

**DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
INDIAN CREEK MINE EXPANSION**



DECEMBER 2008



Mission Statement

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the stewardship of our public lands. It is committed to manage, protect, and improve these lands in a manner to serve the needs of the American people for all times. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield of our nation's resources within a framework of environmental responsibility and scientific technology. These resources include recreation; rangelands; timber; minerals; watershed; fish and wildlife; wilderness; air; and scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

The Department of Environmental Quality's mission is to protect, sustain, and improve a clean and healthful environment to benefit present and future generations.

State of Montana
Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Butte Field Office
106 North Parkmont
Butte, MT 59701

December 2008

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Graymont Western U.S., Inc. Proposed Mine Expansion, Broadwater County, Montana.

Graymont Western U.S., Inc., operates an open pit limestone quarry west of Townsend, Montana, in the Limestone Hills. The mine operates under Operating Permit No. 00105, issued by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Plan of Operations #MTM78300, issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Graymont Western U.S., Inc. proposes to expand the currently permitted mine to the south resulting in a continuation of Graymont's existing operations in the Limestone Hills. Graymont (formerly Continental Lime Inc.) produces calcium oxide (quicklime and lime), hydrated lime, and other lime products at the Mine. The proposed amendment would expand the existing permit boundary to encompass approximately 1,940 acres of additional public land currently administered by BLM and represents approximately 50 years of mine production including 15 years of currently permitted mine life. Proposed mine expansion would include quarry areas, mine facilities, ore storage sites, soil salvage stockpiles, haul roads, and overburden disposal areas.

The Draft EIS analyzes the potential impacts of: 1) the proposed action 2) No Action, (existing life-of-mine permit), and 3) Alternative A, Modified Pit Backfill, which would reduce the visual effect of highwalls and create varied slope angles resulting in areas conducive to establishment of diverse habitat to support wildlife.

DEQ and BLM have tentatively selected the Alternative A, Modified Pit Backfill as the preliminary preferred alternative. **This is not a final decision.** The preferred alternative could change in response to public comment on the Draft EIS, new information, or new analysis that might be needed in preparing the Final EIS.

Written comments may be sent to the Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office, 106 North Parkmont, Butte, MT 59701 attn: Dave Williams or Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Director's Office, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, attn: Greg Hallsten.

A public hearing to receive oral and written comments will be held in **Townsend, Montana** during the 60-day comment period which begins following the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. Hearing details will be announced through **public notices, media news releases and mailings.**

The Final EIS might only contain public comments and responses and changes to the Draft EIS. Please keep this Draft EIS for future reference.



Richard H. Opper, Director
State of Montana
Department of Environmental Quality



Richard M. Hotaling, Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Butte Field Office

**DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR
GRAYMONT WESTERN, INC. INDIAN CREEK MINE EXPANSION**

LEAD AGENCY:

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Butte Field Office
Butte, Montana**

CO-LEAD AGENCY:

**Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Helena, Montana**

PROJECT LOCATION:

Broadwater County, Montana

**COMMENTS ON THIS DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT SHOULD BE
DIRECTED TO:**

**Mr. Dave Williams
Project Manager
Butte Field Office
106 North Parkmont
Butte, Montana 59701-7600**

DATE BY WHICH COMMENTS MUST BE POSTMARKED TO BLM:

BLM and DEQ will accept written comments on the Draft EIS for 60 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency Publishes the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. Future meetings, hearings, or any other public participation activities will be announced 15 days in advance through public notices, media news releases, and/or mailings.

ABSTRACT

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analyzes potential impacts associated with Graymont Western US, Inc. (Graymont) proposal to amend BLM Plan of Operations MTM 78300 and Montana Metal Mine Reclamation Act (MMRA) Operating Permit No. 00105 to include a life-of-mine expansion of limestone and dolomite mining operations at the Indian Creek Mine (Mine) located approximately 4 miles west of Townsend, Montana. The proposed amendment would encompass approximately 1,940 acres of public land currently administered by BLM and represents approximately 50 years of mine production including 15 years of currently permitted mine life.

The proposed life-of-mine expansion would result in a continuation of Graymont's existing operations in the Limestone Hills including mine pits, mine facilities, ore storage sites, soil salvage stockpiles, haul roads, and overburden disposal areas lying within a disturbance boundary of 1,313 acres (968 acres in the South Claims Area and 345 acres in the Dolomite Claims Area). A disturbance boundary would be established within the overall proposed operating permit area. Actual surface disturbance for mine activities within the disturbance boundary would be less than the permitted disturbance to allow flexibility for mine planning. The agency preferred alternative is Alternative A – Modified Pit Backfill.