



Kootenai National Forest  
1101 US Highway 2 West  
Libby, MT 59923

Montana Department of  
Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901



August 19, 2001

**Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Rock Creek Project**

Dear Reader:

Attached is a copy of the version of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Rock Creek Project you requested. Sterling Mining Company's proposed project consisting of an evaluation adit, an underground copper/silver mine, and associated mill, tailings storage facility, and waste water treatment facility, would be located in Sanders County, Montana. The proposed project involves lands in and adjacent to the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness. Access to the proposed site would be via Montana Highway 200 then approximately 6 miles up Forest Development Road No. 150. The mine was designed to process 10,000 tons per day for approximately 30 years.

The final EIS presents a preferred alternative (Alternative V) and four other alternatives including the company's proposed action. The final EIS discloses the potential environmental consequences associated with each alternative. A number of changes and additional information have been incorporated into the final EIS based on public, agency, and tribal comments on the draft and supplemental EISs. The issues revisited included hydrology, geology, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, socioeconomics, cultural resources, and American Indian concerns. Additional mitigations and monitoring requirements were incorporated into Alternative V as a result of this additional information.

The documents available include the following:

- The Summary--this is a stand alone document that summarizes the contents and analysis in the EIS.
- The complete EIS--this document comprised of several volumes includes the summary; a description of the purpose and need for the project, development and description of alternatives, the affected environment, the environmental consequences, and references; numerous appendices; and our agencies' responses to public comments. This document is available either as a printed document or on a CD.

The documents listed above can also be reviewed at libraries in the vicinity of the proposed project, agency offices, and on both agencies web pages:

DEQ: <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/eis.asp>

KNF: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/kootenai>

A Record of Decision will be prepared no earlier than 30 days after the notice of receipt of the final EIS is published in the Federal Register. A copy of the Record of Decision will be provided to everyone on the final EIS mailing list who received a copy of one of the final EIS documents; a notice of the decision will be sent to all other persons on the mailing list.

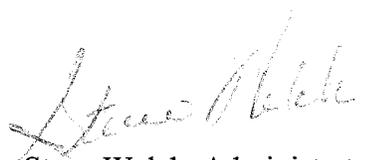
The agencies involved wish to thank all those who provided suggestions and comments used to complete the final EIS. Your valuable input helped the agencies to more fully develop the preferred alternative and mitigate environmental impacts of the proposed action. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact either John McKay, KNF, at (406) 293-6211 or Kathleen Johnson, DEQ, at (406) 444-1760/4953.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,



Bob Castaneda  
Forest Supervisor  
Kootenai National Forest



Steve Welch, Administrator  
Permitting and Compliance Division  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality