

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
of the
ANTELOPE LEASE APPLICATION
AS APPLIED FOR BY ANTELOPE COAL COMPANY
(Federal Coal Lease Application WYW128322)
October 1995

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Need

On December 29, 1992, Antelope Coal Company (ACC) filed an application for a coal lease on federal coal reserves located north of and adjacent to the Antelope Mine. The mine is operated by ACC, a subsidiary of Nerco Coal Corp. Nerco is a subsidiary of Kennecott Energy and Coal Company. The coal lease application was filed with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the administrative agency responsible for leasing federal coal. The purpose of this environmental assessment is to evaluate the environmental impacts of mining the coal reserves that were applied for by ACC.

The lands applied for are located in Converse County, Wyoming, approximately 55 miles north of Douglas, Wyoming and 60 miles south of Gillette, Wyoming. Figure 1 is a map showing the location of the area. The proposed lease contains approximately 617.2 acres of federal coal in Converse County, Wyoming, but due to the presence of the Burlington Northern/Chicago and Northwestern (BN/C&NW) Railroad Gillette-Orin main line and County Road 37, coal is considered recoverable under only about 462.2 acres. Figure 2 is a map showing the location of the proposed LBA tract as applied for, relative to the adjacent federal and state leases held by ACC (i.e., the existing Antelope Mine). The surface of the proposed lease area is owned by the federal government [part of the Thunder Basin National Grassland administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS)] and ACC, with rights-of-way owned by BN/C&NW for the Gillette-Orin main line, by Converse County for County Road 37, and by US West Communications for a telephone line. As applied for, the proposed lease would be mined as part of the existing operations at the Antelope Mine. After mining, the land would be reclaimed for livestock grazing and wildlife use as is the current practice at the Antelope Mine.

The Antelope coal lease application was reviewed by the BLM in the agency's Wyoming State Office in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It was determined that the application and the lands involved meet the requirements of regulations governing coal leasing on application [43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3425].

The proposed Antelope lease lies within the decertified Powder River Federal Coal Production Region. The Antelope coal lease application was reviewed and approved for processing as a lease-by-application (LBA) by the Powder River Regional Coal

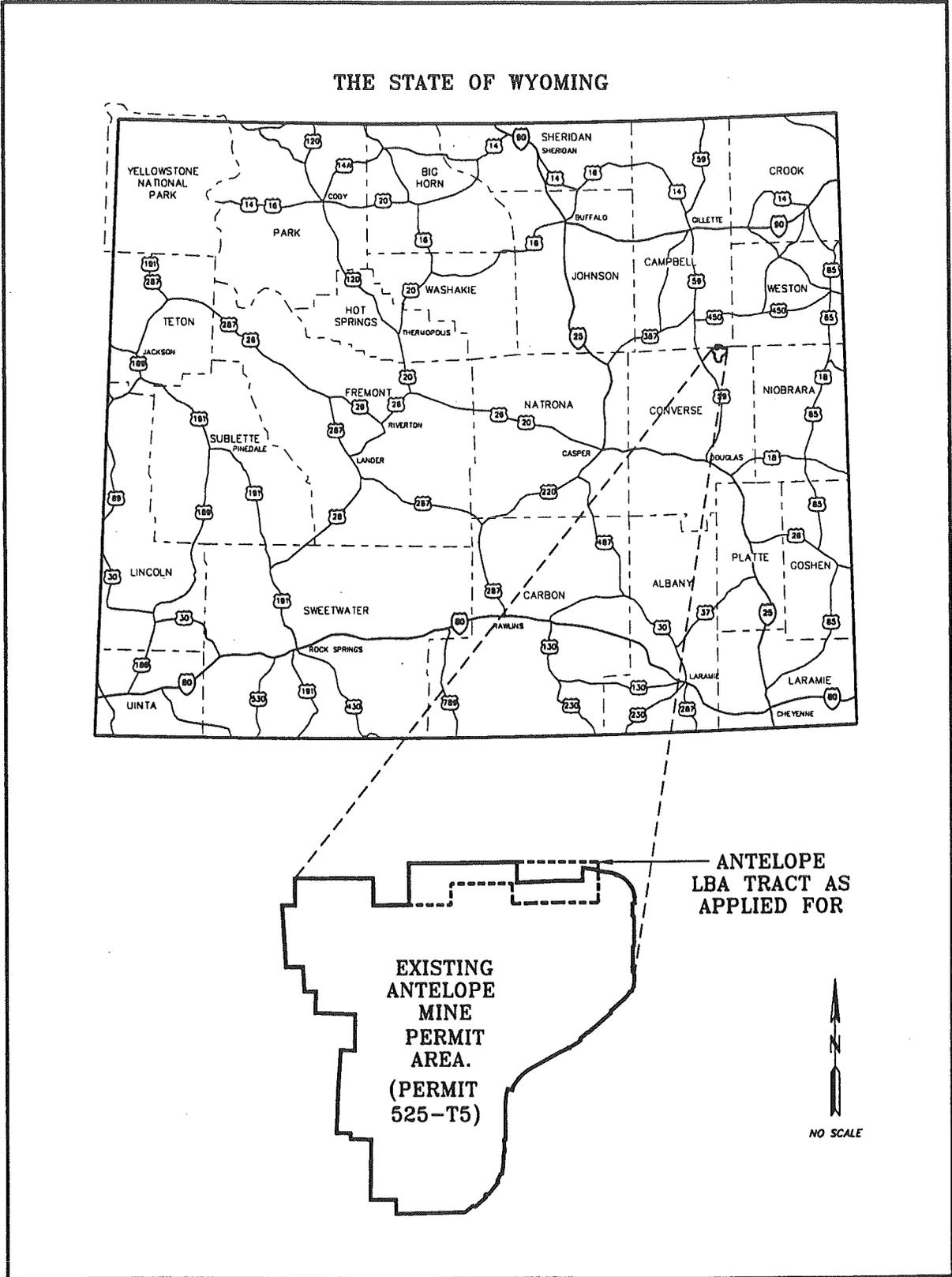


Figure 1. General Location Map of Antelope LBA Tract

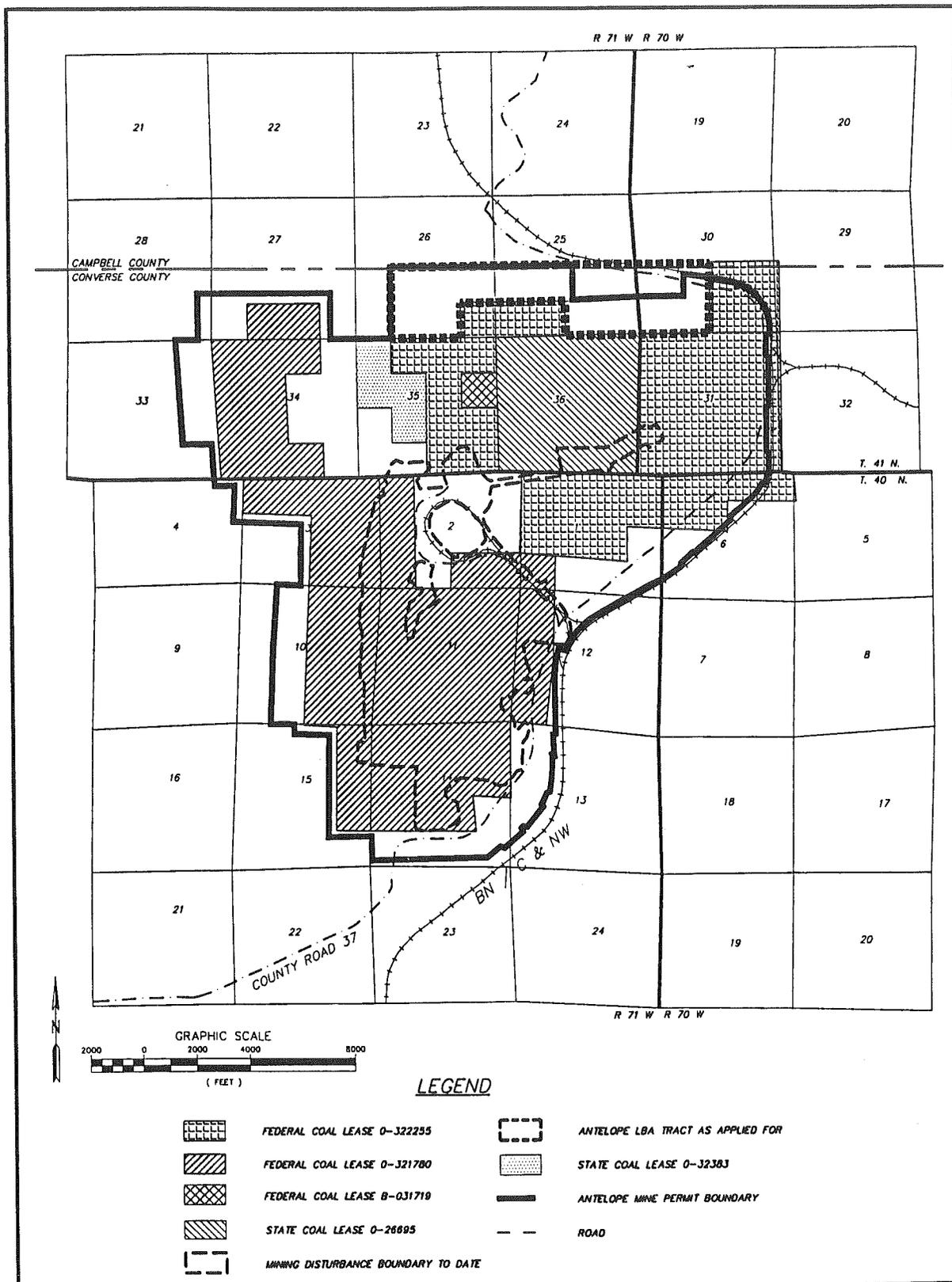


Figure 2. Antelope Coal Leases and LBA Boundary As Applied For

Team at the June 16, 1993 meeting in Billings, Montana. Although the Powder River Federal Coal Production Region was decertified as a federal coal production region in January 1990, the Regional Coal Team has remained active and has reviewed proposed coal leasing in the region on a regular basis since decertification. The most recent Powder River Regional Coal Team meeting was the one held in Billings, Montana, on June 16, 1993.

Five LBAs have been issued in the Wyoming portion of the Powder River Federal Coal Region since the region was decertified. Within the Powder River Federal Coal Region, there are currently four pending LBA tracts in Wyoming, including the Antelope application. One coal lease sale has been held, and one application is pending in Montana. Table 1 lists the LBAs issued to date in Wyoming, and the pending Wyoming LBAs.

The BLM must complete three actions for an LBA to be processed: a planning and environmental review, a geologic and mine plan review, and an economic review of the proposed lease area. Leasing by application is a competitive process, and a public hearing is required for each LBA.

This environmental assessment (EA) satisfies the planning and environmental review portion of the LBA process. It has been prepared to assist both the BLM and the USFS in making a decision on the proposed lease, to provide a basis for public review, and to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

1.2 Conformance With Land Use Plan

The BLM's principal authority to manage public lands is established by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. Through this authority, the BLM is responsible for managing resources on public lands in a manner that maintains or improves them. The Solid Minerals division of the Casper BLM office, which administers federal coal leases in the Wyoming Powder River Basin, has adopted as its mission the provision of "timely services to our customers to ensure responsible mineral development." The BLM planning regulations are set forth in 43 CFR 1600. The Platte River Resource Area Resource Management Plan and its associated environmental impact statement (EIS) is the plan which governs the management of BLM-administered lands and minerals in Converse County (BLM, 1985). The Platte River Resource Area consists of Natrona, Converse, Platte and Goshen counties. The proposed action conforms with the current Platte River Resource Area Resource Management Plan, although this plan does not directly address the area covered by the LBA.

A major portion of the lands in the application area are on the Thunder Basin National Grassland, for which the USFS is the surface management agency. The Thunder Basin National Grassland is administered by the district USFS office in Douglas, Wyoming. This district office is, in turn, under the USFS forest supervisor's

Table 1. WYOMING POWDER RIVER BASIN COAL LEASING SUMMARY

LEASE BY APPLICATIONS (LBAs): SALE HELD

LBA LEASE NO. APPLICANT	APPLI-CATION DATE	AS APPLIED FOR ESTIMATED LEASE SIZE & COAL TONNAGE	STATUS	AS OFFERED LEASE SIZE & EST. TONS OF MINEABLE*** COAL	SALE INFORMATION***	AVERAGE COAL QUALITY DATA FROM LEASE SALE NOTICE
JACOBS RANCH I Jacobs Ranch Mine WYW117924 Kerr-McGee	10/10/89	1465.16 Acres 123 MM Tons	Sale Held: 9/26/91; EA unsuccessfully appealed by PRBRC*, WOC*, and Sierra Club; Lease Effective: 10/1/92; Motion by PRBRC* for IBLA reconsideration denied	1708.62 Acres 147,423,560 Tons	1 bid received: \$20,114,930.00 \$11,772.62/acre; 13.6 cents/ton Bid Accepted	Btu/lb=8540 Ash=5.4%, Sulfur=0.47% Strip Ratio=2.46 BCY**/ton
WEST BLACK THUNDER Black Thunder Mine Thunder Basin Coal Co. WYW119307	12/22/89	3225 Acres 400 MM Tons	Sale held: 8/12/92, Bid Accepted Lease Effective: 10/1/92	3492.495 Acres 429,048,216 Tons	1 bid received: \$71,909,282.69 \$20,589.66/acre, 16.8 cents/ton Bid Accepted	Btu/lb=8839 Ash=4.40%, Sulfur=0.25% Strip Ratio=2.72 BCY**/ton
NORTH ANTELOPE/ ROCHELLE I WYW119554 N.Ant & Rochelle Mines Powder River Coal Co.	3/2/90 two applications	N. Antelope 954 Acres, 120 MM Tons; Rochelle 1196 Acres, 150 MM Tons	Sale Held: 9/29/92, Bid Accepted Lease Effective: 10/1/92	Offered as One Tract: 3064.04 Acres 403,500,000 Tons	1 bid received, \$86,987,765.00 \$28,389.89/acre, 21.6 cents/ton Bid Accepted	Btu/lb= 8804, 8700 Ash = 4.28%, 4.31% Sulfur= 0.35%, 0.13% Ratio = 2.29, 2.16 BCY**/ton
WEST ROCKY BUTTE WYW122586 Proposed Rocky Butte Mine Northwestern Resources Co.	12/4/90	390 Acres 50 MM tons	Sale Held: 12/3/92, Bid Rejected; Sale Held 1/7/93, Bid Accepted; Sale Procedure Appealed, Sale upheld by IBLA; Lease Effective 1/1/93; Reconsideration Requested by PRBRC*; Logical Mining Unit Approved	12/3/92, 1 bid received, \$14,200,000 \$30,603.45/acre, 25.8 cents/ton Bid Rejected 17/92, 1 bid received, \$16,500,000 \$35,621.38/acre, 29.1 cents/ton Bid Accepted	Upper Coal(98% of coal) Btu/lb= 8354 Ash=4.30%, Sulfur=0.27% Average Overall Strip Ratio=3.75BCY**/ton	
EAGLE BUTTE WYW124783 Eagle Butte Mine AMAX Land Co.	7/25/91	915 Acres 150 MM Tons	Sale Held: 4/5/95, Bid Accepted Lease Effective 8/1/95	1059,175 acres 166,400,000 Tons	1 bid received, \$18,470,400 \$17,438.48/acre; 11.1 cents/ton Bid Accepted	Upper Coal: Btu/lb=8434 Ash=4.95%, Sulfur=0.54% Lower Coal: Btu/lb=8431 Ash= 4.23%, Sulfur=0.22% Strip Ratio=1.99BCY**/ton

TOTAL BONUS: \$213,982,377.69; ESTIMATED TONS OF MINEABLE COAL LEASED: 1,203,071,776; TOTAL ACRES: 9,787,535

LEASE BY APPLICATIONS (LBA'S): PENDING

ANTELOPE WYW128322 Antelope Mine Antelope Coal Co.	12/29/92	617.2 Acres 60 MM Tons	Scoping Meeting held 2/17/94 in Douglas; Second scoping period through 5/16/94; Draft EA released 3/95
NORTH ROCHELLE WYW127221 North Rochelle Mine Zeigler Coal Co./SMC Mining	7/22/92	1439 Acres 140 MM tons	Hearing Held 4/26/95 in Douglas Regional Coal Team recommended EIS in preparation Scoping not currently scheduled
NORTH ANTELOPE/ ROCHELLE II WYW136142 Powder River Coal Co.	3/23/95	4020 Acres 550 MM Tons	Waiting on RCT review
JACOBS RANCH II WYW136458 Jacobs Ranch Mine Kerr-McGee	4/14/95	4000 Acres 432 MM Tons	Waiting on RCT Review

TOTAL PENDING: 1.18 BILLION TONS OF COAL UNDER 10,076 ACRES

*PRBRC= Powder River Basin Resource Council, WOC= Wyoming Outdoor Council
 ***ESTIMATED MINEABLE TONS OF COAL AS REPORTED ON THE SALE NOTICE. MINEABLE TONS OF COAL ARE ASSUMED TO BE THE SAME AS IN PLACE TONS OF COAL UNLESS REPORTED DIFFERENTLY IN THE SALE NOTICE. BONUS RECEIVED PER TON IS CALCULATED USING MINEABLE TONS OF COAL

**BCY = Bank Cubic Yards

office in Laramie, Wyoming, which also has jurisdiction over the Medicine Bow National Forest. Therefore, the Medicine Bow National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan (USFS, 1985) is the land use management plan that more directly pertains to the Antelope coal lease application. The proposed action is in conformance with this USFS land use plan.

The unsuitability criteria for coal mining listed in the Federal Coal Management Regulations (43 CFR 3461) have been applied to the lease application area. Table 2 summarizes the unsuitability criteria (column 1), describes the findings for the entire area of the Medicine Bow National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan (column 2), and validates these findings for the Antelope LBA tract, including the lands under alternatives 1, 2, and 3 (column 3). As indicated in the table, the lands within the BN/C&NW right-of-way are unsuitable for mining under Unsuitability Criterion Number 2. These lands are included in the lease tract to allow recovery of all of the minable coal outside of the railroad right-of-way and to comply with coal leasing regulations which do not allow leasing of less than 10-acre aliquot parts. A stipulation stating that the portion of the lease within the BN/C&NW right-of-way is excluded from mining will be added to the lease when it is issued (see Section 2.1.1.6 of this EA). The exclusion of the coal underlying the railroad right-of-way from mining activity by lease stipulation honors the finding of unsuitability for mining under Unsuitability Criterion Number 2 for the BN/C&NW right-of-way.

1.3 Relationship To Statutes, Regulations, Or Other Plans

The Antelope coal lease application was submitted and will be processed and evaluated under the following authorities: Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended; Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960; NEPA; Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976; FLPMA; and, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA).

The leasing of federal coal is the responsibility of the BLM under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. This environmental assessment has been prepared to evaluate the potential impacts which could occur if the proposed lease is issued and mined.

After a coal lease is issued, SMCRA gives the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) primary responsibility to administer programs that regulate surface coal mining operations and the surface effects of underground coal mining operations. Pursuant to Section 503 of SMCRA, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) developed, and in November 1980 the Secretary of the Interior approved, a permanent program authorizing WDEQ to regulate surface coal mining operations and surface effects of underground mining on non-federal lands within the State of Wyoming. In January 1987, pursuant to Section 523(c) of SMCRA, WDEQ entered into a cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior authorizing WDEQ to regulate surface coal mining operations and surface effects of underground mining on federal lands within the state.

Table 2. Validation of Mining Unsuitability Criteria for Antelope LBA Tract

UNSUITABILITY CRITERIA	FINDINGS FOR THUNDER BASIN NATIONAL GRASSLAND (TBNG) STUDY AREA (USFS, 1985)	VALIDATION FOR ANTELOPE LBA TRACT
<p>1. Federal Land Systems. With certain exceptions that do not apply to this tract, all federal lands included in the following systems are unsuitable for mining: National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National System of Trails, National Wilderness Preservation System, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Recreation Areas, Lands Acquired through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, National Forests and federal lands in incorporated cities, towns and villages.</p>	<p>TBNG is not part of a national forest and none of the other listed federal lands categories is present within the study area.</p>	<p>None of the listed federal lands are present on the Antelope LBA tract, and the tract is therefore not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>2. Rights-Of-Way and Easements. Federal lands that are within rights-of-way or easements or within surface leases for residential, commercial, industrial or other public purposes, on federally owned surface, are unsuitable for mining.</p>	<p>TBNG contains two rights-of-way that meet the intent of this criterion: BN railroad and the Tri-County 230 KV transmission line.</p>	<p>The BN/C&NW right-of-way is on a portion of the Antelope LBA tract. This right-of-way was designated unsuitable for mining in the TBNG Land and Resource Management Plan. The lease will be stipulated to exclude mining within the railroad right-of-way.</p>
<p>3. Dwellings, Roads, Cemeteries, and Public Buildings. Federal lands within 100 feet of a right-of-way of a public road or a cemetery; or within 300 feet of any public building, school, church, community or institutional building or public park; or within 300 feet of an occupied dwelling are unsuitable for mining.</p>	<p>Within TBNG, a school at Wilkinson Ranch headquarters, Wyoming State Highway 59, and 5 ranch headquarters were found to meet the intent of this criterion</p>	<p>None of the listed rights-of-way or buildings are on the Antelope LBA tract, and the tract is therefore not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>4. Wilderness Study Areas. Federal lands designated as wilderness study areas are unsuitable for mining while under review for possible wilderness designation.</p>	<p>No lands within TBNG review area are within a wilderness study area.</p>	<p>There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>5. Lands with Outstanding Scenic Quality. Scenic federal lands designated by visual resource management analysis as Class I (outstanding visual quality or high visual sensitivity) but not currently on National Register of Natural Landmarks are unsuitable.</p>	<p>No lands on TBNG meet the scenic criteria as outlined.</p>	<p>There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>6. Land Used for Scientific Study. Federal lands under permit by the surface management agency and being used for scientific studies involving food or fiber production, natural resources, or technology demonstrations and experiments are unsuitable for the duration of the study except where mining would not jeopardize the purpose of the study.</p>	<p>No lands in the TBNG review area are under permit except small enclosures being used to gage reclamation success on existing mines.</p>	<p>There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>7. Historic Lands and Sites. All publicly or privately owned places which are included in or are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and an appropriate buffer zone are unsuitable.</p>	<p>On the basis of the consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, there were no unsuitable findings under this criterion in the TBNG review area.</p>	<p>There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>8. Natural Areas. Federal lands designated as natural areas or National Natural Landmarks are unsuitable.</p>	<p>No lands in the TBNG are designated as natural areas or as National Natural Landmarks.</p>	<p>There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>9. Critical Habitat for Threatened or Endangered Plant and Animal Species. Federally designated critical habitat for T or E plant and animal species, and scientifically documented essential habitat for T or E species are unsuitable.</p>	<p>There is no habitat meeting federally designated criterion for T or E plant or animal species within the TBNG review area.</p>	<p>There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.</p>
<p>10. State Listed Species. Federal lands containing habitat determined to be critical or essential for plant or animal species listed by a state pursuant to state law as T or E shall be considered unsuitable.</p>	<p>Wyoming does not maintain a state list of T or E species of plants or animals. Therefore, this criterion does not apply.</p>	<p>There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.</p>

UNSUITABILITY CRITERIA	FINDINGS FOR THUNDER BASIN NATIONAL GRASSLAND (TBNG) STUDY AREA (USFS, 1985)	VALIDATION FOR ANTELOPE LBA TRACT
11. Bald or Golden Eagle Nests. An active bald or golden eagle nest and appropriate buffer zone are unsuitable unless the lease can be conditioned so that eagles will not be disturbed during breeding season or unless golden eagle nests will be moved.	The USFS found numerous eagle nests, and buffer zones were established, and determined that coal leasing can occur within the buffer zone if the nests are protected with stipulations and site mitigation plans. There were no unsuitable findings under this criterion, but lands involved in buffer zones are subject to special lease stipulations.	Active eagle nests are found near the tract (on the tract under Alternative 2). Federally approved buffer zones are in place to assure protection and mitigation. There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.
12. Bald and Golden Eagle Roost and Concentration Areas. Bald and golden eagle roost and concentration areas on federal lands used during migration and wintering are unsuitable unless mining can be conducted in such a way as to ensure that eagles shall not be adversely disturbed.	No golden eagle roost or concentration areas occur on the TBNG review area. Mining planned in the review area is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the bald eagle. Coal leasing can occur and adequate protection can be provided. There were no unsuitable findings in the TBNG review area.	There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.
13. Federal lands containing active falcon (excluding kestrel) cliff nesting sites and a suitable buffer zone shall be considered unsuitable unless mining can be conducted in such a way as to ensure the falcons will not be adversely affected.	After consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), it was determined that this criterion does not apply in TBNG.	There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.
14. Habitat for Migratory Bird Species. Federal lands which are high priority habitat for migratory bird species of high federal interest shall be considered unsuitable unless mining can be conducted in such a way as to ensure that migratory bird habitat will not be adversely affected during the period it is in use.	After consultation with the USFWS, it was determined that this criterion does not apply in TBNG.	There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining. The LBA tract includes a mountain plover use area. A mitigation plan will be developed prior to mining, and USFWS will be consulted prior to mitigation plan approval.
15. Fish and Wildlife Habitat for Resident Species. Federal lands which the surface management agency and state jointly agree are fish and wildlife habitat of resident species of high interest to the state, and which are essential for maintaining these priority wildlife species, shall be considered unsuitable.	Sage grouse leks were found on and near the TBNG review area. However, methods of mining can be developed which will not have a significant long-term impact on the grouse or their habitat. Therefore, the areas involved in leks and buffer zones are not unsuitable.	There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.
16. Floodplains. Federal lands in riverine, coastal, and special floodplains shall be considered unsuitable where it is determined that mining could not be undertaken without substantial threat of loss of life or property.	After consultation with the U.S. Geological Survey, it was determined that floodplains can be mined with site specific stipulations and resource protection safeguards to be developed during mining and reclamation planning. Therefore, all lands within the TBNG review area are not unsuitable for mining.	There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.
17. Municipal Watersheds. Federal lands which have been committed by the surface management agency to use as municipal watersheds shall be considered unsuitable.	There are no municipal watersheds in the TBNG review area.	There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.
18. National Resource Waters. Federal lands with national resource waters, as identified by states in their water quality management plans, and 1/4-mile buffer zones shall be unsuitable.	There are no natural resource waters within the TBNG review area.	There are no unsuitable findings, and the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.
19. Alluvial Valley Floors. All lands identified by the surface management agency, in consultation with the state, as AVFs where mining would interrupt, discontinue or preclude farming, are unsuitable. Additionally, when mining federal lands outside an AVF would materially damage the quality or quantity of water in surface or underground water systems that would supply AVFs, the land shall be considered unsuitable.	Lands along prominent drainages were considered potential AVFs pending a final determination by the state. These lands are placed in an "available pending further study" category and are not considered unsuitable.	The state has made a final determination on Antelope Creek and Horse Creek in the Antelope Permit area, which includes most of the Antelope tract. The AVF was found not to be significant to farming. Thus the area is not unsuitable for mining.
20. State or Indian Tribe Criteria. Federal lands to which is applicable a criterion proposed by the state or Indian tribe located in the planning area and adopted by rulemaking by the Secretary are unsuitable.	The state has no applicable criteria and there is no Indian tribe located in or near the planning area. Therefore there is no unsuitability finding.	Various tribal entities were notified by the USFS archeologist during scoping process. None expressed concerns. Thus the Antelope tract is not unsuitable for mining.

Pursuant to the cooperative agreement, a federal coal lease holder in Wyoming must submit a permit application package to OSM and WDEQ/Land Quality Division (LQD) for any proposed coal mining and reclamation operations on federal lands in the state. WDEQ/LQD reviews the permit application package to ensure that the permit application complies with the permitting requirements and that the coal mining operation will meet the performance standards of the approved Wyoming program. OSM, BLM, USFS, and other federal agencies review the permit application package to ensure that it complies with the terms of the coal lease, the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, NEPA, and other federal laws and their attendant regulations. If the permit application package does comply, WDEQ issues the applicant a permit to conduct coal mining operations. OSM recommends approval, approval with conditions, or disapproval of the mining plan to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Land and Minerals Management. Before the mining plan can be approved, the BLM and the USFS must concur with this recommendation.

If the proposed Antelope LBA tract is leased, the lessee would be required to revise its coal mining permit prior to mining the coal, following the processes outlined above. As a part of that process, a new mining and reclamation plan must be developed showing how the lands in the new lease area would be mined and reclaimed. Specific impacts which would occur during the mining and reclamation of the tract will be addressed in that proposed mining and reclamation plan and specific mitigation for any anticipated impacts will be proposed.

WDEQ enforces the performance standards and permit requirements for reclamation during the mine's operation and has primary authority in environmental emergencies. OSM retains oversight responsibility for this enforcement. BLM has authority in those emergency situations where WDEQ or OSM cannot act before significant environmental harm or damage occurs.

A significant amount of permitting is required in addition to the coal mining permit before mining can commence. Table 3 lists the state and federal regulatory agencies which must be consulted prior to mining and the additional permits that may be needed.

1.4 Public Participation

The Antelope lease application was reviewed by the Powder River Regional Coal Team at their meeting in Billings, Montana on June 16, 1993. At that meeting, ACC presented information about the Antelope Mine and the lease application to the regional coal team and the public in attendance.

Preliminary scoping for developing the draft EA was based upon the issues considered in the previously prepared environmental analyses and detailed mine permits in the Powder River Coal Region. In February 1994, more than 200 notices of a scheduled scoping meeting were mailed to federal and state agencies, local governments, conservation groups, commodity groups, and individuals who may be impacted by this lease application. The mailing list for the scoping notice was

Table 3: Federal and State Permitting Requirements and Agencies

AGENCY	LEASE/PERMIT/ACTION
FEDERAL	
Bureau of Land Management	Coal Lease Resource Recovery and Protection Plan Scoria Sales Contract Exploration Drilling Permit
Forest Service	Special Use Permits Contract for Sale of Mineral Materials
Office of Surface Mining	Mining Plan Approval SMCRA Oversight
Mine Safety and Health Administration	Safety Permit and Legal I.D.
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms	Explosives Manufacturer's License Explosives Use and Storage Permit
Federal Communication Commission	Radio Permit: Ambulance Mobile Relay System Radio License
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	Radioactive Byproducts Material License
Army Core of Engineers	Authorization of Impacts to Wetlands & Other Waters of the U.S.
Environmental Protection Agency	Hazardous Waste I.D. Number
Department of Transportation	Hazardous Waste Shipment Notification
Federal Aviation Administration	Radio Tower Permit
STATE	
State Land Commission	Coal Lease Scoria Lease
Department of Environmental Quality-Land Quality Division	Permit and License to Mine
Department of Environmental Quality-Air Quality Division	Air Quality Permit to Operate; and Air Quality Permit to Construct
Department of Environmental Quality-Water Quality Division	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Water Discharge Permit Permit to Construct Sedimentation Pond Authorization to Construct Septic Tank & Leach Field; Authorization to Construct and Install a Public Water Supply & Sewage Treatment System
Department of Environmental Quality-Solid Waste Management	Solid Waste Disposal Permit-Permanent and Construction
State Engineer's Office	Appropriation of Surface Water Permits Appropriation of Groundwater Permits
Industrial Siting Council	Industrial Siting Certificate of Non-Jurisdiction
Department of Health	Radioactive Material Certificate of Registration

jointly developed by the BLM, the USFS, and ACC. A scoping meeting was held in Douglas, Wyoming on February 17, 1994. Four written comments were received on the Antelope lease application, and one oral comment was made at the scoping meeting. Additional scoping comments were requested during April and May on three potential tract configurations. Seven additional written comments were received during this period. Concerns expressed during the public scoping process have been addressed in this draft EA and include:

- the need for additional on-site surveys and inventories for endangered species and migratory birds of high federal interest,
- the cumulative impacts of current and proposed mining operations and all other human activities on wildlife carrying capacities,
- impacts to utility and pipeline facilities,
- impacts to wetlands and waters of the U.S., and
- impacts to cultural resources and traditional cultural properties.

Additional review and coordination with state and federal agencies was also done. Specifically, letters were written to appropriate agencies advising of the pending lease application and requesting their concerns. Results are discussed below in the sections dealing with the respective environmental disciplines.

The draft EA for the Antelope Coal Lease Application was issued in late March, 1995, and a formal public hearing was held on April 26, 1995, at the Holiday Inn in Douglas, Wyoming. There were two oral comments during the public hearing. A copy of the hearing transcript is available at the BLM Casper District Office. The comment period on the draft EA ended on May 30, 1995. Eight written comments were received on the draft EA. These comment letters and responses are included as Appendix A of this final EA.