



Date: June 21, 2006
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BILLINGS -- The Bureau of Land Management and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality have released an environmental assessment analyzing American Colloid Company's request to expand its bentonite mine in southern Carbon County.

The proposed expansion involves adding 490 acres to the existing 6,833-acre operation that includes 3,639 acres of BLM surface and 3,194 acres of private surface. About 100 of the 490 acres are BLM surface, and about 297 of the 490 acres would actually be disturbed by mining or mine related activities. American Colloid estimates that approximately 700,000 cubic yards of bentonite would be mined in the proposed area adjacent to U.S. Highway 310 about six miles southeast of Warren, Mont.

The public has 30 days to review the document and the company's proposed amendment to its plan of operations. Copies of the environmental assessment, a proposed finding of no significant impact and decision record, and American Colloid's application are available from the BLM's Billings Field Office, 5001 Southgate Drive or at www.mt.blm.gov/bifo. In order to be considered, comments need to be received by July 21, 2006. Comments should be sent to: Bureau of Land Management, Attn: ACC's Amendment #3 Project Coordinator, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101.

After considering the comments received, BLM and MT DEQ will determine the adequacy of the environmental analysis and issue a decision. BLM and MT DEQ may revise the environmental assessment or change the proposed decision record as a result of public comments. A copy of the completed assessment and signed decision will be provided to those individuals or organizations submitting comments.

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