



# 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 20, 2017

**RE: Preparation of an Environmental Assessment for a Proposed Federal Mining Plan Modification for Bull Mountains Mine No. 1**

Dear Interested Party,

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Western Region Office, will prepare an environmental assessment for Signal Peak Energy, LLC's Bull Mountains Mine No. 1, Amendment 3 mining plan modification for Federal coal lease MTM 97988. The Interior Department Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals, in accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, originally approved Bull Mountains Mine No. 1, Amendment 3 mining plan modification for Federal coal lease MTM 97988 on February 24, 2015.

Because of a recent court decision, OSMRE is preparing this environmental assessment to evaluate the environmental impacts resulting from the originally proposed mining plan modification for Federal coal lease MTM 97988, pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). *See Montana Environmental Information Center v. U.S. Office of Surface Mining et al., Case 9:15-cv-00106-DVM (D. Mont. 2017).*

The OSMRE is responsible for reviewing plans to conduct coal mining and reclamation operations on lands containing leased Federal coal. Pursuant to 30 CFR 746, the OSMRE must prepare and submit to the Secretary of the Interior a decision document recommending approval, disapproval, or approval with condition(s) of the proposed mining plan modification. OSMRE is requesting public comments on the scope of the environmental assessment, alternatives to be considered, and issues that should be analyzed.

The proposed Mining Plan Modification would allow Signal Peak to continue underground coal mining, within the permit area, on approximately 1,213 acres of additional Federal coal lands. In connection with mining this Federal coal, Signal Peak would also mine adjacent private and State coal. Mining would continue approximately 11.5 years and 90.1 million saleable tons of coal would be recovered. In addition to the mining of adjacent private and State coal, other actions that would be conducted in association with the proposed Mining Plan Modification (i.e., connected actions) include facilities associated with rock disposal; construction of roads, boreholes and powerlines; installation of ventilation facilities; and other surface disturbances.

If no action is taken, Signal Peak would continue to mine approximately 2.5 years to recover the 9.4 million saleable tons of non-Federal coal remaining within the permit area

OSMRE is soliciting public comments on the proposed Project, scope of the environmental assessment, and the issues that should be analyzed. Interested persons may view information about the proposed Project on the OSMRE website at:

<https://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/bullMountainsMine.shtm>.



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The website contains information related to: the Signal Peak's proposed mining project; the public comment period; and the NEPA process.

This notice initiates the public scoping process. To ensure consideration in developing the environmental assessment, we must receive your electronic or written comments by **November 20, 2017**. Comments may be submitted in writing or by e-mail. At the top of your letter or in the subject line of your e-mail message, please indicate that the comments are "Bull Mountains Mine No. 1 EA Scoping Comments."

- E-mail comments should be sent to: [osm-nepa-mt@osmre.gov](mailto:osm-nepa-mt@osmre.gov)
- Comments delivered by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail or by courier service must be delivered by **November 20, 2017** and should be sent to:

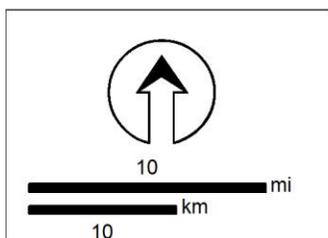
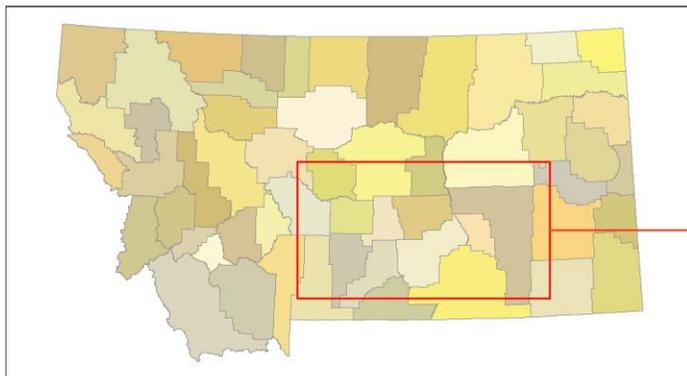
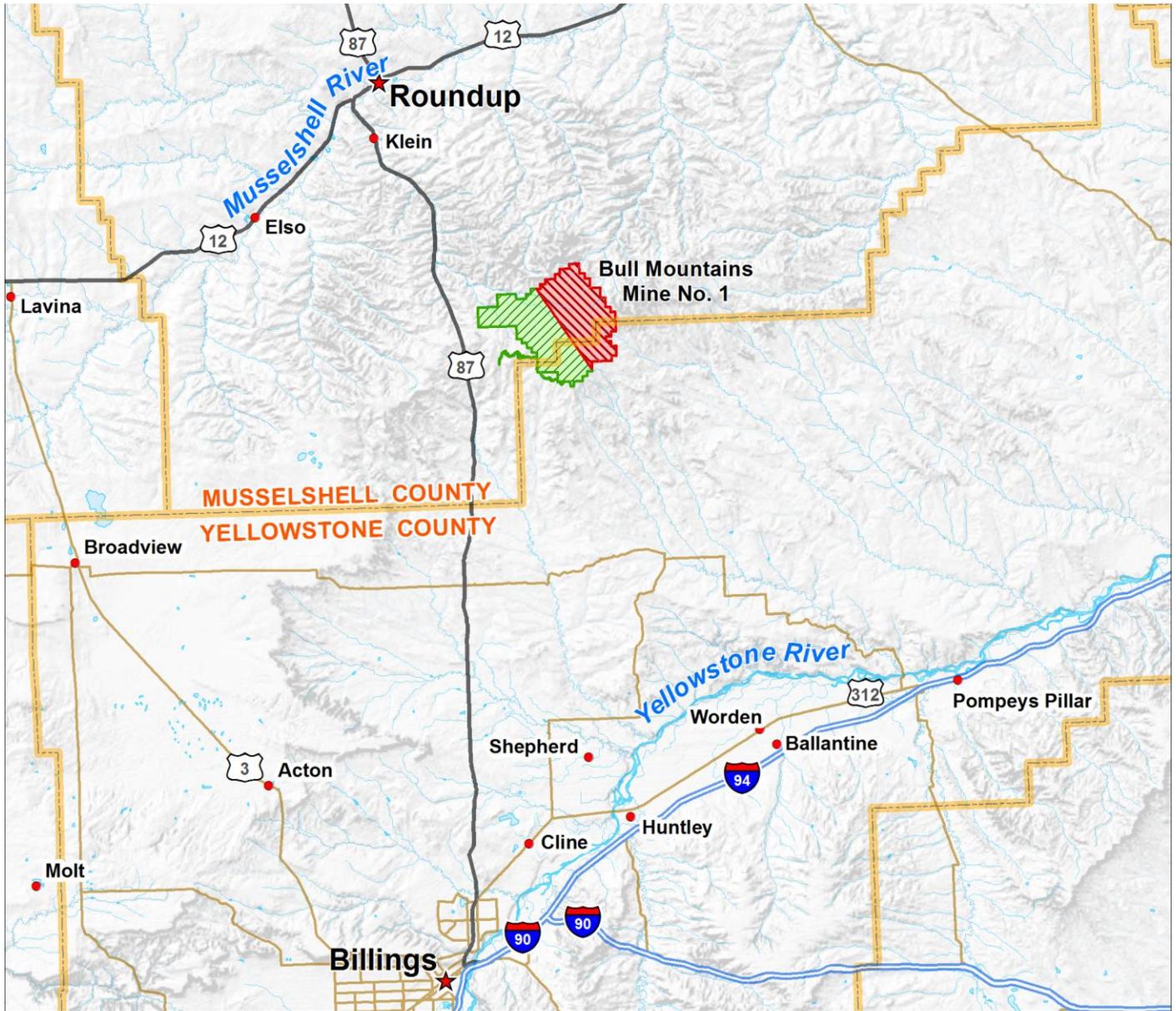
OSMRE-Western Region  
ATTN: Gretchen Pinkham, Bull Mountains Mine No. 1  
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320  
Denver, CO 80202-3050

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. By including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personally identifying information, may be made publically available at any time. 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.

For further information about the Project, NEPA Process, or to have your name added to the mailing list, contact: Gretchen Pinkham, OSMRE Project Manager, at 303-293-5088 or [gpinkham@osmre.gov](mailto:gpinkham@osmre.gov).

Elizabeth Shaeffer, Manager  
Field Operations Branch

Enclosure



- ★ County Seats (Administrative Center)
  - Other Cities & Towns
- Bull Mountains Mine No. 1**
-  Amendment 2 Permit and Access
  -  Amendment 3 Mining Area

**Bull Mountains Mine No. 1  
Federal Mining Plan  
Modification EA**

Last Updated: 14 OCT 2017

**Figure I  
Project Location**