

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ON THE
AMERICAN COLLOID COMPANY AMENDMENT #10
TO PLAN OF OPERATIONS MTM 77811
CARTER COUNTY, MONTANA
EA# MT-020-02004-176**

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

The American Colloid Company has submitted a proposal to the BLM Miles City Field Office and the Montana DEQ to amend its mine plan for bentonite mining, near Alzada in Carter County, Montana. The amendment would add 1,487 acres to the permit of which 584 acres are federal lands managed by the BLM and 983 acres are private lands. According to the proposal, 686 acres would be disturbed by mining of which 205 acres are BLM managed.

The American Colloid Company is headquartered in Belle Fourche, S.D. and has been mining bentonite in the Alzada area since 1977. The permit currently contains 3,600 acres. Of this, approximately 821 acres are Federal (BLM) surface and 2,779 are privately owned. Over the years, about 2,070 acres have been disturbed by mining or related activities, about 1,640 acres have been reclaimed through seeding and about 300 acres are currently under some phase of mining. In addition, about 1,443 acres have been released from bond and removed from the permit, 289 acres of which were disturbed and fully reclaimed.

The proposed action requiring a decision by BLM would involve approving the addition of the identified BLM lands into the current Plan of Operations with the attendant mining haul road construction, hauling of ore and the reclamation of all disturbed areas.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

On the basis of the information contained in the Environmental Assessment and all other information available to me, I have determined that Alternative A – *American Colloid's Proposed Action* with mitigation identified in the attached EA and existing Plan of Operations, which I have selected, will not have significant effects on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is unnecessary and will not be prepared.

**Field Manager
Miles City Field Office**

Date