17.24.304 Baseline Information: Environmental Resources

(1) Each application must contain:

(k) Statement of Condition, Capability, and Productivity of Land

General vegetation and range analysis for condition, capability, and productivity of land within Pits 1, 2, 3 and 4 are discussed in the following appendices:

	Permitted Area	**Application 183 Area**
	Appendices	**Appendices**
General Vegetation & Range Analysis	B B-2 & B-2a	B-3
Range Condition	F of Appendix B-2 E of Appendix B-2a	E of Appendix B-3
Utility	L of Appendix B-2 I of Appendix B-2a	
Productivity	D of Appendix B-2 D of appendix B-2a	B of Appendix B-3

(i) Pre-mining Land Uses and Map

Land within the disturbance boundary was (and in some cases still is) pastureland, grazing land, weedy areas, and wildlife habitat. All disturbed areas will be reclaimed to the pre-mine land uses, although the vegetational and land use patterns will change. Pre-mining capability is based on regional, local and site specific characteristics reflected by weather, soils, vegetation and wildlife analyses, topography and geology and actual pre-mining land use practices. This evaluation is discussed in detail in Volumes l and 2 of the EBS and in permit volume B-2a for the Carbone Amendment and volume B-3 for the Pearson Creek Permit Amendment. Rangeland of the permit area is documented in the vegetation map (Plate 23).

(ii) Capability and Productivity of the Mine Permit Area

Land management practices at the SCM have varied. Attempts have been made to put portions of the permit area into dryland cultivation. Such attempts have failed due to one or more of the following reasons: climatic factors, soil depth, slope, land use configurations, available water supply and management practices. Past flood irrigation used along the Spring Creek and South Fork drainages was limited to a site along the South Fork (47 acres) and within the Pit 4 area (6.6 acres) as shown in Figure III-14 of the Alluvial Valley Floor Identification Report of the Spring Creek Mine prepared by Woodward-Clyde Consultants in 1979. According to their investigation, the barely visible storm water diversion ditch was probably used prior to 1925 to divert water onto the fields during high flows in Spring Creek and the South Fork. An extensive search of agricultural records has been made to determine any history of intensive agricultural use. In addition, local landowners have been contacted to discuss historical practices. Little evidence has been found to indicate that lands within the permit area have ever been successfully used for anything other than pastureland and livestock grazing.

Productivity of land within the permit area is addressed in:

- Volumes 1 and 2 of the EBS
- Appendix B, Vegetation and Range Analysis
- Appendix B-2, Vegetation and Range Analysis.
- Appendix B-2a Vegetation and Range Analysis Carbone Amendment Area.
- Appendix B-3, Vegetation and Range Analysis, Pearson Creek

(A) Pre-mining Land Use Capabilities

Lands adjacent to the SCM are rangeland and pastureland, which area dominant land uses throughout the area. Reclamation is discussed in Section 17.24.313.

(B) Productivity of the Permit Area Expressed as Average Yield of Food, Fiber, Forage or Wood Products

Rangeland productivity has been addressed in Volume 1, 1980 Annual Report, Appendix B, Appendix B-2, and Appendix B-3 of the EBS. Measured biomass productivity is provided in the EBS, 1980 Annual Report and Appendix B-2. Consistent with this rule, estimates of productivity using referenced SCS methods, are provided for the EBS expansion area. All estimated productivity data is summarized in the second section of Appendix B. Productivity data for the established reference areas are provided in the Annual Reports on file with the Department, and in Appendix B-2. The range site productivity for the Pit 4 area can be found in Appendix B-2a. The productivity of the Pearson Creek area can be found in Appendix B-3.

Because reclamation associated with the mine will be returned to its pre-mining condition as pastureland, rangeland and wildlife habitat, SCM may, when implementation is reasonable, institute a range management (grazing) plan

(C) Statement of Previous Mining on the Permit Area

The mine permit area has not been previously mined by either surface or underground methods.

(D) Existing Land Uses and Land Use Classifications Under Local Law

See the section above titled, "Capability and Productivity of the Mine Permit Area" for a description of the existing land uses".