

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

S. Livingston Gas Leak 2019
Abandoned Mine Lands (AML-ESaE-1964)
Springfield Illinois; Sangamon County

A. Introduction

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Abandoned Mine Reclamation (AMLRD) is proposing S. Livingston Gas Leak 2019, an Emergency reclamation project that will abate a borehole leaking mine gasses from Abandoned Mine Lands (AML). The reclamation project will seal off the leaking mine gasses at both the borehole and associated two inch leaking buried tap connection that is defined as "a sudden danger of impairment that presents a high probability of substantial physical harm to the health, safety or general welfare of people before the danger can be abated under normal program operation procedures". The emergency reclamation project is located within Springfield, Illinois Sangamon County.

B. Statement of Environmental Significance of the Preferred Alternative

OSMRE has thoroughly reviewed the attached environmental assessment and determined that it adequately discusses the environmental issues and impacts for OSMRE abandoned mine lands reclamation construction grant approval purposes. Based on the analysis in this environmental assessment, I find that emergency abatement of this abandoned mine site would not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment. I therefore conclude that no detailed statement (EIS) is necessary.

Three alternatives were considered. Alternative 1: No Action, Alternative 2: Preferred Alternative, and Alternative 3 Other Reasonable Alternative. The preferred alternative, Alternative 2, was selected as a method that eliminates all explosive, combustion, and asphyxiation hazards. In addition, sealing the borehole reduces or eliminates emissions of methane gas from the borehole and associated tap connection into the atmosphere.

C. Reason

Abandoned mine lands within the project present a human health hazard and adversely impact the local environment by posing physical dangers to landowners, visitors and trespassers from the abandoned mine features. The abandoned features are resultant of mining conducted in Springfield, Illinois, Sangamon County which ceased operations, prior to the enactment of the Surface Mining Control and reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). In 1984, the Illinois Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council received authority and funding from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) to conduct an emergency program.

Under the preferred alternative, Alternative 2: The project will eliminate all explosive,

combustion, and asphyxiation hazards. In addition, sealing the borehole reduces or eliminates emissions of methane gas from the borehole and associated tap connection into the atmosphere.

The finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and the intensity of effects using the ten factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b).

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

Selection of Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative), to issue an AML Emergency authorization to proceed with the proposed AML project, would result in temporary minor impacts, described below, to the community and local environmental conditions on and immediately adjacent to the project site. This emergency project is in a developed residential area east of downtown Springfield, Illinois. Homes constructed in this area date back to the mid-1900s. An abandoned railroad right of way is present at the location of this emergency. The railroad property is now owned by the City of Springfield. A review of the historical plat maps (1858-1914) showed no houses, churches, schools, or cemeteries in the project area.

During construction, noise and air pollutants associated with work activity may exceed that already associated with normal residential land use. Such disturbance is believed to be minimal and temporary to expected land use by wildlife. There will be no long-term change in habitat resulting from the project.

Potential short-term increase in pollutants resulting from drilling and grouting machinery and potential dust associated with grouting operations. Proper precautions will be taken to protect the public from nuisance dust during delivery of materials to the project site. Such impacts would be local and minimal with no long-term impact. Methane gas emissions will likely be decreased, assuming no other open conduits between the mine and surface exist. No significant impact.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

Under the Preferred Alternative, the project will have major long-term benefits for local/adjacent residents and visitors by eliminating all explosive, combustion, and asphyxiation hazards. In addition, sealing the borehole reduces or eliminates emissions of methane gas from the borehole and associated tap connection into the atmosphere.

The minor to minor short-term disruption to the community and local environmental conditions on and immediately adjacent to the project site will not affect public health or safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as the proximity to historical or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The Preferred Alternative will not impact unique characteristics of geographic area including historic or cultural resources, park lands, wild and scenic rivers, wetlands, prime

farmland and known ecologically critical areas because these resources are not known to exist in the project area.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

Throughout the environmental review process for the reclamation of the abandoned mine land impacted lands, no controversy was encountered, nor are the effects expected to cause future controversy.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The effects of implementing the Preferred Alternative do not pose uncertainties. The environmental review process has not identified any effects that many involve unique or unknown risks.

6. The degree to which the action may establish precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The Preferred Alternative is not expected to establish precedent for future actions with significant effects, nor will it represent a decision in principle about future considerations as future abandoned mine land reclamation projects will be evaluated and considered on a case- by-case basis.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

Cumulative impacts were analyzed in the Environmental Assessment, and no significant cumulative impacts were identified.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The Preferred Alternative is not expected to adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources. There are no documented historical or cultural resources within the project area as per the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review and consultation. Clearance for SHPO is dated 03/10/20.

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9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The Preferred Alternative is not expected to adversely affect any known endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Acts of 1973.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

This action does not violate Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

William L. Joseph

William Joseph, Chief
Alton Field Division
Interior Regions 3, 4 and 6
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

8/12/2020

Date

Attachment