



United States Department of the Interior

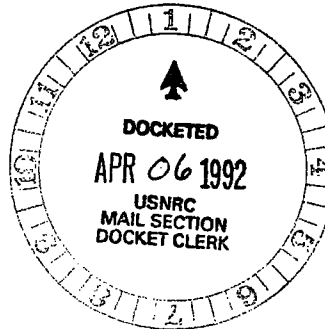
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Platte River Resource Area ABR -6 AIO:26
P.O. Drawer 2420
Mills, Wyoming 82644



3809/WYW119890
WYW124668

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Mr. Ramon E. Hall
Region IV
Uranium Recovery Field Office
P. O. Box 25325
Denver, CO 80225



APR 1 1992

RE: Rio Algom South Powder River Basin Project, Your Docket No. 40-8964
and Power Resources Inc. Highland Project, Your Docket No. 40-8857

Dear Mr. Hall:

Enclosed are copies of our Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Decision Record (DR) for the above-cited projects. The FONSI and DR were based on the environmental assessments that you provided for each project and for which the Bureau of Land Management was a cooperating agency.

Your cooperation and that of your staff during the permitting process is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding these documents, please contact Mr. Dan Benoit at FTS 329-7502.

Sincerely,

William H. Mortimer
Platte River Resource Area Manager

Enclosures

OFFICIAL DOCKET COPY

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40-8964

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EA WY-062-09-030

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Bureau of Land Management
Casper District
Platte River Resource Area

Environmental Assessment No. WY-062-09-030

Prepared March 1992

Plan of Operations
for
An In-Situ Uranium Mine
for
Rio Algom Mining Corporation
6305 Waterford Blvd.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

DECISION RECORD
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Recommendation: It is my recommendation that the plan of operations submitted by Rio Algom Corporation for in-situ uranium mining be approved. The approval should be subject to the terms and conditions found in 43 CFR 3809 (mining law), 43 CFR 3814 (stocktrail driveway withdrawal), and 36 CFR 60 and 36 CFR 800 (cultural resources), the conditions set forth in the attached EA, and the approved plan of operations. Approval of this Plan will not now or in the future serve as a determination of the ownership or the validity of mining claims to which it may relate.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared jointly by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The NRC was the lead agency in preparing the EA due to the responsibility in issuance of a source material license to the applicant. The BLM was a contributing agency in preparation of the document due responsibilities for surface and minerals management.

Compliance and Monitoring: As per BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 90-59 (October 23, 1989), the mining operation will be inspected every six months after initiation of production operations. In addition, the Wyoming DEQ and NRC will inspect the operation at least on an annual basis.

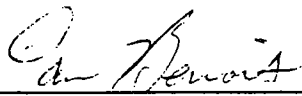
Rationale for Recommendation: The actions described in the attached EA are needed to develop and mine reserves of uranium. The mine plan is consistent with state and local government programs, plans, zoning, and applicable regulations. The land is physically suited for the uses proposed and the action will not result in any unnecessary or undue environmental degradation. Impacts resulting from the proposed action can be adequately mitigated. Additionally, the project is in compliance with the Platte River Resource Area Resource Management Plan (PRRA RMP) approved in July 1985, the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1970, and the regulations in 43 CFR 3809.

Rio Algom Mining Corporation has made application to the Wyoming DEQ, NRC, and BLM for permits to mine uranium using in-situ leaching methods at the Smith Ranch Project located in the southern Powder River Basin, Converse County, Wyoming. The mine permit area covers about 16000 acres, including 2680 acres of Federally-owned land. The current mine permit falls within a much larger permit (304-C) which Rio Algom now holds. The DEQ is treating the application as an amendment to mine permit 304-C.

Rio Algom's mine plan permit area includes sites which are currently on or are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (Register). One of the historic sites consists of six discontinuous segments of the Bozeman Trail. Investigations concluded that three segments of the trail which occur in the midst of the applicant's wellfields contribute to the overall significance of the trail. Two portions are non-contributing segments, and the Holdup Hollow segment, which is north of the proposed wellfields, is currently listed on the Register.

Because of the existence of these sites, a consultative process between the NRC, BLM, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and other interested parties was undertaken. The purpose of the consultation was to comply with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The goal of the process was to evaluate the eligibility of sites for inclusion on the register, to determine the effects of the permitted activity on the sites and gain concurrence of interested parties on how to avoid or mitigate those effects. As a result of the process the NRC issued a finding of No Effect and No Adverse Effect to the Wyoming SHPO on September 11, 1991, and to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on October 18, 1991.

Based upon concurrence of the interested parties the proposed action, as modified by the mitigation and stipulations in the attached EA, will be in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. These include the Historic Preservation Act (as amended) and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR 60, and the Archeological Resources Protection Act (as amended) and its implementing regulations at 43 CFR 7.



Geologist

3-18-92

Date



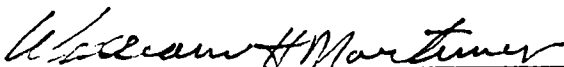
Archeologist

3/18/92

Date

Decision: The above recommendation and its rational are adopted as my decision.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached Environmental Assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.



Platte River Resource Area Manager

March 19, 1992

Date