

CHAPTER 9
CONSULTATION AND
COORDINATION



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9. Consultation and Coordination

9.1 Environmental Statement Coordination

Before preparing the Draft Environmental Statement, a copy of the Woodward-Clyde Environmental Report (4) was submitted to a number of Federal and State agencies for review and comment. Agencies contacted as a part of this effort included:

a. Federal Agencies

U. S. Forest Service, Region 2
Omaha District Corps of Engineers
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII
Federal Energy Administration, Region VIII
Chairman, Federal Power Commission
Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Region VIII

b. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management, Billings, Montana
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region VI
U. S. Geological Survey, Lakewood, Colorado
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Aberdeen, South Dakota
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Denver, Colorado

c. North Dakota Agencies

Honorable Arthur A. Link, Governor
State Intergovernmental Clearinghouse, State Planning
Division
State Natural Resource Advisor
State Energy Coordinator
North Dakota Department of Health
Secretary and State Engineer, State Water Commission
State Game and Fish Department
State Outdoor Recreation Agency
North Dakota State Tax Department
State Public Service Commission
State Geologist
State Historical Society

In addition, an advance copy of this statement was reviewed and commented on by the West Central North Dakota Regional EIS team which is comprised of 17 Federal and 32 State of North Dakota agencies for which the Bureau of Land Management is the lead Federal agency. Comments on the advance copy were also requested from:

Federal Power Commission, Washington, D.C.
Rural Electrification Administration, Washington, D.C.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Billings
U.S. Corps of Engineers, Omaha
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Aberdeen
ANG Coal Gasification Company
U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C.

The draft of this environmental impact statement was prepared by the Upper Missouri Region, Bureau of Reclamation, Billings, Montana. Several meetings were held with ANGCGC representatives at Billings to gain additional data; further data and information were asked for and provided in numerous communications between the Bureau of Reclamation and ANGCGC. Persons from several different disciplines were involved in the preparation of the statement. These disciplines include:

Fish and Wildlife Biology	Hydrology
Limnology	Ecology
Sociology	Civil Engineering
Economics	Electrical Engineering
Environmental Engineering	

9.2 Consultation During Preparation of Final Environmental Statement

Notice of the Draft Environmental Statement's availability was printed in the Federal Register on March 22, 1977; copies were distributed to the entities listed in the summary on March 23, 1977. Additional copies were made available from the Office of Ecology, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, D.C.; the Office of the Regional Director, Upper Missouri Region, Bureau of Reclamation, Billings, Montana; and the Missouri-Souris Projects Office, Bureau of Reclamation, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Public hearings on the DES were held in Beulah, North Dakota, on May 10, 1977, and in Bismarck, North Dakota, on May 11, 1977. Notice of the two hearings was published in the Federal Register on March 31, 1977. On April 10, 1977, notices of the hearings were released to the wire services (AP and UPI), all daily and weekly newspapers, and radio and television stations in the area of concern. Notices were also published in local newspapers during the week of May 2, 1977. Total registered attendance at the two hearings was 91.

The public hearing record includes a transcript of all oral testimony and written comments submitted for the record. Relevant comments from the public hearings are summarized in this chapter along with the Bureau of Reclamation's responses and cross-references to appropriate sections of the final statement.

All written comments received during the review period from governmental agencies as well as letters from the public, are contained in Appendix J. All written comments on the draft statement and all written and oral testimony from the hearing record were considered during preparation of the final environmental statement.

One major area of concern was that the EIS should cover the cumulative impacts of all coal-related development proposed for the region surrounding the proposed ANGCGC plant. This statement is a site-specific EIS for the ANGCGC plant only and coverage of cumulative impacts is necessarily limited. A BLM-North Dakota Regional EIS near completion in August 1977 is designed to fulfill the requirement to study cumulative impacts. In addition, this statement provides limited coverage of the Basin Electric Company powerplant to be constructed adjacent to the ANGCGC plant. The Rural Electrification Administration will issue the site-specific EIS for the Basin Electric proposal.

Copies of the public hearing record are available for public inspection at the Office of the Director of Communications, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., and at the following Bureau of Reclamation offices: Assistant to the Commissioner, Ecology, Washington, D.C.; Technical Services and Publications Branch, Engineering and Research Center, Denver, Colorado; Upper Missouri Regional Office, Billings, Montana; and the Missouri-Souris Projects Office, Bismarck, North Dakota. At the state and local levels, copies are available at the North Dakota

State Planning Agency, Bismarck, North Dakota; the Office of Budget and Program Planning, Helena, Montana; the Bismarck Public Library, Bismarck, North Dakota; and the Beulah City Library, Beulah, North Dakota.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC HEARINGS
ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Nature of Comments about
Draft Statement

1. The permit for the gasification plant should require that essential public facilities and services be in place before plant construction begins.
2. To avoid developing a biased DES, data compiled by the Bureau of Reclamation should have been used instead of that compiled and provided by the ANG Company.
3. The DES does not include a description of the present state of educational facilities in the impacted area.
4. Projected classroom needs should be based on the State recommended classroom ratio of 1:24 and the laboratory instructor-student ratio of 1:15, rather than the overall ratio of 1:30 used in the DES.
5. The DES omitted consideration of projected gymnasium and vocational education facility needs for the impacted area.
6. The community of Hazen will have to provide adequate educational facilities for the incoming population. However, there are severe funding problems because the Hazen School District is at present bonded to capacity and is not located so that it will benefit from increased property taxes from the plant. Too, there is a time lag in getting grant requests approved.

Bureau of Reclamation Responses

1. The USBR has no authority to place these kinds of stipulations on water service contracts. There are numerous permits issued by the State of North Dakota where such a stipulation could be attached if necessary.
2. It is Department of Interior policy that baseline environmental data for private developments be provided by the company. The data used in the DES was compiled by reliable consulting firms and governmental sources and subjected to detailed review and analysis by USBR personnel.
3. The present status of educational facilities in the impact area was discussed in Section 2.3.3 of the DES.
4. The projected needs are based upon the premise that the student-teacher ratio will likely increase because the temporary nature of a part of the population would preclude the expenditure of limited funds to provide permanent facilities which would no longer be used once the temporary population moves out.
5. The general discussion in Section 3.3.2.2 on educational facilities includes gymnasiums and Vo-Tech facilities. We feel that specific needs should be determined by the local school boards based upon their greater familiarity with local values and wishes.
6. As a last resort, loans could be made from the State Coal Severance Tax Fund to be paid back from future severance taxes (See Section 2.3.2). However, whether or not to utilize this source is strictly a local decision.

Nature of Comments about
Draft Statement

7. The capacity of the public health care system in the impacted area will be considerably exceeded as a result of the additional population influx. The present physician to patient ratio in the area is 1:4,000, against a State average of 1:1,500. Moreover, the area will need a new hospital and at present there are no funds available for new facilities or to recruit additional physicians and other health care personnel. Funds received from the Coal Impact Office are adequate only to maintain and rehabilitate existing structures.
8. The DES deemphasizes solar energy and conservation alternatives. This represents a fossil fuel bias.
9. Alternative uses of the coal for producing petrochemicals and as coking coal should be discussed.
10. The DES does not mention the presence or absence of lower coal seams. If the land is to be disturbed by strip-mining, all possible energy should be recovered.
11. The DES does not include information about the rate structure that will govern sale of the gas produced. Will this rate structure encourage energy conservation or excessive and wasteful use of energy?

Bureau of Reclamation Responses

7. Again, it would be possible to borrow funds from the State Trust Fund if other possible sources have been exhausted.
8. The USBR fully supports solar energy and conservation as alternatives to the long-term use of fossil fuels. As short-term alternatives to the proposed gasification plant they do not appear to be feasible at this time.
9. Alternative use of the coal for producing petrochemicals was discussed in Section 8.3.1.1 of the DES. Lignite is not considered a good coal for coking purposes because the moisture content is too high, the volatile content is generally too low, and the fixed carbon content is too low.
10. There are no economically recoverable coal seams below the Beulah-Zap bed.
11. The Federal Power Commission will determine the rate structure governing the sale of the SNG. Current proposals to average the cost into the existing rate structure were discussed as page 1-3 of the DES.

Nature of Comments about
Draft Statement

12. The acreage of land projected to be disturbed by mining appears to be underestimated. The expected 10 percent accuracy of the projections as stated in the DES appear not to be accurate within 25 percent. For example, using the commonly accepted acreage of 1,750 tons per acre-foot (of coal), the total land mined during 25 years would amount to 16,250 acres, which is nearly 4,000 acres more than is projected in the DES. Also, the DES should point out that a total of 29,175 acres will be disturbed by the combined ANG and Basin Electric mining activities.
13. The statement that farmers will want their land reclaimed as cropland has no basis other than the attraction of short-term high wheat prices.
14. The total amount of water released into the atmosphere will be 5,600 gallons per minute instead of 4,700 gallons per minute as stated in the DES, since the 800 gallons per minute discharged from the oxygen cooling plant is not included.
15. The discussion of water evaporation from the ANG and Basin Electric plants does not adequately emphasize the effects of increased humidity and "mugginess." Also, the combination of increased humidity with sulfur and nitrous oxide emissions increases the likelihood of acid rains occurring.
16. There is no source referenced for the statement on page 3-81 that the alkaline waters in North Dakota will reduce mercury hazards to humans and wildlife by precipitating it out. This statement should either be omitted or its source cited in the text.

Bureau of Reclamation Responses

12. The acreages used in the DES were based on measurements of the thickness and quality of the seam to be mined, not a statewide overall average. As stated on page 1-11 of the DES, the Basin Electric plant would require about 100 acres to be mined annually thus disturbing a total of about 16,000 acres for both projects.
13. The basis for the statement was the generally higher dollar-per-acre yield of cropland over rangeland.
14. Updated data sets the evaporation loss at 7,720 gpm. Evaporation and drift from both cooling towers are included in this estimate but blowdown is not. Section 1.5.5.4 has been revised to include the revised data.
15. Because of the comparatively low relative humidity of the area, it is not likely that "mugginess" or local acid rains would develop because of water evaporation from the gasification plant.
16. The statement was based on chemical laws and reactions well known in the science of chemistry and no one particular reference served as a source.

Nature of Comments about
Draft Statement

Bureau of Reclamation Responses

17. Will the Bureau of Reclamation sell water to AMG even though the DES concludes that the project will adversely affect air quality and ground water quality and quantity; that wildlife habitats will be permanently altered; and that the social structure of the area will be significantly affected by the increased population?
18. Consideration should be given to compiling statistical data the incidence of diseases under pre-plant conditions. Such a data base is essential for monitoring conditions after the plant is in operation.
19. The DES does not give adequate attention to the effects of trace elements on air and water quality radioactivity, or possible carcinogens. The deleterious effects of toxic tract elements on humans, animals and plants should be mentioned as well as the lack of official emission standards.
20. Sulfur dioxide from lignite and coal-fire powerplants may cause selenium deficiencies in cattle, resulting in stillborn or weak calves. Reportedly, the sulfur dioxide is absorbed by alfalfa and, when eaten by cattle, the resulting sulfate reduces selenium levels. Two such occurrences have been reported in North Dakota: one was on a ranch 1 mile from a thermoelectric powerplant and oil refinery; the other was on a ranch 6 miles from a thermoelectric complex. Studies are underway to determine better ways of diagnosing and preventing this problem.
17. The Secretary of the Interior will have to decide whether or not to issue a water service contract after weighing the impacts of the proposal against the benefit to the nation of the synthetic natural gas produced.
18. We agree with this comment and have advised ANGGC accordingly
19. The effects of toxic trace elements was discussed on pages 3-16, 3-17, and 3-81 of the DES. A sentence regarding the lack of tract element emission standards has been added to Section 4.1.2.1. Radioactivity from either source should not be a problem because of the very low occurrence of radioactive elements in the coal. Very little is known about the carcinogenicity of the emissions and to place more emphasis on this potential effect would be to engage in "scare tactics" not warranted by existing knowledge.
20. No response necessary.

9.3 Bibliography

(References used in the Woodward-Clyde report (4) were not all included in this bibliography but are contained on pages 10-25 through 10-80 of that report.)

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