Please Join Us!

Public Scoping Meetings

Date/Time: January 23, 2012 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Pecos River Village Conference Center, 711 Muscatel Drive, Carlsbad, NM

Date/Time: January 24, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Location: Jal Community Center, 109 W Panther Avenue, Jal, NM

Date/Time: January 24, 2012 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Hobbs, NM (please check the project website or Hobbs News-Sun for location)

Need more information?

Ochoa Mine Project EIS Lead
BLM Carlsbad Field Office
620 East Greene St.
Carlsbad, NM 88220
(575) 234-5972
Email: blm_nm_cfo_comments@blm.gov
Website: http://www.nm.blm.gov/cfo/ochoaMine/

Return to:

BLM Carlsbad Field Office
620 East Greene Street
Carlsbad, NM 88220

Ochoa Mine Project Environmental Impact Statement

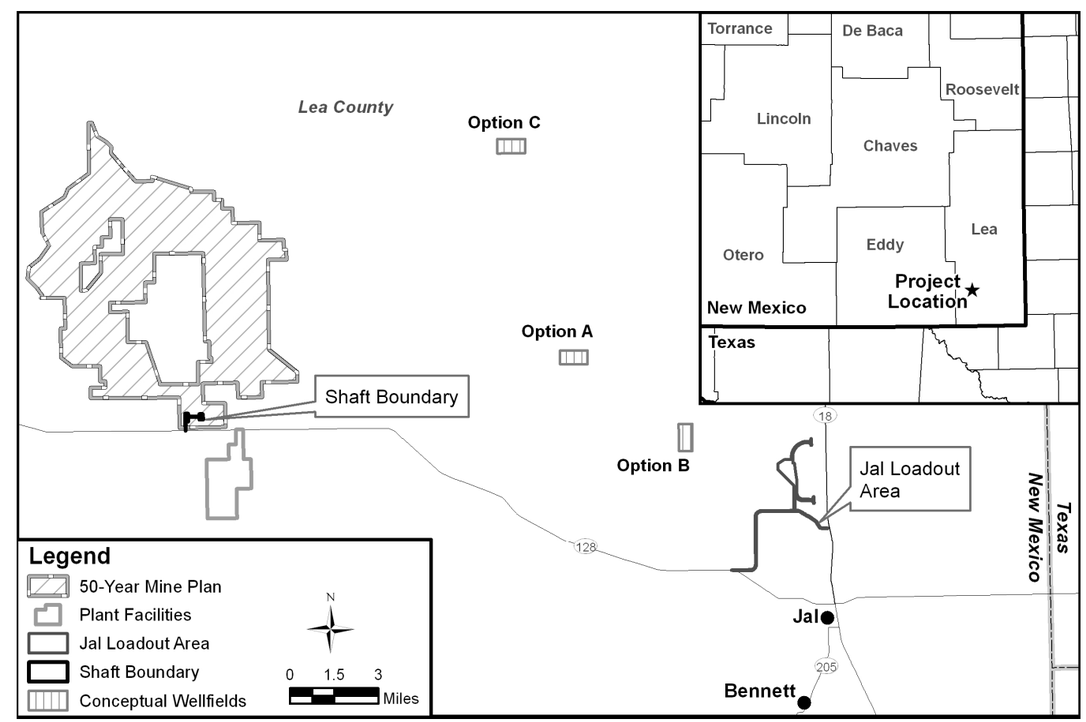
Bulletin #1

What is the Ochoa Potash Mine Project?

Intercontinental Potash Corporation (USA) (ICP) is proposing to develop a new mine in southern Lea County, New Mexico, to extract polyhalite ore for the production of the sulfate of potash (SOP) for use as fertilizer. The proposed project is located on land managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 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 before the agency makes a decision on whether to allow the proposed project to proceed. The EIS will be prepared under the guidance of the BLM Carlsbad Field Office as the lead agency and decision-maker.

There are two primary operations to get the ore to a finished fertilizer product. The first operation is to mine raw polyhalite approximately 1,500 feet underground in the Rustler Formation. Once mined, the polyhalite is hoisted to the surface and transported to the processing facilities where it is crushed, calcined, leached, and granulated to produce SOP, the saleable product. The final product would be moved by truck to a load-out facility near Jal, New Mexico, to be loaded on trains and shipped to distributors selling to farmers.

ICP submitted a proposed Mine Plan of Operations to the BLM to extract polyhalite ore for the next 50 years. The total water demand for the Ochoa Project is projected to be approximately 2,000 gallons per minute supplied by deep, non-potable, brackish water from the Capitan Aquifer. The source of the water would be one of the three well fields shown in the map below.



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 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 the direction of the lead agency and in compliance with agency policies and guidelines.

The BLM will directly supervise the contractor to ensure that the EIS is consistent with NEPA and its implementing regulations. Furthermore, 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.

How can I be involved in the EIS process?

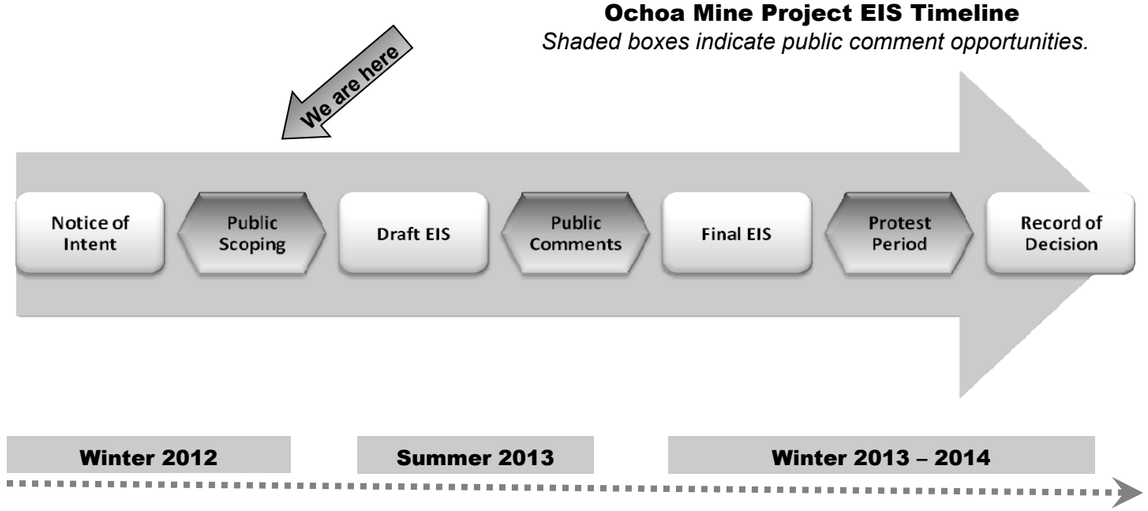
Public participation is a key component to preparing a sound NEPA document. Attend the scoping meetings scheduled for your area to learn more about the project. The meetings will provide the opportunity to ask questions, express any concerns, and submit your comments. At the meeting, be sure to sign in and request to have your contact information placed on the project mailing list. You may also **submit comments and request to be added to the mailing list using the comment form enclosed with this Bulletin**. This will ensure that you are kept up-to-date on project activities and will receive notices about future ways to provide input.

You are encouraged to participate and provide comments during the public review period of the Draft EIS. 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.

Ochoa Mine Project EIS Timeline

Shaded boxes indicate public comment opportunities.



What is scoping?

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 comments

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 federal 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

- 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.
- Provide substantive and concise written comments.
- Learn about the NEPA process and when in the process agencies will receive comments.
- 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 agency 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.

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