

## 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., 6<sup>th</sup> 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., 6<sup>th</sup> P.M., Wyoming
- Sec. 34: E $\frac{1}{2}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ .

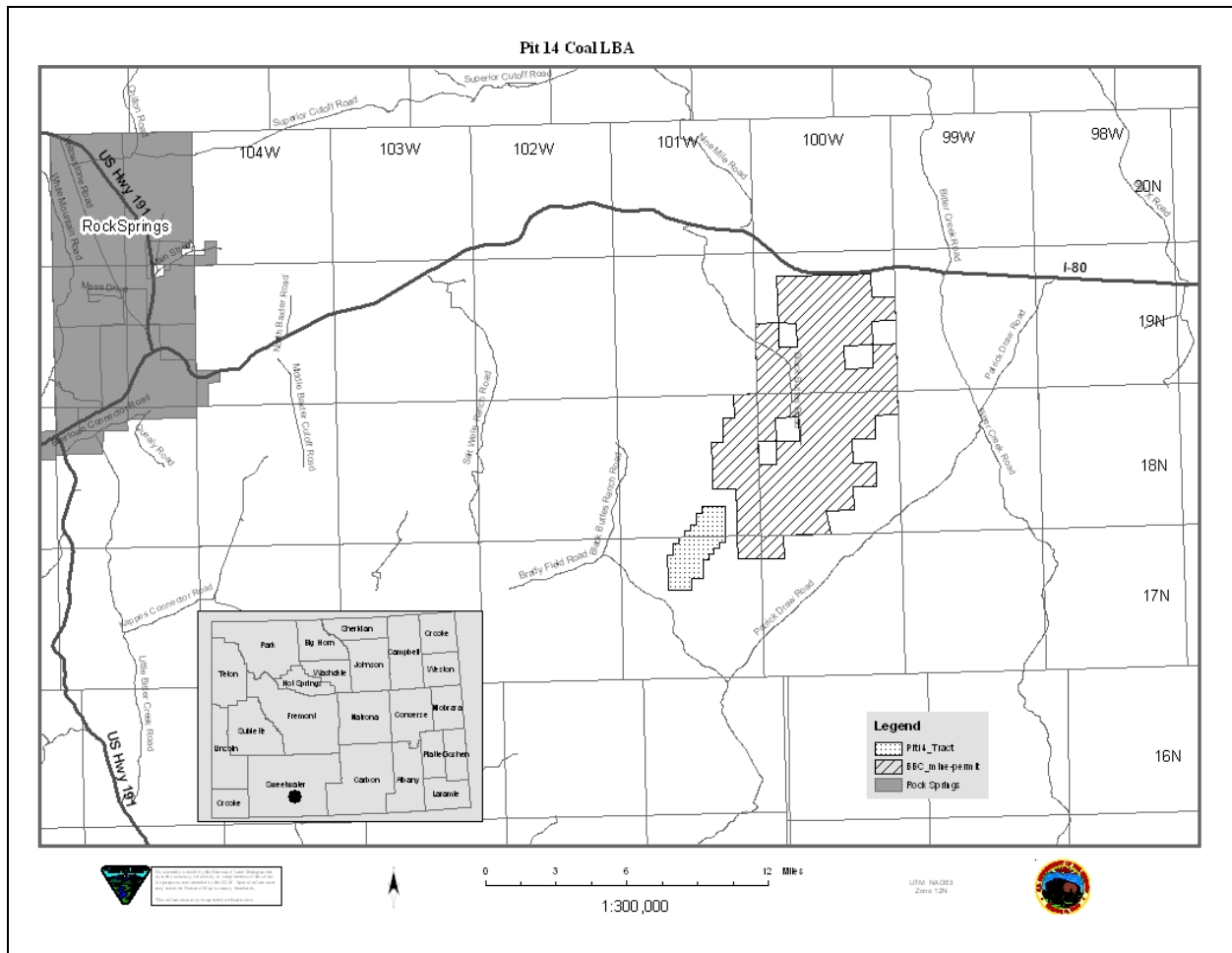
Containing 1,399.48 acres more or less.

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](mailto: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