

DRAFT
Environmental Impact Statement for the
South Gillette Area Coal Lease Applications
WYW172585, WYW173360, WYW172657, WYW161248

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Coal Creek Mine, Wyoming*



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Cordero Rojo Mine, Wyoming*



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*American Avocet in a Reclaimed Wetland
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MISSION STATEMENT

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**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
SOUTH GILLETTE AREA COAL LEASE APPLICATIONS
CAMPBELL COUNTY, WYOMING**

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

Cooperating Agencies: USDI, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
Western Region, Denver, CO

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Cheyenne, WY

Wyoming Department of Transportation, Cheyenne, WY

Abstract: This Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS) assesses the environmental consequences of decisions to hold competitive, sealed-bid sales and issue leases for several tracts of federal coal located adjacent to existing surface coal mines in Campbell County, Wyoming, subject to standard and special lease stipulations. The South Gillette Area Coal Lease by Application (LBA) Tracts, as applied for by Foundation Coal West, Ark Land Company, Caballo Coal Company, and Cordero Mining Company, include approximately 8,161.0 acres containing approximately 873.6 million tons of in-place Federal coal. The four coal companies, operators of the adjacent Belle Ayr Mine, the adjacent Coal Creek Mine, the adjacent Caballo Mine, and the adjacent Cordero Rojo Mine, respectively, propose to mine the tracts as maintenance leases for the existing mines, if lease sales are held and they acquire the leases.

This Draft EIS describes the physical, biological, cultural, historic, and socioeconomic resources in and around the existing mines and the LBA tracts. The alternatives in the Draft EIS consider the impacts of leasing the tracts as they were applied for; leasing reconfigured tracts in order to avoid bypassing Federal coal or to increase competitive interest in a tract, and not leasing the tracts. The focus for the impact analysis was based upon resource issues and concerns identified during previous coal leasing analyses and public scoping conducted for these lease applications. Concerns related to leasing coal and its subsequent development include impacts to groundwater, air quality, wildlife, global climate change, impacts to human health, conflicts with oil and gas development, impacts to cultural and paleontological resources, impacts to wetland resources, nitrogen oxide emissions resulting from blasting of coal and overburden, access to county roads, and impacts from coal transport. Cumulative impacts related to ongoing surface coal mining and other proposed development in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming, and coal combustion residues and other by-products from coal-fired power plants, are also of concern.

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

The Draft EIS is open for a 60-day review period beginning on the date that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. Comments that are postmarked or received on or before the end of the 60-day review period will be considered in the preparation of the final EIS.

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