

APPENDIX B:
COMMENTS AND RESPONSES ON THE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This page intentionally left blank.

Comment Letter

- A. Mr. Don Ballard
Anadarko Land Corporation
P.O. Box 1330
Houston, TX 77251
- B. Mr. Bill Spillman
122 Converse Court
Rock Springs, WY 82901
- C. Mr. Erik Molvar
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
P.O. Box 1512
Laramie, WY 82073
- D. Mr. Gus Winterfeld
Erathem-Vanir Geological
2021 Ardella Drive
Pocatello, ID 83201
- E. Mr. Dee Jennse
Interwest Mining Company
One Utah Center
201 South Main Street, Suite 2100
Salt Lake City, UT 84140
- F. Ms. Lynne Boomgaarden
Office of State Lands and Investment
122 West 25th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
- G. Mr. Bill Wichers
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
5400 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82006
- H. Mr. William Coble, Jr.
Town of Superior
P.O. Box 60
Superior, WY 82945

A. Mr. Don Ballard, Anadarko Land Corporation (2 pages)

ANADARKO PETROLEUM CORPORATION

TEL. 932/ 836-0000
P.O. BOX 1390 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77251-1390

March 1, 2004



BLM Rock Springs Field Office
Attn: Teri Deakins
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

VIA FACSIMILE (307) 352-0329
Original to follow via US Mail

Re: Ten Mile Rim Tract (TMRT)
Case Number WYW 154595
Bridger Coal Company
Sweetwater County, Wyoming

Dear Ms. Deakins:

Anadarko Land Corp. (ALC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Ten Mile Rim Coal Lease By Application and associated Rights of Way, being case number WYW 154595. ALC owns considerable interests in the area surrounding the property associated with the proposed lease, which may be affected by the outcome of this effort. The following comments are respectfully submitted regarding the Ten Mile Rim Tract (TMRT) Lease by Application (LBA).

ALC is generally supportive of the TMRT LBA by Bridger Coal Company (Bridger). BLM policy specifies that mineral resources are on a level equal with all other resource values. This equitableness is important in the lease application stage and should be considered when addressing the balance with other issues such as those related to the environment. The coal industry, generally, and Bridger, specifically, have demonstrated the ability to access coal resources while protecting environmental values.

The coal industry has also demonstrated over time that a lease such as this creates certain socio-economic benefits to a region and state. In addition to supplying high paying, quality jobs to individuals within local communities, the industry makes significant financial contributions to local, state and federal treasuries. These positive regional impacts should be considered.

It is noted that other coal properties in the vicinity are held by the private sector in fee ownership or are presently under valid existing leases and are arranged in a checkerboard pattern with the BLM lands. It is believed that BLM's approval of the proposed lease will promote ongoing development of regional coal resources and avoid mineral waste. Also, since Bridger created the access to the TMRT by its use of prior federal, state and private leases, Bridger seems to be the only logical lessee for these lands.

ALC hopes that this project will be carried through to completion in the most expeditious manner possible as, in its opinion, this project will be good for the people and industry of Sweetwater County as well as the State of Wyoming.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Ballard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Don Ballard
Landman
Anadarko Land Corp.

c: C. Bretches

Response to Comment Letter A. Thank you for taking the time to review the Draft EA and providing your comments. This letter does not contain any specific comments on the EA; therefore, no changes to the EA are required as a result of this letter.

B. Mr. Bill Spillman (1 page)

Dear Sir:

As regards the Draft Environmental Assessment for the 10-Mile Rim Coal lease, I do not know that I can provide a specific objection to Bridger Coal Co. making application for leases in this area as long as surface disturbance is none. However that is not likely.

What I do object to as regards this area is the BLM's ongoing and continued mode of managing the Red Desert area in a piecemeal style. It is more than apparent that the BLM sees only one use for S.W. Wyoming; that is to provide extractive industries land to develop and ruin any chance of this area being used for those whose self interests are not benefitted by industrial or extractive use.

Over the past several years the BLM has approved multiple seismic mapping, small but numerous exploratory gas drilling projects, and these are strangling the remote possibilities that the Red Desert will retain the esthetic values that the public has more than adequately demonstrated should persevere. The continued delay in the release of the draft environmental impact statement on the Jack Morrow Hills appears to have allowed the BLM free reign to approve gas field development that will surround these sensitive lands and even intrude into what should be seen as a core area necessary for preserving any semblance of those values the public desires to protect.

Until the release of the Jack Morrow Hills impact statement and until a comprehensive plan or impact statement can be developed for all of S.W. Wyoming, all further development and assessment plans should immediately be put on hold. The BLM has run rampant over this area and clearly indicates the coziness it has with developmental interests as long as royalties flow to the BLM coffers. The BLM continues to deny the public's comments and desires for the Red Desert that are counter to allowing oil field development.

As stated above, no further plans for development or industrial assessment should be allowed until the whole area of S.W. Wyoming receives a comprehensive and total assessment that will allow other uses besides those of petroleum interests who could care less about S.W. Wyoming. Those industries see only a 20 year possibility to fill their pockets with money while the people who reside here, who value the natural landscape and wildlife will be left with only a barren, scraped raw land, bereft of any value except as a parking lot.

Please consider this note officially as a protest to the methane drilling assessment plan for the Hay reservoir area that is also being anticipated for BLM approval. Another way the BLM is doing piecemeal management is the fact that this project is under the management of the Rawlin's field office. The BLM is making it as difficult as possible to coordinate management of the Red Desert.

Sincerely and hopefully,



Bill Spillman
1122 Converse Ct.
Riverton WY

Response to Comment Letter B. This letter states the opinion that BLM is piecemealing the management of the Red Desert area in southwest Wyoming and suggests that no further development should occur until a comprehensive assessment is completed. BLM manages the federal lands within the Red Desert area in accordance with the various approved resource management plans. Therefore, no changes to the EA are required as a result of this comment.

Regarding management of the Jack Morrow Hills area, the Ten Mile Rim Tract area is located outside of the boundaries of the Jack Morrow Hills planning area and would not affect any future management decisions that would be made by BLM within this area. Therefore, no changes to the EA are required as a result of this comment.

The remaining portion of this letter contains numerous general comments/opinions; however, none of these comments/opinions are specific to the Draft EA. Therefore, no changes to the EA are required. Thank you for taking the time to review the Draft EA and providing your comments.

C. Mr. Erik Molvar, Biodiversity Conservation Alliance (2 pages)



Working to Protect Native Species and Their Habitats

P.O. Box 1512, Laramie, WY 82075 (307) 742-7978 fax: 742-7985



March 2, 2004

Rock Springs Field Office, BLM
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Re: Scoping Comments on the Tenmile Rim Coal Mining Project

Dear Folks:

These are the scoping comments of Biodiversity Conservation Alliance on the proposed Tenmile Rim Coal Mining Project. Please address these comments in your forthcoming EA.

Big Game Crucial Winter Range

If there are big game Crucial Winter, Crucial Winter/Yearlong, or Severe Winter Relief habitats as identified by WGFD, these should be closed to facility and road construction to prevent disturbance of wildlife.

Sage Grouse and Birds of Prey

Areas within 2 miles of a sage grouse lek should be withdrawn from surface disturbing activities. Similarly, lands within one mile of active raptor nests should be withdrawn from surface disturbing activities. Once again, due to the relatively limited scope of the project, activities should be able to be completed outside the most sensitive seasons.

Prairie Dogs

Surface facilities and road construction should be located outside active prairie dog towns.

Rare Native Fishes

Bluehead sucker have been reported from Bitter Creek near the mouth of Salt Wells Creek (Carter and Hubert 1995). Due to the presence of this and other Sensitive Species fishes in the reaches downstream from the project area, damage to streams, discharge of chemicals into streams, and erosion and siltation must be kept to a minimum.

Techniques Used

Since the project entails subsurface mining exclusively, major concerns about surface impacts to wildlife and wildlands should be minor. Please inform us if this is not the case, and explain unforeseen impacts in the forthcoming EA. In general, we view subsurface mining as a preferable alternative to open-pit strip mining from an environmental perspective, and applaud the BLM for not choosing to approve another strip mine, which would result in massive destruction of lands and resources.

Wilderness

We are unaware of wilderness-quality lands within the project area. Nonetheless, the BLM should inventory the project area for the presence of roadless tracts larger than 5,000 acres in size in the checkerboard area of the project. If such roadless tracts are identified, pains should be taken to avoid creating new roads or vehicle ways in conjunction with the project.

Conclusions

We believe that the operator should have little difficulty in fulfilling the mitigation measures outlined in this Scoping Letter. If this is done, we believe that the Tennile Rim Coal Mining Project has the potential for becoming a sterling example of "doing it right" where coal mining is concerned. We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments with you, and please send us all future NEPA correspondence relating to this project.

Sincerely yours,

Erik Molvar
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance

Literature Cited

Carter, B., and W.A. Hubert. 1995. Factors influencing fish assemblages of a high-elevation desert stream in Wyoming. *Great Basin Nat.* 55:169-173.

Response to Comment Letter C. Scoping issues were evaluated and identified during the formal scoping period that occurred from November 9, 2001 to December 12, 2001 and the public scoping meeting that was held on December 12, 2001. A Draft EA (released to public on January 22, 2004) was prepared based on comments received from local, state, and federal agencies and the public during the formal scoping period. Potential issues related to crucial winter range for big game species, greater sage-grouse, raptors, white-tailed prairie dogs, rare native fish, wetlands, and wilderness were evaluated and appropriate issues were addressed in the EA. Thank you for taking the time to review the Draft EA and providing your comments. This letter does not contain any specific comments on the EA; therefore, no changes to the EA are required as a result of this letter.

D. Mr. Gus Winterfeld, Erathem-Vanir Geological (1 page)

Teri Deakins
 Environmental Protection Specialist
 BLM-Rock Springs Field Office
 280 Highway 191 North
 Rock Springs, WY 82901
 Pte: 307.352.0211
 Fax: 307.352.0329
 email: teri_deakins@blm.gov
 Paleopoet@aol.com



Paleopoet@aol.com
 03/01/2004 12:51 PM

To: Sherry_Blackburn@BLM.GOV, Teri_Deakins@blm.gov
 cc:
 Subject: Hi Sherry/Ten Mile Rim EA comments

Hi Sherry:

Hope you're doing fine. I'm not sure you're the one to send comments to, so I'll also copy this to Teri Deakins who I think is involved with the project.

I just happened to be looking at the Rock Springs BLM homepage and saw the Ten Mile Rim EA. Looking through it I didn't see anything about paleontology in there and I know that there are at least 6-8 fossil vertebrate localities in the Fort Union Formation within the area outlined on the project map. Several of these are University of Wyoming localities and others are Carnegie Museum localities. Some of these localities produce very important mammalian specimens, including the upper jaws and teeth of the Paleocene primate *Chiromyoides* which is only known from incisors teeth elsewhere in North America.

A couple of years ago myself and a crew from the Carnegie worked between the main road going north and Black Rock and identified several vertebrate localities in that area as well. My recommendation is that paleontology be reviewed and some of the known localities either be avoided or surface collected rather than be lost to strip mining—I say that based on my previous experience out in the Point of Rocks area on my Master's thesis—once very important localities are lost they are gone forever and within the Fort Union Formation discovery similar localities is very unlikely. A key to the Fort Union out there as far as fossil vertebrates seems to be green or bluish mudstones—almost all of them in the formation produced vertebrate fossils of some kind.

I'd be happy to give you input on fossils I know about anytime a project comes up if you like.

I'll also send you information on the new localities we identified in the Pacific Rim area in the next couple of days.

Thanks

Gus Winterfeld

Response to Comment Letter D. While the Proposed Action is primarily related to an underground coal mining operation, it is possible that a limited number of acres (approximately 59 acres) may be disturbed during the repair of subsidence related disturbance. Therefore, Sections 3.3.8 and 4.8 have been added to the EA. In addition to the information presented in Chapters 3 and 4, BLM recognizes that application of the standard and special coal lease stipulation would provide protection for significant paleontological resources (refer to Appendix A in the Draft EA). Thank you for taking the time to review the Draft EA and providing your comments.

E. Mr. Dee Jennse, Interwest Mining Company (2 pages)

DEE W. JENSE
President



A Subsidiary of PacifiCorp

One Utah Center
201 South Main Street, Suite 2100
Salt Lake City, Utah 84140-0021
(801) 220-4140 • FAX (801) 220-4725

March 4, 2004

Teri Deakins
Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, WY 82901

RE: *Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Ten Mile Rim Coal Lease - By-Application and Associated Rights-of-Way Dated February 2004, Sweetwater County, Wyoming*

Dear Ms. Deakins:

On behalf of PacifiCorp and Bridger Coal Company (BCC is a joint venture of subsidiaries owned by PacifiCorp and Idaho Power Company), we wish to take this opportunity to express our support for the Proposed Action as presented in the referenced Environmental Assessment (EA) involving the leasing of federal coal lands. These unleased federal coal lands are located adjacent to Bridger's existing surface mine lands and leases within the checkerboard land grid and will provide additional coal reserves for the proposed underground mining venture by BCC.

In general, the EA as issued to the public fairly represents the intentions of this proposed project. Furthermore, we applaud the level of detail and the merits behind the preparation of this environmental document. In moving this effort forward, should there be any minor issues or minor deficiencies identified in the EA process, we would suggest these minor issues (if any) could be adequately addressed in the mine permitting process handled through the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Land Quality Division.

Having begun in 1974, the Bridger Mine is a 30 year old captive surface strip mine which has produced over 170 million tons in its life with all of this coal being consumed at the nearby Bridger Power Plant (also jointly owned by PacifiCorp and Idaho Power Company). BCC is the major supplier of coal to the Bridger Power Plant and we wish to reiterate our need and commitment to sustaining development of 6+ million tons of annual coal production at the Bridger Mine located in southwestern Wyoming. With the incorporation of the underground mine, the Bridger Mine will become a multi-faceted mining operation inclusive of surface, highwall and underground (longwall) mining methods together with ongoing surface reclamation activities.

For nearly 4 years, BCC has had an integral part in the planning of this project to bring it to fruition.

Teri Deakins
March 4, 2004
Page 2

The uniqueness of this project will provide sustained coal production for power generation and further supports the public interest in sustainable development on federal, state and private lands while integrating and balancing the basic components of social well being, environmental health and economic prosperity. Coal continues to play a vital role in PacifiCorp's sustainable energy supply and is a very important part of its balanced energy portfolio in meeting customer energy demands of today and the future.

This project will benefit southwestern Wyoming by contributing to sustained employment over the expected 15 to 20 year life of the project while providing economic benefits for many local businesses and a source of tax revenue for local government and schools. In addition, we feel there are also environmental benefits to be realized from the underground mine which includes, but is not limited to a significant reduction in the overall land disturbance footprint, together with reduced operative impacts of fugitive dust, noise, and wildlife.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Scott Child at 801-220-4612.

Respectfully,

Dee W. Jense
President

S:\C\BCC\WY\04\0304-01BCC.wpd

cc IMC - B. King, B. Child, C. Pellastro
BCC - P. Akers, J. Elkin, N. Hargis
PacifiCorp - N. Getzelman, B. Tarnatols

Response to Comment Letter E. Thank you for taking the time to review the Draft EA and providing your comments. This letter does not contain any specific comments on the EA; therefore, no changes to the EA are required as a result of this letter.

F. Ms. Lynne Boomgaarden, Office of State Lands and Investments (2 pages)
Office of State Lands and Investments
Funding Wyoming Public Education

122 West 25th Street
 Cheyenne, WY 82002
 Phone: (307) 777-7331
 Fax: (307) 777-5400
slfmail@state.wy.us



Dave Freudenthal
 Governor

Lynne Boomgaarden
 Director

March 2, 2004



Bureau of Land Management
 Rock Springs Field Office
 280 Highway 191 North
 Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Attn: Teri Deakins

TRANSMITTED VIA FAX – HARD COPY TO FOLLOW VIA U.S. MAIL

Re: 3420 (922 BJanssen)
 WYW154595
 Ten Mile Rim
 OSLI Project# 2004-009

To Whom It May Concern:

The staff of the Office of State Lands and Investments has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment relative to the Proposed Ten Mile Rim Coal LBA and Associated Rights-of-Way and offers the following comments relative to the proposed action insofar as it pertains to the mission of this office.

Because the State owns the minerals on Section 36, T22N, R101W, which is located within the TMRT LBA area, this office strongly supports an LBA proposal that fosters timely access to and the mining of the State's coal reserves. We also believe it is important that Bridger Coal Company be permitted to sustain historic coal production levels. A federal decision that effectively would require Jim Bridger Power Plant to secure alternative coal supplies in the near future seems unwarranted.

We acknowledge it is possible that private and state minerals within the project area may be developed whether or not federal coal is leased; however, a decision not to lease the federal resource in the proposed configuration may result in a bypass of federal coal and the loss

Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
Ten Mile Rim LBA DEA
March 2, 2004
Page 2

of federal coal royalties, including the State of Wyoming's share. For all these reasons, we support the proposed action.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment. If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

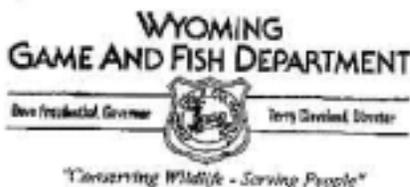
Sincerely,


Lynne Boomgaarden
Director

sc

cc: Governor's Planning Office

Response to Comment Letter F. Thank you for taking the time to review the Draft EA and providing your comments. This letter does not contain any specific comments on the EA; therefore, no changes to the EA are required as a result of this letter.

G. Mr. Bill Wichers, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (2 pages)

March 3, 2004

WER 10176
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed
Ten Mile Rim Coal Lease-By-Application and
Associated Rights-of-Way
Sweetwater County

Teri Deakins
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Dear Ms. Deakins:

The staff of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Ten Mile Rim Coal Lease-By-Application and Associated Rights-of-Way within the Rock Springs Field Office area. We offer the following comments.

Terrestrial Considerations:

The proposed lease lies within winter-yearlong range of the Steamboat elk and mule deer herds, and yearlong range of the Sublette pronghorn herd. Sage grouse have traditionally inhabited this area. The Jim Bridger Power Plant and current surface coal mine has already heavily impacted the area around the proposed lease. The proposal to extract the coal through an underground operation and use existing roads and other facilities currently in place from the surface mine will not significantly increase impacts.

We have some concerns with the proposed power line. Depending on its placement, the power line could be used as a perch by raptors and increase predation upon sage grouse. Current guidelines (Connolly et al., 2000, Wildlife Society Bulletin 28: 1-19) suggest avoiding building power lines and other tall structures that provide perch sites for raptors within 3 km of seasonal habitats, such as nesting habitat. If possible, lines should be buried or poles modified to prevent their use as raptor perch sites.

Ms. Teri Deakins
March 3, 2004
Page 2 - WER 10176

Our Green River Wildlife Biologist, Grant Frost (875-3223), is available to consult with Bridger Coal Company on placement and/or modifications of power lines to minimize impacts to sage grouse.

Aquatic Considerations:

We have no aquatic concerns pertaining to this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



BILL WICHERS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

BW:VS:as
cc: Kyndra Miller-Governor's Planning Office
USFWS

Response to Comment Letter G. As stated on page 26 of the Draft EA, the Proposed Action includes a commitment to design, construct, operate, and maintain all powerline structures in conformance with Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1994, and Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996. In addition, no new powerline structures would be constructed within 3 km (1.86 mi) of any greater sage-grouse lek. Greater sage-grouse that might congregate at seasonal breeding leks would not be impacted by potential predation by raptor species and no changes to the Draft EA are necessary. Therefore, no changes to the EA are required as a result of this comment.

Thank you for taking the time to review the Draft EA and providing your comments. The remaining portion of this letter does not contain any specific comments on the EA; therefore, no changes to the EA are required.

G. Mr. William Coble, Jr., Town of Superior (1 page)



PO Box 66, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901
Tel/Fax: 307 543-6130

March 12, 2004

Ms. Teri Deakins
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, WY 82901

RE: Ten Mile Rim Tract

Dear Ms Deakins:

The Town of Superior is concerned about our water wells. The Town of Superior has three wells within 3 miles of the proposed underground mining operation. The Town's main concern is protecting our only water source. We'd like to know what happens if their mining operations damages our water supply. What steps need to be taken to prevent any damage to our wells? Please keep us informed of the permitting process.

Sincerely,


William M. Coble, Jr.,
Mayor

Response to Comment Letter H. Detailed information about the proposed new water well has been added to Section 2.1.5.6, Water Requirements. In addition, a description of the aquifer that would be affected is discussed in Section 3.3.16.2 and potential effects of this well are presented in Section 4.16.2.1. To address concerns about the potential impacts of the Proposed Action (specifically the new water well) on the existing groundwater wells owned by the Town of Superior, the BLM has developed a special lease stipulation. This special lease stipulation has been included into the Standard Coal Lease Form and Special Lease Stipulation (presented in Appendix A) and would be incorporated into any coal lease that may be issued as a result of this EA.