

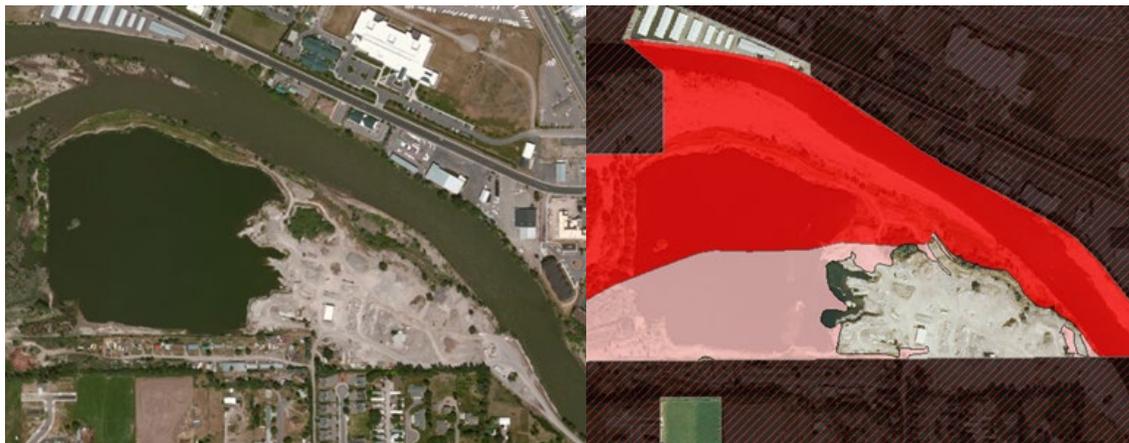
Response to Comments
Sand and Gravel Operations
Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit MTG490000

On July 29, 2019, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued Public Notice MT-19-13, stating DEQ's intent to issue a Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) General Permit for discharges to surface water from Sand and Gravel Operations. The public notice required that all substantive comments be received or postmarked by August 29, 2019, to be considered in formulation of the final determination and issuance of the permit. A public hearing was also held on August 29, 2019, to accept public comments. DEQ received no comments during the public hearing.

This Response to Comments document includes a summary of all significant comments on the draft permit and fact sheet received during the public comment period and DEQ's responses to those comments. The Response to Comments document is an addendum to and supersedes relevant portions of the Fact Sheet to the extent described below.

Comment 1: Because these mines disturb the existing stabilizing vegetation and increase the erosivity and susceptibility to sediment runoff into surface water sources on the site, proper monitoring and control of discharge is important for maintaining current water quality conditions of the receiving waters. We are generally concerned with the proximity of some sand and gravel operations to surface waters and the potential for channel migration and avulsion to negatively affect surface water quality (see photos below).

We are in support of Section D(1) Special Conditions of the permit that require daily visual inspections when discharging. Observing daily streambank scouring and quantity of receiving water could help operators tune into early warning signs of excessive storm water and/or flooding. Aside from requiring visual inspections and documentation we recommend development of a response action to identify measures that could prevent unplanned pit overflows and to notify local DES of unplanned pit overflows of the dewatering discharges.



Response: The Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Sand and Gravel Operations regulates the point source discharge of pollutants to state surface waters.

DEQ's Open Cut Mining Program reviews the placement and proximity of a sand and gravel mine relative to the surface water during the application review and approval process. In addition, permittees who propose to mine in a floodplain are required to coordinate with the local county and/or the Department of Natural Resource and Conservation.

DEQ agrees to add requirement for the permittee to describe and document any corrective actions taken to address and prevent changes of the condition of the streambank (See Part 2.3.2. of the Final Permit). This description must be documented and included in the noncompliance reporting as required in Part 5 of the General Permit.