

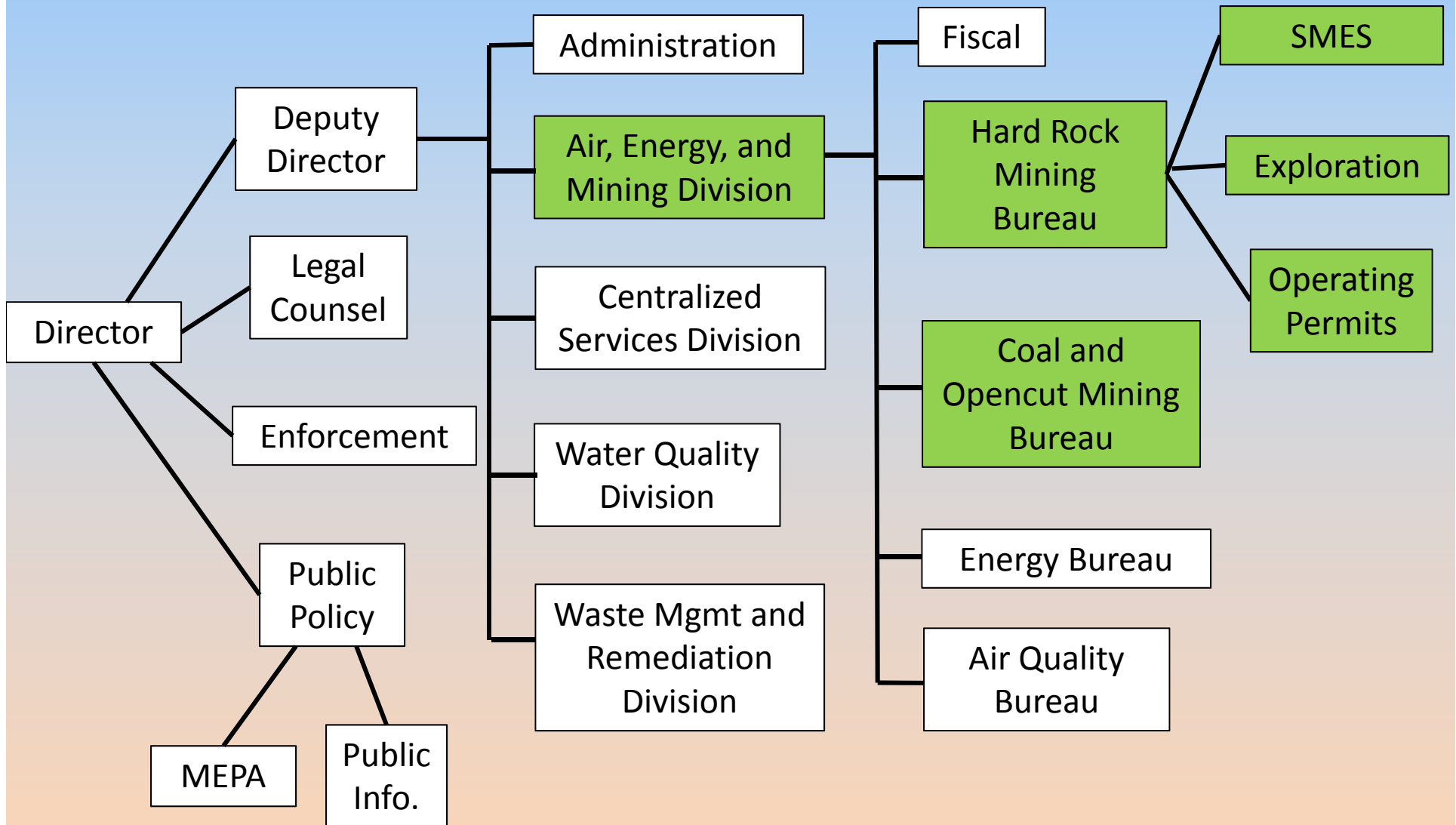
# The State of (Hard Rock) Mining in Montana

*Garrett Smith- Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality*





# Organizational Chart



# Coal and Opencut Mining Bureau

Responsibilities originate from the Opencut Mining Act and the Strip and Underground Mine Siting and Reclamation Acts

Regulates the mining and processing of:

**Bentonite**  
**Scoria**

**Clay**  
**Soil**

**Peat**  
**Coal**

**Sand/gravel**  
**Uranium minerals**

## **1,880 Opencut Permits**

### **609 Operators**

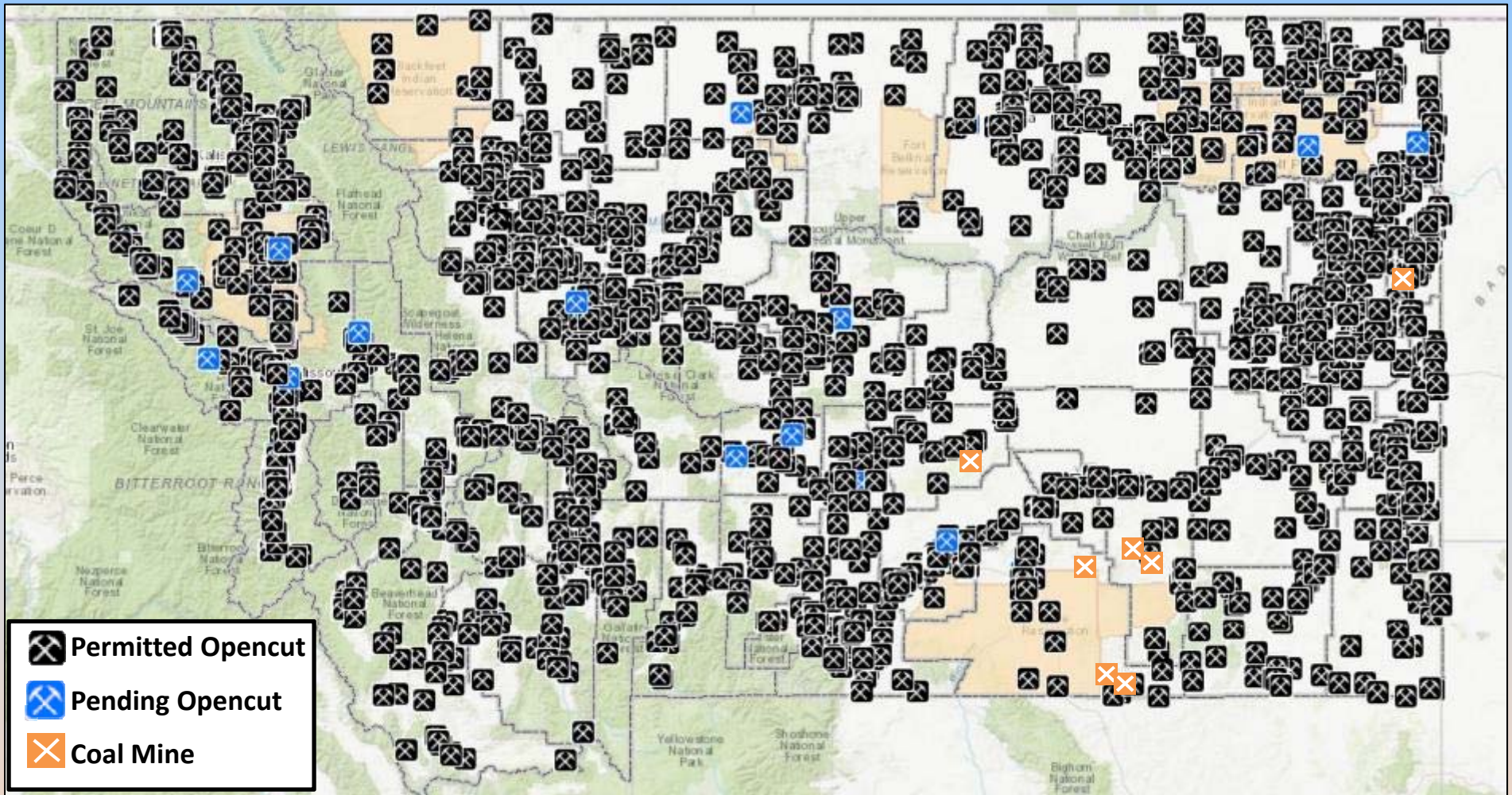
- 51% Private
- 44.5% County or Irrig. Dist.
- 3.8% State
- 0.7% Municipal

## **14 Strip Mine Permits**

- 6 active coal mines
- 2 inactive (reclamation) coal mines
- 75,339 acres



# Coal and Opencut Mining Bureau



**1,880 Opencut Permits**

**21 Pending**

**14 Strip Mine Permits**

**6 active sites, 2 pending**



# Hard Rock Mining Bureau

Responsibilities originate from the Metal Mine Reclamation Act (MMRA) and Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

Regulates the mechanized exploration and development of all ore, rock, or mineral substances *not* covered by the Coal and Opencut Bureau

Despite public perception, this program does NOT regulate or adjudicate:

- Mining Claims
- Hobby Mining/Panning
- Labor Laws
- Property/Civil Disputes
- Site Safety
- Water Rights

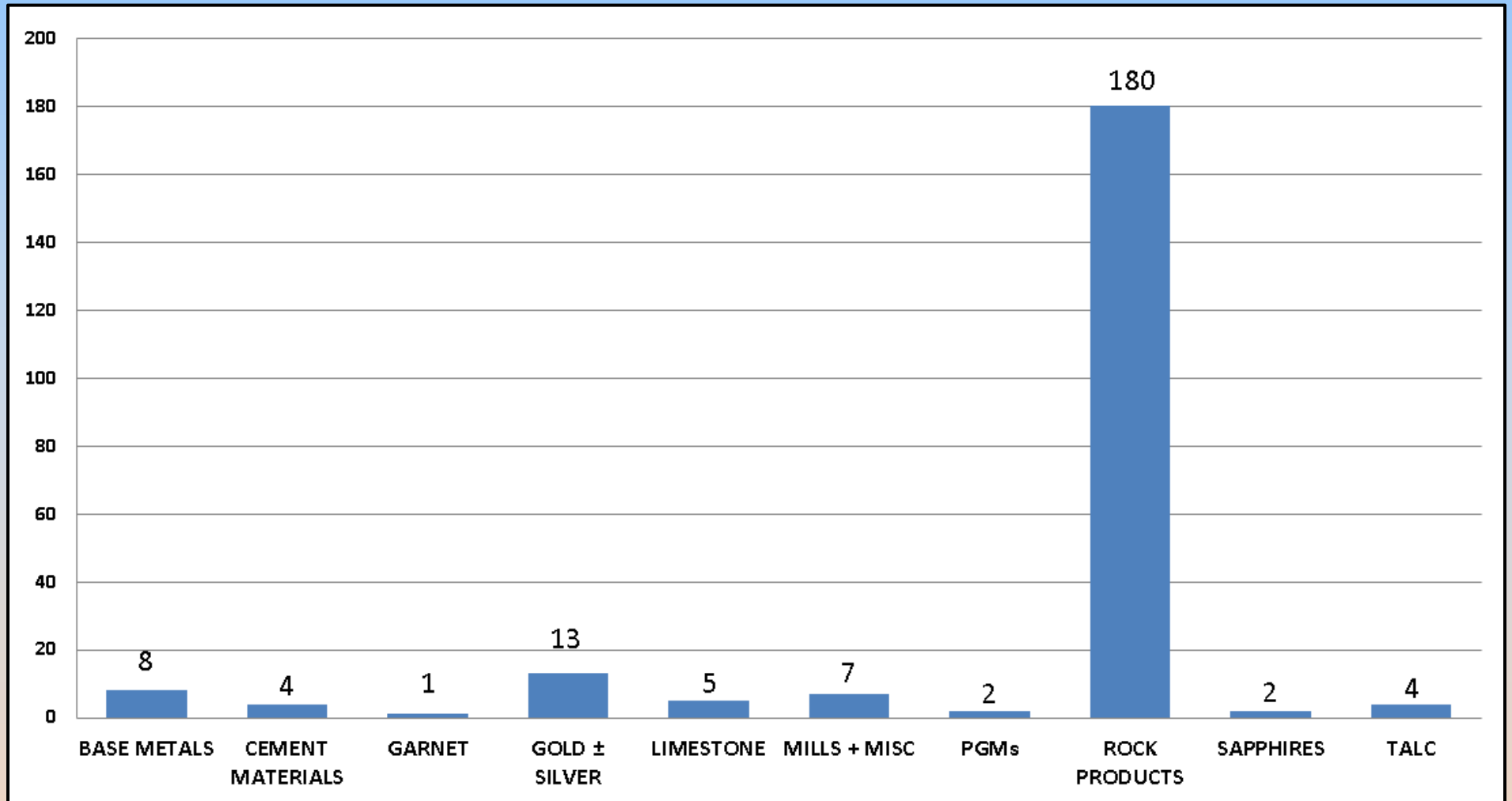
# Comparison of Permitting Actions

Proposed projects and site locations have unique circumstances  
Plans need to be flexible, while ensuring compliance

	<u>Small Miner Exclusion (SME)</u>	<u>Exploration License</u>	<u>Operating Permit</u>
<b>Description</b>	≤5 acres 2 sites, if >1 mile apart	Mechanized exploration, 10k ton sample limit	All other mining, as defined in MMRA
<b>Application &amp; Renewal</b>	Statements submitted annually, no fee	Plans submitted, annual renewal and fee	Plans submitted, annual report and fee
<b>Bonding</b>	Variable for hard rock; \$10k max for placer	Bond required for extent of Plans	Bond required for extent of Plans
<b>MEPA Review</b>	No document, not exempt from air/water laws	Review process: EA or EIS	Review process: EA or EIS
<b>Permitting Timeline</b>	<30 days to process	Months to years, complexity and other agencies	Year to decades, complexity and other agencies



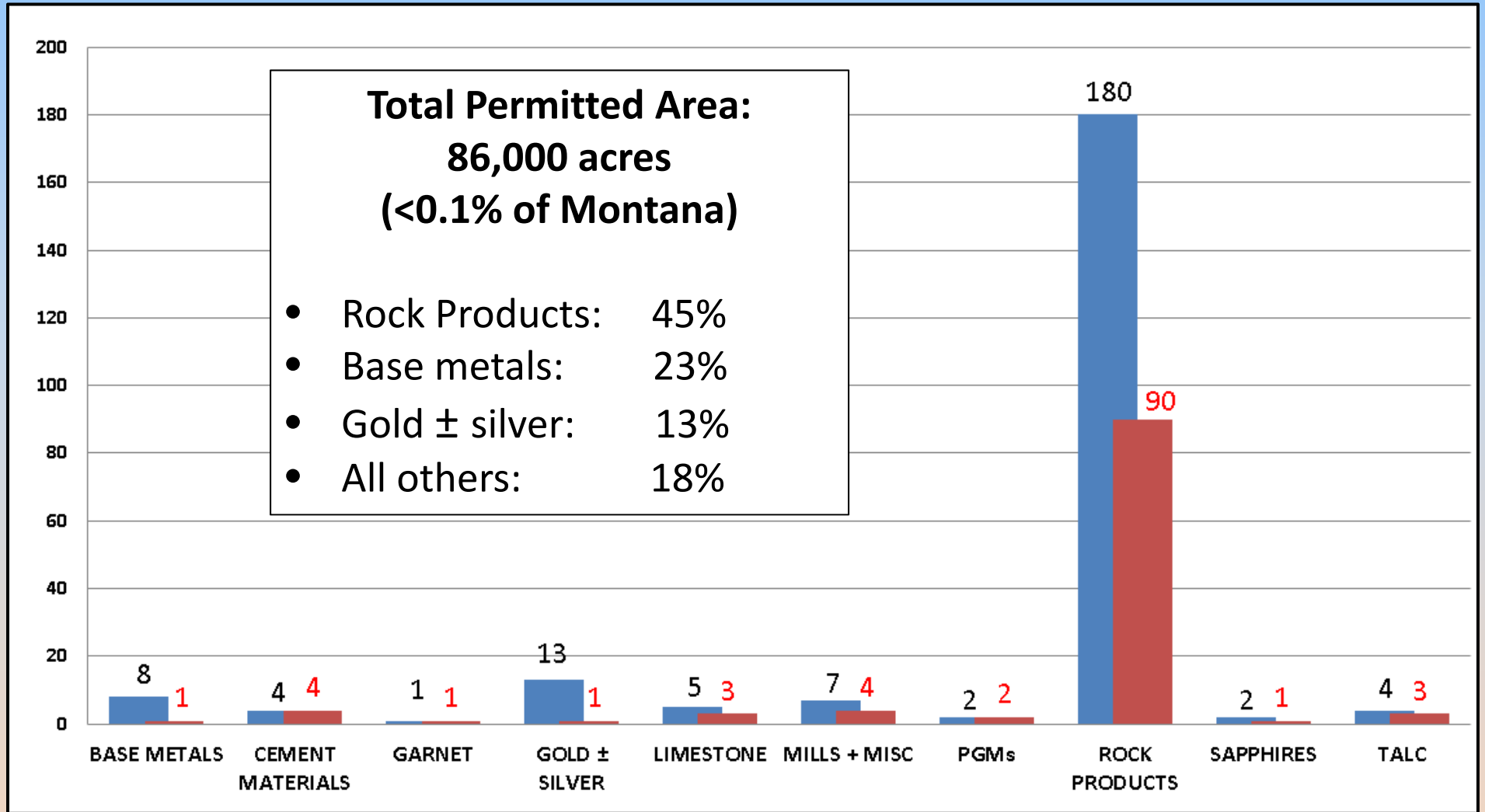
## Number of Operating Permit Sites



**79 Hard Rock Permits (includes 9 Pending and 8 Closure)**

**Total of 226 sites (multi-quarry permits)**

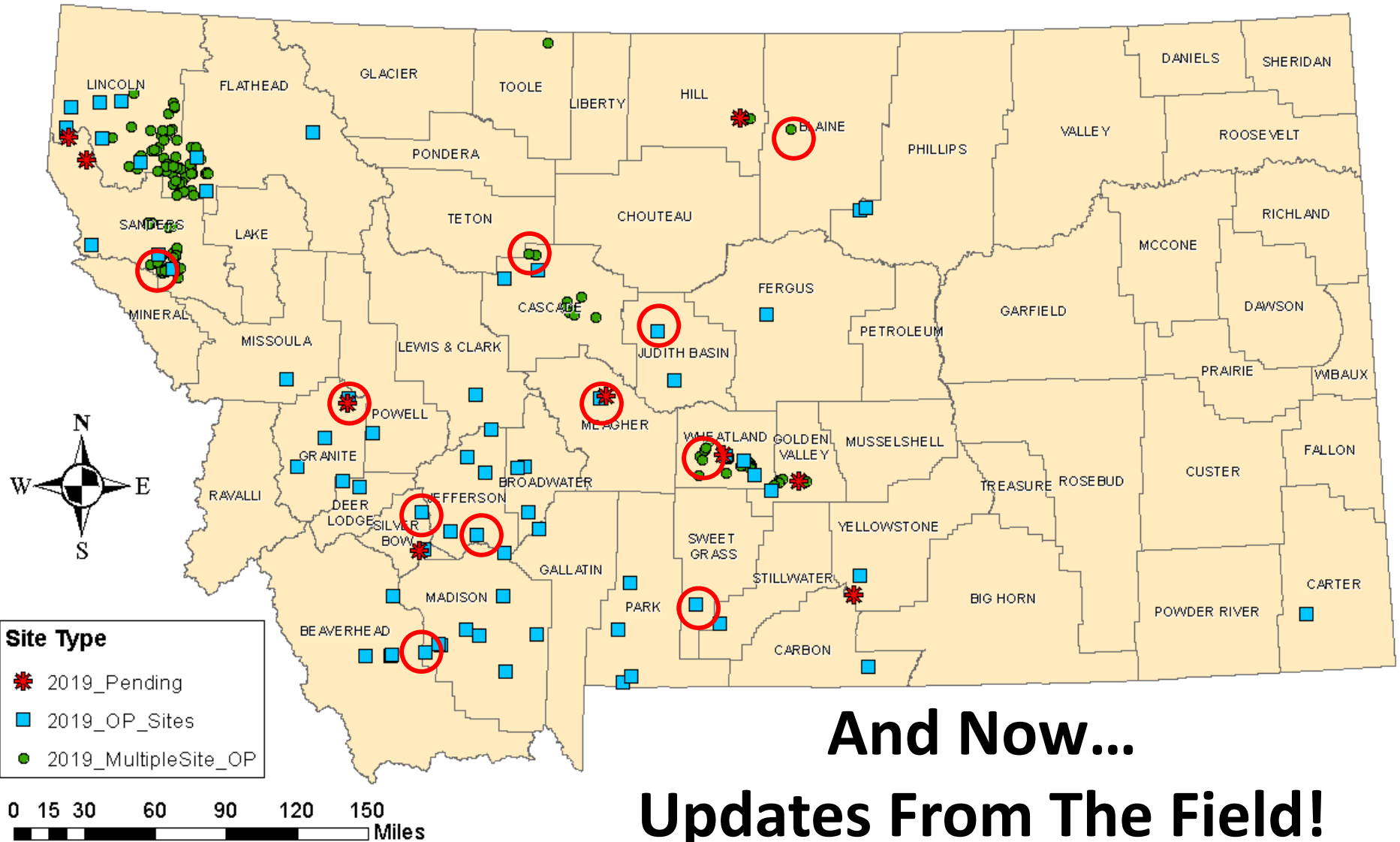
# Number of Operating Permit Sites vs. Currently Active Sites



Activity shown here was determined by recent site inspections



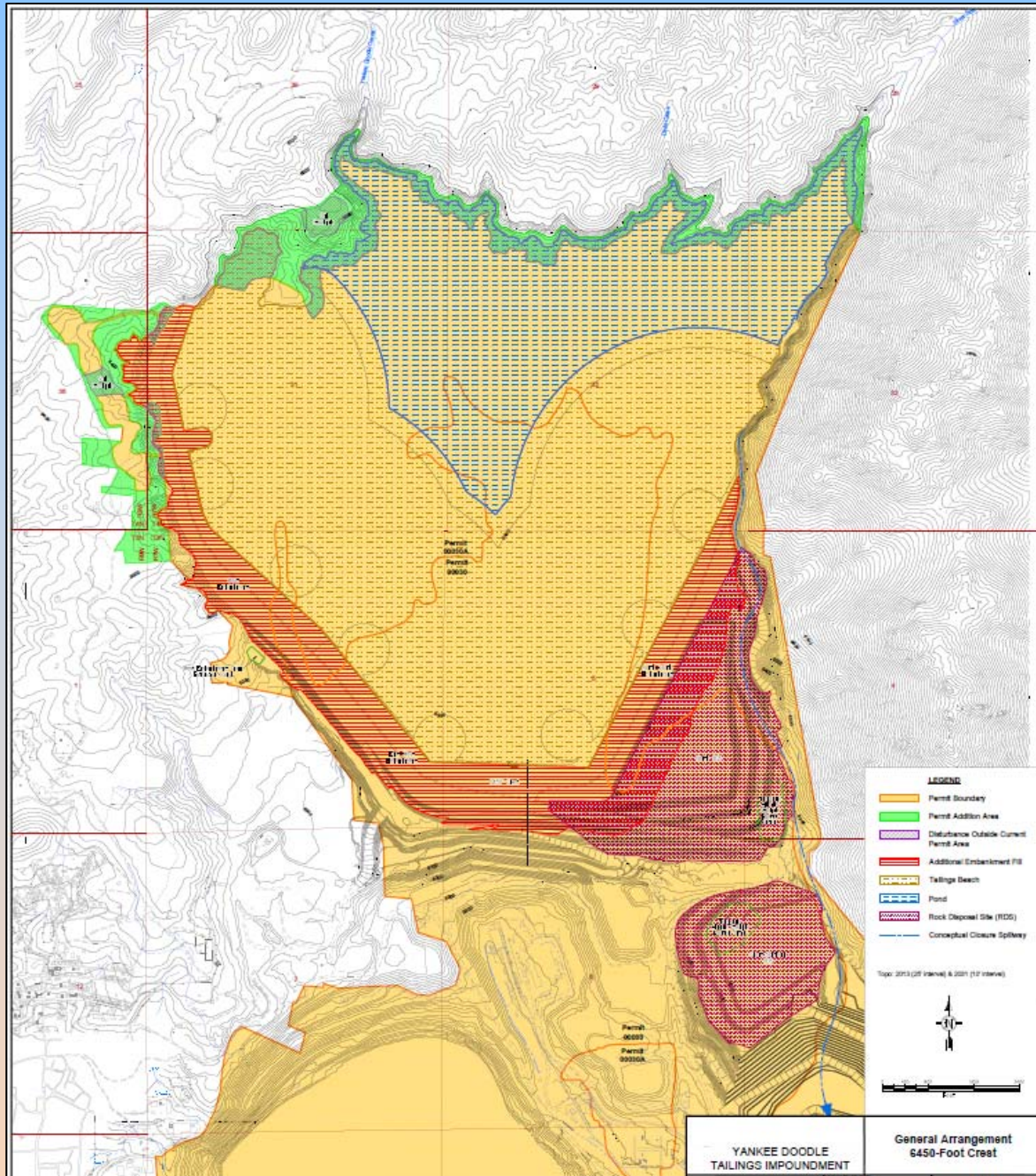
# Hard Rock Operating Permits 2019





 **Montana Resources**





## Current Amendment

- Raise the west embankment by 45 feet (6,405 to 6,450 elevation)
- Extend northern boundary of pond to 6,428 elevation
- Utilize subsurface seepage collection drain in west embankment
- Increase total permit area by 237 acres; disturbance area by 99 acres



# MEPA Process





**BARRICK**



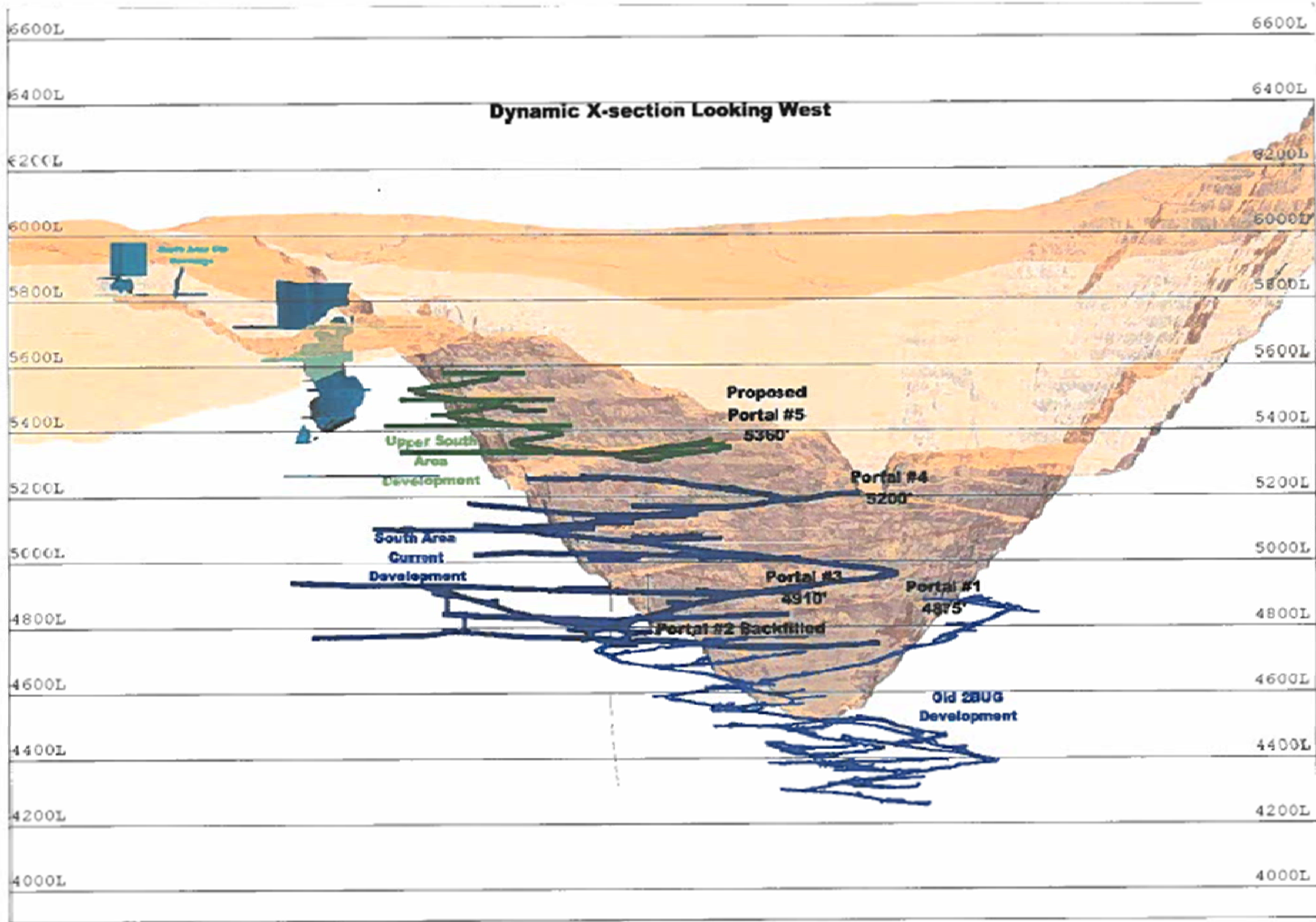


Figure 2. Portal # 5 & USAD Cross Section

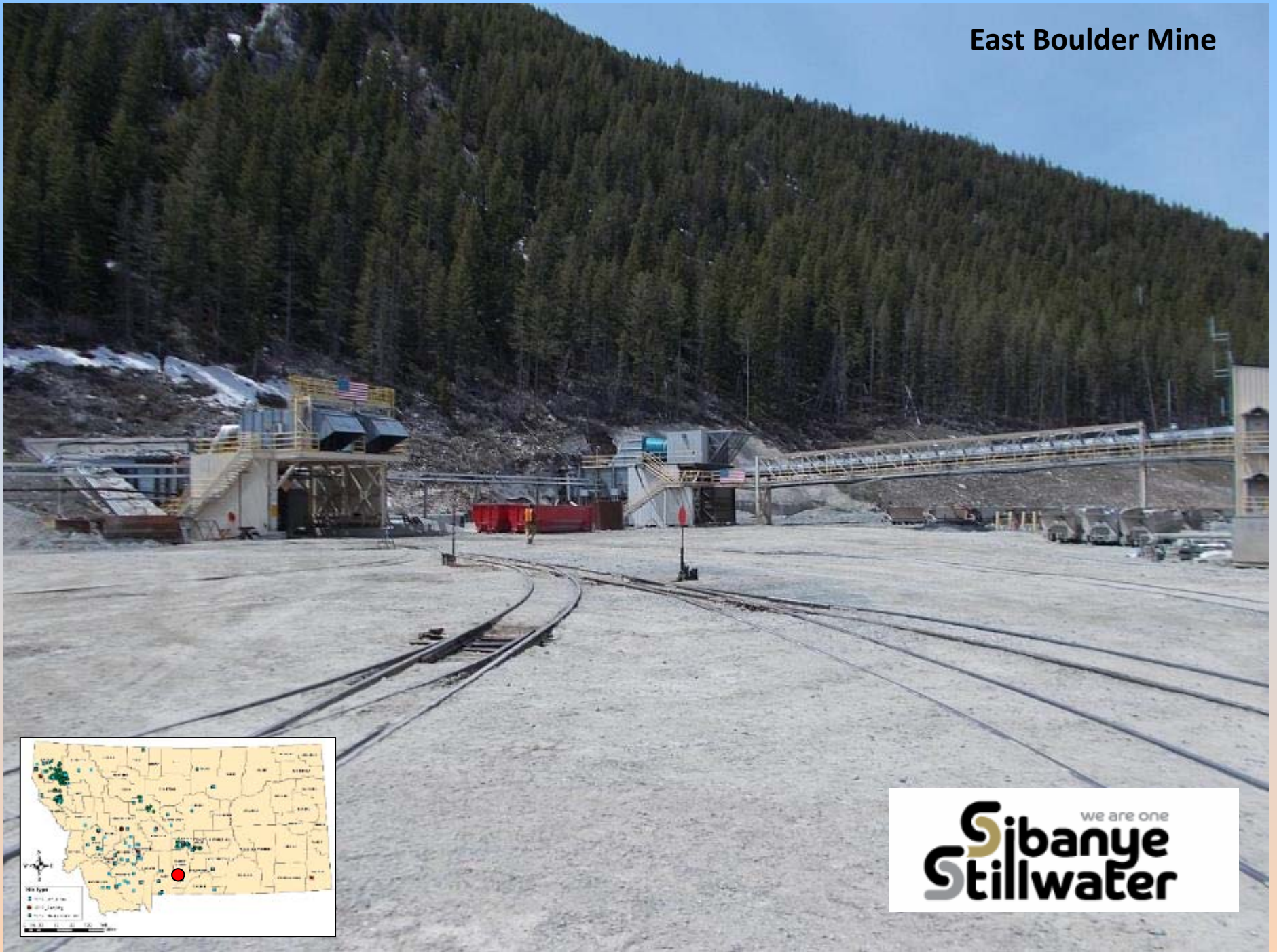
2000

4000

6000

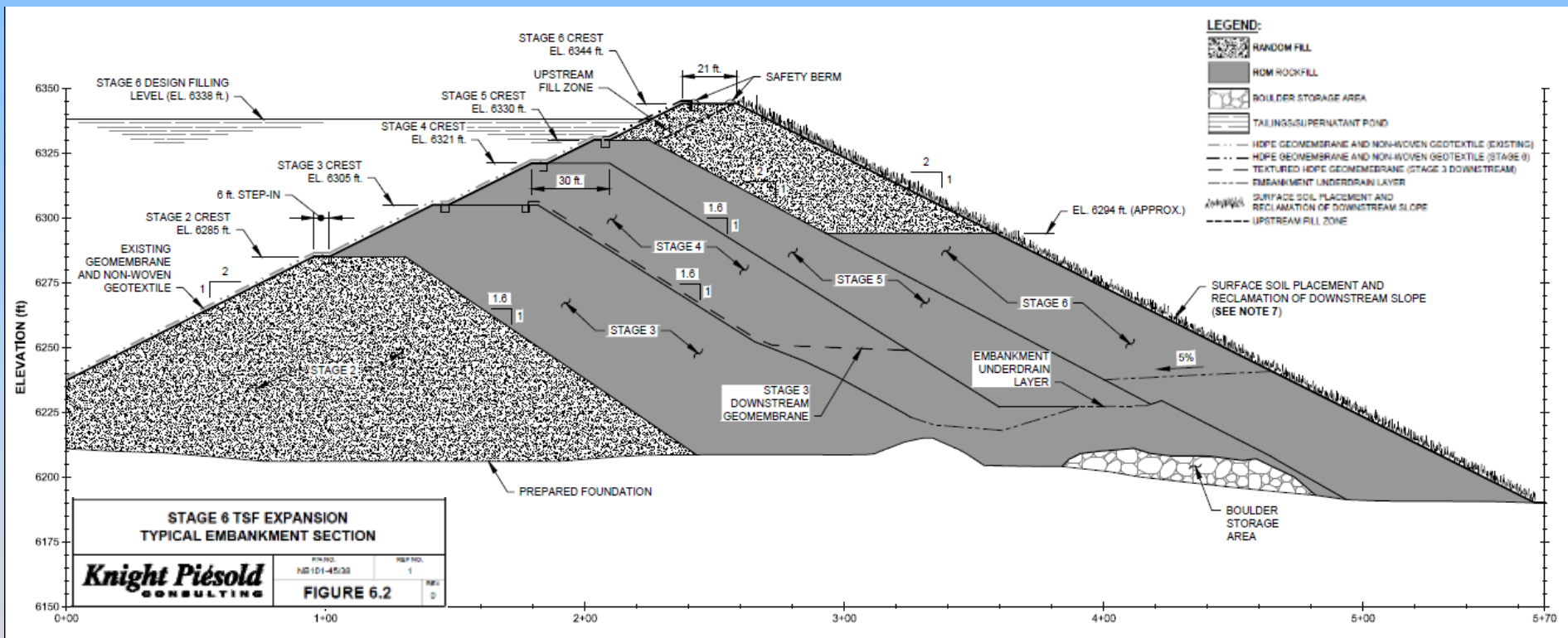


# East Boulder Mine







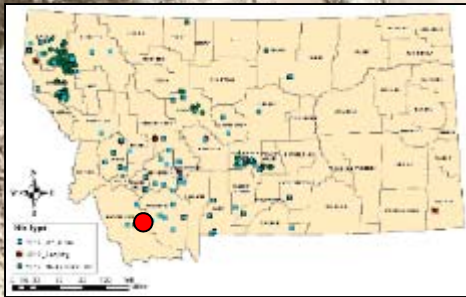


Source: Sibanye-Stillwater, Operating Permit Revision Application

## Current Amendment

- Stage 6 tailings impoundment expansion
- Raise the embankment crest by 14 feet, expand facility footprint:
  - 55.8 acres of disturbance within permit area
  - new disturbance area of 4.8 acres
- Environmental review document currently being developed with USFS







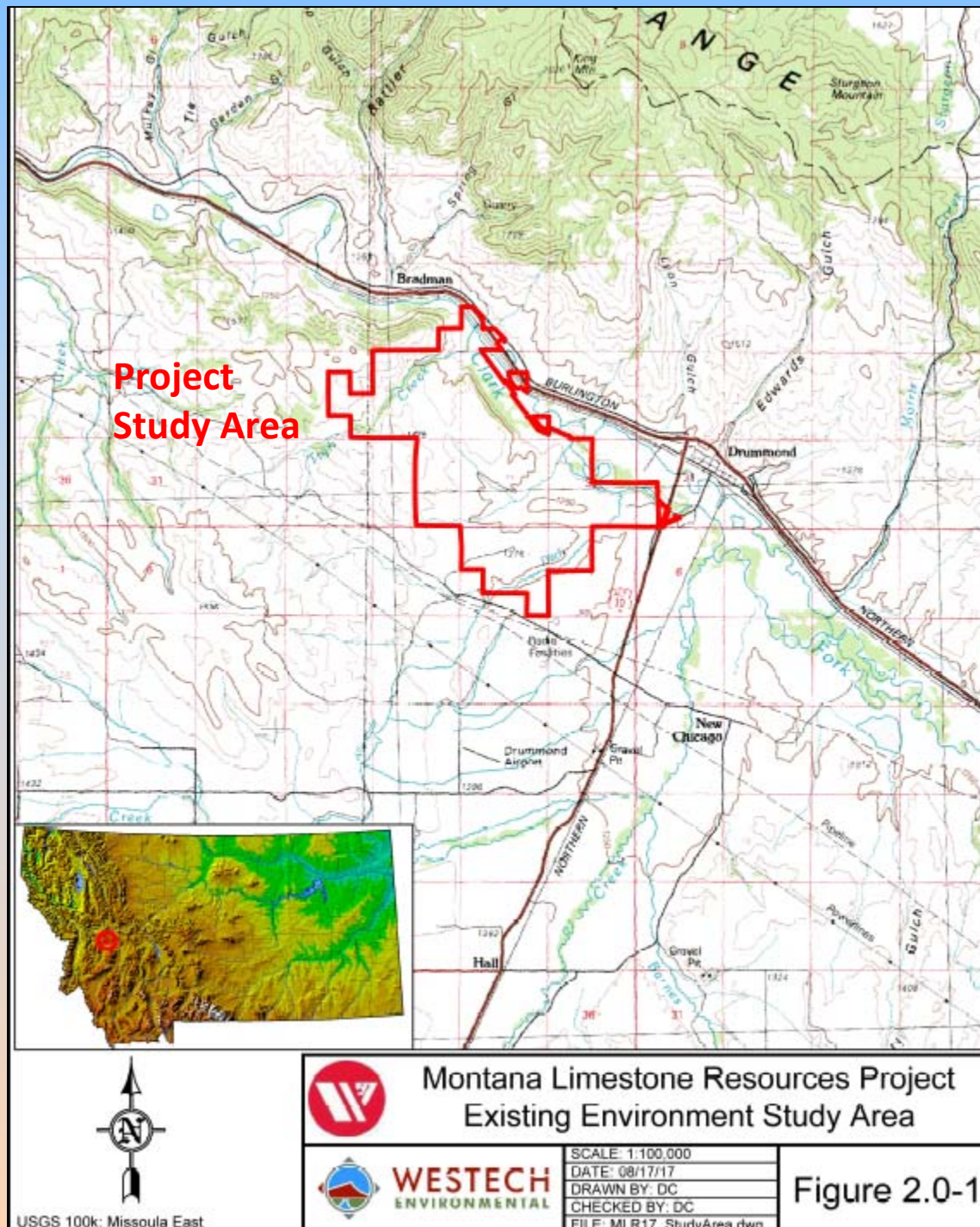
# Proposed Project

**Montana Limestone Resources, LLC**

**Limestone quarries and processing plant**

**Multiple quarries in Mission Canyon Formation**

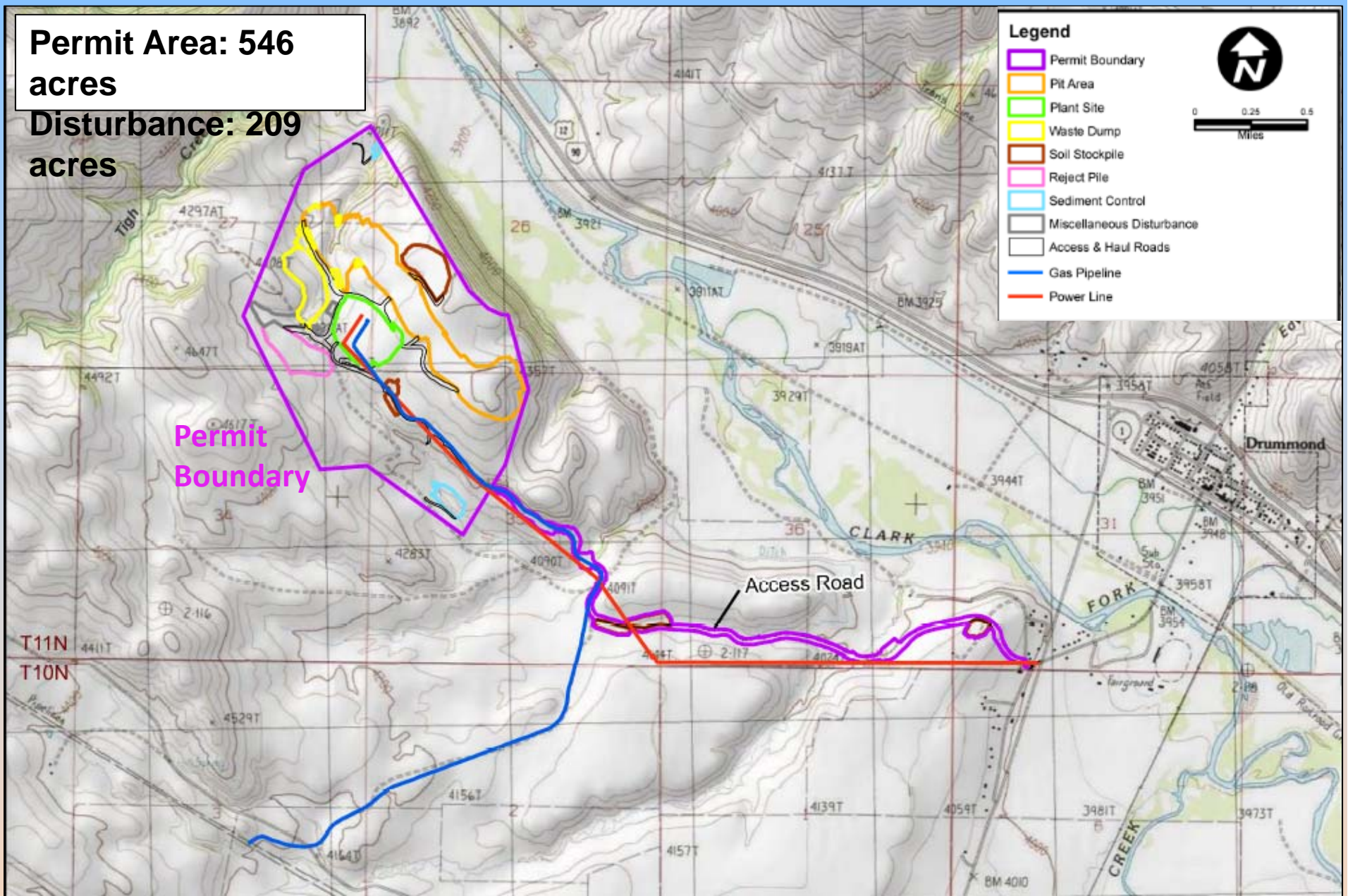
**~365,000 tons of limestone annually**



Source: Montana Limestone Resources, LLC  
Westech Environmental (2017)  
Operating Permit Application



**Permit Area: 546  
acres  
Disturbance: 209  
acres**



**Montana Limestone  
Resources LLC**

Source: Montana Limestone Resources, LLC  
Westech Environmental (2017)  
Operating Permit Application



**Figure 3.2-7 MLR Phase 6 with Waste Dumps (green) and Plant Site (blue)**

Source: Montana Limestone Resources, LLC  
Westech Environmental (2017)  
Operating Permit Application



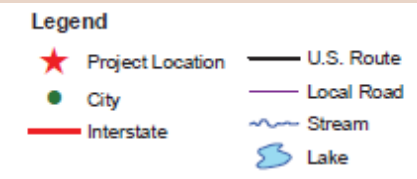
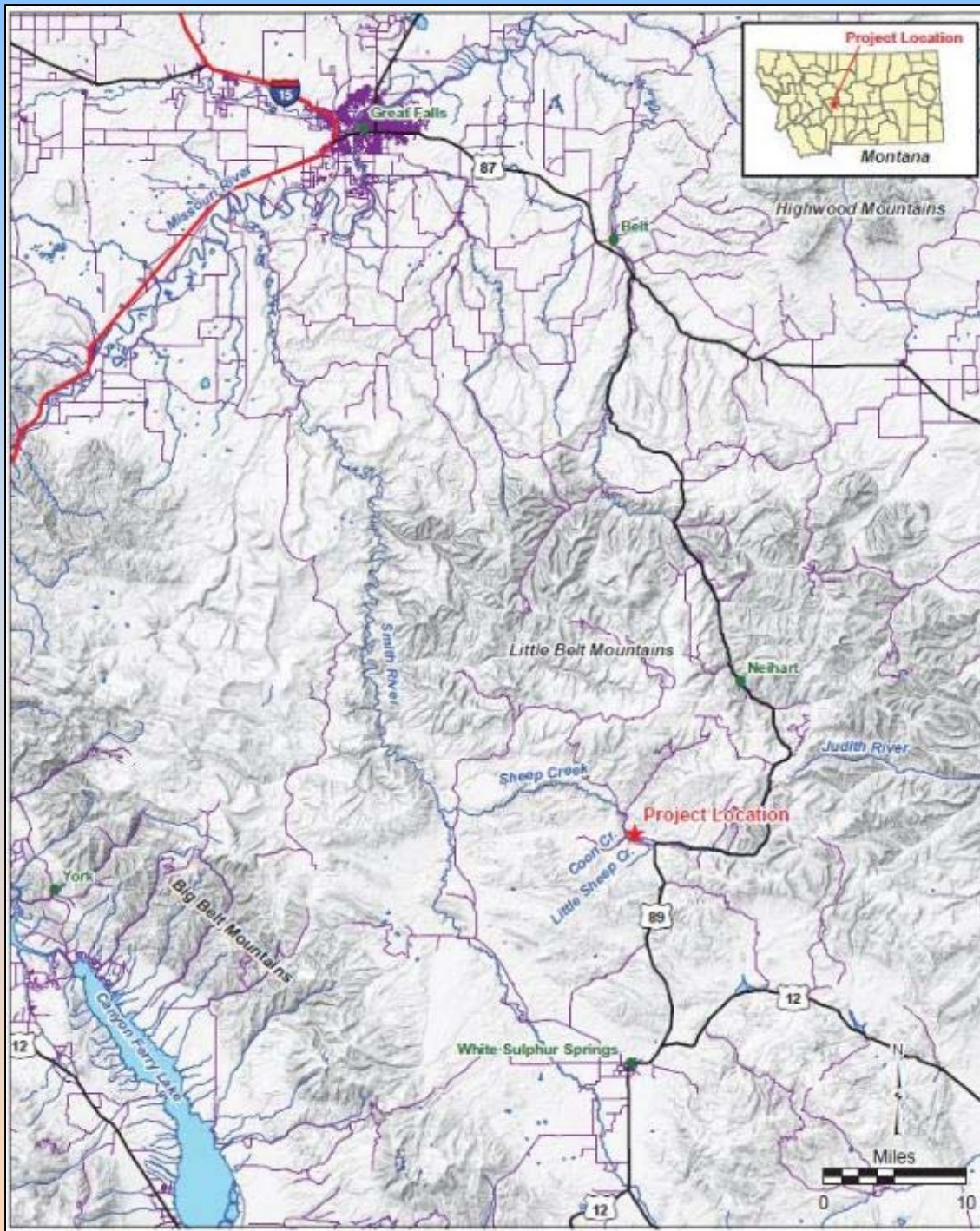
# Proposed Project

## Black Butte Copper Project

Sandfire Resources  
America Inc. (Tintina  
Resources)

Permit area: 1,888 acres  
Disturbance: 296 acres

Underground copper mine  
and surface mill complex



Source: Tetra Tech (2017)  
Operating Permit Application



# Oblique Aerial Simulation Looking Northwest



Source: Tintina Resources, Tetra Tech (2018)  
Operating Permit Application and revisions

# MEPA Process



**Draft EIS published  
March 11, 2019**

**Three public meetings  
and two webinars**

**Submit comments by:**

**Email**

TintinaDraftEIS@mt.gov

**Mail**

Craig Jones- MT DEQ

P.O. Box 200901

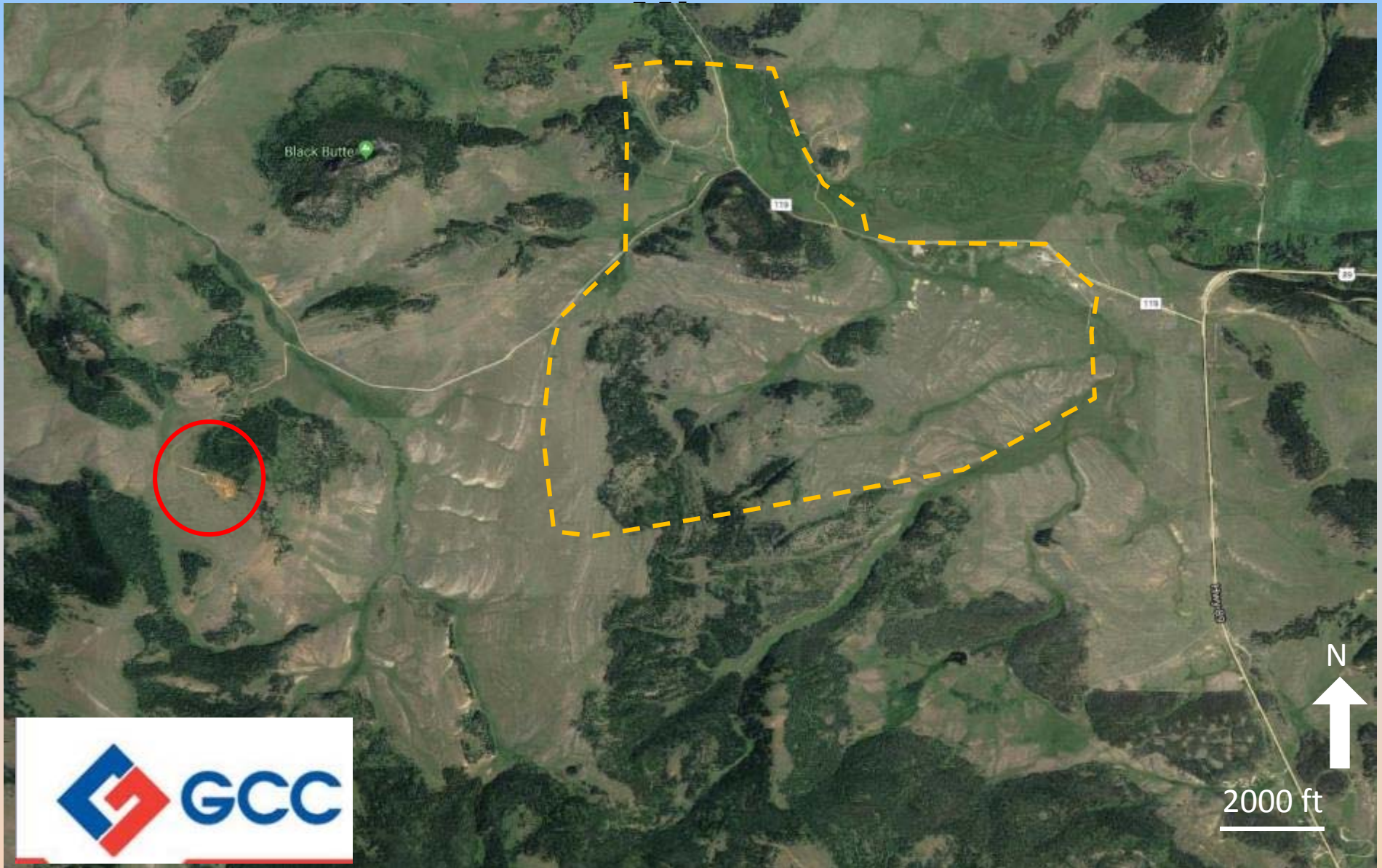
Helena, MT 59620-0901

**Comment Deadline**

**Friday May 10th**



# Not to be confused with the existing Black Butte

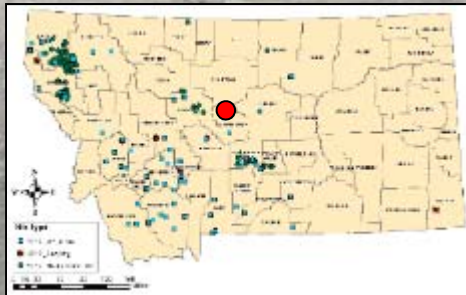






07/31/2018 12:59

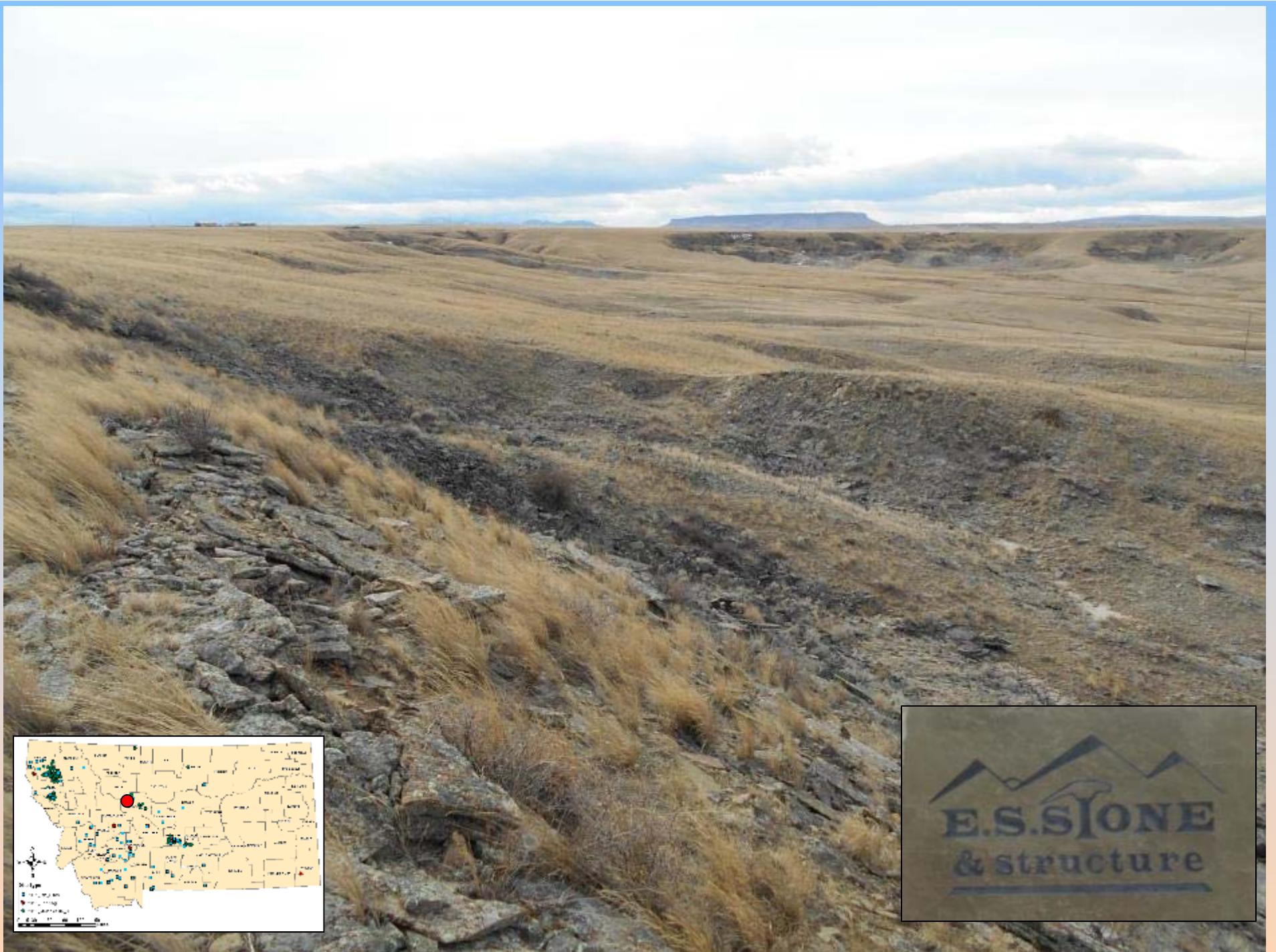




07/31/201



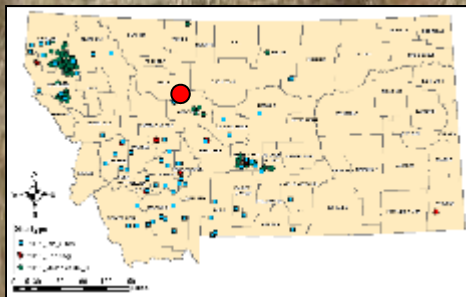






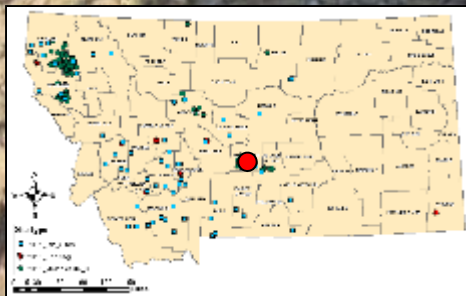


07/12/2017



07/12/2017





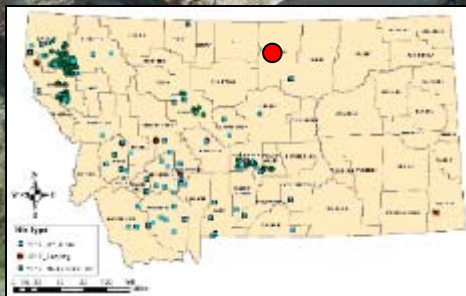
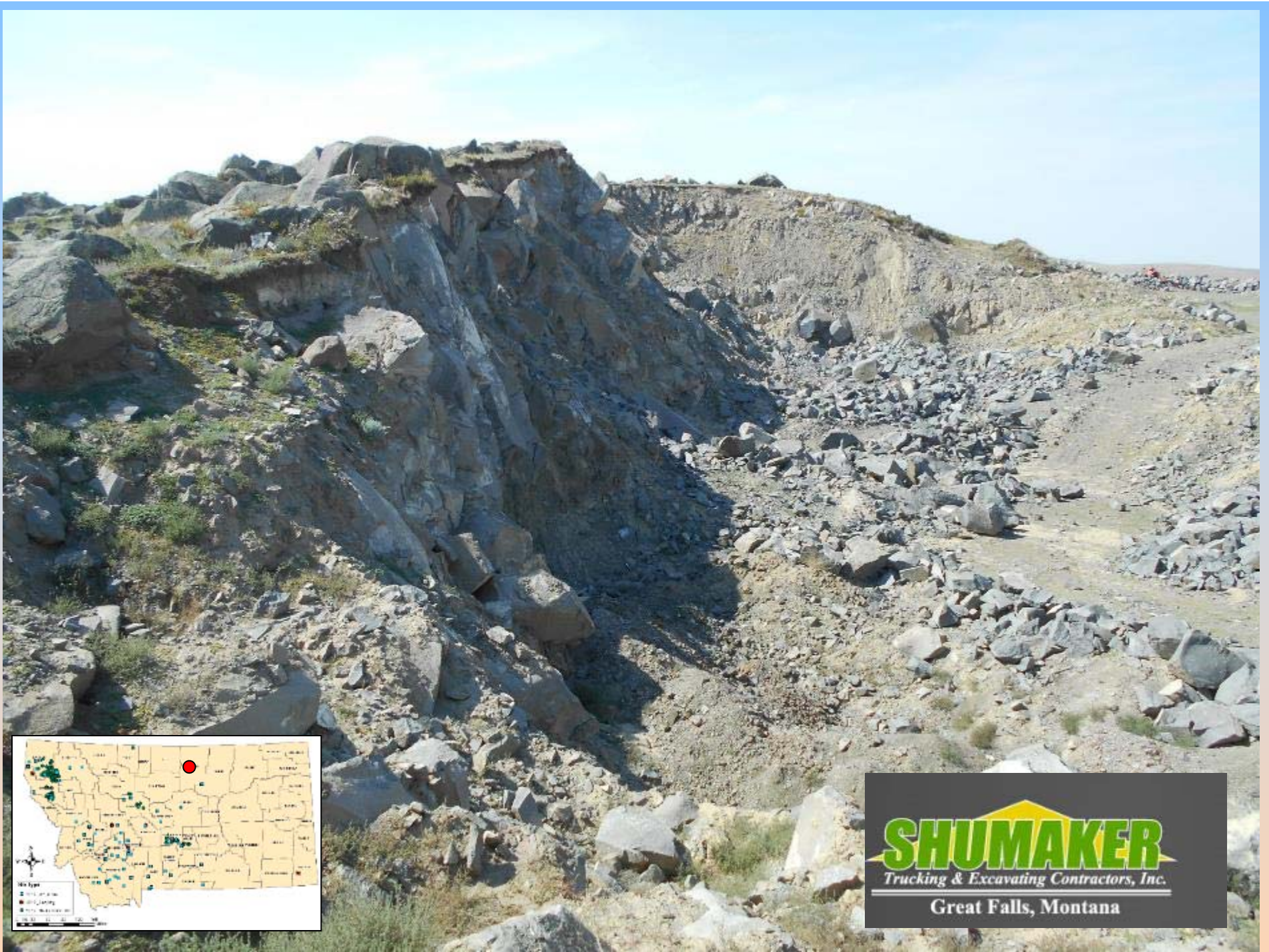
07/26/2017





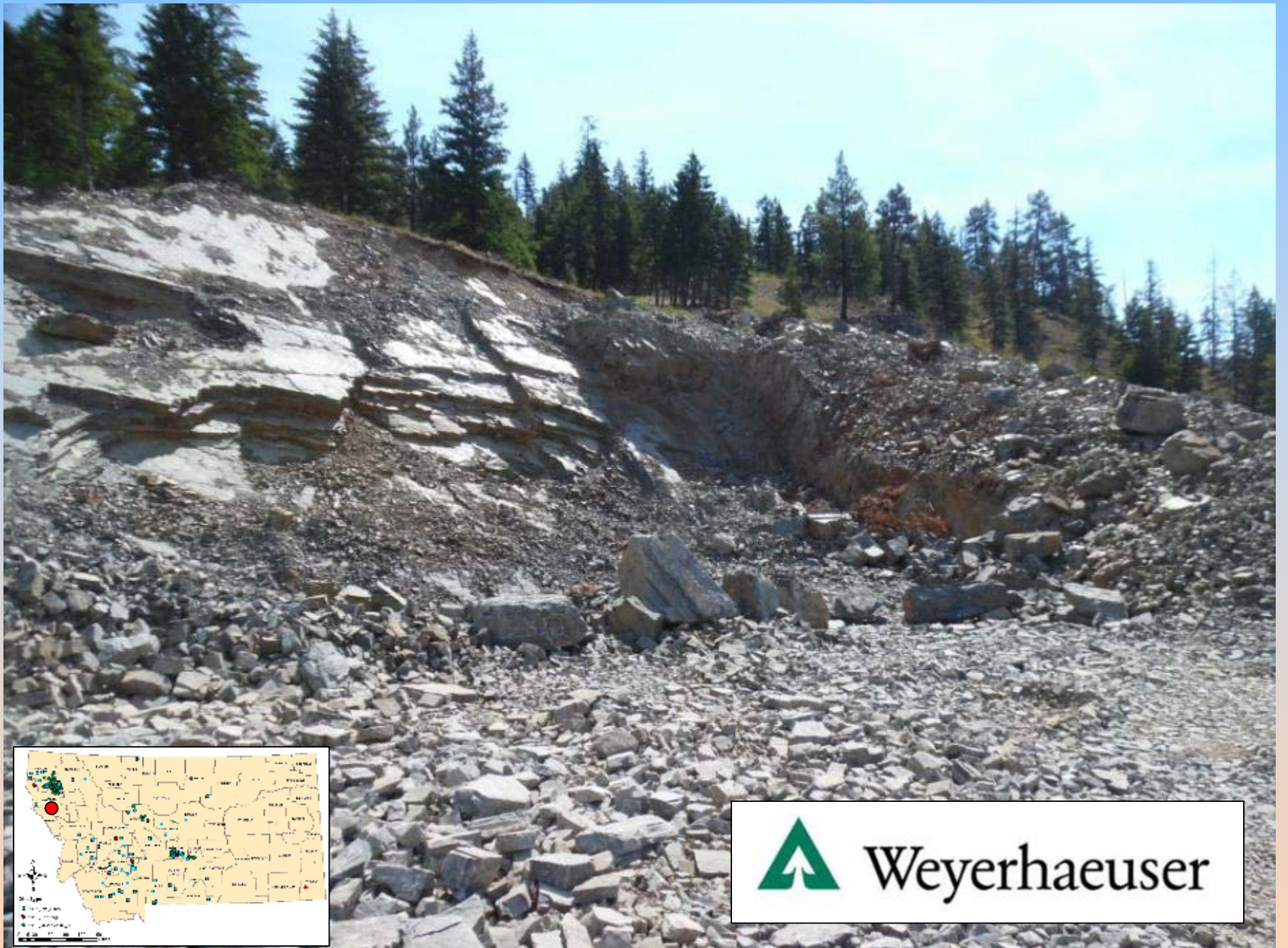
08.24.2016





**SHUMAKER**  
Trucking & Excavating Contractors, Inc.  
Great Falls, Montana





Weyerhaeuser



**Thank you for your time and attention!**

**Questions?**

