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lease west of and adjacent to the existing Rocky Butte Federal Coal Lease (WYW78633) in Campbell County, Wyoming, which NWR recently acquired. The proposed West Rocky Butte tract, as modified by the BLM, covers 463.4 acres with an estimated 59 million tons of recoverable coal. The BLM has prepared an EIS to evaluate the environmental impacts of: (1) Issuing a competitive Federal coal lease, and (2) subsequent approval of a logical mining unit (LMU) request to be filed for the Rocky Butte and West Rocky Butte leases, assuming NWR is determined to be the successful high bidder for the West Rocky Butte Tract. Currently, there are no mining facilities or operations on the existing Rocky Butte Federal coal lease, so a new mine start would be necessary to begin production. The area is located about 10 miles southwest of the city of Gillette, Wyoming.

DATES: The public comment period will begin on July 3, 1992, and will end on August 3, 1992. Public comments will be accepted on the FEIS, on the fair market value (FMV) of the tract, and on maximum economic recovery (MER) of coal on the tract. In order to assure that comments are considered in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the West Rocky Butte Tract, WYW122586, they must be received no later than c.o.b. on Monday, August 3, 1992.

ADDRESSES: Comments, concerns and requests for copies of the FEIS should be addressed to the Casper District Office, Bureau of Land Management, Attention: Nancy Doelger, 1701 East "E" Street, Casper, Wyoming 82601.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy Doelger or Mike Karbs, phone (307) 261-7600, or contact the address listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This Federal coal lease application was made to the BLM pursuant to provisions of 43 CFR 3425.1 as a lease by application. The holding of a lease sale would allow NWR to acquire the West Rocky Butte Tract (if they are determined to be the successful high bidder), apply for the formation of an LMU with the existing Rocky Butte lease, and open a new mine. This would be a major Federal action, and the BLM has determined that the action requires the preparation of an EIS.

The FEIS analyzes the impacts of developing and operating a surface coal mine on the combined Rocky Butte (WYW78633) and West Rocky Butte (WYW122586) Tracts. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was issued on January 17, 1992, and comments were accepted on the DEIS

[WY-060-02-4120-09] WYW122586]

Environmental Statements; Availability; West Rocky Butte Coal Lease, WY

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior, Wyoming.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a final environmental impact statement (FEIS) pursuant to 40 CFR parts 1500-1508 for the West Rocky Butte Federal coal Lease Application (WYW122586) in the Powder River Basin, Campbell County, Wyoming.

SUMMARY: Northwestern Resources Co. (NWR) has applied for a Federal coal

through the end of March 1992. Thirty-six comments were received on the DEIS. A public hearing was held in Gillette, Wyoming, on February 26, 1992. Eight people made statements for the record during the hearing. Revisions have been made to this FEIS in response to the comments received on the DEIS.

Two alternatives are analyzed in the EIS. The Proposed Action is to lease the West Rocky Butte Tract, as modified by the BLM. This is the Preferred Alternative of the BLM. The second alternative is the No Action alternative, which assumes that a lease for the West Rocky Butte Tract would not be issued, and a new mine would not be opened at this time. The major concerns with opening a new mine which were identified during scoping, and in comments on the DEIS involve air quality, hydrology, reclamation, and impacts to nearby residents.

The West Rocky Butte tract does not contain enough coal to open a new mine. It would be logically mined with the existing Rocky Butte lease. The existing Rocky Butte lease was purchased in the 1982 Powder River Coal Sale. It will be terminated on February 1, 1993, due to noncompliance with the diligence requirements of section 2(a)(2)(A) of the Mineral Leasing Act unless the two tracts are combined into an LMU. Combining the two leases would extend the diligence period of the existing Rocky Butte lease, WYW78633, to the same diligence date as the West Rocky Butte Lease, WYW122586, i.e., 10 years after issuance of the West Rocky Butte Lease.

Ray Brubaker,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 92-15047 Filed 6-25-92; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-22-M