

U.S. Department of Energy Oil Shale Task Force

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The DOE Oil Shale Task Force was formed in response to a letter from Colorado Governor Richard Lamm to Secretary James Schlesinger on May 8, 1978. The Governor, concerned about environmental and health impacts asked Schlesinger "to assist Colorado by working with us in developing additional research and analyses of current and future efforts." DOE first created a Task Force focusing on Management Information Systems (MIS), but later expanded it to include all technologies. The goals were to plan, implement, and coordinate a comprehensive and integrated research program. In the context of the DOE RD&D Plan, the Task Force played the role of coordinating the work being done in the Data Base Development and Risk Analysis activities. Some of the accomplishments were the development and implementation of research programs at very sites such as Logan Wash; public meetings in Grand Junction and Denver; three symposia held in Vail. The Task Force had representatives from universities, DOE lab, national labs, private consultants and the State of Colorado. There was also an advisory group with members from government, industry and environmental organizations. Numerous papers and reports were published during the 1980s. The program was discontinued in the mid 1980s by funding cuts. The Task Force and some examples of its work will be discussed. The Task Force may provide a useful model for future activities and the information generated in the program is a valuable base for future decision-making. In addition, new scientific knowledge developed in the last 20 years can be applied to this research base to develop a better understanding and direct future efforts.