

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management****[WY-920-1320-EM, WYW136142]****Federal Coal Lease Modification****AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) and notice of public hearing on the Modification of Federal Coal Lease WYW136142 at the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine Complex operated by Powder River Coal Company, in Campbell County, WY.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations and other applicable statutes, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the DNA for the modification of Federal coal lease WYW136142 in the Wyoming Powder River Basin, and announces the scheduled date and place for a public hearing pursuant to 43 CFR 3432, 3425.3 and 3425.4. The draft DNA addresses the impacts of modifying this Federal coal lease and mining the modification area as a part of the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine Complex operated by Powder River Coal Company, in Campbell County, WY. The purpose of the hearing is to solicit public comments on the DNA, the fair market value, the maximum economic recovery, and the proposed noncompetitive offer of the coal included in the proposed lease modification. This lease modification is being considered for offer as a result of a request received from Powder River Coal Company on June 19, 2000. The tract as requested includes about 19.97 acres containing approximately 2.5 million tons of Federal coal reserves.

DATES: A public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. MDT, on October 9, 2001, at the Clarion Western Plaza Motel, 2009 S. Douglas Highway, Gillette, Wyoming. Written comments on the DNA will be accepted on or before November 2, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Please address questions, comments or requests for copies of the DNA to the BLM Casper Field Office, Attn: Mike Karbs, 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, WY 82604; or you may e-mail them to the attention of Mike Karbs at casper_wymail@blm.gov; or fax them to 307-261-7587.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Karbs or Nancy Doelger at the above address, or phone: 307-261-7600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM Casper Field Office has received a request to modify an existing Federal coal lease at the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine Complex. This mine is operated by Powder River Coal Company, and is located in Campbell County, WY, approximately 20 miles southeast of Wright. On June 19, 2000, Powder River Coal Company filed an application with the BLM to modify Federal lease WYW136142 by adding the following lands:

T. 41 N., R. 70 W., 6th PM, WyomingSection 18: Lot 6 (N¹/₂) or (N¹/₂NW¹/₄NE¹/₄)

This tract is adjacent to Powder River Coal Company's North Antelope/Rochelle Mine Complex and includes 19.97 acres more or less with an estimated 2.5 million tons of coal. This application was filed as a lease modification under the provisions of 43 CFR 3432.

BLM believes that this lease modification serves the interests of the United States because it allows for a more efficient recovery of coal in a narrow or "neck" area of the current lease. This modification area is logically recovered as a part of the planned operations on the existing lease, and while this area could be recovered as part of a later competitive coal lease tract, that is not a certainty. If this coal is recovered in concert with the existing lease, it would result in minimal additional surface disturbance.

BLM further believes that there is no current competitive interest in the lands proposed for lease modification, although as noted above, this area could be recovered as part of a later competitive coal lease tract, but that may or may not occur. This lease modification would not reduce the competitive value of a later competitive coal lease tract. Under the lease modification process, the modified lands would be added to the existing lease without competitive bidding. Before offering the lease modification the BLM will prepare an appraisal of the fair market value of the lease. The United States would receive fair market value of the lease for the added lands.

The proposed lease modification is within the mine permit area of the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine Complex. No new facilities or employees would be needed to mine the coal. Haul distances would not be increased. If production at the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine continues at the 2000 rate of 70 million tons of coal, the 2.5 million tons of coal included in the proposed lease modification would represent less than one-half month of

production. The lands have most recently been studied under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) as part of the Powder River/Thundercloud LBA EIS (lease by application environmental impact statement), as well as several earlier NEPA analyses. BLM prepared a DNA for this action to make most effective use of these existing NEPA analyses. If this tract is modified into the current lease, the new lands must be incorporated into the existing mining plans for the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine Complex. The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) is a cooperating agency in the preparation of the environmental document because it is the Federal agency that is responsible for any required actions necessary to incorporate these lands into the current mining plan.

BLM conducted scoping during August 2001, soliciting specific concerns that should be considered in processing this modified lease application, with scoping comments accepted through September 7, 2001. The DNA addresses issues identified or information received during this scoping period for the proposed lease modification. In addition to preparing the DNA, BLM will also develop possible stipulations regarding mining operations, determine the fair market value of the tract and evaluate maximum economic recovery of the coal in the proposed tract while processing this lease modification.

Comments on the DNA, the fair market value, the maximum economic recovery, and the proposed noncompetitive offer of the coal included in the proposed lease modification, as well as scoping comments already received, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the address below during regular business hours (7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Dated: August 30, 2001.

Alan Rabinoff,

Deputy State Director, Minerals and Lands.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ES-020-01-1310-EI]

Notice of Intent To Prepare Planning Analyses/Environmental Assessments

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare planning analyses/environmental assessments.

SUMMARY: The Jackson Field Office, Eastern States will prepare Planning Analyses/Environmental Assessments (PA/EA) to consider leasing scattered tracts of Federal mineral estate for oil and gas exploration and development. This notice is issued pursuant to Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1501.7 and Title 43 CFR 1610.2(c). The planning effort will follow the procedures set forth in Title 43 CFR part 1600. The public is invited to participate in this planning process, beginning with the identification of planning issues and criteria.

DATES: Comments relating to the identification of planning issues and criteria will be accepted for 30 days from the date of this publication.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to: Bureau of Land Management, Jackson Field Office, 411 Briarwood Drive, Suite 404, Jackson, MS 39206.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Reiss, Lead for PA/EA, Jackson Field Office, (601-977-5400).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM has responsibility to consider nominations to lease Federal mineral estate for oil and gas exploration and development. An interdisciplinary team will be used in the preparation of the PA/EAs. Preliminary issues, subject to change as a result of public input, are (1) potential impacts of oil and gas exploration and development on the surface resources and (2) consideration of restrictions on lease rights to protect surface resources. The number of separate analyses that will be prepared for the tracts will depend on their proximity to each other. Tract locations, along with acreage, are listed below.

Alabama, Clarke County, St. Stephens Meridian

T 6 N, R 3 E—Section 4:
W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$

T 9 N, R 1 E—Section 31: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

Alabama, Conecuh and Monroe Counties, St. Stephens Meridian

T 6 N, R 8 E—Section 34: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$,
SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$

T 6 N, R 9 E—Section 19:
S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Alabama, Lamar County, Huntsville Meridian

T 16 S, R 16 W—Section 5: N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
Section 11: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 20:
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$

Alabama, St. Clair County, Huntsville Meridian

T 13 S, R 4 E—Section 24: E $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$, Section
25: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$

Arkansas, Ouachita County, 5th Meridian

T 15 S, R 14 W—Section 31:
NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

T 15 S, R 15 W—Section 23:
S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ W $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

T 16 S, R 14 W—Section 4:
NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Arkansas, Yell County, 5th Meridian

T 5 N, R 23 W—Section 18:
N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

T 5 N, R 24 W—Section 13: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Louisiana, East Carroll Parish, Louisiana Meridian

T 18 N, R 13 W—Sections 41, 42, 43, 46,
47, 48, 50 51, 52

Louisiana, Webster Parish, Louisiana Meridian

T 19 N, R 8 W—Section 22:
E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

Due to the limited scope of this PA/EA process, public meetings are not scheduled.

Bruce E. Dawson,

Field Manager, Jackson Field Office.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY-920-1320-EL; WYW150210, WYW150318, WYW151134, WYW151643, & WYW154001]

Federal Coal, Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Scoping

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on four maintenance lease applications received for five Federal coal tracts in the decertified Powder River Federal Coal Production Region, Wyoming, and Notice of Scoping.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has received the

following competitive coal lease applications:

1. On March 10, 2000, Powder River Coal Company applied for a maintenance coal lease for approximately 4,500 acres (approximately 564 million recoverable tons of coal) in two tracts adjacent to the North Antelope/Rochelle Mine Complex in Campbell County, WY. The tracts, which are referred to as the NARO North Lease by Application (LBA) Tract and the NARO South LBA Tract, were assigned case numbers WYW150210 and WYW154001, respectively.

2. On March 23, 2000, Ark Land Company applied for a maintenance coal lease for approximately 2,799.5 acres (approximately 383.6 million in-place tons of coal) adjacent to the Black Thunder Mine in Campbell County, WY. The tract, which is referred to as the Little Thunder LBA Tract, was assigned case number WYW150318. On June 14, 2001, Ark Land Company filed an application to modify the Little Thunder LBA Tract. As currently filed, the tract includes approximately 3,449.317 acres and 440 million tons of recoverable coal reserves.

3. On July 28, 2000, Triton Coal Company applied for a maintenance coal lease for approximately 1,868 acres (approximately 173.2 million in-place tons of coal) adjacent to the North Rochelle Mine in Campbell County, WY. The tract, which is referred to as the West Roundup LBA Tract, was assigned case number WYW151134.

4. On September 12, 2000, Antelope Coal Company applied for a maintenance coal lease for approximately 3,500 acres (approximately 292.5 million in-place tons of coal) adjacent to the Antelope Mine in Campbell and Converse Counties, WY. The tract, which is referred to as the West Antelope LBA Tract, was assigned case number WYW151643. On June 27, 2001, Antelope Coal Company filed an application to modify the West Antelope LBA Tract. As currently filed, the tract includes approximately 3,542 acres and 293.9 million tons of in place coal reserves.

The tracts were applied for as maintenance tract LBAs under the provisions of 43 CFR 3425.1. The Powder River Regional Coal Team (RCT) reviewed these lease applications at a public meeting held on October 25, 2000, in Cheyenne, WY. The RCT recommended that BLM process these four lease applications. As part of the LBA process, BLM will prepare an environmental analysis in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),