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United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Utah State Office

P.O. Box 45155

Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155

<http://www.blm.gov>

IN REPLY REFER TO:

(UT-923)

SL-051221, U-2810

DEC 12 2003

Ms. Alice Carlton, Forest Supervisor
Manti-LaSal National Forest
599 West Price River Drive
Price, Utah 84501

Incoming
1/015/0018
Copy Sharon : FAM

Dear Ms. Carlton:

The Bureau of Land Management has received an exploration plan from Interwest Mining Company in behalf of Pacificorp to conduct exploration operations on coal leases SL-051221 and U-2810 in Rilda Canyon. The company proposes to dig 6 to 20 test pits on previously disturbed lands to evaluate the geologic and technologic characteristics of the area. The Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGGM) has determined that this exploration proposal should be treated as an exploration plan under 43 CFR 3482 rather than as a permitting action.

We have reviewed the exploration plan and have determined that it meets the requirements of the regulations. A copy of this plan is being forwarded to your for your review and comment. Please provide us with your recommendations for appropriate conditions of approval for protection of surface resources.

In accordance with the Interagency Agreement for Leasable Mineral Operations on the National Forest System signed October 28, 1987, we are requesting your participation in a joint scoping of the proposed action to determine the level of environmental analysis needed to support BLM's consideration of the exploration plan and any approvals required from the Forest Service for authorizations under this proposal other than the Mineral Leasing Act. During this meeting, we would also like to be able to establish the level of participation of both agencies in the NEPA process and identify a time-frame for completing the analysis. The company proposes to begin operations as early as January 12, 2004, so we would like to meet as soon as possible to initiate the process. BLM would be available to meet with personnel from your office during the week of December 15. Please let us know when the Forest Service can be available to discuss this plan. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (801) 539-4037.

Sincerely,

for *Jeff Mc Kenzie*

James F. Kohler
Chief, Branch of Solid Minerals

Enclosure
Exploration Plan

cc: Mary Ann Wright
Pat Gubbins (PFO)