

From: Simon, Benjamin
To: [Rupert, Jeff](#)
Cc: [Moore, Nikki](#); [Randal Bowman](#); [Skrabis, Kristin E](#); [McAlear, Christopher](#)
Subject: Re: Question about Handford Reach NM
Date: Monday, July 03, 2017 2:39:56 PM

Thank you very much. We will get back to you if we have additional questions.

Ben

On Mon, Jul 3, 2017 at 3:36 PM, Rupert, Jeff <jeff_rupert@fws.gov> wrote:

Hello Ben, sorry for the delay responding. What follows are responses developed jointly by FWS and BLM based on the information we have on Hanford Reach (Nikki, let us know if I missed anything). Please let us know if you have any additional questions.

1. The response to the data call indicates "N/A" for energy, minerals, and grazing. However, the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Hanford Reach indicates that there are oil and mineral rights owned by the Big Bend Alberta Mining Company as of 2008 on 1,280 acres.

- Can you let us know the status of these mineral rights?

According to the September 1999 Department of Energy's Final EIS (page 4-18), "the Big Bend Alberta Mining Company is free to enter on the lands at will to explore for oil or gas." However, the status of the mineral rights remains unknown because we have no information on the mineral owner, Big Bend Alberta Mining Company, or their operating status.

- (b) (5) [REDACTED]

2. The NPS' 1994 EIS on Hanford Reach contains information on minerals. The information in the EIS information includes USGS mineral assessments. The minerals include: sand/gravel/stone; clay; Pumicite; petrified wood; and placer gold. Also, there appear to be potential oil and natural gas present in the Basin.

- Do you have any information you could share with us about minerals on the NM?

BLM's LR2000 database indicate there are no matching records for authorized oil and gas leases in Washington State for BLM interests.

- Does the 1994 EIS reflect current conditions?

"Although exploration for gas has occurred in the area, deposits have proven to be small. Oil exploration was conducted in the Rattlesnake Mountain and

Rattlesnake Hills area in the 1920s and 1930s, but useful deposits were not found. Big Bend Alberta Mining Company asserts an interest in minerals on approximately 1,200 acres within the monument. To the extent that rights exist, they would be treated as valid existing rights." (CCP p B-12)

- Were the Monument boundaries drawn to exclude the areas where there were potentially exploitable minerals?

The Monument Boundary appears to have been drawn with a primary focus on prior DOE administered land. Two things in the proclamation regarding minerals are pertinent:

1. "All Federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or leasing or other disposition under the public land laws, including but not limited to withdrawal from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument."

and

2. "The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights."

- Does BLM have a role leasing or permitting any of the minerals that may be present?

Yes, BLM would have a role permitting any minerals associated with a valid existing right should they exist. According to BLM records, there are no BLM authorized oil and gas leases in Washington State.

On Thu, Jun 29, 2017 at 7:45 PM, Simon, Benjamin <benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov> wrote:
Hi,

I would like to clarify a couple of things about Hanford Reach NM.

1. The response to the data call indicates "N/A" for energy, minerals, and grazing. However, the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Hanford Reach indicates that there are oil and mineral rights owned by the Big Bend Alberta Mining Company as of 2008 on 1,280 acres.
 - Can you let us know the status of these mineral rights?
 - If these rights do exist it seems like they would be considered valid existing rights. Is this correct?
2. The NPS' 1994 EIS on Hanford Reach contains information on minerals. The information in the EIS information includes USGS mineral

assessments. The minerals include: sand/gravel/stone; clay; Pumicite; petrified wood; and placer gold. Also, there appear to be potential oil and natural gas present in the Basin.

- Do you have any information you could share with us about minerals on the NM?
- Does the 1994 EIS reflect current conditions?
- Were the Monument boundaries drawn to exclude the area where there were potentially exploitable minerals?

3. Does BLM have a role leasing or permitting any of the minerals that may be present?

Thanks for helping with this.

Ben

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