

Bureau of Mines/Coldwater Public Open House

What is the “preferred alternative?”

Several alternatives were reviewed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement of July 2006. The preferred alternative was selected from this document.

In preparing the 2006 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Department of the Interior, a number of alternatives were identified for the future of the property. The Department of the Interior has selected Alternative D as its “preferred alternative.”

Under Alternative D, the federal government would manage and bear the costs for modification of all or part of the land, structures, or other improvements prior to conveyance or retention of the center. Modifications could include removal of all or a portion of the existing structures and associated above ground infrastructure (roads, power lines, ore bins, etc.) at the Center. Modifications could also include construction of new structures, or rehabilitation of existing buildings, or both.

Following completion of the modifications, the property would be disposed through transfer to a university or nonfederal government entity without restrictions, transfer to a university or nonfederal government entity with restrictions, or retention by the federal government for use such as those described under the three conceptual land-use scenarios (open space/park, interpretive/nature/history center, or training center/office park). The Department of the Interior has chosen retention by the federal government.

In selecting Alternative D, the Department of the Interior also stated its preference for the open space/park land use scenario. Under this conceptual scenario, the Center would be converted to open space and natural areas where the focus would be on restoration and use of the natural environment under this scenario. The Center property would become a park or be used as open space. This could be accomplished by removing some or all of the buildings, structures and roadways. Nonnative plant species could be identified and removed. Native vegetation could then be planted and the site naturalized to recreate the historic characteristics of an open oak savanna, prairie-type setting.

Alternative D contains some options, and the Department of the Interior has further clarified that its preferred alternative includes removal of all existing structures and associated above-ground infrastructure (roads, power lines, ore bins, etc.) at the Center, restoration of the site to natural conditions, restoration of the spring, and retention of the site by the federal government.