



In Reply Refer
To:

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Miles City Field Office
111 Garryowen Road
Miles City, Montana 59301-7000
www.blm.gov/mt



March 22, 2011

3809 (MTC020)
MTM 77811

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Miles City Field Office and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) have jointly prepared a detailed Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential impacts from American Colloid Company's (ACC) proposal for future bentonite mining activities. The EA and the proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were available for a 30-day public comment period that ended on March 10, 2011. We received no substantive comments that required making changes to the EA.

My decision is to select Alternative A – American Colloid's Proposed Action, based upon the analysis of potential environmental impacts described in the Environmental Assessment. This decision includes mitigation identified in the attached EA, the Habitat Recovery and Replacement Plan, existing Plan of Operations, and American Colloid's Amendment No. 12 mine plan submittal. You may view and download an electronic version of the Decision Record, FONSI, and EA at our BLM Miles City Field Office website at www.blm.gov/mt.

This decision does not include the privately owned lands as those lands are not subject to the federal mining regulation (Surface Management Regulations, 43 CFR 3809). Privately owned lands will be addressed in a separate decision made by the Montana DEQ.

Questions concerning this decision can be mailed to Jon David, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM Miles City Field Office, 111 Garryowen Road, Miles City, Montana 59301 or emailed to jdavid@blm.gov.

If you would like more information about the bentonite mine plan amendment, contact Jon David, Natural Resource Specialist, at the BLM Miles City Field Office (406) 233-3665, Dan Benoit, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, at the BLM Miles City Field Office (406) 233-3646, or Jo Stephen at the Montana DEQ Billings office at (406) 247-4435.

Sincerely,

Deborah K. Johnson
Field Manager