

Oil shale activities at the U.S. Geological Survey

Ronald C. Johnson, John R. Dyni, John R. Donnell, and David Ferderer, U.S. Geological Survey, Denver, CO

Increased energy demand and high oil prices have renewed interest in domestic oil shale resources. To accommodate the demand, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is reinstating its oil shale research and assessment program. Prior to the collapse of the oil shale industry in the early 1980s, the USGS conducted a wide range of oil shale investigations including detailed mineralogical and geochemical studies, stratigraphic studies, geologic mapping, and resource assessments. Oil shale research focused extensively on the Eocene Green River Formation in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming, but other U.S. and international deposits were studied as well. In addition, the USGS became the repository for the former U.S. Bureau of Mines oil shale research data and publications. Unfortunately, very little of this oil shale information is available digitally, and most of the original USGS and Bureau of Mines publications are out of print and difficult to obtain. An important priority of the new oil shale program is to digitize the critical USGS and Bureau of Mines reports and make them available on line. Currently, a new USGS oil shale website is under construction to provide access to digital oil shale information. USGS geologic quadrangle maps, geologic cross sections, and other published oil shale materials are being scanned and will be available as TIFF images. We are also utilizing ArcGIS to convert structure contour, isopach, and iso-resource data and maps for Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming into more useful products. For additional information, please see http://energy.cr.usgs.gov/newsite/other/oil_shale/index.html.