



Brian Schweitzer, Governor
Richard H. Opper, Director

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**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PLUM CREEK TIMBERLANDS, LP
OPERATING PERMIT 00167
POKER HILL AND LOWER TWIN ROCK SITES
AMENDMENT 001**

June 29, 2010

Dear Reader:

Plum Creek Timberlands, LP (Plum Creek) filed an application on February 17, 2010 for amendment 001 to Operating Permit 00167 from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Plum Creek submitted an amendment to the permit to increase the permitted acreage for two of the existing quarry sites. The two sites are known as the Poker Hill and the Lower Twin Rock sites.

The Poker Hill site is located in Sections 4, 9, & 10, Township 28 North, Range 30 West, and is about 15 miles south of Libby in Lincoln County off Highway 2. The permit area would be increased from 16 acres to 123 acres. The area to be disturbed would be increased from 10 acres to 38 acres over a twenty year period.

The Lower Twin Rock site is located in Sections 4 & 9, Township 26 North, Range 26 West, and is about 36 miles west of Kalispell in Flathead County off Highway 2. The permit area would be increased from 48 acres to 154 acres. The area to be disturbed would be increased from 12 acres to 36 acres over a twenty year period.

The total permitted acreage for Plum Creek would be increased from 13,944 acres to 14,157 acres. The total acreage permitted for disturbance under the operating permit would be increased from 3,523 acres to 3,575 acres. To date, approximately 272 acres have been disturbed and about 99 acres have been reclaimed.

A legal notice on the submittal for the expansion of the two sites (Amendment 001) application was published in the Kalispell: *Daily Interlake*, Missoula: *Missoulian*, Butte: *Montana Standard*, Great Falls: *Great Falls Tribune*, Helena: *Independent Record*, and Thompson Falls: *Sanders County Ledger*. The legal notice was also sent to the State of Montana *Newslinks* service which distributes information to subscriber newspapers in Montana. No public comments have been received in response to the legal notice and press releases.

The Draft EA analyzed the potential impacts of the Proposed Action as well as the No Action Alternative and the Approval with Modification Alternative. The agency has decided to approve the amendment with modification. The modification is as follows:

Poker Hill site: If a major road construction contract is awarded, the applicant must consult with the Montana Department of Transportation regarding the junction of the access road with Highway 2 for the Poker Hill site. The junction may need to be adjusted to provide for safety and better visibility due to increased truck traffic from both directions. Plum Creek would have to monitor the local neighbors' water wells if bedrock is encountered that requires blasting.

The Draft EA addressed issues and concerns raised during agency scoping. Questions on the decision to approve the amendment should be directed to Herb Rolfes, Operating Permit Section Supervisor, DEQ/EMB, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, phone (406)444-3841, or e-mailed to hrolfes@mt.gov. Copies of the Draft EA can be obtained by contacting Mr. Rolfes or by accessing the DEQ website at: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/ea/hardrock.mcp>

Sincerely,



Warren D. McCullough
Chief Environmental Management Bureau

File: 00167.353
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