

NOTE TO READERS:

This final EA is being published in abbreviated format. Reviewers will need the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Belle Ayr 2000 Coal Lease Application, BLM, December, 2000, for review of the complete EA.

Copies of the Draft EA may be obtained from:

Bureau of Land Management,
Casper Field Office, Attn: Nancy Doelger,
2987 Prospector Drive,
Casper, WY 82604

Phone: 307-261-7627

e-mail: Attn: Nancy Doelger at
"casper_wymail@blm.gov"

fax: Attn: Nancy Doelger at
(307)-261-7587



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Casper Field Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604-2968

3425 (LBA)
WYW151133
Belle Ayr 2000

MAR 29 2001

Dear Reader:

This copy of the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Belle Ayr 2000 Coal Lease Application, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Serial Number WYW151133, is provided for your review and comments. This EA has been prepared to analyze the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of issuing a Federal coal lease for the Belle Ayr 2000 coal tract located adjacent to the Belle Ayr and Caballo surface coal mines in southeastern Campbell County, Wyoming.

This final EA is published in abbreviated format. Reviewers will need the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Belle Ayr 2000 Coal Lease Application, BLM, December, 2000, for review of the complete EA.

A formal public hearing on the proposed Belle Ayr 2000 coal lease application was held at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 18, 2001, at the Clarion Western Plaza Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn), 2009 S. Douglas Highway, Gillette, Wyoming. The purpose of the hearing was to receive comments on the proposed coal lease sale, on the fair market value and maximum economic recovery of the Federal coal resources in the proposed Belle Ayr 2000 tract, and on the Draft EA. A copy of the transcript of the hearing is available for public review at the BLM Casper Field Office at the letterhead address, attention Nancy Doelger.

BLM received three written comments on the draft EA. These comment letters are reproduced in Appendix A of this final EA, with responses from BLM.

BLM will accept comments on this final EA, as well as on the issues of fair market value of the tracts, and maximum economic recovery of coal in the tracts until May 11, 2001, and will consider them in preparing the Decision Record for this proposed Federal coal lease. Comments received after May 11, 2001 will be considered in the Decision Record if time permits.

If you wish to comment on the Final EA, we request that you make your comments as specific as possible. Comments will be more helpful if they include suggested changes, sources, or methodologies. Opinions or preferences will not receive a formal response. However, they will be considered and included as part of the BLM decision-making process.

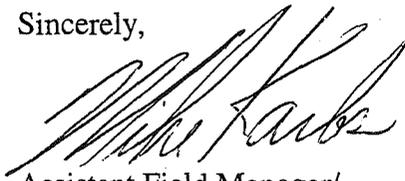
This EA was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and applicable regulations, and other applicable statutes, to address possible environmental and socioeconomic impacts that could result from this project. This EA is not a decision document. Its purpose is to inform the public of the impacts of leasing and mining the Federal coal proposed for lease in a maintenance coal lease application and to evaluate alternatives to leasing and mining the proposed maintenance coal lease application.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the address listed below during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and will be published as part of the Final EA. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street 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.

Please send written comments to Bureau of Land Management, Casper Field Office, Attn: Nancy Doelger, 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, WY 82604. Written comments may also be e-mailed to the attention of Nancy Doelger at "casper_wymail@blm.gov". E-mail comments must include the name and mailing address of the commentor to receive consideration. Written comments may also be faxed to the attention of Nancy Doelger at (307)-261-7587.

If you have any questions or would like to obtain a copy of the draft EA, or if you need additional copies of this final EA, please contact Nancy Doelger at (307) 261-7627 or at the above address.

Sincerely,



Assistant Field Manager/
Solid Minerals