

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
GOLDEN SUNLIGHT MINES, INC.  
OPERATING PERMIT 00065  
EAST BUTTRESS DUMP EXTENSION  
AMENDMENT 12**

**February 17, 2010**

Dear Reader:

Golden Sunlight Mines, Inc. (GSM) filed an application on September 10, 2009 for amendment 12 to Operating Permit 00065 from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). GSM's mining operation is located in Jefferson County approximately 5 miles northeast of Whitehall, MT in Sections 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33 of Township 2 North, Range 3 West, Section 4, 5 and 6 in Township 1 North, Range 3 West and Sections 1, 13, 24, 25 and 36 in Township 2 North, Range 4 West.

The proposed amendment would increase the permitted disturbance boundary, reconfigure the East Buttress Dump to enhance stability, add an East Buttress Extension buffer zone, a borrow pit buffer zone, an East Buttress Extension access route, and a 5B Optimized Pit East Dump Buffer zone. The permitted disturbance would increase from 3017.7 acres to 3,101 acres.

After additional geotechnical review of the permitted East Buttress Dump, it was determined that a different configuration could significantly increase the stability provided by the East Buttress Dump to the Sunlight Block ground movement. The reconfiguration would change by adding 31 acres located directly east of the currently permitted 200 acre site. However, the East Buttress Dump Extension disturbance acreage would actually be reduced from 200 acres to 144 acres. This would be due to an overall increase in the height of the previously permitted East Buttress Dump.

The proposed increases in the permitted disturbance boundary would be as follows:

- Update the permitted disturbance boundary due to mapping irregularities over the years (1.2 acres);
- Reconfigure the currently approved East Buttress Dump Extension to enhance the Sunlight Block Stability (30.8 acres);
- Add an East Buttress Dump Extension buffer zone (30.3 acres);
- Add a borrow pit buffer zone and area for future East Buttress Dump Extension access (14.9

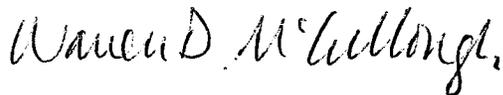
- acres); and
- Add a 5B Optimized East Dump Buffer zone (6.1 acres).

The total area added to the permitted disturbance boundary would be 83.3 acres, all within the approved permit boundary. Approximately 2,275 of the 3,017.7 acres permitted for disturbance have been disturbed to date.

The agencies' interdisciplinary team had an internal scoping meeting on 10/13/09. A legal notice on the submittal of the East Buttruss Dump Extension (Amendment 12) application was published in the *Whitehall Ledger* (9/23/09 and 9/30/09), the *Independent Record* (9/24/09, 10/1/09 and 10/8/09), The *Montana Standard* (9/23/09, 9/30/09 and 10/07/09), the *Missoulian* (9/23/09, 9/30/09 and 10/7/09), the *Billings Gazette* (9/22/09, 9/29/09 and 10/6/09) and the *Great Falls Tribune* (9/24/09, 10/1/09 and 10/8/09). The legal notice was also sent to the State of Montana *Newslinks* service which distributes information to subscriber newspapers in Montana. The *Whitehall Ledger*, *Independent Record*, *Montana Standard*, *Missoulian*, and the *Great Falls Tribune* all ran separate news stories on the submittal of the amendment application. Only one public comment has been received, which indicated support of the proposal, in response to the legal notice and press releases.

The Draft EA analyzed the potential impacts of the Proposed Action as well as the No action alternative. There were no proposed agency modifications to the submittal. The Draft EA addressed issues and concerns raised during agency scoping. Questions on the decision to approve the amendment should be directed to Herb Rolfes, Operating Permit Section Supervisor, DEQ/EMB, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, phone (406)444-3841, or e-mailed to [hrolfes@mt.gov](mailto:hrolfes@mt.gov). Copies of the Draft EA can be obtained by contacting Mr. Rolfes or by accessing the DEQ website at: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/ea/hardrock.mcp>

Sincerely,



Warren D. McCullough  
Chief Environmental Management Bureau