

Scoping Notice

Pit 14 Coal Lease-by-Application Black Butte Coal Company

Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office

Scoping Period: January 4, 2005 through February 4, 2005

Open House: January 26, 2005, 4:00pm to 5:30pm

Public Meeting: January 26, 2005, 7:00pm

Description of Project

On March 24, 2004, Black Butte Coal Company (BBCC) filed a coal lease application for a maintenance tract containing approximately 20 million tons of in-place Federal coal within a tract of approximately 1,399.48 acres. This tract, case number WYW160394, is called the Pit 14 Tract and affects the following public lands in Sweetwater County (see location map):

- T. 17 N., R. 101 W., 6th P.M., Wyoming
Sec. 2: Lots 3, 4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 4: Lots 1, 2, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 10: NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
- T. 18 N., R. 101 W., 6th P.M., Wyoming
Sec. 34: E $\frac{1}{2}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

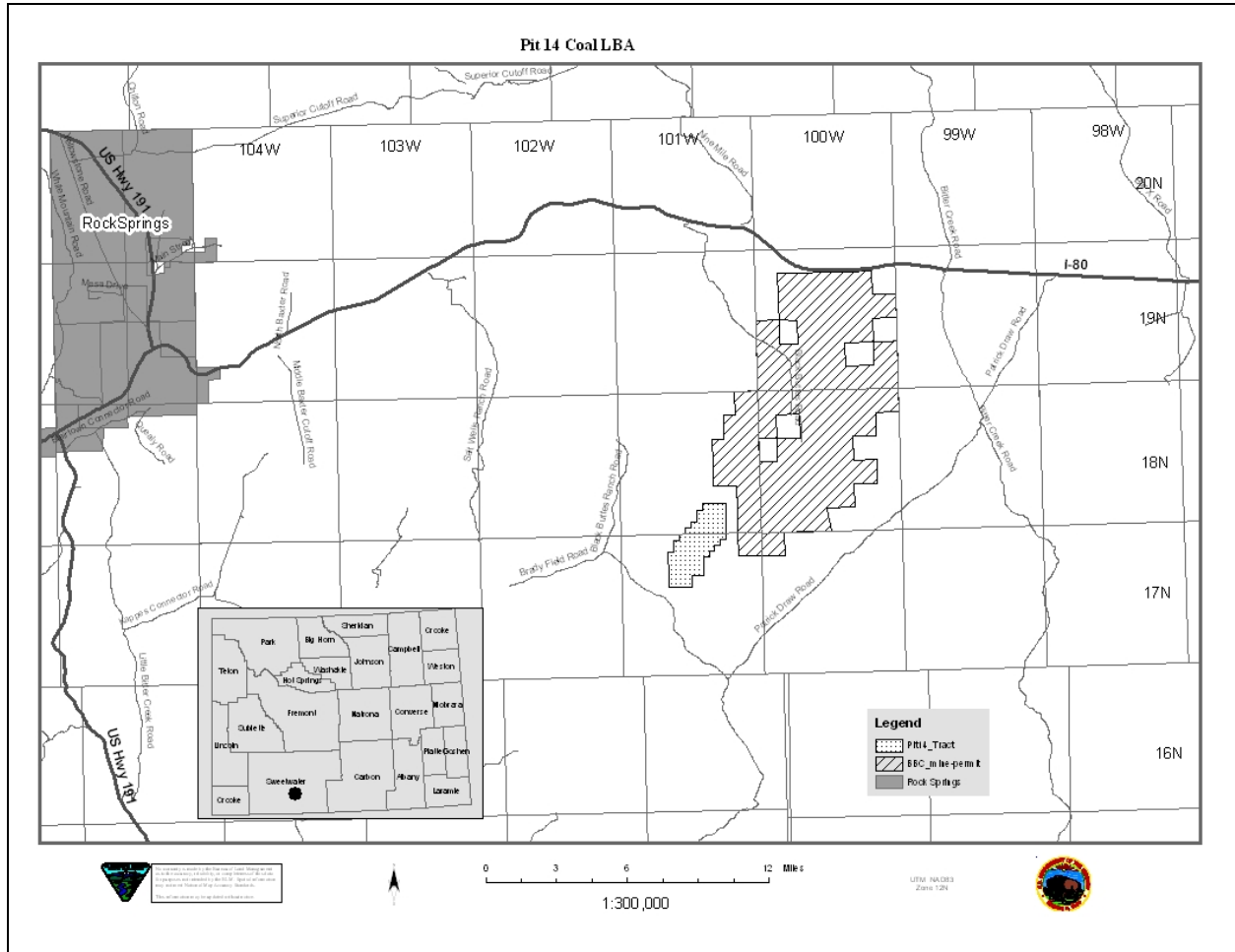
Containing 1,399.48 acres more or less.

The Pit 14 Tract is located within "checkerboard", or mixed Federal and private surface ownership. The Pit 14 project area is 33% Federal surface and mineral estate.

As part of the coal leasing process, BLM will evaluate the tract configuration and may decide to add or subtract Federal coal to avoid bypassing coal, to facilitate maximum economic recovery, or to increase competition.

The Black Butte Coal Mine is located adjacent to the LBA area and BBCC currently operates the mine for open pit (surface) mining of coal. BBCC proposes to mine the LBA tract as a maintenance tract for the Black Butte Mine. Should the lands be leased, Pit 14 would be mined as a surface pit and disturbance is expected to be approximately 2,200 acres. BBCC has an approved mining and reclamation plan from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ), Land Quality Division. The mine also has an approved air quality permit from the WDEQ, Air Quality Division to mine up to 7 million tons of coal per year. BBCC is currently mining from existing Federal, private, and state leases at a rate of 3 to 4 million tons per year.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) will be a cooperating agency during preparation of the EIS. If the Pit 14 LBA Tract is leased to the applicant, the new lease must be incorporated



into the existing mining plan for the adjacent mine. Before the Federal coal can be mined, the Secretary of the Interior must approve the revised mining plan. The OSMRE is the Federal agency that would be responsible for recommending approval, approval with conditions, or disapproval of the revised mining plan to the Secretary should the tract be leased.

Consistent with regulations pertaining to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the BLM must prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) prior to allowing the coal lease to be sold. Under the provisions of Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA, the BLM announces its intentions to prepare an EIS and to solicit public comments regarding issues and resource information. Consistent with regulations found at 43 CFR 3425, this notice also serves to notify the public that a coal lease is under consideration.

Relationship to Land Use Plans

The *Green River Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (GRRMP)* (1997) allows for coal leasing and development. The GRRMP provides land use guidance for coal leasing within the project area. Should the analysis determine an amendment to the GRRMP is necessary, the plan would be amended.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The exploration and development project is subject to the appropriate level of environmental analysis. To

comply with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations which implement NEPA, BLM has decided to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Land and Resource Management Issues and Concerns

A BLM interdisciplinary team of resource specialists will be involved in the analysis of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. A third-party contractor has been selected to prepare the analysis. Land and resource issues tentatively identified as potentially affected by this action include:

Air Quality	Minerals
Soils	Fluid Minerals
Surface Water	Coal Mining
Ground Water	Socio Economics
Vegetation	Transportation
Sensitive Plant Species	Recreation
Biological	VRM
Mule Deer	Cultural
Antelope	Trails Overland/Cherokee
Elk	Cumulative impacts
Raptors	Potential ROW Area/s
Greater Sage-Grouse	Livestock Grazing
Sensitive Animal Species	Wild Horses
T/E/P/C species	

The formal scoping period for the Pit 14 LBA will begin with publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register. The scheduled publication date is January 4, 2005. The BLM can best utilize public input if comments and resource information are submitted within 30 days of publication of this notice in the Federal Register. On January 26, 2005, an open house will be held between 4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., and a scoping meeting at 7:00 p.m., at the Rock Springs Field Office, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

If you have specific issues or other concerns that BLM should consider during the NEPA process, please identify them in writing. You may send comments to the BLM by mail, facsimile, or electronic mail. Comments may also be hand-delivered to the Rock Springs Field Office or submitted at either of the public meetings. To receive full consideration, please submit comments on or before February 4, 2005. Send written comments to:

Address: Teri Deakins, NEPA Project Manager
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Email: teri_deakins@blm.gov
(please reference Pit 14 LBA in the subject field)

Written comments in response to this notice, including the names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the BLM Rock Springs office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday (except federal holidays) after the comment period closes and may be published as part of the environmental process. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Teri Deakins at 307-352-0211 or Jeff Clawson at 307-352-

0323.

Initial Mailing List

The scoping notice initial mailing distribution includes the following list of agencies, individuals, industries, organizations, and media.

Government Offices

Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office (910, 912, 920, 930)
Office of the Governor
U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Cheyenne, Green River)
Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
Wyoming State Clearinghouse

Elected and Other Officials

Mayors of Rock Springs, Green River, Superior
State Representatives: Stephen Watt, Bill Thompson, Pete Jorgensen, Mick Powers, Marty Martin
State Senators: Rae Lynn Job, Tex Boggs, Stan Cooper
Sweetwater County Commissioners
Sweetwater County Libraries, Green River, Rock Springs
Sweetwater County Planner
U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Cubin, Bonnie Cannon, Representative
U.S. Senator Craig Thomas, Pati Smith, Representative
U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, Lyn Shanaghy, Representative

Oil and Gas Lessees (certified)

Barlow & Haun Inc.
Anadarko E&P Company
Questar Exploration & Production Company
NPC Incorporated
ABO Petroleum Corporation
Andex Resources LLC
MYCO Industries
Sharbro Oil & Gas Company
Westport Oil & Gas Company
Yates Drilling Company
Yates Petroleum Corporation

Public Land Users and User Groups

Affected grazing permittees in the Rock Springs Allotment and affected interests
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
Environmental Defense Fund
Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States
National Wildlife Federation
Native American Tribes: Eastern Shoshone, Northern Ute, Northern Arapaho, Shoshone-Bannock
People for the West
Petroleum Association of Wyoming
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Sierra Club, Northern Plains Representative
Southwest Wyoming Industrial Association
Wilderness Society

Wyoming Association of Professional Archaeologists
Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Wyoming Public Lands Council
Wyoming Wildlife Federation

Newspapers

Casper Star-Tribune
Green River Star
Kemmerer Gazette
Pinedale Roundup
Rock Springs Daily Rocket-Miner
Sublette Examiner
Uinta County Herald
Wyoming State Journal

Radio Stations

Cowboy News Network – Cheyenne
KMER/KOAX/KDWY – Kemmerer
KOTB/KEVA – Evanston
KPIN – Pinedale
KQSW/KRKK/KSIT - Rock Springs
KUGR/KYCS/KFRZ - Green River
Wyoming Public Radio – Laramie

Television Stations

KCWY-TV - Casper
KGWC-TV - Casper
KGWN - Cheyenne
KTWO-TV - Casper
KWFY-TV - Casper