

Summary: BLM Civil Engineer Wrongfully Mined Limestone

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Report Number: 18-1207

The OIG investigated allegations that a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) civil engineer sold limestone from a quarry on his property without BLM authorization. Pursuant to a homestead patent issued by the U.S. Government in 1925, the BLM retained the mineral rights on the privately owned property.

We substantiated the allegations. The civil engineer admitted that between 2011 and 2015, he sold 6,172.5 cubic yards of limestone for money and services totaling \$13,909. He acknowledged he had not obtained approval from the BLM to sell the limestone but said he was not aware that he was required to do so, because his father had previously mined limestone from the quarry since at least the 1960s. After reviewing a copy of the mineral patent for the property, the civil engineer acknowledged the minerals on the property were held in reserve by the U.S. Government.

The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Montana declined prosecution of this matter. The BLM issued a letter of suspected unauthorized use of mineral materials to the civil engineer in December 2018.

This is a summary of a report we provided to the Director of the BLM.

