



United States Department of the Interior



OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Western Region Office
1999 Broadway, Suite
3320
Denver, CO 80202-3050

And

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson St.
Craig, Colorado 81625

January 19, 2016

Dear Interested Public Land User,

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Western Region Office, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Little Snake Field Office (LSFO), have jointly prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the Colowyo Coal Mine's (Colowyo) Collom Permit Expansion Area (the Project). The EA has been prepared to support a decision by OSMRE as to whether a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be reached for a proposed mining plan modification for the Project. The EA also supports BLM LSFO in determining whether the agency can reach a FONSI and make a decision on the approval of a proposed federal coal lease modification for the Project. The proposed lease modification was not an original element of the Project and EA when public outreach was held in October and November 2013.

BLM regulations at 43 Code of Federal Regulations Subpart 3432 provide federal coal lessees the opportunity to apply for approval of a lease modification to add less than 960 acres of unleased lands to an existing lease. The proposed lease modification would add 27.84 acres of unleased federal land within the existing, state approved mine permit boundary to federal coal lease COC-01213475 01. Under the Proposed Action (Action Alternative A) the lands within the lease modification would be disturbed during the final stages of reclamation. Disturbance of those lands would be necessary for the final contour grading to tie in the natural topography with the adjacent areas to the north, east, and south that was previously covered by the temporary overburden stockpile. The lease modification is also a part of the action alternative (Alternative B) that was developed by Colowyo after the outreach period at the request of the agencies. Alternative B would reduce the amount of coal mined and afford enhanced protections for the greater sage-grouse. To accomplish those goals, Alternative B would require placing a portion of the temporary overburden stockpile over the lands included in the lease modification. Implementation of either Alternative would require that BLM LSFO approve the lease modification to provide Colowyo with use of that tract for activities associated with the Project.

The 27.84-acre tract included in the lease modification would only be utilized for surface activities in the development of the mine and would be reclaimed when mining is complete. No federal coal resources are proposed to be mined from the land included in the lease modification.

The EA analyzes the potential effects of approving both a federal coal lease modification and a surface mining plan modification that would authorize mining activities to produce up to 5.1 million tons per year (mtpy) of coal from Colowyo's federal coal leases, COC-0123475 01 and COC-68590. A decision on the lease modification is a separate federal action from a decision on the mining plan modification. However, because there would be no need for the lease modification without the proposed mining plan modification, and the mining plan modification as proposed in Alternatives A and B could not be approved without the prior approval of the lease modification, both federal actions are analyzed together in the EA.

Both OSMRE and BLM have preliminarily reached a FONSI for their respective actions. In the case that the FONSIs are signed by the agencies, the EA would support an OSMRE recommendation to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management for a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed mining plan modification. The EA would also support a decision by the BLM LSFO on whether or not to approve the coal lease modification application.

By this letter, OSMRE and BLM are notifying you that the EA and the unsigned FONSIs for each agency have been completed and are available for public review and comment as of January 19, 2016. OSMRE and BLM will accept written or emailed comments submitted during the period January 19, 2016 through February 18, 2016.

The EA and unsigned FONSIs can be reviewed online at the following OSMRE and BLM websites:

<http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/colowyo.shtm>

<http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/lsfo.html>

A hard copy of the EA and unsigned FONSIs can also be reviewed at the following locations:

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Western Region
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320,
Denver, CO 80202
Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson St.
Craig, CO 81625
Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety
1313 Sherman St, Room 215
Denver, CO 80203
Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

Moffat County Building
221 W. Victory Way, Suite 130
Craig, CO 81625
Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

Moffat County Library
570 Green St.
Craig, CO 81625
Between the hours of: 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM, Monday and Tuesday; 9:30 AM and 5:30 PM, Wednesday through Friday; and 11:00 AM and 5:30 PM Saturday
(Closed Sunday)

Bureau of Land Management, White River Field Office
220 East Market St.
Meeker, CO 81641
Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

Rio Blanco County Courthouse
555 Main St.
Meeker, CO 81641
Between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

Meeker Public Library
490 Main St.
Meeker, CO 81641
Between the hours of 9:30 AM and 5:30 PM, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; 9:30 AM and 9:00 PM, Tuesday and Thursday; and Saturday 9:30 AM and 2:00 PM
(Closed Sunday)

Rangely Regional Library
109 E. Main St.
Rangely, CO 81648
Between the hours of 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM, Tuesday; and 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM on Saturday
(Closed Sunday)

You are invited to direct your written comments on the EA and unsigned FONSI to:

ATTN: Collom Permit Expansion EA
C/O: Nicole Caveny
OSMRE WR
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202

Comments may also be emailed to: OSM-Colowyo-Mine-EA@OSMRE.gov. Be sure to send emails with the subject line:

ATTN: Collom Permit Expansion EA

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – will be publicly available. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

All submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be available for public review to the extent consistent with applicable law.

OSMRE and BLM kindly request that you refer to the specific chapter, section, and/or page number of the EA and/or FONSI that is associated with your comment.

Additional information regarding this Project may be obtained from Nicole Caveny at (303) 293-5078 or ncaveny@osmre.gov.

Sincerely,



Marcelo Calle
OSMRE, Manager Field Operations Branch



William Mortenson
BLM, Acting Field Manager