

Colorado Libraries for Mining, Environmental, Natural Resources, and Energy Researchers

by Andrea L. Hamilton, Abby Lindquist, and Andrea McCullough

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Colorado ranks seventh in the United States in total energy production, fifth in natural gas production, ninth in crude oil, eleventh in coal, and twenty-seventh in electricity.¹ Additionally, Colorado is home to the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, a “collaborative educational non-profit organization dedicated to the scholarly and practical study of law and regulations relating to mining, oil and gas, water, public lands, energy, [and] environmental protection,”² and has a strong network of research institutions to support the researcher interested in energy-related industries. This article provides a summary of local libraries specializing in mining, the environment, natural resources, and other energy-related collections.³

Bureau of Land Management Library

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Library⁴ has more than 40,000 volumes and 250 periodical subscriptions in its collection, covering all aspects of land management, natural resources, minerals, and administration. The collection focuses on two primary areas: (1) scientific information for the use of BLM scientists and subject specialists; and (2) publications produced by or for the BLM that are available to both BLM and non-BLM users. Publications available to the public include extensive holdings related to minerals development; National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents; annual reports and statistics; surveys and reports generated for specific field offices; and policy documents. Visitors may access the print collection while in the library, and limited reference service is provided by the BLM librarians for the general public. An online catalog is available.⁵

Special Collections

Many of the BLM publications have been digitized and can be found online.⁶ This collection includes oil shale reports, NEPA documents, and technical notes and references. Legal researchers may be interested in BLM’s “Laws, Regulations, Policies, Court Decisions” page,⁷ which provides links to various types of legal and regulatory resources pertaining to the BLM.

Document Delivery Services

Document delivery service⁸ requests are handled as staffing and time permit. Most requested information can be sent to the requestor via e-mail.

Bureau of Reclamation Library

As part of the Department of the Interior library group, the Bureau of Reclamation runs an engineering library,⁹ with a focus on dams, water, and irrigation. The purpose of the Bureau of Reclamation has evolved from storing water for use on demand to now focusing on hydropower and dam maintenance, and the library resources reflect that shift.

The collection contains general in-house reports, as well as reports related to specific projects. Although the library does not collect many law resources, it does have supportive legal resources tied to the engineering field. Additional links to government resources can be found on its website.¹⁰ Older documents may be transferred to the Federal Records Center or the National Archives and Records Administration, or may be destroyed. An online catalog is available.¹¹



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Document Delivery Services

The library accepts reference requests from members of the public by e-mail or by phone. Document delivery is available, as long as the documents are publicly accessible (due to security, some of the collection is private). There is no circulation for visitors, but an interlibrary loan through affiliated library systems is available.

Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

Oil and gas wells in Colorado are permitted and regulated by the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC),¹² which is a division of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. Most COGCC materials have been digitized and are available online. The Colorado Oil and Gas Information System (COGIS)—a database containing oil- and gas-related information regarding facilities, production, levy, inspection/incident, and financial assurance going back to 1951, when the COGCC was created—is the COGCC resource that legal researchers use most frequently. Commission hearing files and orders, rules and policies, COGCC forms and staff reports, and pending and recently issued permits also are available. There is an online catalog.¹³

Document Delivery Services

The COGCC does not offer document delivery services. Anything available through COGIS that is not yet digitized can be searched manually at the COGCC. The News and Media page¹⁴ provides more detail about the information available through the COGCC.

Colorado School of Mines Arthur Lakes Library

The Arthur Lakes Library¹⁵ focuses on engineering and earth, energy, and environmental science. Reference guides on the library website offer subject-specific resources as useful starting points.¹⁶ Legal researchers have used the library's mining and geological handbooks for clear, authoritative explanations of an activity or process.

The public computers provide access to a majority of the library's databases and journals, such as GeoRef and Engineering Village (including Compendex) for scholarly, industry-specific publications. An online catalog is available.¹⁷

Special Collections

In addition to being a selective depository for U.S. and Colorado state government publications, the library holds impressive map and image collections.¹⁸ The Russell L. and Lyn Wood Mining History Archive¹⁹ includes a law collection from the Society of Mining Law Antiquarians focused on preserving books and materials related to the history of mining law. The archive is open by appointment. The Tell Ertl Oil Shale Repository²⁰ contains materials covering the history of oil shale, including historic documents primarily from operations in Colorado and the West, photos and diagrams, maps, and reports, all of which can be found in the associated database.²¹ This special collection has limited hours, so visitors are advised to call ahead.

Document Delivery Services

Document delivery services are available through the interlibrary loan process.²²

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 Technical Library

A large portion of the library²³ contains Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publications, most of which are highly technical and many of which are historical in nature. The collection also contains many environmental impact statements; a map collection specific to Region 8 states (Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah); and general science research books like those you might find in an academic library. In addition, the library maintains current and archival paper copies of volume 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

The EPA offers an online catalog.²⁴ When conducting a search, researchers should note that there are two EPA libraries in the vicinity that can be selected from the online search menu. The Region 8 Technical Library²⁵ serves regional EPA employees, the six states in Region 8, and twenty-seven regional tribal nations. The second EPA library is the National Enforcement Investigations Center,²⁶ which is a smaller library and supports the field activities, forensic lab work, and courtroom litigation work of EPA personnel nationwide.

Special Collections

The library can provide historical publications relating to a particular Act, such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which makes it particularly valuable to researchers interested in mining, the environment, natural resources, or energy. Additionally, the EPA Superfund Records Center²⁷ maintains unpublished documents such as memos and records of decision. Copies of these documents must be obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request.²⁸

Document Delivery Services

Document delivery services are available through the Online Computer Library Center.²⁹ Additionally, the Environmental Information Service Center³⁰ is staffed by three knowledgeable

individuals who serve as a gateway to the EPA, answering phone and e-mail queries. They send EPA publications to schools and individuals on a regular basis; refer public callers within the EPA; and direct individuals to appropriate outside state, county, or federal agencies.

U.S. Geological Survey Library

The Denver branch of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Library collection³¹ covers all earth science topics, domestic and foreign; mineralogy; petrology; geochemistry; oil, gas, and coal; and Bureau of Mines publications, including open files.³² Visitors to the library have full access to the print collection, as well as full-text electronic resources at workstations in the library.³³ To borrow print materials, members of the public must work through their local library (public, university, or corporate) to request the materials via interlibrary loan. The USGS does not accept requests by telephone or in person. All current USGS publications also are available online, and many are only available online.³⁴ An online catalog is available.³⁵

Special Collections

The Photographic Collection is an archive of still photographs and original sketches dating from the 1870s and taken by USGS scientists as part of their field studies. Selected photographs from the collection can be accessed online from the USGS Photographic Collection website.³⁶ The Field Records Collection is an archive of field notes, correspondence, manuscripts, maps, analysis reports, and other data created or collected by USGS geologists during field studies and other project work.³⁷

Document Delivery Services

Document delivery requests are handled through the interlibrary loan process.³⁸

U.S. Office of Surface Mining Library

This Department of the Interior Library³⁹ is a good resource for information about surface coal mining, especially for technical information regarding land reclamation or legislative information relating to Office of Surface Mining (OSM) regulations or the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). The OSM Library collection does not include mine maps or lists of inactive mines, nor can it provide specific information about surface coal mining specific to another state or a tribe, because each has its own regulatory program. An online catalog is available.⁴⁰ In addition, there are separate websites specific to the legislative history of SMCRA⁴¹ and surface coal mining regulations for other states and tribes.⁴²

Special Collections

The library has a complete collection of environmental impact statements that have been issued by the agency in relation to surface coal mining projects. It also contains two hard-to-find U.S. Bureau of Mines series—"Reports of Investigation" and "Information Circulars"—published from 1980 through 1995.

Document Delivery Services

When possible, the library offers document delivery services. It also will loan materials to other libraries.

Western Museum of Mining & Industry Library

The Western Museum of Mining & Industry's (WMMI) collection⁴³ of 5,000-plus volumes covers the Industrial Revolution, mining technologies, mining law, mineralogy, geology, steam power, and steam locomotives, along with historic USGS documentation and publications. Visitors to the library have full on-site access to the print collection; however, a library membership is required to check out materials.⁴⁴ The WMMI Library does not accept research requests by phone or e-mail. An online catalog is available.⁴⁵

Special Collections

The library has many historic titles, such as the 1877 edition of *The Plains of the Great West and Their Inhabitants*, by Richard Irving Dodge. The collection also includes mining manuals from the early 1900s and how-to guides for activities such as extracting gold, silver, and copper.

The museum offers lectures and other educational activities to complement current exhibits and topics of concern for the mining community. It now hosts a full-scale replica of the rescue pod—the Fenix II capsule—that saved the thirty-three Chilean miners who had been trapped 2,300 feet underground in 2010.

Document Delivery Services

The library does not offer document delivery services at this time.

Notes

1. U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Colorado: State Profile and Energy Estimates," available at www.eia.gov/state/?sid=CO#tabs-3.
2. Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, "What is the Foundation," available at www.rmmlf.org/geninfo/what.htm.
3. The authors extend their gratitude to the following individuals for sharing details of their organizations: Patricia Anderson, Public Services Librarian, Colorado School of Mines; Malia Burton, Librarian, Digital Services, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Lisa Dunn, Head of Reference, Colorado School of Mines; Lydia G. Frederick, Supervisory Librarian, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 8; Robert J. Frick, Hearings Manager, Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC); Dave Futey, Museum Manager, Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI); Deborah K. McGinnis, Librarian, U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining (OSM); Dianne Powell, Library Manager, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR); and Emily Wild, Librarian, Physical Scientist, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).
4. BLM Library, www.blm.gov/nstc/library/library.html.
5. See 207.67.203.54/B10109Staff/OPAC/index.asp. At the time this article was written, the BLM Library was in the process of launching a new website; the new URL likely will be www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/blm-library.html.
6. BLM Library Internet Archive, archive.org/details/blmlibrary.
7. See www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations.html.
8. Document delivery service means that copies or reprints of documents are delivered via fax, e-mail, courier, or mail, or are made available for on-site pickup. The turnaround time and cost for these services vary by institution. Copies or reprints may be part of the institution's print or electronic collection or may be obtained via partnerships or agreements with other institutions. Copyright laws and licensing agreements do apply to document delivery requests.
9. USBR Library, www.usbr.gov/library.
10. See www.usbr.gov/library/BRResource.html.

11. USBR Library Catalog, www.usbr.gov/library/BRcatalog.html.
12. COGCC, cogcc.state.co.us.
13. The COGCC online catalog can be accessed by going to cogcc.state.co.us and selecting "Library" from the left-hand menu.
14. Go to cogcc.state.co.us and select "News/Media" from the left-hand menu.
15. Colorado School of Mines Arthur Lakes Library, library.mines.edu.
16. See library.mines.edu/Research_by_Subject.
17. Arthur Lakes Library Online Catalog, libcat.mines.edu.
18. Details on accessing the collections are available at library.mines.edu/About_the_Library/Library_Collections.
19. Russell L. & Lyn Wood Mining History Archive, library.mines.edu/Mining_History_Archive.
20. Tell Ertl Oil Shale Repository at Arthur Lakes Library, library.mines.edu/Tell_Ertl.
21. Tell Ertl Oil Shale Repository Database, tellerl.coalliance.org/vwebv/searchBasic?sk=en_US.
22. See library.mines.edu/Request_Form_for_Non-Mines_Users.
23. U.S. EPA Region 8 Technical Library Services, www2.epa.gov/libraries/region-8-technical-library-services.
24. EPA National Library Catalog, www2.epa.gov/libraries/catalog.
25. Listed as "EOA" in the Holdings field of any full-record display in the library catalog.
26. National Enforcement Investigations Center Environmental Forensic Library Services, www2.epa.gov/libraries/neic-environmental-forensic-library-services (listed as "EOB" in the Holdings field of any full-record display in the library catalog).
27. See www2.epa.gov/region8/superfund-contacts (Superfund Records Center contact information is at the bottom of the page).
28. See www.foia.gov/report-makerequest.html.
29. See www.oclc.org/en-US/home.html.
30. EPA Region 8 Environmental Information Service Center, www2.epa.gov/region8/environmental-information-service-center.
31. USGS Library, library.usgs.gov.
32. Handouts on how to find USGS data and publications are available at library.usgs.gov/libhandouts.html for.
33. A full list of resources is available at library.usgs.gov/publiceresources.html.
34. The USGS Publications Warehouse provides access to current on-line publications at pubs.er.usgs.gov.
35. USGS Library Catalog, igsrglib03.er.usgs.gov/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=#focus.
36. USGS Photographic Library, libraryphoto.cr.usgs.gov.
37. USGS Field Records Collection, www.cr.usgs.gov/fieldrecords.
38. Additional information about USGS Denver Library research services is available at www.usgs.gov/core_science_systems/access/summer_2013/article-11.html.
39. OSM Technical Library, www.techtransfer.osmre.gov/NTTMainSite/osmlibrary.shtm.
40. OSM Library Catalog, 207.67.203.72/O10007/OPAC/Index.aspx.
41. See www.osmre.gov/topic/FEDREG/FinalRuleIndex.shtm.
42. See www.osmre.gov/contacts/map/map.aspx.
43. WMMI, www.wmmi.org/visitors.
44. Information on purchasing a WMMI membership is available at www.wmmi.org/membership.
45. WMMI Library Online Catalogue, www.wmmi.org/library (select "Visit our Online Catalogue"). ■