

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

COMPANY NAME: Spring Creek Coal, LLC

DATE: March 8, 2013

PERMIT#: C1979012

REVISION NO: MR186

LOCATION: Spring Creek Mine, PAR 2H at the west end of Pit 1

Type and Purpose of Action:

The operator intends to remove topsoil that was seeded in November of 2002 as part of PAR 2H. This reclamation has established vegetation but will need to be impacted for future mining purposes. There are approximately 7 acres of reclamation that will need to be disturbed in order to establish pit access. The operator intends to remove the topsoil in a single lift and stockpile this material at an approved stockpile footprint separate from A and B stockpiles.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

These practices will impact reclamation on a relatively small area. By keeping the material stockpiled separately of A and B piles, this can be laid back down with minimal impacts to the soil and it will likely be able to retain much of the established seed bank. As mining progresses, this area will be included with future reclamation. All of the reclamation goals will still be met. The bonding clock will be restarted for this small area, though as it is still within the same drainage basin, there will be no impact to final bond release.

Alternative Actions:

By not impacting this reclamation, there will be additional safety hazards to the operator and this will also limit the operator's ability to fill a spoil void. By not filling that spoil void, additional reclamation cannot be completed. The operator could potentially access these areas by going around this reclamation area to the north but the increased costs to the operator and safety hazards of too narrow of a pit would be detrimental to mine safety and unnecessary in meeting reclamation goals.

Prepared by: Michael Glenn

Title: Vegetation Specialist

FC: 620.451, 620.452