

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

COMPANY NAME: Big Sky Coal Company

DATE: September 5, 2012

PERMIT#: C1988004B

REVISION NO: MR42

LOCATION: Big Sky Mine, T01N, R41E, Section 30

Type and Purpose of Action:

The proponent proposed the following changes to Pond IB-9: construction of a 100-year, 24-hour open channel spillway and perforating the standpipe. These changes were proposed as a means to bring the pond into compliance with regulations for a permanent post-mine pond. The purpose for this post-mine pond would be replacement of pre-mine wetland habitat or a reclamation enhancement supporting riparian vegetation, livestock, and wildlife. This proposal and all related permit changes for the proposed permanent pond were submitted to the Department as a minor revision to the current permit.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

The proposal was submitted to help mitigate the impact of mining on wetlands in Lee Coulee. Negative potential impacts of leaving Pond IB-9 would include a future rapid drawdown of the pond. Measures to mitigate rapid drawdown of the pond include proper design and construction of the spillway. The potential impact to down gradient water users is insignificant.

Alternative Actions:

Removal of the pond embankment and reclamation of the area to a grassland.

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Title: Engineer

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