

HB In-Situ Solution Mine EIS Bulletin #1

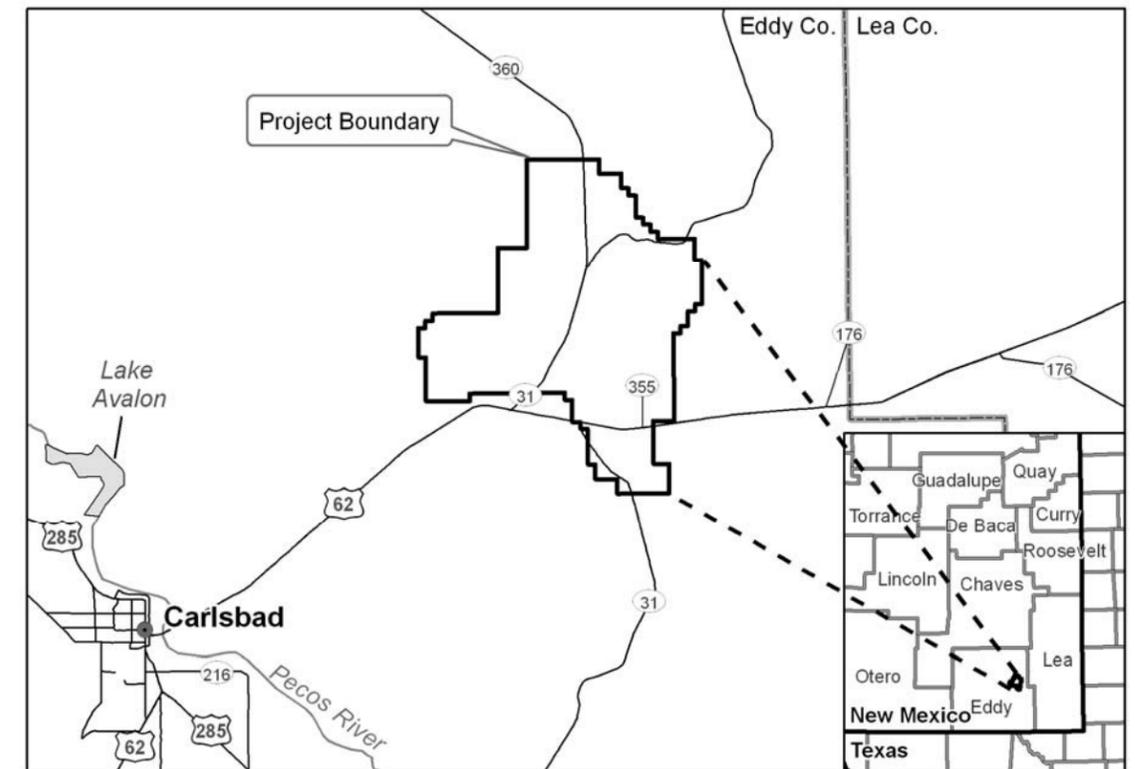


What is the HB In-Situ Project EIS ?

Intrepid Potash, Inc., through its subsidiary HB Potash, LLC, proposes to construct and operate an in-situ solution mine in the abandoned HB Potash Mine (formerly Eddy Potash or PCA). The project is located approximately 20 miles northeast of the city of Carlsbad in Eddy County, New Mexico. The project involves injecting saturated saline water into the mine workings and extracting a mineral-rich solution. This mineral-rich solution would be pumped to the surface and transported through a pipeline to solar evaporation ponds. Once the solution evaporates in the ponds, the potassium-bearing salts would be harvested from the ponds for ore refinement in a newly constructed mill.

The majority of the land affected by the proposed project is located on land managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The remaining lands are either owned by the State of New Mexico or held privately. The BLM Carlsbad Field Office has determined that an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. The EIS will be prepared under the guidance of the BLM Carlsbad Field Office as the lead agency.

The first step in preparing the EIS is to initiate scoping, a process of introducing the proposed project to the public and soliciting their concerns and issues. *Please see page 3 for information on the public scoping process.*



Why is the HB In-Situ Project under Consideration?

The leasing of potassium is authorized through the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended. The project is located within the Known Potash Leasing Area (KPLA) designated for the leasing of potash (potassium compound) by the Secretary of the Interior and is under the management of the BLM. The proposed in-situ mine is located on lands currently leased for potash by Intrepid Potash. This project will allow for the extraction of additional potash reserves from the inactive mines which otherwise would remain underground.

The environmental impacts of the project initially were being evaluated through an environmental assessment (EA). A public meeting was held for the EA in September 2008. Interest in the project and comments received during the comment period indicated that there was a high level of public interest in the project and the potential environmental impacts. For this reason, BLM determined that an EIS would be required to thoroughly analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Return to:
BLM Carlsbad Field Office
620 East Greene Street
Carlsbad, NM 88220

Need more information?

HB In-Situ Solution Mine EIS Project Lead
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620 East Greene St.
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(575) 234-5972
Email: nmcfo_comments@blm.gov
Website: <http://www.nm.blm.gov/cfo/HBIS/>



How will the EIS be prepared?

Under the requirements of the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, an EIS is prepared for major federal actions that may have a significant effect on the human environment. The federal lead agency with jurisdiction over the project (in this case, the BLM) is responsible for the preparation of the EIS. The EIS will assess and document the potential environmental, cultural, social, economic, and other effects of the proposed project.

The BLM has elected to use a contractor to prepare this EIS, a practice commonly used by the BLM and other federal agencies. Under this process, a private contractor is selected by the lead agency (BLM) to prepare the document under its direction in compliance with agency policies and guidelines.

The BLM will directly supervise the contractor to ensure that the EIS is consistent with NEPA and it implementing regulations. The BLM is responsible for final acceptance of the Draft and Final EIS and the Record of Decision, which will be signed by the authorized BLM representative at the end of the process.

How can I be involved in the EIS process?

Public participation is a vital component to preparing a sound NEPA document. To become involved, attend the scoping meetings scheduled for your area to learn more about the project. The meetings will provide the opportunity to ask questions, express any concerns, and submit your comments. At the meeting, be sure to sign in and request to have your contact information placed on the project mailing list. This will ensure that you are kept up-to-date on project activities and will receive notices about future ways to provide input. Written comments will be accepted during the 30-day scoping period, which ends on February 10, 2010.

You are encouraged to participate and provide comments during public comment periods. If you are on the mailing list, you will be notified when the Draft EIS is completed and available for review.

The EIS Timeline below identifies points in the NEPA process for providing your comments.

What is scoping?

The scoping process begins once a federal lead agency has decided to prepare an EIS and the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS is published in the Federal Register. Scoping is the process of actively acquiring input from the public and other interested federal, state, tribal, and local agencies. Information gained during scoping assist the lead agency in identifying potential environmental issues, alternatives, and mitigation measures associated with development of the proposed project. The process provides a mechanism for narrowing the scope of issues, so that the EIS can focus the analysis on areas of high interest and concern. Therefore, public participation in the scoping process is a vital component to preparing a sound NEPA document. The scoping process provides the public and agencies opportunities for meaningful involvement in the decision-making process.



Tips For Providing Effective Comments

Your participation is an important part of the decision-making process!

- ✓ Submit your comments on potential impacts and ideas for project alternatives.
- ✓ Review the BLM website, monitor local newspapers, attend public meetings, and become familiar with the proposed project development.
- ✓ Provide substantive and concise written comments.
- ✓ Learn about the NEPA process and when comments will be accepted by the BLM.
- ✓ Keep your comments focused on the specifics of the proposed project under consideration.
- ✓ Become familiar with the responsibilities of the federal agency decision-makers.
- ✓ Submit your comments within the timeframes announced. This helps the agencies include all concerns in the EIS.
- ✓ Make sure that you are on the EIS mailing list to receive notification of public meetings and project information.

Please Join Us!

Public Scoping Meetings

Location: Pecos River Village Conference Center
711 Muscatel Dr.
Carlsbad, NM 88220

Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Time: 1:00 to 4:00 PM
6:00 to 9:00 PM

HB In-Situ Solution Mine EIS Timeline
Gray boxes indicate public comment opportunities.

