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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Manti-La Sal
National Forest

015/032 #2
599 West Price River Dr.
Price, Utah 84501
(801)637-2817

Reply to: 2820

Date: September 14, 1993

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SEP 15 1993

DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS & MINING

Lowell Braxton
Division of Oil, Gas and Mining
3 Triad Center, Suite 350
355 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, Ut 84180-1203

Dear Forest User:

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been completed for Federal Coal Lease Application UTU-68082 (Crandall Canyon Tract) on the Price and Ferron Ranger Districts of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The EA was completed as a joint effort by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. It identifies several leasing alternatives including the No Action Alternative and the expected impacts for each alternative.

As required under the Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976, the Bureau of Land Management must obtain consent from the surface management agency, in this case the Forest Service, to lease Federal coal reserves. Based on the information presented in the EA, a Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (Proposed FONSI) that identifies the Regional Forester's preferred alternative is enclosed.

The EA and Proposed FONSI are available for review and comment prior to a final decision. Copies of the EA are available through the Forest Supervisor's Office of the Manti-La Sal National Forest in Price, Utah. Comments must be submitted to George Morris, Manti-La Sal National Forest, 599 West Price River Drive, Price, Utah 84501 by the close of business on October 14, 1993. For additional information contact Walt Nowak or Carter Reed at (801) 637-2817. Comments will be considered in making the final decision.

The predecisional review of Environmental Assessments is a new procedure implemented in the Intermountain Region. The purpose is to keep interested parties, such as yourself, informed of our actions and to ask your help in making decisions in regard to management of the National Forests.

Sincerely,

/s/ Aaron L. Howe

for
GEORGE A. MORRIS
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

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**PROPOSED
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**DIVISION OF
OIL, GAS & MINING**

**GENWAL COAL COMPANY LEASE APPLICATION UTU-68082
CRANDALL CANYON TRACT**

**USDA FOREST SERVICE, INTERMOUNTAIN REGION
MANTI-LA SAL NATIONAL FOREST
FERRON AND PRICE RANGER DISTRICTS**

EMERY COUNTY, UTAH

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) which discusses the effects of leasing the Crandall Canyon Tract (Lease Application UTU-68082). Identification of my preferred alternative recorded in this proposed FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) is based on the environmental analyses documented in the referenced Environmental Assessment; the Final Environmental Impact Statement, Manti-La Sal National Forest (Forest Plan FEIS), 1986; and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the San Rafael Proposed Resource Management Plan, 1989. The Environmental Assessment for Coal Lease Application UTU-68082, Crandall Canyon Tract is available through the Forest Supervisor's Office of the Manti-La Sal National Forest in Price, Utah.

Genwal Coal Company applied to the Bureau of Land Management for leasing of 1,974.39 acres under the Lease-on-Application process contained in Federal Regulations 43 CFR 3425 to extend the life of their existing Crandall Canyon Mine. In response to the application an interagency team delineated the Crandall Canyon Tract to be considered for leasing. The tract encompasses 3,384 acres of Federal coal on lands administered by the Manti-La Sal National Forest. It lies directly adjacent (west, north and east) to the approved permit area for Genwal Coal Company's Crandall Canyon Mine. The tract would be accessed from underground workings in the adjacent mine. The Bureau of Land Management in consultation with Genwal Coal Company has determined that new surface facilities would not be required to efficiently and economically mine coal from the tract using underground mining methods.

The proposed action is subject to the following authorities: Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended; Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976 (FCLAA), as amended; Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960; National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA); National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); and Federal Regulations 43 CFR 3400. Development of the lease, which is a separate permitting action, would be subject to these actions and the following: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA); Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA); Federal Regulations 30 CFR 700 to End (SMCRA Regulations), and the State of Utah Coal Mining and Reclamation Regulatory Program.

My preferred alternative is Alternative C which involves consenting to leasing of that portion of the delineated tract which lies east of the Joes Valley Fault with Forest Service Special Stipulations and the Stipulation for Lands of the National Forest System Under Jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture in addition to standard lease terms (BLM Lease Form 3400-12). That portion of the delineated tract which lies west of Sections 26, 35, T. 15S., R. 6E., and Section 2, T. 16S., R. 6E. would not be included due to the absence of ground water data and the complexity of the ground water system that limits our ability to predict mining related impacts to the hydrology of the Upper Joes Valley area. Leasing and mining induced subsidence in that portion of the delineated tract which lies within the Candland Mountain SPR (Semiprimitive Recreation) Management Unit would be allowed as provided in the Forest Plan because underground mining would not conflict with providing a quality semiprimitive recreation opportunity. Alternative C best meets the management objectives of the Forest Service as outlined in the Forest Plan and the needs of the general public. It would make additional Federal coal reserves available for competitive leasing, provide an opportunity to extend the life of the Crandall Canyon Mine, and would be consistent with Forest Service management goals and prescriptions for the area.

I have determined that the proposal is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This determination was made based on the following considerations:

1. Management and public issues were identified during project scoping. Project scoping involved public notices of the proposal with a comment period as well as Interdisciplinary Team reviews and meetings. The preferred alternative would adequately address all issues identified through project scoping, and provides for protection of resources and mitigation of impacts consistent with the Forest Plan.
2. The unsuitability criteria for coal mining contained in Federal Regulations 43 CFR 3461 were addressed in the Forest Plan, Forest Plan FEIS, and the environmental analysis for the tract. No areas within the tract were determined to be unsuitable for mining based on the criteria.
3. The potential adverse effects of the proposal can be effectively mitigated by the included special lease stipulations and implementation of the SMCRA Regulations (30 CFR 700 to End) and State of Utah Federal Coal Mining and Reclamation Regulatory Program.
4. The leasing action and anticipated lease development should have no significant adverse affect to cultural and paleontological resources, or floodplains.
5. There will be no adverse impacts to prime or unique rangelands, farmlands, or timberlands; alluvial valley floors; or wetlands.

6. There will be no adverse affects to listed or proposed Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive plant or animal species. The Biological Evaluation that documents this conclusion and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is included in the project file.
7. The preferred alternative is consistent with objectives and direction of the Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Plan, 1986. Cumulative impacts would be consistent with projected Forest Plan outputs and thresholds.
8. Coal mining has been a common and important element of the local economy and culture since the late 1800s. The impacts of underground mining have been observed and monitored for many years and no new or unique methods of mining are likely. The effects of the proposed activity are not likely to be highly controversial.
9. The activity is consistent with identified laws and regulations and would not adversely affect public health and safety.

Compliance with the terms and conditions of the lease and other administrative actions associated with the lease, in accordance with Federal Regulations 43 CFR 3400, are the responsibility of the Bureau of Land Management. The review, approval and enforcement of mining operations within the lease are the responsibility of the Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement under Federal Regulations 30 CFR 700 to End. As required under the Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1975 and the above regulations, future actions related to the lease which could affect surface resources require consultation and consent of the Forest Service.

For further information contact Walt Nowak or Carter Reed at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 599 West Price River Drive, Price, Utah 84501, (801) 637-2817.

Gray F. Reynolds, Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region

Date: _____