



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

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



October 13, 2015

Dear Interested Public Land User,

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 a Federal mining plan modification for the Spring Creek Mine (SCM) lease by modification (LBM) to Federal coal lease MTM-069782 (the Project). In accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (MLA), The DOI Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management (ASLM) must approve the Project before any mining and reclamation can occur on lands containing leased Federal coal. The LBM application was filed with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) by Spring Creek Coal LLC (SCC) on May 17, 2007. As a result, the BLM prepared EA# MT-DOI-BLM-MT-020-2010-29 in cooperation with the OSMRE and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) which was published in February 2010. BLM subsequently issued a finding of no significant impact for the lease modification and the LBM was issued on July 1, 2010. MDEQ has received an application for a major permit revision (TR1) for the SCM Permit C1979012, including mining portions of LBM MTM-069782.

OSMRE is preparing an EA to evaluate the environmental impacts resulting from the Project, pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The SCM is located approximately 32 miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming. The SCM uses a combination of dragline and truck shovel mining methods. The amount of remaining recoverable Federal coal authorized for removal within the currently approved Federal mining plan is approximately 122.4 million tons (mmt). The Project proposes to add 74.5 Federal surface acres, 498.11 Federal coal acres and 48.1 mmt of Federal coal to the approved Federal mining plan. The average SCM production rate is 18 million tons per year (mmtpy) and the maximum production rate is 30 mmtpy. The Project would not change the average or maximum production rate. SCM started operation in 1980 and the mine will continue to operate until 2025. The Project would extend the life of the mine 3 years.

The EA will disclose the potential for direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to the environment from the Project. Further, this EA will update, clarify, and provide new and additional environmental information for the Project. Through the EA process, OSMRE will determine whether or not there are significant environmental impacts. If a finding of no significant impact is reached, the OSMRE Director will make a recommendation to the ASLM on the Federal mining plan modification, and the ASLM will approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the Federal mining plan modification as required under the MLA. If the EA identifies significant impacts, an environmental impact statement will be prepared.

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 to:

ATTN: Spring Creek Mine TR1 EA

C/O: Lauren Mitchell,

Western Region Office, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, 1999

Broadway, Suite 3320, Denver, CO 80202-3050

Email: OSM-NEPA-MT@OSMRE.gov

Comments should be received or postmarked no later than November 14, 2015 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, telephone number (303) 293-5028 and the Project website provided below. When available, the EA and other supporting documentation will be posted at: <http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/SpringcreekMineTR1.shtm>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marcelo Calle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Marcelo Calle, Manager
Field Operations Branch