

# News-Sun

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## Potash project moves into key phase

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NEWS-SUN

The planned Intercontinental Potash Corporation polyhalite mine west of Jal moved into a critical stage last week with the publication of the mine's draft environmental impact statement.

The draft EIS was published by the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management on Aug. 9. Later this month, area residents will get a good look at the proposed mine and be able to weigh in on its development in three public meetings to review the EIS.

"It will be the mainly to get comments from the public or interested parties," said Shiva Achet, Planning and Environmental coordinator for the BLM. "They will be forums in which we will present what we have done, what alternatives have been looked into and what we expect next."

Achet said the meetings will give area residents an overview of the entire EIS, with high points being the use of brackish water from the Capitan Reef Basin for mine operations, the disposal of tailings and increased roadway traffic from the mine site — located about 27 miles west of Jal on Highway 128 — to the train depot near Jal where the material will be shipped.

According to the BLM, the draft EIS is a disclosure document that describes the potential adverse or beneficial environmental and social impacts — either direct, indirect or cumulative — that could result from the development of the Ochoa Project.

ICP proposes to mine polyhalite deposits from a depth of 1,500 feet below the surface and extract sulphate of potash from those deposits. Sulphate of potash, also known as potassium sulphate, is used in fertilizer and sells at a premium over muriate of potash, which is mined

## Potash

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in Eddy County by Intrepid and Mosaic.

The draft EIS is the result of more than two years of study on issues including water resources, cultural resources, natural resources, air quality and other resources.

Sidney Himmel, ICP president and chief executive officer, said in a release that the draft EIS will show the company has designed the mine with all the necessary safeguards.

"ICP has designed a project that safeguards the environment while contributing to the economy of southeastern New Mexico," Himmel said. "The publication of the DEIS marks a key milestone for the project, paving the way for the company to break ground on construction of the mine and processing facility. With more than 100 full-time employees and consultants currently engaged in the project, it is expected that up to 1,400 new construction jobs, at peak construction activity, will be created, and up to 500 additional new, permanent employees will be hired to support commercial operations once construction is completed and production is underway."

Randy Foote, chief operating officer for ICP, said the draft EIS is three weeks behind the company's expected schedule in being released, but said it is moving along well.

Foote said the company is still actively working on many facets of the project while the draft EIS is being reviewed.

"Our main focus is the EIS and the feasibility study, which is very in-depth on how you would do it and how much it will cost, plus or minus 10



IC POTASH CORP

percent," Foote said. "The feasibility study needs to be a document strong enough to acquire financing."

Foote said the company is also working on aspects of air quality and groundwater discharge permits that will be needed and on the hydrological model for using the Capitan Reef Basin.

Foote said the schedule calls for a record of decision on the EIS in March 2014 and the company would target a groundbreaking shortly thereafter.

"That is the best course of action we could have," he said.

The upcoming public meetings are scheduled for Carlsbad, Jal and Hobbs at the following times and locations:

■ Aug. 27 - 4-6:30 p.m. - National Cave and Karst Research Institute, 400-1 Cascades Ave., Carlsbad.

■ Aug. 28 - 10 a.m.-noon - Woolworth Community Library, 100 E. Utah Ave., Jal.

■ Aug. 28 - 4-6:30 p.m. - New Mexico Junior College, Training and Outreach Building, 5317 N. Lovington Highway, Hobbs.

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