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File Code: 2820
Date: March 30, 2015

APR 01 2015

DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING

SCOPING INFORMATION

SITLA Muddy Tract Helicopter-Supported Exploration Drilling

USDA Forest Service – Manti-La Sal National Forest

Ferron Ranger District

Emery County, Utah

March 2015

The Ferron Ranger District of the Manti-La Sal National Forest received an Application for Special Use Permit from Canyon Fuel Company, LLC, SUFCO Mine proposing to conduct helicopter-supported drilling activities on the SITLA Muddy Coal Tract. Information on the submitted Special Use Application follows. Your participation and comments are encouraged during this project development and evaluation.

The proposed exploration area is generally located in central Utah 10 miles northwest of the town of Emery. The legal description of the SITLA Muddy Coal Tract is as follows: T. 20 S., R. 5 E., Salt Lake Base and Meridian, Section 32, S1/2, S1/2; Section 33, S1/2, S1/2; and T. 21 S., R. 5 E., Salt Lake Base and Meridian, all of Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (see map).

The Special Use Application submitted to the Forest Service by Canyon Fuel Company proposes to drill helicopter-supported coal exploration holes within the SITLA Muddy Coal Tract which is a currently leased coal reserve owned by the state of Utah. Although surface activities will occur on National Forest System lands these exploration holes are necessary to explore leased coal reserves owned by the state of Utah. Canyon Fuel Company would access the helicopter and equipment staging area by motorized vehicles via existing Forest System roads. These roads would be maintained in accordance with and are currently covered by their existing Road Use Permit. All drilling equipment, drill rig components, and associated materials, necessary tools and personnel would be transported by helicopter or horse back from the staging area to the drill hole locations. No new access roads or well pads would be constructed as part of this project. Site preparation could include removal of dead-fall and lopping tall brush as necessary. Vegetation in the form of trees, grasses, forbs and low shrubs would not be removed. The drill site would occupy an area no larger than approximately 40' x 40'. All materials, tools, and equipment would be removed immediately upon completion of drilling and reclamation activities will commence immediately. Helicopter-supported drilling method is used to eliminate the need for construction of roads and pads resulting in minimal surface disturbance. All applicable state and federal regulations would be adhered to and all activities would occur in accordance with an approved exploration plan.

The purpose and need for this action is to respond as required by law and regulation to a valid complete Special Use Application.



The Ferron District has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within the categories of actions (36 CFR § 220 6(e)(3)) "*Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land*" that can be excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of these categories. A Decision Memo and project record will be prepared following NEPA procedures found in 36 CFR § 220. Copies of these items will be provided upon request following their preparation.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted. Comments would be most helpful if received by April 30, 2015. Comments should be hand delivered or sent to Darren Olsen, Responsible Official, at PO Box 310, 115 West Canyon Road, Ferron, UT 84523, by telephone at 435-636-3586, or by fax at 435-384-3296. The office business hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments should be submitted in a format such as an email message, pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc or .docx) to comments-intermtn-manti-lasal-ferron-price@fs.fed.us. More information about this proposal can be obtained by contacting Kyle Beagley at 435-636-3577 or by email at kbeagley@fs.fed.us Information for this project can be found on the web at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/mantilasal/landmanagement/projects>

Sincerely,



Darren Olsen
District Ranger
Ferron/Price Ranger District
115 West Canyon Road
Ferron, UT 84523



Map

