



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Manti-La Sal
National Forest

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File Code: 2820-4

Date: January 21, 2000

Ms. Sally Wisely
Utah State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Utah State Office
P.O. Box 45155
324 South State Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

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DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS AND MINING

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Dear Ms. Wisely:

Canyon Fuel Company, LLC (Canyon Fuel) submitted an application for leasing of the Flat Canyon Tract to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on March 18, 1998. BLM assigned Serial Number UTU-77114 to the Lease-by-Application and transmitted a copy to the Manti-La Sal National Forest on April 2, 1998. The Flat Canyon Tract to be considered for leasing by the responsible agencies was delineated by the Interagency Tract Delineation Team (ITDT).

The Utah State Director of BLM sent a copy of the Tract Delineation Report to the Manti-La Sal National Forest and requested that the Forest Service conduct the Forest Plan and data adequacy consistency reviews in a letter to the Forest Supervisor, Manti-La Sal National Forest, dated August 20, 1999. Canyon Fuel submitted the first data adequacy submittal to the BLM and Forest Service in July 1999. After an initial review by the Forest Service, it was determined that the data presented was not complete or adequate to commence evaluation of the tract. Comments were presented to Canyon Fuel in a meeting at the Forest Supervisor's Office, conducted in October 1999. Canyon Fuel submitted supplemental data on January 5, 2000.

The Forest Service has reviewed the Flat Canyon Tract, as delineated, regarding Forest Plan consistency, and Canyon Fuel's resource data submittal for consistency with coal lease data adequacy standards established by the Uinta-Southwestern Utah Coal Region. Our findings are as discussed below:

Forest Plan Consistency

The tract lies with the Huntington Canyon-Gentry Mountain Coal Multiple-Use Evaluation Area evaluated in the Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, 1986 (Forest Plan). Issues and concerns that must be evaluated for tracts in this area include water quality, traffic, visual quality, and recreation thresholds. The Forest Plan states that the area is available for further lease action consideration. Further lease actions utilizing Huntington Canyon for transportation and mine development, other than supplying existing operations, will be delayed until it is determined that unacceptable impacts to existing resources would not occur.



The Flat Canyon Tract has been proposed for leasing by Canyon Fuel to provide additional coal reserves for the Skyline Mine that can be accessed from underground workings in the adjacent Skyline Mine Permit area. Additional mine developments, other than underground workings, are not anticipated.

It is concluded that the tract is consistent with Forest Plan direction and therefore, is available for further consideration for coal leasing in an Environmental Impact Statement. The Environmental Impact Statement will include analysis of the issues identified in the Forest Plan in addition to those identified through scoping.

Forest Plan Emphasis and Direction

The tract includes RNG (Range), DRS (Developed Recreation Sites), and TBR (Timber) Forest Plan Management Units.

RNG Management Unit

Emphasis is on production of forage and cover for domestic livestock and wildlife. Direction states that appropriate mitigation measures must be used to assure continued livestock access and use. Those authorized to conduct development will be required to replace losses through appropriate mitigations, where site-specific development adversely affects long-term production or management.

DRS Management Unit

Management emphasis for DRS units is on developed recreation. The Flat Canyon Tract includes the Flat Canyon Campground DRS Management Unit. Mineral leasing is allowed where it is determined that stipulated methods of development and extraction will not adversely affect recreation values to any significant degree.

TBR Management Unit

Emphasis is on management for the production and use of wood-fiber for a variety of wood products. There is no specific direction for mineral activities in TBR Management Units. General policy requires mineral operators to pay the fair market value of merchantable timber removed or destroyed for mineral activities, and reclamation measures include planting to replace timber.

Land Uses

The Boulger Canyon dam, reservoir, and associated dispersed recreation area lies within the tract. The lease must contain stipulations to protect or mitigate impacts to the dam and reservoir and provide for public safety.

Data Adequacy Standards

The Manti-La Sal National Forest review for data adequacy was limited to resource data, excluding coal data that will be evaluated by BLM. It has been determined that there is currently sufficient resource data (excluding coal) to begin scoping and the environmental analysis, but additional data will be needed to meet requirements of the Uinta-Southwestern Utah Coal Region Data Adequacy Standards. Since the analysis will not be completed prior to another field season, the supplemental information can be obtained prior to finalizing release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

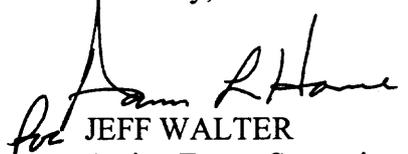
It is concluded that there is sufficient data to proceed with the analysis, but additional information will be necessary prior to publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Conclusion

The tract is available for further consideration for coal leasing under the Forest Plan, subject to further analysis in an Environmental Impact Statement. Canyon Fuel has provided sufficient environmental resource data to proceed with the Environmental Impact Statement, but additional information will be required to meet Uinta-Southwestern Utah Data Adequacy Standards and for analysis prior to releasing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for public review. The Manti-La Sal National Forest will work with Canyon Fuel to compile the additional data.

If you have any questions or require additional information, contact Aaron Howe or Carter Reed at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Price, Utah.

Sincerely,


JEFF WALTER
Acting Forest Supervisor

cc:

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