

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

COMPANY NAME: Spring Creek Coal, LLC

DATE: June 7, 2013

PERMIT#: C1979012

REVISION NO: MR189

LOCATION: Spring Creek Mine

Type and Purpose of Action:

Spring Creek Coal (SCC) proposes to use an inactive monitoring well, AD-13, completed in the Anderson-Dietz coal to dewater the coal aquifer in advance on mining in Pit 4. This well would be mined through in 5 years under the current mine plan. Water produced from the well would be diverted via existing culverts and ditches to Trap 22 for use in dust suppression.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

Water quality in the Anderson-Dietz from the area around AD-13 has been very poor with TDS consistently over 5000 mg/L. The flow of this poor quality water over the surface may reduce the quality of the spoil and soil in contact with the water. The water is not proposed to flow through any native or currently reclaimed channels, and therefore potential impacts to surface water quality and reestablishment of vegetation on reclamation would be minimal.

AD-13 is located over 1 mile from the nearest permit boundary. Since the area is being actively mined and will be mined through in a few years, the proposed dewatering of the AD aquifer is unlikely to result in additional drawdown beyond the drawdown currently predicted by the PHC. No users of the AD aquifer outside the permit boundary should be impacted by the use of AD-13 for dewatering. SCC's nearby monitoring wells in the AD coal may respond to the increased drawdown from the proposed enhanced dewatering operation.

Alternative Actions:

The alternate action is to not approve the use of AD-13 for dewatering, and SCC would continue with their current mine plan and hydrologic control practices. Since the well is only proposed to operate for 5 years before being mined through, this alternate action would result in reduced drawdown south of Pit 4 in the short term. However, dewatering of the aquifer in the area would continue to occur as Pit 4 advances south and north.

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