

Public Notice
Spring Creek Mine Mining Plan Modification
Environmental Assessment

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Western Region Office, will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for the Spring Creek Mine's (SCM) mining plan modification for federal coal lease MTM 94378 (the Project). The DOI Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals (ASLM), in accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, originally approved SCM's mining plan modification for federal coal lease MTM 94378 on June 27, 2012. SCM commenced mining in federal coal lease MTM 94378 in 2012 in accordance with its state mine permit and federal mining plan modification approvals, and mining and reclamation operations have been ongoing since that time in the approved permit area.

The SCM is located approximately 32 miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming. The SCM uses a combination of dragline and truck shovel mining methods. The 2012 Spring Creek mining plan modification approval authorized surface coal mining, a production rate of up to 24 million tons per year with an ultimate recovery of 117.3 million tons of coal. Federal coal lease MTM 94378 was issued by the Bureau of Land Management in December of 2007. The mining plan modification approval resulted in 1,117.7 acres of federal coal lease MTM 94378, and 428.3 acres of federal surface land being included within the SCM. As of December 31, 2015, approximately 18.4 million tons of federal leased coal has been mined within the Project area.

Because of a recent court decision, OSMRE is preparing this EA to reevaluate the environmental impacts resulting from the originally proposed and currently approved mining plan modification for federal coal lease MTM 94378, pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). *See January 21, 2016 order of the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana, in case WildEarth Guardians v. U.S. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement et al., Case 1:14-cv-00013-SPW (D. Mont.).*

The EA will update, clarify, and provide new and additional environmental information for the Project. As a result of the EA process, OSMRE will determine whether or not there are significant environmental impacts. An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared if the EA identifies significant impacts. If a finding of no significant impact is reached, and pursuant to 30 CFR 746.13, OSMRE will prepare and submit to the ASLM a mining plan decision document recommending approval, disapproval, or conditional approval of the mining plan. The ASLM will approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve the mining plan approval document within the mining plan decision document, as required under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920.

OSMRE is soliciting public comments on the Project. 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 by email: osm-nepa-mt@osmre.gov, ensure the subject line reads: ATTN: Spring Creek Mine LBA1 EA. Comments may also be received by mail: OSMRE Western Region, C/O Lauren Mitchell, 1999 Broadway, Suite 3320 Denver, CO 80202. All comments must be received or postmarked no later than March 12, 2016, in order to be considered during the preparation of the EA. 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. Additional information regarding the Project may be obtained from Lauren Mitchell at (303) 293-5028. When available, the EA and other supporting documentation will be posted at and may be obtained from:

<http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/SpringcreekMineLBA1.shtm>.