

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS
Colowyo Coal Mine, Collom Permit Expansion Area Project Mining Plan
Environmental Assessment

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), Western Region Office, will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for a mining plan proposed by the Colowyo Coal Company (Colowyo) to surface mine undeveloped Federal coal leases at the existing Colowyo Coal Mine. OSM will serve as the lead agency for the preparation of the EA. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Little Snake Field Office (LSFO) will be a cooperating agency.

The Colowyo Coal Mine is located approximately 26 miles southwest of Craig, Colorado and 22 miles north-northeast of Meeker, Colorado, west of Colorado Highway 13/789 in southwest Moffat and northern Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado. The project would occur on federal coal leases administered by the BLM LSFO and located within the Collom Permit Expansion Area one mile northwest of Colowyo's current mining operations. The federal coal leases contained in the project area include leases COC0123475, COC0123476-01, and COC68590 (Collom Lease Tract). The proposal to lease the Collom tract was evaluated in the 2006 "Environmental Assessment for Lease-by-Application, Collom Lease Tract" and approved Finding of No Significant Impact, and the decision to lease the tract was documented in the Decision Record issued by the BLM in 2006. Federal lease COC68590 was issued by the BLM in July 2007. The other leases were issued in 1982.

OSM is preparing this EA to evaluate the potential environmental impacts resulting from the proposed mining plan for the Collom Permit Expansion Area as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The OSM Western Regional Director will make a recommendation to the DOI's Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management (ASLM) on the proposed federal mining plan. The ASLM will approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the mining plan as required under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. The OSM recommendation and the ASLM decision will be based on the current EA, previous NEPA information, the permit application package, the BLM "Resource Recovery and Protection Plan", and the State of Colorado's Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 permit findings. This EA will update, clarify and provide new and additional environmental information based on the proposed mining operations. Resource values to be covered include: surface and ground water; geology; soils; topography; recreation; air quality; climate change and greenhouse gases; fish and wildlife; cultural resources; social economic composition; and environmental justice. The cumulative effects of the project will also be addressed.

The proposed mining plan includes mining two pits, the Collom Lite Pit and the Little Collom X Pit using truck/shovel and dragline surface mining techniques. The Collom Lite Pit would cover about 880 acres and would be up to 650 feet deep in places and the Little Collom X Pit would cover about 213 acres and would be up to 100 feet deep in places. Temporary out-of-pit spoil pile areas or an adjoining mined out pit would be utilized to store overburden materials removed from the pit areas. Coal would be hauled in trucks to a primary crusher where it would be loaded into haul trucks and then transported on a single haul road northeast along the west fork and main stem of Jubb Creek for approximately six miles to the Gossard loadout. Additional mine support facilities would be constructed on adjacent private and state lands including utility and water lines, a primary crusher, and an office, maintenance, and warehouse

facility. Reclamation, including backfill and grading (to handle erosion and restore the landscape to a condition similar to the pre-mining topography), replacement of topsoil, and revegetation using suitable approved species, would begin as soon as possible after coal is removed. Proposed mining operations would disturb a total area of 2,244.22 acres over the anticipated 20 to 40 year life of the project.

OSM and the BLM will hold an "open-house" style public outreach meeting which will include displays and handouts explaining the project, and will provide opportunities to ask questions of OSM, BLM, and Colowyo representatives about the project and the NEPA process, and opportunities to provide written comments on the project. ***The meeting will be held on October 10, 2013 from 4-8 pm at the BLM Little Snake Field Office located at 455 Emerson Street, Craig, Colorado.***

Additional information regarding this project may be obtained from Foster Kirby or Nicole Caveny, Western Region Office, OSM, 1999 Broadway, Suite 3320, Denver, CO 80202-3050, telephone numbers (303) 293-5039 and (303) 293-5078, respectively. When available, the EA and associated decision document, outreach summary report, legal notice, and outreach letter, will also be posted at: http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/current_initiatives/Colowyo/Colowyo.shtm.

OSM is soliciting public comments on this proposal. Your comments will help to determine the issues and alternatives that will be evaluated in the environmental analysis. You are invited to direct these comments to: OSM Colowyo Mine EA, C/O Foster Kirby or Nicole Caveny, Western Region Office, OSM, 1999 Broadway, Suite 3320, Denver, CO 80202-3050, Email: OSM-Colowyo-Mine-EA@osmre.gov. Comments will be accepted through October 31, 2013. Comments received, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection.