

Title:

Progress on Reassessing Oil Shale of the Green River Formation at the U.S. Geological Survey

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In April, 2007 the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) received funding for a two-year project to reassess oil shale of the Eocene Green River Formation of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. One of the first goals is to make available on-line as much of the oil shale data from the formation as possible, including Fischer assay data, scans of geophysical logs, core descriptions, previous USGS assessments, and other publications. The Fischer assay data for Colorado and Utah are now available on-line, and assay data for Wyoming are being prepared. All USGS publications related to oil shale are now available on-line.

The new assessment will incorporate the considerable amount of Fischer assay data that were acquired by the USGS after the oil shale industry collapsed in the 1980s and after the previous USGS oil shale assessments were completed, the most recent being in 1989. In addition, the new assessment will subdivide the oil shale section into various facies that will be assessed separately.

Advances in computer modeling since previous assessments will allow simulations of various development scenarios for open pit mining, underground mining, and in situ retorting. Most modeling will follow completion of the new assessment, but to date preliminary two-dimensional and three-dimensional maps and animations showing zone thicknesses and volumetric calculations of overburden above the Mahogany oil shale zone of the Green River Formation in the Piceance Basin have been generated using ArcGIS and EarthVision.

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