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NEWS



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DOE Evaluates Environmental Impacts of Uranium Mining on Government Land in Western Colorado

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced that the *Final Uranium Leasing Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)* is available to the public.

In the final Uranium Leasing Program PEIS, DOE identified the preferred alternative of continued management of the program with exploration, mine development and operations, and reclamation at 31 lease tracts for the next 10-year period or for another reasonable period of time.

Under the Uranium Leasing Program, DOE's Office of Legacy Management manages 31 tracts of land in Mesa, Montrose, and San Miguel counties in Colorado – approximately 25,000 acres – that are leased to private entities for uranium and vanadium mining. There have been three previous leasing periods on the tracts since the program was established in 1948. No mining operations are active on these lands at this time.

DOE prepared the Uranium Leasing Program PEIS to analyze potential environmental impacts, including the site-specific and cumulative impacts. DOE evaluated five alternatives ranging from cancelling the program to the no-action alternative of continuing the program for the remainder of the 10-year lease period that started in 2008.

During the evaluation process, DOE conducted a 109-day public comment period, held four public meetings in southwestern Colorado, and considered all public comments on the draft PEIS in preparing the final document. The PEIS will inform the department's decision on the future course of the Uranium Leasing Program.

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DOE will issue a Record of Decision no sooner than April 21, 2014. The final environmental impact statement can be found on the DOE Legacy Management website at <http://energy.gov/lm/downloads/final-uranium-leasing-program-programmatic-environmental-impact-statement-peis>, or on the DOE National Environmental Policy Act web site at www.energy.gov/nepa.

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