

## **Scoping Notice**

### **Bridger Coal Lease Modification – WYW2727 Bridger Coal Company**

#### **Description of Project**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office (RSFO) has been notified by Bridger Coal Company that they are seeking to modify Coal Lease WYW2727 and to obtain a right-of-way to support surface mining operations.

The Company has proposed a lease modification affecting lands adjacent to the current lease located north of Interstate 80. If modified, the current lease for federal lands would be expanded to include the west half of Section 24, and the southwest quarter and south half of the northwest quarter of Section 12, Township 20 North, Range 100 West (see attached map). The lease modification would add approximately 560 acres to the existing federal lease. In addition to the federal lease modification, the Company plans to increase lease holdings on bordering private lands for a total increase of approximately 2000 acres within the checkerboard land ownership pattern.

In addition to the federal lease modification (WYW2727) request, the company is proposing to conduct surface mining operations within Wyoming State Coal Lease No. 0-42077. The state coal lease encompasses all of Section 36, Township 20 North, Range 100 West (see attached map). The lands in Section 36 are split estate. The State of Wyoming owns the subsurface estate and the surface estate is federally owned and managed by the BLM.

Bridger Coal Company operates the Jim Bridger Coal Mine complex consisting of a multi-faceted mining operation inclusive of surface, underground, and highwall mining methods together with ongoing reclamation operations located in southwestern Wyoming, approximately 35 miles northeast of Rock Springs. The Jim Bridger Coal Mine complex is a captive operation and has been in production since 1974 providing coal to the adjacent Jim Bridger Power Plant. The lease modification and right-of-way project would serve growing industrial, commercial, and residential electrical production needs in the region.

#### **Relationship to Land Use Plans**

The Green River Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (GRRMP), effective 1997, allows for coal leasing and development. The GRRMP provides land use guidance for coal leasing within the proposed project area.

## **Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

The coal lease modification is subject to the appropriate level of environmental analysis. To comply with NEPA and the Council of Environmental Quality regulations which implement NEPA, BLM is required to conduct an environmental analysis.

## **Land and Resource Management Issues and Concerns**

A BLM interdisciplinary team of resource specialists will be involved in the analysis of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Land and resource issues tentatively identified as potentially affected by this proposed action include: wildlife, cultural, grazing, oil and gas, other leases, visual resource management, climate change, socioeconomics, winter range (elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope), threatened and endangered or special status plants and animals, and air quality.

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. BLM is requesting the public's help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives for analysis, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Comments are requested by December 16, 2009, allowing a 30-day comment period.  
Please submit your comments to:

Address: Kimberlee Foster  
Bridger Coal Lease Modification – WYW2727  
BLM Rock Springs Field Office  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Email: [rock\\_springs\\_wymail@blm.gov](mailto:rock_springs_wymail@blm.gov)  
Please list "Bridger Coal Lease Modification WYW2727" in the subject line.

# Bridger Coal Lease Modification - WYW2727

## Legend

-  Federal Land Lease Modification
-  Private Land Lease Modification
-  Federal Right-of-Way
-  State Subsurface Existing Lease
-  Existing Federal Coal Lease
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private

Scale = 1:57,000  
1.1 inches per Mile

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management  
Rock Springs Field Office  
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