Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton today announced approval of revised regulations governing mining exploratory and development operations conducted on Federal and Indian lands under permits and leases issued by the Department of the Interior.

The regulations are not new, Secretary Morton pointed out, but rather are the existing reorganized and clarified regulations. (The revised regulations will be published June 1, 1972 in the Federal Register and will become effective 30 days thereafter.)

These regulations are designed to give permittees and 1essfiaes a better understanding of their responsibility to protect and other natural resources during operations and to reclaim land no longer needed for mining purposes.

The regulations also clarify the authority of mining supervisors of the U. S. Geological Survey - - who are charged with, enforcing the regulations -- for directing environmental protection and reclamation. The practical result of the revision, Secretary Morton said, is that ' the regulations will provide greater protection for the environment.

The regulations were published in the Federal Register as a proposed rulemaking March 24, 1971, with the public invited to submit comments and suggestions. As a result of comments received, a number of changes that were not substantial were made in the regulations published today.