

**From:** [Amy Defreese](#)  
**To:** [Betsy Herrmann](#)  
**Subject:** FW: alton  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 13, 2015 2:34:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [Alton Coal BP Defreese additions.docx](#)

---

Could you take a look at this for any typos. I must be going nutty ... I can't find any! Laura says there are some. Change the track changes button to "Final" without markup.

Amy

*Amy Defreese, Ecologist  
Utah Field Office, US Fish & Wildlife Service  
2369 W. Orton Circle, Suite 50  
West Valley City, Utah 84119  
(801) 975-3330 x 128  
[amy\\_defreese@fws.gov](mailto:amy_defreese@fws.gov)*

---

**From:** Laura Romin [mailto:[laura\\_romin@fws.gov](mailto:laura_romin@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 13, 2015 2:13 PM  
**To:** Amy Defreese  
**Subject:** Re: alton

The first time you mention year round refuge habitat, specify that is part of the mitigation plan - could do that in parentheses if you want.

I also saw a few typos/missing little words - so proof for that before sending back to Megan. I'm on my iPhone at the moment so can't get those for you.

Thanks, Amy!

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 13, 2015, at 1:01 PM, Amy Defreese <[amy\\_defreese@fws.gov](mailto:amy_defreese@fws.gov)> wrote:

Here you go. I think Megan can play with the text, spacing and layout to fit it to one page. I will go ahead and do it if you think it is appropriate.

Amy

*Amy Defreese, Ecologist  
Utah Field Office, US Fish & Wildlife Service  
2369 W. Orton Circle, Suite 50  
West Valley City, Utah 84119  
(801) 975-3330 x 128  
[amy\\_defreese@fws.gov](mailto:amy_defreese@fws.gov)*

---

**From:** Laura Romin [mailto:[laura\\_romin@fws.gov](mailto:laura_romin@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 13, 2015 12:13 PM  
**To:** Amy Defreese  
**Cc:** Betsy Herrmann

**Subject:** Re: alton

Let me take a quick look.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 13, 2015, at 11:59 AM, Amy Defreese <[amy\\_defreese@fws.gov](mailto:amy_defreese@fws.gov)> wrote:

Laura,  
Do you want to see any of my proposed changes to the Brief before I  
send them to Megan?

Amy

*Amy Defreese, Ecologist  
Utah Field Office, US Fish & Wildlife Service  
2369 W. Orton Circle, Suite 50  
West Valley City, Utah 84119  
(801) 975-3330 x 128  
[amy\\_defreese@fws.gov](mailto:amy_defreese@fws.gov)*

**From:** Romin, Laura [mailto:[laura\\_romin@fws.gov](mailto:laura_romin@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 13, 2015 10:34 AM  
**To:** Defreese, Amy  
**Subject:** alton

Amy, when you coordinate with Megan, please be sure to cc: me and  
Larry.

Thanks.

Laura.

Laura Romin, Deputy Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Utah Ecological Services Field Office  
2369 W. Orton Circle  
West Valley City, Utah 84119  
ph: 801-975-3330, ext. 142  
cell: 801-554-7660

<Alton Coal BP\_Defreese additions.docx>

January 13, 2015

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

FROM: Matt Hogan, Deputy Regional Director, Mountain Prairie Region

SUBJECT: Alton Coal Tract Lease-By-Application (LBA) EIS

I. INTRODUCTION

On January 12, 2015, the Service received a request for the Director to meet with Rep. Stewart on the Alton Coal Tract along with BLM Director Neil Kornze in the next two weeks in an effort to understand things from the Agencies' perspectives.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Utah Field Office reviewed and commented on an Administrative Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (ASDEIS) in August 2013.

II. BACKGROUND

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Utah Field Office reviewed and commented on an Administrative Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (ASDEIS) in August 2013.

In summary, we commented that the proposed project will have significant effects to greater sage-grouse. The greater sage-grouse populations affected by the proposed project are found within the Panguitch Priority Area of Conservation (PAC) and include the southern-most lek in the species' range.

~~In summary, we commented that proposed project will have significant effects to greater sage-grouse.~~

Of the alternatives presented for consideration, we recommended the selection of Alternative K1, which would provide the greatest opportunity for long-term persistence of the local populations. This alternative minimizes the amount of disturbed greater sage-grouse habitat by 980 acres (49%) over the proposed action. Despite the reduced acreage subject to direct disturbance, the extent of available, year-round refuge habitat may not be adequate to prevent the loss or displacement of the local greater sage-grouse populations.

Consequently, we recommended that BLM stipulate no surface disturbance associated with mining activity occur until year-round refuge habitat for greater sage-grouse is fully functional and used by the species. This reflects a recommendation in the 2013 Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Objectives Final Report to avoid mining leases in sage-grouse habitats until other suitable habitats can be restored to habitats used by the species. We additionally recommended that BLM increase the proposed lek buffer for surface disturbance from 0.5 mile to 2 miles. In the absence of such measures, Specifically, the extent of available, suitable refuge habitat for greater sage-grouse may not be adequate to prevent the loss or displacement of the Alton-Sink Valley greater sage-grouse population, which includes the southern-most lek in the species' range. This population occurs within the Panguitch Priority Area of Conservation (PAC). We

~~recommended that BLM identify and create fully functional, year-round refuge habitat to sustain birds during mining operations. We additionally commented that~~ the proposed greater sage-grouse mitigation plan ~~doesid~~ not fully compensate for impacts disclosed in the ASDEIS. We provided recommendations to improve the mitigation plan.

~~In the fall of 2013, BLM worked with the Utah Field Office to address comments related to the greater sage-grouse mitigation plan. The BLM has not published a subsequent Supplemental Draft EIS.~~

### III. STATUS

~~In the fall of~~On December 4, 2013, BLM provided a response to our comments to the ASDEIS. BLM stated that it is infeasible for the operator to complete mitigation projects prior to mining and that use of refuge habitat by greater sage-grouse will not be required as stipulation for successful mitigation. In addition, BLM chose to employ a 0.5 mile surface disturbance buffer for leks. We understand that a publication-ready Supplemental DEIS is ready for release and is undergoing review in the BLM Washington Office. ~~worked with the Utah Field Office to address comments related to the greater sage-grouse mitigation plan. The BLM has not published a subsequent Supplemental Draft EIS.~~

~~It is not known if/how BLM has addressed our prior comments.~~