

# United States Department of the Interior



## OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT Western Region Office

1999 Broadway, Suite 3320  
Denver, CO 80202-3050



June 1, 2016

Dear Stakeholders and Interested Parties,

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Western Region Office, has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the Spring Creek Mine's (SCM) mining plan modification for federal coal lease MTM 94378 (Spring Creek Mine LBA 1 EA [the Project]). Federal coal lease MTM 94378 was issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in December of 2007. The DOI Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals (ASLM), in accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, subsequently approved SCM's federal mining plan modification to include federal coal lease MTM 94378 on June 27, 2012. The 2012 Spring Creek federal mining plan approval authorized surface coal mining on 1,117.7 acres of federal coal within MTM 94378. 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, as of December 2015, approximately 18.4 mmt of the 103.2 mmt of federal coal included in the 2007 BLM MTM 94378 lease sale had been recovered. The SCM is located approximately 32 miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming (see attached map). The SCM uses a combination of dragline and truck shovel mining methods.

Because of a recent court decision, OSMRE has prepared 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 updates, clarifies, and provides new and additional environmental information for the Project. As a result of the EA process, OSMRE has determined there are no significant environmental impacts and has issued an unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). 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 invites you to comment on the EA and the unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which are now available for review. All comments must be received or postmarked by July 5, 2016 to be considered.

The EA and unsigned FONSI are available for review online at:  
<http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/SpringcreekMineLBA1.shtm>

Printed versions of the EA and unsigned FONSI are also available for review at the following locations:

- OSMRE, Western Region  
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320  
Denver, CO 80202  
Between the hours of 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday (Closed Saturday and Sunday)
- BLM, Miles City Field Office  
111 Garryowen Road  
Miles City, MT 59301  
Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Monday through Friday (Closed Saturday and Sunday)

- Sheridan County Courthouse  
224 S Main St  
Sheridan, WY 82801  
Between the hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday (Closed Saturday and Sunday)
- Big Horn County Courthouse  
Old U.S. 87  
Hardin, MT 59034  
Between the hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday (Closed Saturday and Sunday)
- Sheridan Fulmer Library  
335 W Alger St  
Sheridan, WY 82801  
Between the hours of 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM Monday through Thursday, Friday and Saturday –  
Between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Closed Sunday
- Big Horn County Library  
419 N Custer Ave  
Hardin, MT 59034  
Between the hours of 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM Monday through Thursday, Friday – Between 10:00  
AM and 6:00 PM, Closed Saturday and Sunday

You are invited to direct your comments on the EA and unsigned OSMRE FONSI to: ATTN: Spring Creek Mine LBA 1 EA, C/O: Lauren Mitchell, OSMRE WR, 1999 Broadway, Suite 3320, Denver, CO 80202-3050. Comments may also be emailed to: [osm-nepa-mt@osmre.gov](mailto:osm-nepa-mt@osmre.gov), ensure the subject line reads: ATTN: OSMRE, Spring Creek Mine LBA 1 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.

Additional information regarding this Project may be obtained from Lauren Mitchell at (303) 293-5028 or [lmitchell2@osmre.gov](mailto:lmitchell2@osmre.gov).

Sincerely,



Marcelo Calle, Manager  
Field Operations Branch