

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR MINOR REVISION
COAL AND URANIUM PROGRAM
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

COMPANY NAME: Big Sky Coal Company DATE: October 19, 2010

OPERATING PERMIT#: 83004CR

MR#: MR09-04-03A

LOCATION: The revision affects the entire permit area.

Type and Purpose of Action:

Big Sky Coal Company (BSCC) has proposed to discontinue wildlife monitoring in Area A , with the exception of grouse surveys. The current commitments in the permit have required extensive wildlife surveys for upland game birds, songbirds, lagomorphs, big game, raptors, bats, amphibians, and reptiles. Some of this information has been collected and reported annually since 1974.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

The proposed permit modification has limited environmental impacts. Discontinuing the Wildlife Monitoring as proposed has the potential to reduce vehicle traffic, both ground and air traffic) to three visits each year.

Alternative Actions:

The no action alternative would be to continue the wildlife monitoring as currently approved.

Other alternative actions considered would be to modify or increase the existing wildlife monitoring plan. This alternative action would be an increase in potential impacts from the proposed permit revision.

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