
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 24, 2003, Caballo Coal Company filed an application with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to exchange portions of two federal coal leases located to the south and east, and adjacent to the Caballo Mine in Campbell County, Wyoming, approximately 10 miles south of Gillette, Wyoming (Figure ES-1). The application was made as an Alluvial Valley Floor (AVF) coal lease exchange under the regulations at 43 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 3436, Coal Lease and Coal Land Exchanges: Alluvial Valley Floors. The Caballo Mine is owned and operated by Caballo Coal Company, a subsidiary of Powder River Coal Company. In this environmental assessment (EA), the applicant for the tract will be referred to as PRCC.

The Gold Mine Draw tract as offered and the existing federal coal leases in the adjacent Caballo Mine are shown in Figure ES-2. The Gold Mine Draw tract includes approximately 921.6 acres and an estimated 67.2 million tons of in-place coal reserves. The Gold Mine Draw Tract has been determined to be an Alluvial Valley Floor significant to farming by the WDEQ Land Quality Division.

On August 9, 2004, the BLM issued a decision that the applicant is qualified for the exchange and that all of the offered lands are qualified for an exchange.

In order to process a lease exchange, the BLM must evaluate the quantity, quality, maximum economic recovery, and fair market value of both the offered and selected federal coal tracts and fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by evaluating the environmental consequences of leasing new tracts of federal coal. This EA has been prepared to evaluate the site-specific and cumulative environmental impacts of leasing and developing the federal coal included in the list of selected tracts. BLM does not authorize mining by issuing a lease for federal coal, but the impacts of mining the coal are considered in this EA because it is a logical consequence of issuing a lease. BLM will use the analysis in this EA to decide which of the selected tracts will be exchanged for the offered tract, or to reject all of the selected tracts in favor of a new proposal.

If a lease exchange is made, new lease(s) would be issued to the applicant after the relinquishment of the identified portions of the leases included as a part of the offered tract. The US Department of Justice (DOJ) determines that there would be no antitrust violations if a lease is issued to the applicant.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the Caballo offered tract, as applied for by Powder River Coal Company, would be offered for exchange for one or more of the eight selected tracts located at the North Antelope Rochelle Mine (#1-6), the Rawhide Mine (#7), and, the Caballo Mine (#8) and are subject to standard and special lease stipulations developed for the PRB. The boundaries of the tracts would be consistent with the tract

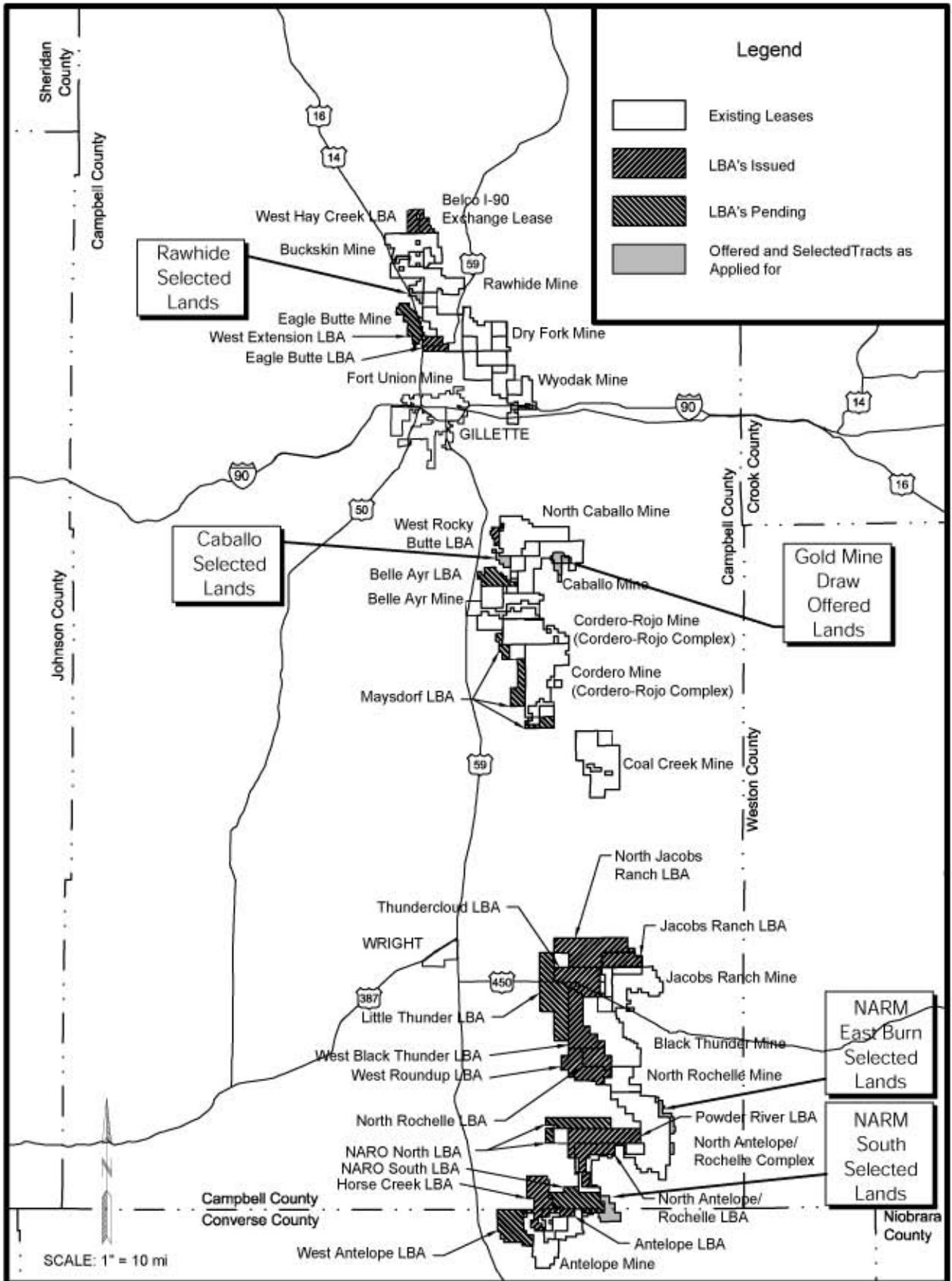


Figure ES-1 General Location Map

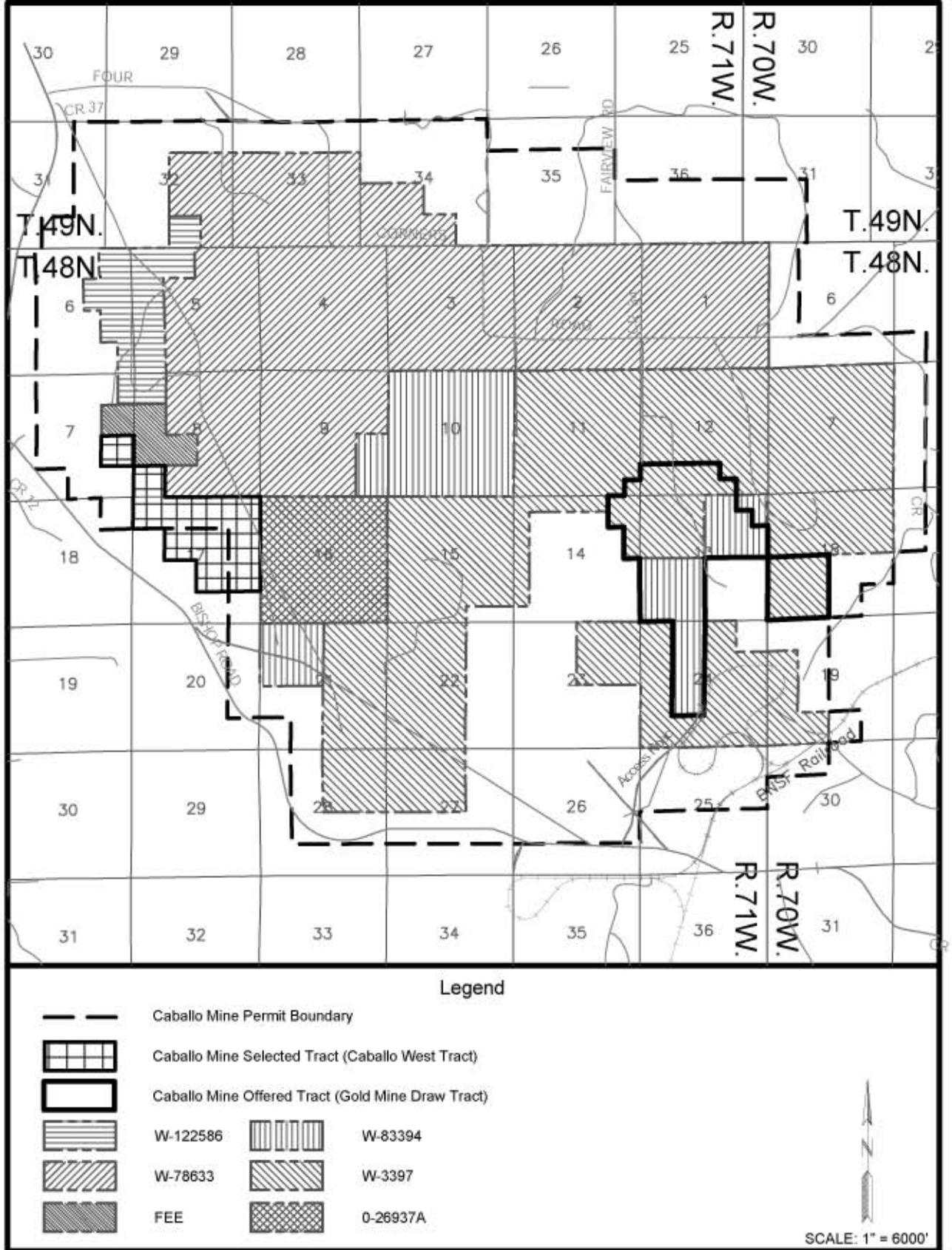


Figure ES-2 Caballo Mine Federal Coal Leases with Offered and Selected Tracts

configurations proposed in the Gold Mine Draw Alluvial Valley Floor Exchange (Figures ES-3 thru ES-6). The minerals within the offered lands would become unleased public minerals if the exchange is completed.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Powder River’s coal lease exchange application would be rejected in its current form, the Gold Mine Draw AVF tract would not be offered for exchange, and the coal contained within the selected tracts would not be leased as a part of this exchange proposal. Rejection of the application would not affect permitted mining activities on existing leases at the adjacent Caballo Mine, North Antelope Rochelle Mine or Rawhide Mine. The Caballo Mine currently leases approximately 11,959.6 acres of federal coal, about 160.1 acres of private coal, and about 648.0 acres of state coal (of which all acres are within the permit boundary). Approximately 13,497.8 acres will eventually be affected. Under the No Action Alternative, Powder River estimates that average annual production at the Caballo Mine after 2005 will be 36.8 mmtpy, and average employment will be 335 persons. Portions of the surface of the selected tract will be disturbed due to overstripping to allow coal to be removed from existing, contiguous leases. Table ES-1 presents a comparison of the proposed action versus the no action alternative at each of the three mines.

TABLE ES-1

COMPARISON OF PROPOSED ACTION AND NO ACTION

	No Action Alternative (existing leases)	Proposed Action			
		Caballo Mine	North Antelope Rochelle Mine	Rawhide Mine	Total
Change in lease area (acres) ¹	No change	- 920.946 + 448.577	+ 1855.72	+ 314.938	+ 1698.289
Change in estimated recoverable coal (mmt)	No change	- 58.1 + 55.2	+ 46.6	+ 34.6	+ 78.3
PRCC estimated change in employment (persons)	No change	0	0	0	0
PRCC estimated change in production rate (mmt/yr)	No change	0	0	0	0
PRCC estimated change in life of mine (years)	No change	1.5	0.6	1.6	---

Notes: ¹Includes federal coal leases only; does not include state and private coal within the permit area.

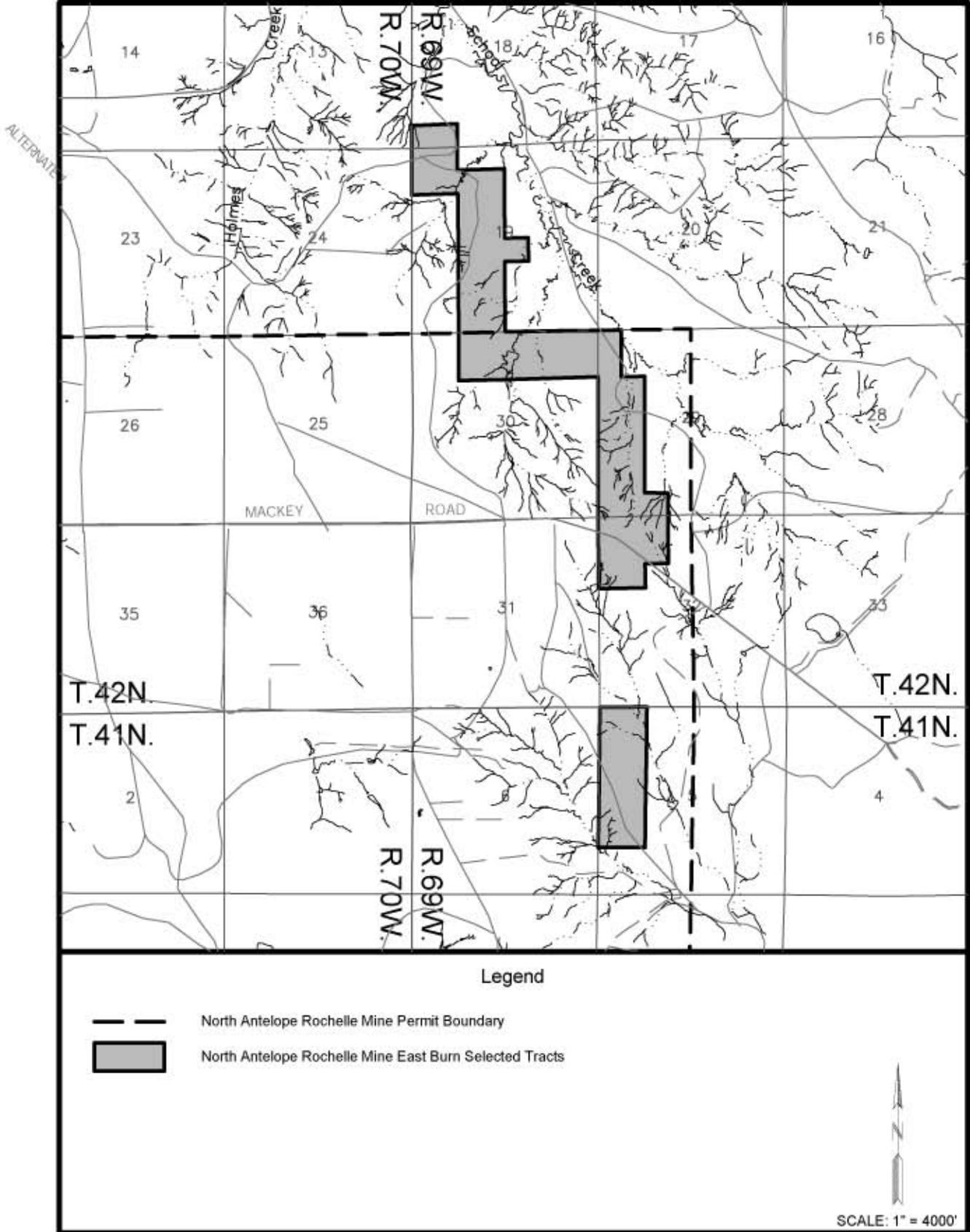


Figure ES-3 North Antelope Rochelle Mine East Burn Selected Tracts

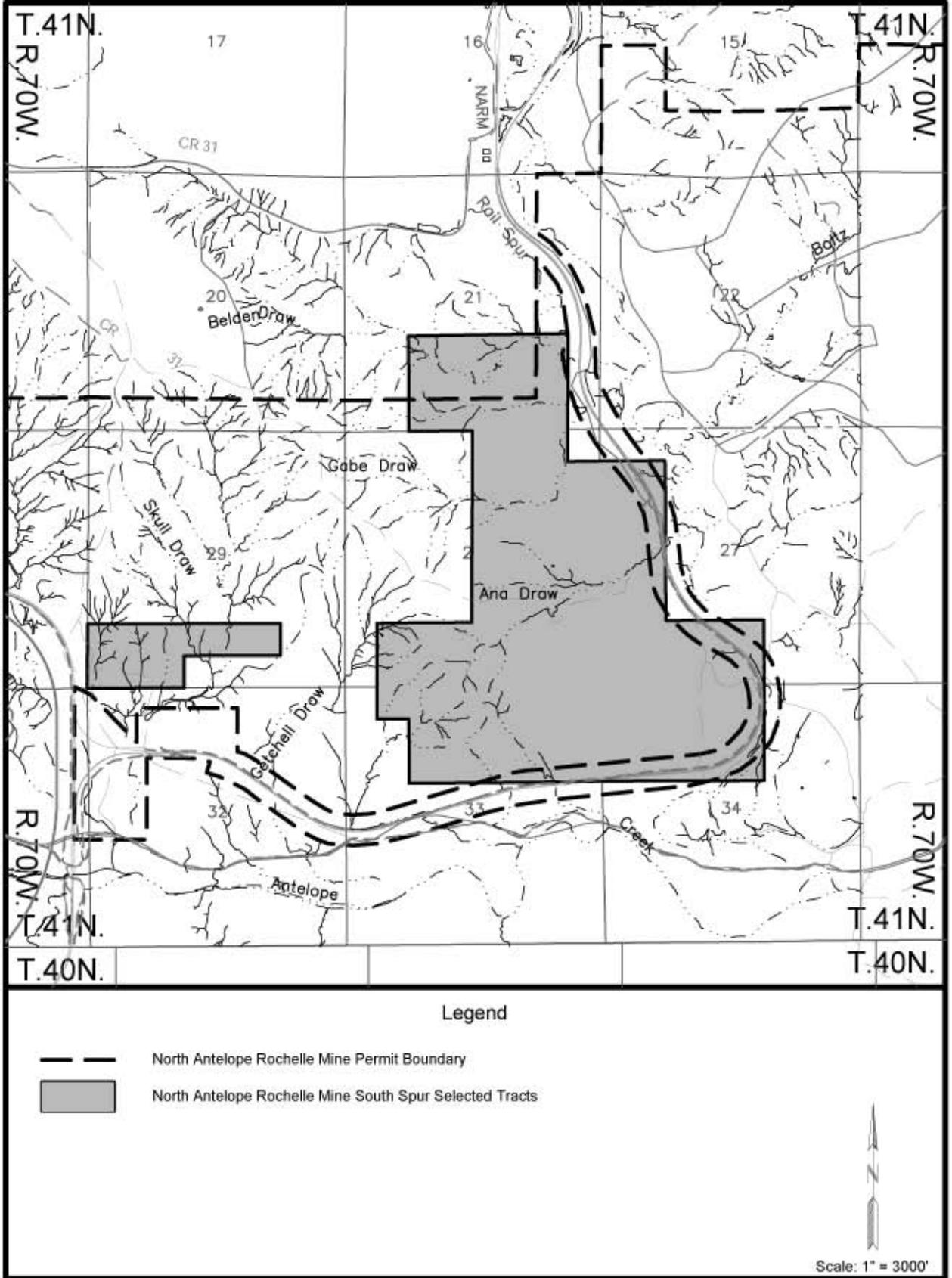


Figure ES-4 North Antelope Rochelle Mine South Spur Selected Tracts

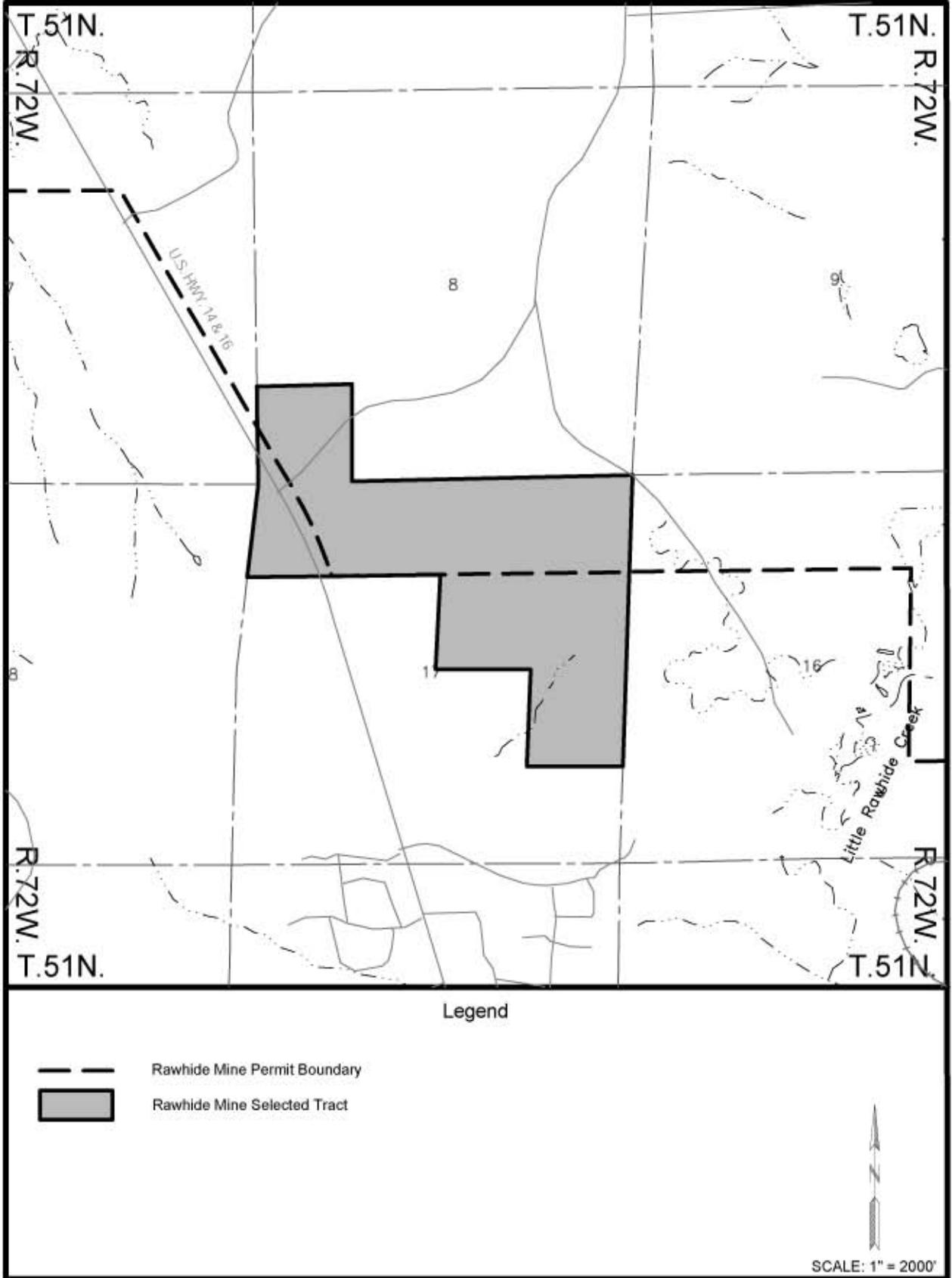


Figure ES-5 Rawhide Mine (South Sand Channel) Selected Tract

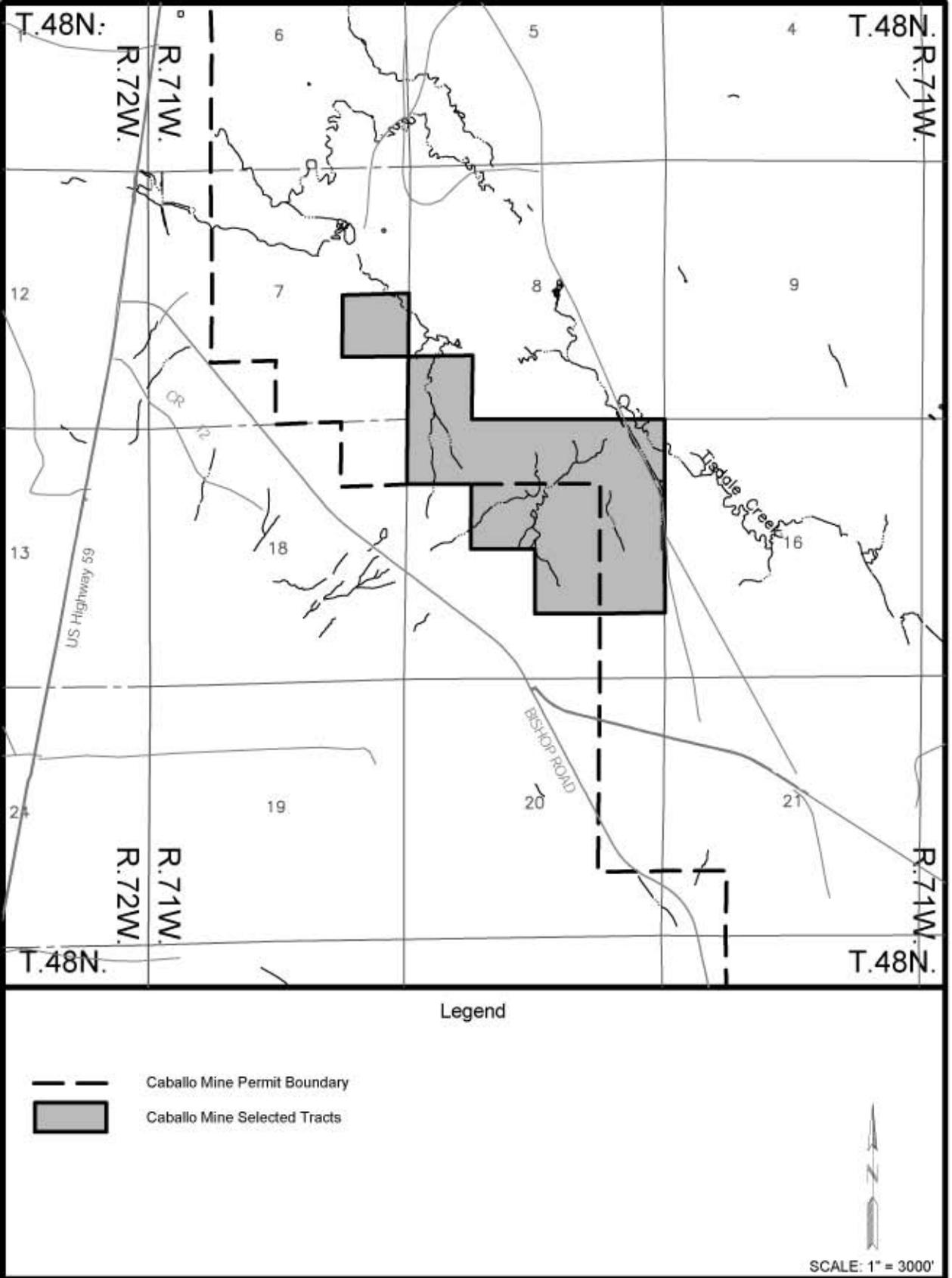


Figure ES-6 Caballo West Selected Tract

Critical elements of the human environment (BLM 1988) that could be affected by the proposed project include air quality, cultural resources, Native American religious concerns, threatened, endangered (T&E), and candidate plant and animal species, hazardous or solid wastes, water quality, wetlands/riparian zones, environmental justice, and invasive nonnative species. Five critical elements (areas of critical environmental concern, prime and unique farmland, wild and scenic rivers, floodplains, and wilderness) are not present in the project area and are not addressed further. In addition to the critical elements that are potentially present in the project area, the EA discusses the status and potential effects of the project on topography and physiography, geology and mineral resources, soils, water availability and quality, alluvial valley floors, vegetation, wildlife, land use and recreation, paleontological resources, visual resources, noise, transportation resources, and socioeconomics.

The Caballo, North Antelope and Rawhide mines are located in the Powder River Basin (PRB), a part of the Northern Great Plains that includes most of northeastern Wyoming. The mines in the PRB are in three distinct clusters. The Rawhide Mine is in the northern cluster located north of Gillette. The Caballo Mine is located in the central group of mines, and the NARM is located in the southern group of mines.

The existing topography on the selected tracts would be substantially changed during mining. A highwall with a vertical height equal to overburden plus coal thickness would exist in the active pits. Following reclamation, the average surface elevation would be lower due to removal of the coal. The reclaimed land surface would approximate premining contours and the basic drainage network would be retained, but the reclaimed surface would contain fewer, gentler topographic features. This could contribute to reduced habitat diversity and wildlife carrying capacity on the selected tracts. These topographic changes would not conflict with regional land use, and the postmining topography would adequately support anticipated post-mining land use. The topography of the Gold Mine Draw tract would not be affected under the Proposed Action.

If any of the tracts are exchanged, the geology from the base of the coal to the land surface would be permanently changed on the selected tracts. The subsurface characteristics of these lands would be radically changed by mining. The replaced overburden and interburden (backfill) would be a mixture of the geologically distinct layers of sandstone, siltstone, and shales that currently exist. The resulting physical characteristics would also be significantly altered.

During mining, other minerals present on the selected tracts could not be developed, but some could be developed after mining. Coal mining affects CBNG development by removing the coal in which the CBNG resource occurs. CBNG resources that are not recovered before mining would be irretrievably lost when the coal is removed. Seam dewatering in advance of mining also draws down coal seam water levels and reduces the hydrostatic pressure, which may allow CBNG to desorb and escape from the coal bed. CBNG could be produced from the existing wells, and other wells could be

drilled during the time it takes to lease and permit the selected tract(s) and, on a case by case basis, until mining activity approaches each well.

Consequences to soil resources from mining the selected tracts would include changes in the physical, biological, and chemical properties. Following reclamation, the soils would be unlike premining soils in texture, structure, color, accumulation of clays, organic matter, and microbial populations. Soil chemistry and soil nutrient distribution would be more uniform. The replaced topsoil would also be more uniform in type, thickness, and texture. It would be adequate in quantity and quality to support planned postmining land uses (wildlife habitat and rangeland).

No additional air quality impacts are expected as a result of the Proposed Action because PRCC does not anticipate an increase in production at any of the three mines as a result of acquiring the selected tract(s). Mining of the selected tract(s) would be conducted utilizing existing methods at each of the mines. However, PRCC estimates that based on which tract(s) are exchanged, that the mine life of the Caballo Mine would be extended by up to 1.5 years, the mine life of the North Antelope Rochelle Mine would be extended by up to 0.6 years and the mine life of the Rawhide Mine would be extended by up to 1.6 years. Therefore, it is expected that the existing air quality impacts would be extended for the duration of the mine life at the affected mine.

Changes in runoff characteristics and sediment discharges would occur during mining of the selected tracts, and erosion rates could reach high values on the disturbed areas because of vegetation removal. However, state and federal regulations require that surface runoff from mined lands be treated to meet effluent standards, so sediment would be deposited in ponds or other sediment control devices before the surface runoff water is allowed to leave the permit area. After mining and reclamation are complete, surface water flow, quality, and sediment discharge would approximate premining conditions.

Mining is not expected to impact the groundwater resource on the NARM East Burn and South Spur tracts because these tracts are located to the east of existing mining and CBNG operations. In the PRB, the coal outcrop typically acts as a recharge area for the coal aquifer. The groundwater flow then follows the dip of the coal, which is to the west. Since coal mining and CBNG have occurred to the west of these tracts, no new impact to groundwater rights or resources is anticipated.

The South Sand Channel and Caballo West tracts are located to the west of existing coal mining operations, but to the east of extensive CBNG operations. The coal in these two tracts has been dewatered by the CBNG operations. Therefore, no new impact to the groundwater resource is anticipated as a result of mining these tracts.

A declared AVF is located within the central portion of Gold Mine Draw tract. There are no AVF's on the selected tracts. Preserving the AVF and adjacent lands is an important benefit to completing the exchange as proposed.

A total of 4.6 acres of jurisdictional wetlands have been identified within the Gold Mine Draw tract. These wetlands would not be impacted under either action. However, 15.81 acres of jurisdictional wetlands have been identified on the selected tracts, and would be impacted by mining operations. These are located on NARM East Burn and South Spur tracts and on the Caballo West tract. The Army Corps of Engineers (COE) requires replacement of all impacted jurisdictional wetlands in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and determines the number of acres to be restored. WDEQ/LQD allows and sometimes requires mitigation of nonjurisdictional wetlands affected by mining, depending on the values associated with the wetland features.

Mining would progressively remove the native vegetation on the selected tracts. Reclamation and revegetation of disturbed land would occur contemporaneously with mining. Reestablished vegetation would be dominated by species mandated in the reclamation seed mixtures, which are approved by the WDEQ. The majority of these species would be native to the selected tracts. Initially, the reclaimed land would be dominated by grassland vegetation, which would be less diverse than the premining vegetation. Estimates for the time it would take to restore sagebrush to premining density levels range from 20 to 100 years. An indirect impact associated with this vegetative change would potentially be a decreased big game habitat carrying capacity. However, a diverse, productive, and permanent vegetative cover would be established on the selected tracts within about 10 years following reclamation, prior to release of the final reclamation bond. The decrease in plant diversity would not seriously affect the potential productivity of the reclaimed areas, and the proposed postmining land uses (wildlife habitat and rangeland) should be achieved even with the changes in vegetation composition and diversity. The reclamation plans for the selected tracts would also include steps to control invasion by weedy (invasive, nonnative) plant species.

In the short term, wildlife would be displaced from the selected tracts in areas of active mining and the acreage of habitat available for wildlife populations would be reduced. Habitat would be disturbed in parcels, with reclamation progressing as new disturbance occurs. The selected tracts do not contain any unique or crucial big game habitat.

Sage grouse have been found on lands within and adjacent to the selected tracts and are yearlong residents in this area. No leks have been recorded on the selected tracts during baseline surveys or annual mine surveys. Two leks were identified within two miles of the East Burn tracts. There are no active raptor nest sites on the selected tracts, but numerous raptor species have been observed within two miles of the Gold Mine Draw and selected tracts. In the long term, following reclamation, carrying capacity and habitat diversity may be reduced due to flatter topography, less diverse vegetative cover, and reduction in sagebrush density.

T&E plant and wildlife surveys specific to the proposed lease tract were conducted in 1999. No suitable roosting habitat, known nest sites, or concentrated prey or carrion sources for bald eagles have been identified during baseline or annual wildlife surveys in the selected tracts. Historically, this species has infrequently been seen foraging in

the general vicinity of all three existing operations. Three black-tailed prairie dog colonies identified on the NARM selected tracts with several colonies observed within two miles. These prey species are important for raptors and other predators. No prairie dog towns were identified at the Gold Mine Draw or other selected tracts. No evidence of black-footed ferrets has ever been recorded by qualified biologists during general or specific surveys in the area of the three mines. Surveys for potential habitat for Ute ladies-tresses orchid were completed at all of the tracts in 2005. No Ute ladies'-tresses were observed during these surveys. One small area in Gold Mine Draw tract provides suitable habitat but no orchids were identified in this area. Completing the exchange as proposed will preserve the potential habitat.

Active mining would preclude other land uses, including livestock and wildlife grazing use and recreational use of the selected tracts. Public surface at the East Burn and South Spur tracts would be closed during mining. Within 10 years after initiation of each reclamation phase, rangeland and wildlife use would return to near premining levels. The cumulative impacts of energy development (coal mining, oil, and gas) in the PRB are and will continue to contribute to a reduction in hunting opportunities for some animals (pronghorn, mule deer, and sage grouse).

Mining would impact oil and gas development on the leased lands during active mining. The federal oil and gas rights are leased. As discussed above, there are active CBNG wells on the selected tracts. CBNG that is not recovered prior to mining would be vented and irretrievably lost as the coal is removed.

Cultural resources surveys have been conducted on the selected tracts. One site identified on the South Spur tract, 48CA1930, remains eligible and will be mitigated if it falls within the mine disturbance limit boundary.

No sites of Native American religious or cultural importance have been identified on the Gold Mine Draw tract or selected tracts. If such sites or localities are identified at a later date, appropriate action must be taken to address concerns related to those sites.

No unique or significant paleontological resources have been identified on the selected tracts, and the likelihood of encountering significant paleontological resources is small.

The NARM facilities and some mining activities are visible from Highway 59, Mackey, Antelope and Road 31 county roads. This is also true for portions of the East Burn and South Spur tracts. Mining activities at the South Sand Channel tract would be visible from US 14-16 and Wyoming 59. Mining would affect landscapes classified by BLM as VRM Class IV, and the landscape character would not be significantly changed following reclamation. No unique visual resources have been identified on or near the selected tracts.

Noise levels on the selected tracts would be increased considerably by mining activities (blasting, loading, hauling, and possibly in-pit crushing). There are no residences located within two miles of the East Burn or South Spur tracts. The nearest

occupied dwelling to the South Sand Channel tract is just over ½ mile away. The nearest occupied dwelling to the Caballo West tract is located approximately 0.2 mile south.

No new or reconstructed coal transportation facilities would be required under the Proposed, but leasing the selected tracts would extend the length of time that coal is shipped from the existing facilities at the permitted NARM, Rawhide and Caballo mines. Active pipelines and utility lines would have to be relocated in accordance with previous agreements, or agreements would have to be negotiated for their removal or relocation.

This exchange would at most increase the mine life of the Caballo Mine by 1.5 years, the North Antelope Rochelle Mine by 0.6 years and the Rawhide Mine by 1.6 years. If the tracts are exchanged under the Proposed Action, PRCC does not anticipate that employment or production would be impacted. No additional demands on the existing county or city infrastructure or services would be expected because no influx of new residents would be needed to fill new jobs. The economic stability of the community of Gillette would benefit by having the mines active for an additional 0.6 to 1.6 years.

With regard to environmental justice issues, it was determined that potentially adverse impacts would not disproportionately affect minorities, low-income groups, or Native American tribes or groups. No tribal lands or Native American communities are included in this area, and no Native American treaty rights or Native American trust resources are known to exist for this area.

As stated previously, the impacts of mining the coal, which are described in the paragraphs above, would be similar under the exchange as proposed.

Under the No Action Alternative, Powder River's coal lease exchange application would be rejected in its current form, the Gold Mine Draw AVF tract would not be offered for exchange, and the coal contained within the selected tracts would not be leased as a part of this exchange proposal. Rejection of the application would not affect permitted mining activities on existing leases at the adjacent Caballo Mine, North Antelope Rochelle Mine or Rawhide Mine. The Caballo Mine currently leases approximately 11,959.6 acres of federal coal, about 160.1 acres of private coal, and about 648.0 acres of state coal (of which all acres are within the permit boundary). Approximately 13,497.8 acres will eventually be affected. Under the No Action Alternative, Powder River estimates that average annual production at the Caballo Mine after 2005 will be 36.8 mmtpy, and average employment will be 335 persons. Portions of the surface of the selected tract will be disturbed due to overstripping to allow coal to be removed from existing, contiguous leases.

If impacts are identified during the exchange process that are not mitigated by existing required mitigation measures, BLM can include additional mitigation measures, in the form of stipulations on the new lease, within the limits of its regulatory authority. BLM

has not identified additional special stipulations that should be added to the BLM lease or areas where additional or increased monitoring measures are recommended.

Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impacts of an action added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of who is responsible for such actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions occurring over time.

BLM completed three regional EISs evaluating the potential cumulative impacts of surface coal development in the 1970s and early 1980s (BLM, 1974, 1979, and 1981). A draft document for a fourth regional EIS was prepared and released in 1984 (BLM 1984).

More recently, BLM has considered cumulative impacts in a number of NEPA analyses evaluating coal leasing actions and oil and gas development in the PRB. The Powder River Federal Coal Region was decertified as a federal coal production region in 1990. Since that time, the BLM's Wyoming State Office has held 23 competitive coal lease sales and issued 17 new federal coal leases containing approximately 5.184 billion tons of coal using the LBA process. As part of the leasing process, BLM prepared NEPA analyses evaluating each of those leasing actions. Most recently, in 2003, the BLM completed two EISs evaluating the effects of coal leasing actions in the Wyoming PRB:

- The South Powder River Basin Coal EIS addressed leasing five lease tracts to four different mines in the group of mines south of Wright, WY.
- The West Hay Creek EIS addressed leasing one tract to one of the mines north of Gillette WY.

BLM also issued the Final Powder River Basin Oil and Gas EIS in 2003. Each of these EISs included an analysis of cumulative impacts in the area where the Gold Mine Draw lease exchange tracts are located.

The Wyoming BLM has pending applications for seven additional maintenance tracts for existing mines containing about 2.164 billion tons of coal. Three of the seven pending applications have been reviewed and recommended for processing by the Powder River RCT.

Federal coal leasing activity has paralleled production since decertification. This is consistent with the Powder River RCT's objective at the time of decertification, which was to use the LBA process to lease tracts of federal coal to maintain production at existing mines.

BLM has also completed two exchanges in the Wyoming PRB since decertification:

- Belco Exchange – a coal lease exchange authorized by Public Law 95-554, completed in 2000. EOG Resources (formerly Belco) received a federal lease for a 106-million ton portion of the former Hay Creek tract adjacent to the Buckskin Mine in exchange for the rights to a 170-million ton coal lease near Buffalo, Wyoming that became unmineable when Interstate 90 was constructed (BLM 1999b). The Buckskin Mine has since acquired this lease.
- Pittsburg and Midway Coal Mining Company (P&M) Exchange: -an exchange of federal coal in Sheridan County, Wyoming, for land and mineral rights in Lincoln, Carbon, and Sheridan counties, Wyoming, completed in 2004.

This EA addresses a proposed coal lease exchange with Powder River Coal Company. Under the proposed action for this EA, lease rights underlying an AVF at the Caballo Mine, which can't be mined, would be exchanged for lease rights of equal value adjacent to existing federal leases at Powder River Coal Company's North Antelope Rochelle, Rawhide or Caballo mines.

There are currently 13 active surface coal mines and one inactive mine in the Wyoming PRB. These mines are all located in Campbell and Converse Counties, just west of the outcrop of the Wyo-dak coal, where the coal is at the shallowest depth. Recently active surface coal mines in Sheridan County, (the Big Horn Coal Mine) and southern Converse County (the Dave Johnston Mine) have ended mining operations, relinquished their federal coal leases, and are reclaiming areas of disturbance.

There are existing permits for other surface-coal mining-related operations in the PRB. These include the Ash Creek and Welch mine permits in Sheridan County and the IZITA mine permit in Campbell County. Operations at these sites are completed and disturbed areas have been reclaimed, but monitoring of the reclaimed areas is ongoing. The KFx Mine (on privately owned coal) is inactive.

The surface coal mines in the PRB currently produce over 96% of the coal produced in Wyoming each year. Since 1989, coal production in the Powder River Basin has increased by an average of 6 percent per year. The increasing production is primarily due to increasing sales of low-sulfur, low-cost PRB coal to electric utilities who must comply with phase I requirements of Title III of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. Electric utilities account for 97 percent of Wyoming's coal sales. In 2002, approximately 33 percent of the coal mined in the United States came from the Wyoming PRB.

BLM estimates that the surface coal mines in the PRB currently have almost 121,200 acres of federal coal leased in Campbell and Converse counties. This represents approximately 3.97 percent of Campbell County, where the majority of the leases are located. If all of the Gold Mine Draw selected tracts were leased and the lease on the offered tract relinquished, this would increase the acres under lease by at most 1,699 net acres, representing a 1.4% increase in leased federal acres. This would represent a maximum increase because the value of the coal that the federal government

exchanges must be equal to the value of the coal in the Gold Mine Draw AVF tract and the selected lands are expected to contain more than adequate coal reserves to equalize the coal value in the offered tract. As a result, it is unlikely that all of the selected lands would be included in the exchange, if it is completed.

The coal operations shown in Figure ES-1 had disturbed an estimated 68,794 acres as of 2003. Approximately 24,097 of those acres of disturbance were occupied by “permanent” mine facilities (roads, buildings, and coal handling facilities) and are unavailable for reclamation. Of the remaining 44,697 acres, which represents areas of disturbance available for reclamation, approximately 21,238 acres had been permanently reclaimed as of 2003. This information is compiled from BLM lease and WDEQ/LQD mining and reclamation permit databases.

The selected tracts being considered for exchange are adjacent to three existing operating mines in the Wyoming Powder River Basin. The offered tract is also adjacent to one of these operating mines. Under either action, the offered tract would not be disturbed. However, portions of the surface of the selected tracts would be disturbed in any event in order to recover the coal in the existing adjacent leases.

The selected tracts at the NARM are positioned such that, if not leased at this time, they may be bypassed by the current operations and would not be economic to mine at a later date due to the small and scattered nature of the coal reserves they contain. In that case, the surface of those tracts would be disturbed to recover the coal in the adjacent existing leases, but the coal would be left in place and wasted as a commercial commodity.

The AVF lands adjacent to the Caballo mine include approximately 66.8 million tons of coal that cannot be mined. At the 2004 production rate of 26.4 mmtpy, this represents approximately two and one half years of production.

If the lease rights to the selected tract adjacent to the Caballo Mine (#8) are exchanged for the lease rights to the AVF lands, the net reserves at the Caballo Mine would decrease by 11.6 million tons, which represents a net decrease of about five months of production at the 2004 annual production rate.

If the lease rights to all of the selected lands adjacent to the NARM are exchanged for the lease rights to the AVF lands, the net reserves at this mine would increase by about 47.6 million tons, which would increase the mine life by about seven months at the 2004 annual production rate of 82.5 mmtpy.

If the lease rights to the tract adjacent to the Rawhide mine are exchanged for the lease rights to the AVF lands, the net reserves at this mine would increase by 34.6 million tons. At the 2004 production rate of 6.9 mmtpy, this represents approximately five years of mine life.

It is unlikely that all of the selected lands would be included in the exchange, because the exchange must be on an equal value basis, and the selected lands are expected to contain more than adequate coal reserves to equalize the coal value in the offered tract.

CBNG wells have been drilled west of the three operating mines adjacent to the selected tracts. The CBNG development near the Rawhide and Caballo mines occurred fairly early in the CBNG play, but development in the vicinity of the North Antelope Rochelle Mine is more recent. CBNG development would potentially continue in the areas around all three mines, including on the selected tracts adjacent to the Rawhide and Caballo mines, which are located west of those mines. The selected tracts adjacent to the North Antelope Rochelle Mine are located east of the mining operations and the CBNG development is occurring west of the existing mining operations. As a result, no CBNG development is anticipated on the East Burn and South Spur tracts. Due to the proximity of the coal mining and CBNG production operations, cumulative impacts to groundwater, surface water, air quality, and wildlife have occurred and are likely to continue as CBNG development continues adjacent to existing surface coal mining operations.

Other mineral development activities in the Wyoming PRB include bentonite mines, in situ uranium mines, and scoria quarries. The areas where bentonite and uranium are mined are not in the general vicinity of the existing surface coal mines. Scoria quarries are frequently located adjacent to, and generally east of, the existing coal mining operations.

Other proposed projects in the southern portion of the Wyoming Powder River Basin that have advanced to the planning and permitting stages and that could be completed in the foreseeable future include: the Wygen II coal-fired power plant at the Black Hills Corporation energy complex near the Wyodak Mine site in Gillette, Wyoming; the Two Elk coal-fired power plant, proposed by the North American Power Group (NAPG), which would be located east of the Black Thunder Mine; a coal-fired power plant proposed by Basin Electric Power Cooperative that would be located near the town of Gillette, and a railroad line from the Powder River Basin to Minnesota proposed by Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern Railroad (DM&E). The impacts of mining the selected tract adjacent to the Caballo Mine would not be expected to overlap with the impacts of building and/or operating these projects. The impacts of mining the selected tracts adjacent to the North Antelope Rochelle Mine could potentially have some minor overlapping impacts with the construction and operation of the proposed Two Elk power plant and DM&E railroad line. The impacts of mining the selected tract adjacent to the Rawhide Mine could potentially have some overlapping impacts with the construction and operation of the Wygen II and Basin Electric power plants. .