DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Geological Survey

Technology Transfer Act of 1986


ACTION: Notice of proposed cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA) negotiations.

SUMMARY: The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is contemplating entering into a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with GeoSIG AG to develop a strong-motion seismograph system.

INQUIRIES: If any other parties are interested in similar activities with the USGS, please contact John R. Evans (650–329–4753 or jrevens@usgs.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is to meet the USGS requirement stipulated in the Survey Manual.

Dated: November 2, 1999.

Steven R. Bohlen,
Acting Chief Geologist.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

Proposed Replacement of Wright Water Distribution Looping Project

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

ACTION: Notice of application for grant funding; public comment period on request to fund the Wright Water Distribution Looping Project.

SUMMARY: OSM is announcing its receipt of a grant application from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Abandoned Mine Land Division (AMLD). Wyoming is requesting $160,000 from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to pay the cost of replacing the Wright Water Distribution Looping Project. In 1993, the State proposes paying for the construction cost as a public facility project that will benefit a community impacted by coal mining.

This notice describes when and where you may read the grant application for funding the Wright Water Distribution Looping Project. It also sets the time period during which you may send written comments on the request to us.

DATES: We will accept written comments until 4:00 p.m., m.s.t., December 20, 1999.

ADDRESS: You should mail or hand-deliver written comments to Guy V. Padgett, Casper Field Office Director, at the address shown below. You may read Wyoming’s grant application for this proposed project during normal business hours Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) at the same address. Also, we will send one free copy of the grant application to you if you request OSM’s Casper Field Office, Casper, Wyoming 82601–1918.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Guy V. Padgett, Telephone: (307) 261–6555.

The Secretary of the Interior approved Wyoming’s AMLR plan on February 14, 1983. You can find background information on the Wyoming AMLR plan into effect.

Once the Secretary approves a State’s AMLR plan, the State may apply for money to fund specific projects that will achieve the goals of its approved plan. Wyoming’s grant application for this proposed project during normal business hours Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) at the same address. Also, we will send one free copy of the grant application to you if you request OSM’s Casper Field Office, Casper, Wyoming 82601–1918.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Guy V. Padgett, Telephone: (307) 261–6555.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours.

Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the rulemaking (or administrative) record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the rulemaking (or administrative) record a respondent’s identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available from public inspection in their entirety.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background on Title IV of SMCRA

Title IV of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) established an Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation (AMLR) program. The purpose of the AMLR program is to reclaim and restore lands and waters that were adversely affected by past mining. The program is funded by a reclamation fee paid by active coal mining operations. Lands and waters eligible for reclamation under Title IV are primarily those that were mined, or affected by mining, and abandoned or inadequately reclaimed before August 3, 1977, and for which there is no continuing reclamation responsibility under State, Federal, or other laws.

Title IV of SMCRA allows States to submit AMLR plans to us. We, on behalf of the Secretary, review those plans and consider any public comments we receive about them. If we determine that a State has the ability and necessary legislation to operate an AMLR program, the Secretary can approve it. The Secretary’s approval gives a State exclusive authority to put its AMLR plan into effect.

The Secretary’s approval gives a State exclusive authority to put its AMLR plan into effect.

II. Background on the Wyoming AMLR Plan

The Secretary of the Interior approved Wyoming’s AMLR plan on February 14, 1983. You can find background information on the Wyoming AMLR plan in the Secretary’s findings and our response to comments, in the February 14, 1983 Federal Register.
Register (48 FR 6536). Wyoming changed its plan a number of times since the Secretary first approved it. In 1984, we accepted the State's certification that it had addressed all known coal-related impacts in Wyoming that were eligible for funding under its program. As a result, the State may now reclaim low priority non-coal reclamation projects. You can read about the certification and OSM's acceptance in the May 25, 1984, Federal Register (49 FR 22139). At the same time, we also accepted Wyoming's proposal that it will ask us for funds to reclaim any additional coal-related problems that occur during the life of the Wyoming AML program as soon as it becomes aware of them. In the April 13, 1992, Federal Register (57 FR 12731), we announced our decision to accept other changes in Wyoming's plan that describe how it will rank eligible coal, non-coal, and facility projects for funding. Those changes also authorized the Governor of Wyoming to elevate the priority of a project based upon the Governor's determination of need and urgency. They also expanded the State's ability to construct public facilities under section 411 of SMCRA. We approved additional changes in Wyoming's plan concerning non-coal lien authority and contractor eligibility that improve the efficiency of the State's AML program. That approval is described in the February 21, 1996, Federal Register (61 FR 6537).

Once a State certifies that it has addressed all remaining abandoned coal mine problems and the Secretary concurs, then it may request funds to undertake abandoned non-coal mine reclamation, community impact assistance, and public facilities projects under sections 411(b), (e), and (f) of SMCRA. State law and regulations that apply to the proposed Abandoned Coal Mine Land Program Wright Water Distribution Looping project funding request include Wyoming Statute 35-11-1202 and Wyoming Abandoned Mine Land Regulations, Chapter VII, of the Wyoming Abandoned Mine Program.

III. Wyoming's Request to Fund the Cost of Wright Water Distribution Looping Project

The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality submitted to us a grant application dated November 1, 1999. In that application, Wyoming asked for $160,000 to pay for the cost of replacing the Wright Water Distribution Project. The Governor of Wyoming certified the need and urgency to fund this project prior to completing the State's remaining inventory of non-coal reclamation work, as allowed by section 411(f) of SMCRA. That certification says the project is in a community impacted by coal mining activities.

This project will mitigate the impacts of safety hazards associated with the present condition of the Wright Water Distribution Looping project. The project will serve the community of Wright by reducing the threat to surface water and public health and safety presented by inadequate water pressure for fire suppression and consumption. The Governor's certification states that safety hazards warrant funding of this project before the remaining inventory of non-coal projects are completed.

IV. How We Will Review Wyoming's Grant Application

We will review this grant application using the regulations at 30 CFR 875.15; specifically subsections 875.15(e)(1) through (7). As stated in those regulations, the application must include the following information: (1) The need or urgency for the activity or the construction of the public facility; (2) the expected impact the project will have on Wyoming's coal or minerals industry; (3) the availability of funding from other sources and, if other funding is provided, its percentage of the total cost involved; (4) documentation from other local, State, and Federal agencies with oversight for such utilities or facilities describing what funding they have available and why their agency is not fully funding this specific project; (5) the impact on the State, the public, and the minerals industry if the facility is not funded; (6) the reasons why this project should be selected before the priority projects relating to the protection of the public health and safety or the environment from the damages caused by past mining activities, and (7) an analysis and review of the procedures Wyoming used to notify and involve the public in this request, and a copy of all comments received and their resolution by the State. Wyoming's application for the Wright project contains the information described in these seven subsections.

Section 875.15(f) requires us to evaluate all comments we receive and determine whether the funding meets the requirements of §§ 875.15(e)(1) through (7) described above. It also requires us to determine if the request is in the best interests of the State's AML program. We will approve Wyoming's request to fund this project if we conclude that it meets all the requirements of 30 CFR 875.15.