



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT
Western Region Office
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202-3050



March 13, 2018

RE: Availability 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, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Signal Peak Energy, LLC's Bull Mountains Mine No. 1, Amendment 3 mining plan modification for Federal coal lease MTM 97988. See Figure 1 for the location of the Mine and the Amendment 3 area.

The Interior Department Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals (ASLM), 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. On August 14, 2017, the District Court for the District of Montana identified deficiencies in OSMRE's analysis under the National Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), vacated and set aside the 2015 Mining Plan Modification EA, and remanded the matter back to OSMRE for further action (see *Montana Environmental Information Center v. U.S. Office of Surface Mining et al.*, Case 9:15-cv-00106-DVM (D. Mont. Aug. 14, 2017)). The 2018 EA has been prepared to address the August 14, 2017 ruling and satisfy OSMRE's responsibilities under NEPA.

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 announcing that the EA and an unsigned FONSI are available online and is requesting public comments on the documents.

The proposed mining plan modification would allow Signal Peak Energy, LLC (Signal Peak) to continue underground coal mining, within the permit area, on approximately 1,835 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 for a total of 11.5 years and approximately 109.7 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 on the previously approved 110 acres of Federal coal lands for approximately 2.5 years to recover 22.9 million saleable tons of coal remaining within the permit area, ceasing mining operations when the Federal coal in Amendment 3 is encountered.



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Interested persons may view the EA and the unsigned FONSI on the OSMRE website at:

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

This notice initiates the public comment process on the 2018 EA and unsigned FONSI. To ensure consideration of your comments, we must receive your electronic or written comments by **April 11, 2018**. 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 Comments.”

- E-mail comments should be sent to: osm-nepa-mt@osmre.gov
- Comments delivered by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail or by courier service must be delivered by **April 11, 2018** and should be sent to:

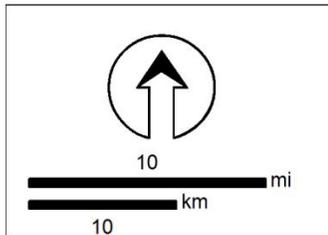
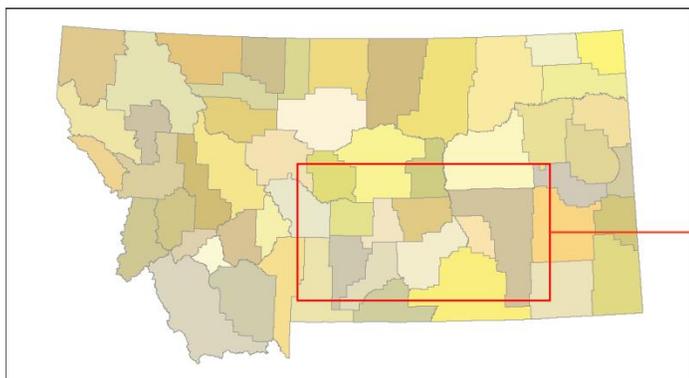
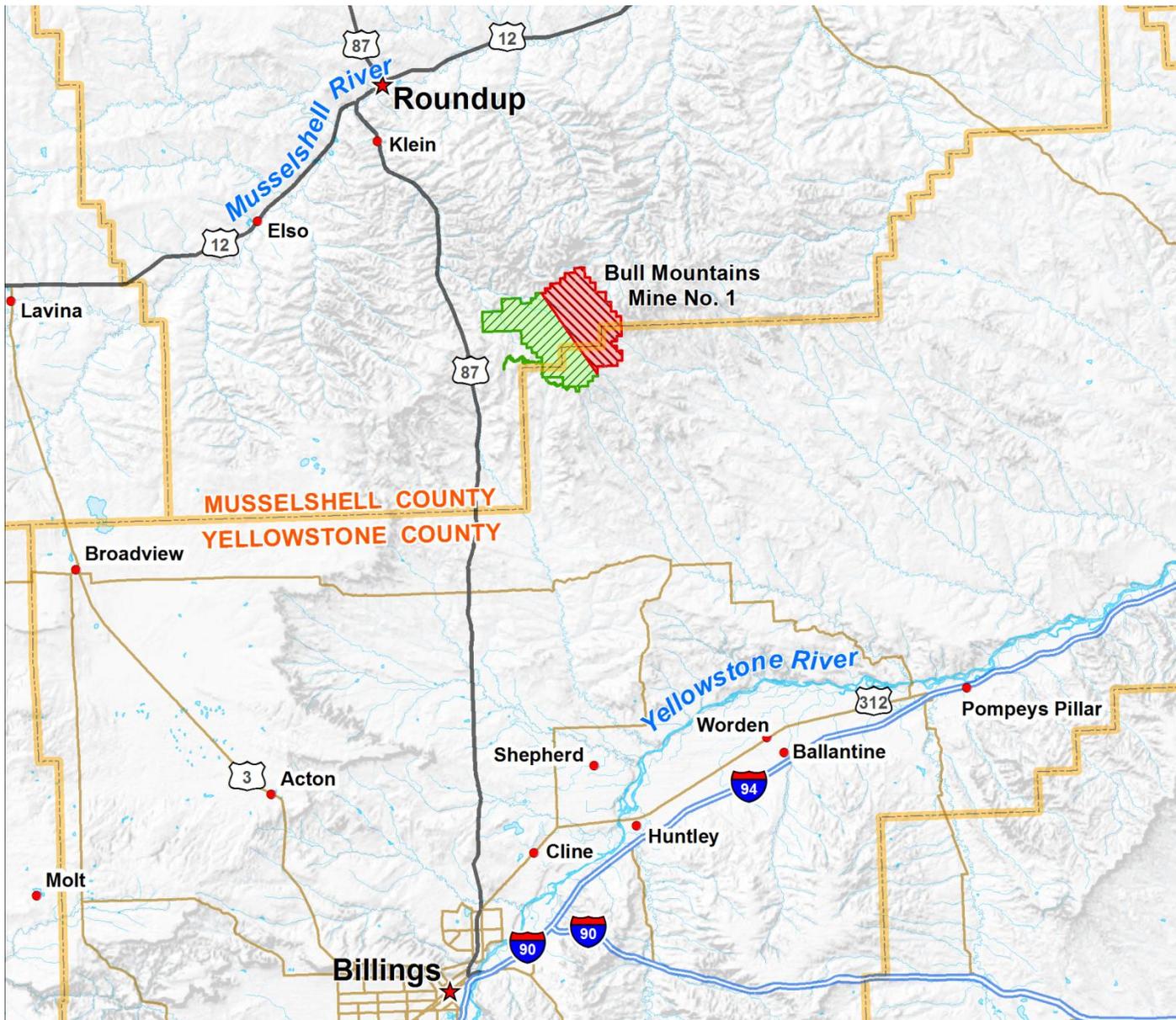
OSMRE-Western Region
ATTN: Gretchen Pinkham, Bull Mountains Mine No. 1
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202-3050

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.

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 1
Project Location**