



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, Colorado 81401



U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Forest Service
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre,
and Gunnison National Forests
2250 Highway 50
Delta, Colorado 81416



JAN 16, 2013

In Reply Refer to: 3425, COC-75916

Dear Interested Party,

The Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (FS or Forest Service), Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG), are seeking comments on a proposed coal lease on National Forest System (NFS) and Public Lands. The BLM notified the GMUG National Forests that Bowie Resources, LLC (Bowie) applied for a federal competitive coal lease-by-application (LBA), COC-75916 Spruce Stomp (containing approximately 1,813 acres), immediately adjacent to existing coal leases held by Bowie.

The proposed lease covers approximately 1,359.9 acres of NFS land, 87.5 acres of BLM land and 365.6 acres of private surface with federal minerals. All of the coal mineral estate is administered by the BLM. The application area contains an estimated 9 million tons of recoverable coal. The BLM is required by law to consider leasing federal coal for economic recovery.

The BLM and FS have determined that this action must be evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to identify potential environmental impacts related to the proposed action. It is anticipated that the environmental analysis will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA). As provided for by 40 CFR 1501.5, the BLM and FS will be joint lead agencies for completion of an EA for the proposed lease.

With respect to NFS lands, the FS is considering whether or not to give the BLM consent to lease coal reserves underlying these lands and what stipulations are necessary for the protection of non-mineral surface resources and values. If FS consent is given, the BLM, after considering the application, the competitive nature of the proposed lease tract, and if additional stipulations are necessary, will decide whether or not to hold a competitive lease sale for the LBA.

The coal lease area is described as:

Township 12 South, Range 91 West, 6th P. M

Section 31: Lots 11 through 26 inclusive

Section 32: Lots 10 through 15 inclusive

Township 12 South, Range 92 West, 6th P.M.

Section 36: S2

Township 13 South, Range 92 West, 6th P.M.

Section 1: Lots 1 through 4 inclusive

Township 13 South, Range 91 West, 6th P.M.

Section 5: lots 2, 3, 4, 10, & 11, N/2N/2SENE, N/2NWSWNE, NESWNE, SESWNE, E/2NWSE, W/2W/2NESE, N/2NENESE, NENWNESE, W/2W/2SENE

Section 6: Lots 1 through 4 inclusive

*containing 1,813 acres more or less

At the leasing stage, the federal agencies evaluate the effects of subsidence (i.e., the land surface lowered as a result of mining) and surface use on resources, and identify where surface resources may require specific protection from subsidence or foreseeable surface uses. Potential surface uses on the lease tract include methane drainage wells (MDWs) and associated access roads required to safely mine the coal resources. Because LBAs are competitive, and the lessee is not known at this time, specific locations of the MDWs and roads are not known at the leasing stage. They will not be known until the time specific mine plans are approved by the State, the BLM, Mine Safety and Health Administration, and the Office of Surface Mining during the subsequent permitting process. To analyze potential surface impacts due to underground mine subsidence, the EA will develop a Reasonably Foreseeable Mine Plan for the leasing stage.

A more detailed description of the proposed project, including a map, is available on the BLM and the FS websites:

<http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo.html>

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sprucestomp>

A No Action alternative and other alternatives that may develop during the public scoping period will be considered. The analysis will consider the effects of leasing on the following: the socioeconomic benefits of mining, wildlife (including threatened, endangered, sensitive and management indicator species), land stability, water resources, soils, geologic hazards, vegetation (including impacts to riparian vegetation and associated habitat if present), cultural resources, existing land uses, recreation, roads/facilities, visual resources, livestock management, air quality, climate change, public safety, cumulative effects including anticipated mine activities, along with other issues that may be raised by the public.

The BLM and FS, as joint leads for the EA, are seeking comments you may have related to this project. Comments will assist the interdisciplinary team in identifying issues, as required by NEPA, which should be addressed as part of the evaluation for this project. This comment period will also meet the requirements of 36 CFR 215.3 and 40 CFR 1506.6. The comment period on the Proposed Action ends 30-days following the date of publication of the legal notice of opportunity to comment in the newspaper of record.

Electronic comments should be submitted to the BLM. Electronic comments must be submitted in an ANSI compatible format (e.g. *.doc, *.txt, *.rtf or *.pdf). Please note in the subject line that the comments are for **Federal Coal Lease COC-75916**.

Written comments should be submitted to the BLM by mail, email, hand-delivered, or fax to:

Desty Dyer
BLM-UFO
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, Colorado 81401
Email: desty_dyer@blm.gov
Fax: (970) 240-5367

Parties expressing interest during this comment period will be eligible to appeal the BLM decision pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.400 and 36 CFR 215. The BLM appeal and stay procedures are outlined in Form 1842-1. Comments must be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Also, for appeal eligibility, each individual or representative from each organization submitting comments must either sign the comments or verify their identity upon request. Please note that comments and information submitted regarding this project, including email addresses and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name, email address, or street address from public view 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 the law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Sincerely,



Scott Armentrout
Forest Supervisor

Sincerely,



Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager
