

Date: February 16, 2016

To: Operators holding DEQ Opencut Mining Permits, and other Interested Parties

From: DEQ Opencut Mining Program

RE: SAGE GROUSE REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with Executive Orders 12-2015 and 21-2015, as of January 1, 2016, anyone applying for a DEQ Opencut Mining Permit or Amendment in designated sage grouse habitats must consult with the Montana **Sage Grouse Program (SGP)** before submitting a permit application to the DEQ. Designated sage grouse habitats are shown in blue and green on the map below, and the habitats can be viewed in greater detail using the zoom (+/-) feature at: <https://www.sagegrouse.mt.gov/> or <http://svc.mt.gov/deq/wmadst/>.

SGP Consultation Process: Operators should contact the SGP at least 30 days before they intend to submit a permit application to the DEQ. Allow 45-60 days for larger, more complicated projects. Operators should provide the SGP with a thorough description of their proposed project and begin the consultation process using the SGP's website: <https://www.sagegrouse.mt.gov/>. The SGP's phone number is 406-444-0554. After the consultation process, the SGP will provide the Operator with a letter including recommendations and stipulations to protect key sage grouse habitats.

DEQ Opencut Mining Program Process: Once the SGP consultation process is finished, the Operator incorporates the SGP's requirements into their Opencut Mining Permit application, and attaches the SGP letter to the application package being submitted to the DEQ. Please note that the DEQ will deem an application incomplete if it is located in designated sage grouse habitats and does not include the SGP letter.

