

**FINAL
Environmental Impact Statement for the
Buckskin Mine Hay Creek II
Coal Lease Application
WYW-172684**



Wyoming High Plains District



July 2011

Pronghorn grazing on completed reclamation at Buckskin Mine.

MISSION STATEMENT

The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

BLM/WY/PL-11/045+1320



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Wyoming High Plains District
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604-2968



In Reply Refer to:
3425 (LBA)(WYP00)
WYW172684
Buckskin Mine Hay Creek II Coal EIS

JUL 19 2011

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to document and disclose the results of the environmental analyses of an application received by BLM to lease a maintenance tract of Federal coal approximately 12 miles north of the city of Gillette in the Powder River Basin, Wyoming. The tract is referred to as the Hay Creek II LBA tract. A copy of the EIS document is provided for your review. The final EIS may also be reviewed at the following website:

<http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/content/wy/en/info/NEPA/documents/hpd/HayCreekII.html>

Copies of the Final EIS are also available for public inspection at the following BLM Offices:

Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming High Plains District Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604

The Draft EIS was published in March 2010, and the 60-day comment period on the draft document ended on May 10, 2010. A formal public hearing on the application to lease Federal coal was held in Gillette, Wyoming, on April 22, 2010. The purpose of the hearing was to receive comments on the proposed coal lease, on the fair market value, and on the maximum economic recovery of the Federal coal resources included in the tract. There were no statements presented at the formal hearing. Written comments were received from 10 individuals, agencies, businesses, and organizations, during the 60-day public review period. The comment letters received on the Draft EIS during the 60-day public review period have been published as part of the Final EIS in appendix D.

A 30-day review period on this Final EIS will commence on the date the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. The BLM will also publish a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. The BLM will accept public comments on this Final EIS for thirty (30) days commencing on the date the EPA publishes its Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

If you wish to comment on the Final EIS, your comments should relate directly to the document. Comments should be as specific as possible, and the locations in the document to which you are commenting on should be cited. The BLM is required to respond in the record of decision

(ROD) to all substantive comments submitted. Substantive comments should: (1) give any new information that could alter conclusions; (2) show why or how analysis or assumptions in the Final EIS are flawed; (3) show errors in data, sources, or methods; or (4) request clarifications that bear on conclusions. Opinions or preferences will not receive a formal response. However, they will be considered and included as part of the BLM decision-making process.

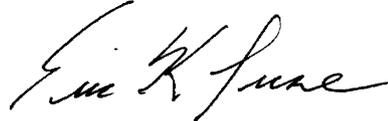
This Final EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and applicable regulations, and other applicable statutes, to address possible environmental and socioeconomic impacts that could result from the Buckskin Mine Hay Creek II coal lease application. This Final EIS is not a decision document. Its purpose is to inform the public and agency decision-makers of the impacts associated with leasing some or all of the Hay Creek II Federal coal tract study area to an existing mine in the Wyoming Powder River Basin and to evaluate alternatives to leasing the Federal coal included in the tract as applied for.

Comments, including names, street addresses, and email addresses of respondents, will be on file and open for public review at the Wyoming High Plains District Office during regular business hours, and will be included as part of the ROD posted at the above listed website. 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. Though we cannot guarantee anonymity, such requests will be honored to the extent allowable by law. All submissions from organizations, businesses, and 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 the Bureau of Land Management, High Plains District Office, Attn: Teresa Johnson, 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, WY 82604. Written comments may also be emailed to the attention of Teresa Johnson at: hay_creek_II_WYMail@blm.gov. Email comments must include the name and mailing address of the commentor to receive consideration. Written comments may also be faxed to the attention of Teresa Johnson at (307) 261-7587.

If you have any questions or would like to obtain a copy of this Final EIS, please contact Lesley Collins at (307) 261-7603, or at the above BLM Wyoming High Plains District Office address.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Connolly
District Manager



**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
HAY CREEK II COAL LEASE APPLICATION
CAMPBELL COUNTY, WYOMING**

ABSTRACT

Lead Agency: USDI, Bureau of Land Management, High Plains District Office, Casper, Wyoming

Cooperating Agencies: USDI, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Denver, Colorado

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (all divisions), Cheyenne, Wyoming

For Further Information Contact: Teresa Johnson, Bureau of Land Management, 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, WY 82604; (307) 261-7600

This final environmental impact statement (EIS) assesses the environmental consequences of a decision by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to hold a competitive, sealed-bid sale and issue a lease for a federal coal maintenance tract in Campbell County, Wyoming, as a result of a coal lease application submitted by Kiewit Mining Properties, Inc. (Kiewit). As applied for, the Hay Creek II coal lease-by-application (LBA) tract includes approximately 419 acres containing approximately 77.2 million tons of federal coal. If a lease sale is held and the applicant acquires the lease, Kiewit proposes to mine the tract as a maintenance lease for the existing, adjacent Buckskin Mine.

This final EIS describes the physical, biological, cultural, historic, and socioeconomic resources in and around the LBA tract. The alternatives in the final EIS consider the impacts of leasing the tract as applied for, leasing an alternative tract configuration, and not leasing a tract. Impact analyses focused on resource issues and concerns identified during public scoping conducted for the Hay Creek II LBA and during previous analyses conducted for coal leasing actions associated with Buckskin and other local coal mines. Recent concerns related to leasing coal and its subsequent development include: impacts on groundwater, air quality, wildlife, cultural resources, paleontological resources, socioeconomics, loss of livestock grazing areas, conflicts with oil and gas development, cumulative impacts related to ongoing surface coal mining and other proposed development in the Wyoming Powder River Basin, greenhouse gas emissions, ozone, and global climate change.

This final EIS, in compliance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act as amended, identifies any endangered or threatened species likely to be affected by the Proposed Action and alternatives.

The final EIS is open for a 30-day review period beginning on the date that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*.

Comments postmarked or received on or before the end of the 30-day review period will be considered during preparation of the Record of Decision (ROD). If the BLM decides to hold a sale for the Hay Creek II lease, the final tract configuration will be defined in the ROD.

**HAY CREEK II COAL LEASE APPLICATION
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Prepared by

**ICF International
Gillette, Wyoming**

Under the Direction of

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
High Plains District Office
Casper, Wyoming**

and

Cooperating Agencies

**U.S. Department of Interior
Office of Surface Mining
Reclamation and Enforcement
Denver, Colorado**

**Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
All Divisions
Cheyenne, Wyoming**

July 2011