

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF FACTS AND DECISIONS

### **Jonesville Coal Exploration Permit Application**

Ranger Alaska, LLC. (RAL), 110N Rubey Drive, Suite 201, Golden, CO 80403 through their representatives Alaska Earth Sciences Inc, 1075 Check Street, Suite 210, Wasilla Alaska 99654, has submitted an application to conduct exploration permit on their Jonesville coal lease (ADL 324600 and ADL 229336). The Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) has reviewed the request and makes the following preliminary findings of facts and decision in accordance with 11 AAC 90.165.

1. An application for a Coal Exploration Permit (No. E-0902) was filed with DMLW on August 30, 2012.
2. The exploration activity is located 2 miles northwest of Sutton in Southcentral Alaska. The proposed activity will occur within Sections 16-21, Township 19 North, Range 3 East, Seward Meridian.
3. Proposed exploration activities will consist of the drilling of up to 45 shallow air rotary drilled boreholes in a tailings pond in the southwest corner of the lease area and the drilling up to seven medium to deep exploratory coreholes. Up to 2200 feet of drilling is anticipated for the air rotary drilling and up to 7250 feet of core drilling. The project proposes to use existing trails and helicopter support wherever possible. All staging and logistics will be done on existing disturbed areas to minimize additional impacts to the area. The application proposes to construct an additional 1760 feet trail to access the drill sites.
4. A preliminary completeness review by DMLW staff determined further information on the project was necessary before the application could be deemed complete. This included more detailed information about the drilling program, updates to background information and further information on drill sites.
5. A copy of the permit application along with a request for comments was distributed to Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM). Comments were received from ADF&G and have been addressed in the permit application. An updated permit application was received on October 18, 2012. The application was deemed complete on October 18, 2012.
6. The exploration application contains all the information required by 11 AAC 90.163 and is sufficient for this office to make a Preliminary Decision.
7. Public notice of this application will be given for the period starting on October 24, 2012, and ending on November 23, 2012. A Legal ad will be placed in the Anchorage Daily News on October 24, 2012. Also, on October 24, 2012 .the notice will be mailed directly to the Division's mailing list of affected persons and agencies and placed on the Departments Public notice website.

8. The activities proposed in the exploration permit application meet the requirements of AS 27.21.200 and 11 AAC 90.163, and 11 AAC 90.167.
9. The approved permit area is not within an area designated unsuitable for mining under AS27.21.260.
10. Pursuant to 11 AAC 90.167(b), The DMLW has determined that the reclamation bond in the amount of \$73, 158.26 is sufficient to cover the associated reclamation costs.
11. The application complies with the requirements of the Alaska Surface Coal Mining Control and Reclamation Act (AS 27.21 and 11 AAC 90).
12. Copies of Permit Application, Preliminary Findings of Fact and other supporting documents are available for review at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water, 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 920, Anchorage, AK 99501-3577 or on our website ([www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/mining/index.htm](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/mining/index.htm)). Comments should be sent to Liping Jing, at the Anchorage address listed above, by fax to (907) 269-8930, or by e-mail to: [coalprogram@alaska.gov](mailto:coalprogram@alaska.gov) with the subject "Jonesville Coal Project". The deadline for comments is 5:00 p.m. on November 23, 2012.

  
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Russell Kirkham, Manager  
Coal Regulatory Program

Date Oct 24, 2012