

FEDERAL REGISTER: 44 FR 12285 (March 6, 1979)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM)

Spring Creek Mine, Big Horn County, Montana; Availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement [Int FES 79-10]

Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and Section 69-6504 R.C.M. 1947 of the Montana Environmental Policy Act of 1971, the Department of the Interior, in cooperation with the State of Montana, has prepared a final environmental impact statement on the proposed Spring Creek surface coal mining operation by the Northern Energy Resources Company in Big Horn County, Montana. The final statement assesses the environmental impacts of the lessee's plan for the surface mining of 10 million tons annually of Federal- and State-owned coal, and the concurrent reclamation and revegetation of surface lands. The proposed action is on Federal coal lease M-069782 and State coal lease C-535-65, T. 8 S., R. 39 E., Principal meridian.

The mine plan contained in this final environmental impact statement was submitted prior to the promulgation of interim regulations by the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, pursuant to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. The mine plan is currently under review by Federal and State regulatory authorities for compliance with those requirements. It has not yet been determined whether the plan is adequate and in full conformance with applicable requirements of the Act. Once the mine plan is conformed to meet those regulations, the Department will evaluate whether this final environmental impact statement is adequate for the mine plan approval action or whether a supplement to this impact statement needs to be prepared and distributed.

Comments received on the draft environmental statement during the comment period were considered in the preparation of the final environmental statement and are reproduced in the appendix.

The final environmental impact statement is available for public review in the U.S. Geological Survey Library, 1526 Cole Blvd., Golden, Colo.; the U.S. Geological Survey Library, Room 4A100, National Center, Reston, Va.; the Montana Department of State Lands, 1625 11th Ave., Helena, Mont.; the Bureau of Land Management, Miles City, Mont.; the Parmley Billings Public Library, 510 North Broadway, Billings, Mont.; the Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library, 320 North Brooks, Sheridan, Wyo.; the Big Horn County Public Library, 419 North Custer Ave., Hardin, Mont.; the Montana State Library, 930 East Lyndale, Helena, Mont.; and the Rosebud County Library, 201 North Ninth Ave., Forsyth, Mont.

A limited number of copies are available on request from the U.S. Geological Survey, Land Information and Analysis Office, Federal Center, Stop 701, Denver, CO 80255., and the Montana Department of State Lands, 1625 11th Ave., Helena, MT 59601.

Dated: February 28, 1979.

LARRY E. MEIEROTTO, *Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior.*

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