Rare Earth Element Opportunities for Wyoming

Tyler Brown, Scott Quillinan, and Parag Chitnis

Prepared for the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees

March 27th, 2025

THE WORLD NEEDS MORE COWBOYS.



School of Energy Resources

SER's Mission: To advance energydriven economic development for Wyoming



SER Research Structure





Research Programs/Groups



Energy Engagement, Leadership, and Careers Program



Jurisprudence of Underground Law and Energy Research Group

Partner Organizations



Enhanced Oil Recovery Institute



Wyoming Integrated Test Center

Select Research Topics

- Carbon capture, use and storage
- Carbon engineering (coal to products)
- Oil and gas production
- Produced water management
- Visualization
- Methane detection
- Rare earth elements and critical minerals
- Coal markets and sales
- Combustion
- Energy policy and economics
- Hydrogen
- Nuclear
- Applied geologic research
- Wind



Critical Minerals Program Overview

History and Development of the Program

- Initial seed funding WY Legislature in 2016
- Grown into large and successful multidisciplinary research program (>\$10)

Expertise

 Geosciences, engineering, data analytics, economics, social science, law, policy, and more.

Campus, state, national, and international collaboration

- Several departments and colleges
- Wyoming cities and counties
- National labs, industry, academia



Events



Dr. Jacob Hochard,

Haub

Wyoming Rare Earths: opportunities for a Domestic Critical Mineral Supply Chain

- Focus: Convening experts from industry, government and academia to address critical mineral supply chains.
- Location and Date: Ucross Foundation June 16th-17th, 2025





- <u>funded by the Department of Energy</u>

Focus: Training for graduate students and early career professionals invested in critical minerals R&D across the supply chain.

Critical Minerals Leadership Academy (CMLA)

• Location and Date: Laramie, August 3rd-10th, 2025



Dr. Erin Phillips, SER

Nearly everyday, "critical minerals" & "rare earth elements" in the news...

WORLD

Why the U.S. Keeps Losing to China in the Battle Over Critical Minerals

Syrah Resources thought its graphite mine in Mozambique would challenge China's dominance in the global market, but then things started going off the rails.

By Jon Emont / Photographs by Annie Flanagan for WSJ March 10, 2025 11:00 pm ET

VIDEO

Inside Trump's Mineral-Rights Deal With Ukraine

President Volodymyr Zelensky has agreed to the framework of a deal that would allow the U.S. access to Ukraine's critical minerals. WSJ's Ian Lovett reports from Kyiv on what's at stake. Photo: Nathan Howard/Reuters

By Wall Street Journal February 28, 2025 11:50 am ET



Is Trump mulling a minerals deal with conflict-hit DR Congo?

Endowed with minerals but losing ground to rebels, the Congolese government wants to boost security.

2 days ago | World



Putin offers Russian and Ukrainian rare minerals to US

The proposal to give the US access to minerals would also include those from territories taken from Ukraine.

25 Feb 2025 World



Inside the race for Greenland's mineral wealth

The territory's untapped mineral wealth has caught the eye of both mining firms and Donald Trump.

26 Jan 2025 Business



Nearly everyday, "critical minerals" & "rare earth elements" in the news...

American Rare Earths launches development of Cowboy State Mine in Wyoming

Rachel Finch Laramie Boomerang Updated 17 hrs ago

In a significant stride toward boosting domestic rare earth resources, American Rare Earths and its subsidiary Wyoming Rare (USA) Inc have ^{al market}, beg...

By Jon Emont | Photogra

VIDEO

Inside Trump's Mineral-Rights Deal With Ukraine

President Volodymyr Zelensky has agreed to the framework of a deal that would critical minerals. WSJ's Ian Lovett reports from Kyiv on what's at stake. Photo: N By Wall Street Journal February 28, 2025 11:50 am ET



ENERGY MINING

Ramaco Hires Heavy <u>Hitter To Push</u> Production Plant For <u>Wyoming</u> Rare Earths

Ramaco Resources is closer to being able to start mining rare earth minerals in Wyoming. The company announced Tuesday that it's hired a global engineering firm to push efforts to bu plant outside of Sheridan. AUG 12







Wyoming Rare Earths Producer Close To Completing \$53 Million Processing Plant

Rare Element Resources needs one more thumbs-up from a federal agency to complete its \$53 million rare earth demonstration plant in Upton. The rare earth refinery is billed as a game-changer not interference but America.



ENERGY MINING



The Australian-based American Rare Earths Ltd. has restructured its Wyoming project to attract investment. With Wyoming becoming ground zero for U.S. rare earths, companies are in a race to be the first to start producing.





to rebels, the Congolese government wants to boost security.

But what is meant by "Critical Minerals" and "Rare Earth Elements"?...

- A non-fuel mineral or mineral material essential to the economic and national security of the United States
- ✓ Serves an essential function in the manufacturing of a product, the absence of which would have significant consequences for the economy or national security of the United States (Energy Act of 2020).

✓ Has a supply chain that is vulnerable to disruption

School of Energy Resources

PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS



Initial list (2018) was revised in 2022, and there are planned **updates every 3 years.**

"Critical" because of essential function



TOUCH SCREEN

It contains a thin layer of indium tin oxide, highly conductive and transparent, allowing the screen to function as a touch screen.



MICROPHONE. SPEAKERS. **VIBRATION UNIT**

Nickel is used in the microphone diaphragm (that vibrates in response to sound waves). Alloys containing neodymium. praseodymium and gadolinium are used in the magnets contained in the speaker and microphone. Neodymium, terbium and dysprosium are used in the vibration unit.





ELEMENTS 🛣



the liquid crystal display. Some give the screen its glow P Eu Gd Dv

DISPLAY

The display contains several rare



Some vital metals used to build these devices are

This infographic details the critical metals that you

ALKALI METAL ALKALINE EARTH TRANSITION METAL BASIC METAL LANTHANOI

considered at risk due to geological scarcity,

geopolitical issues or trade policy.

carry in your pocket.







We live in a material world.





long list of manufacturing processes & manufactured products the use minerals







chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcaipcglclefindmkai/https://nma.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/10/infographic defense-01.pdf

"Critical" because of potential supply chain disruptions

Resource Development and Supply Chains dominated by other countries

Supply Chain





Locations of Developed Resources



Import Reliance ARSENIC, all form ASBESTOS CESIUM FLUORSPAR GALLIUM GRAPHITE (NATURAL) INDIUM MANGANESE MICA (NATURAL) sheet NIOBIUM (COLUMBIUM) RUBIDIUM SCANDIUN STRONTIUM TANTALUM YTTRIUM GEMSTONES BISMUTH NEPHELINE SYENITE RARE EARTHS,3 compounds and metals TITANIUM, sponge metal POTASH DIAMOND (INDUSTRIAL), stones IRON OXIDE PIGMENTS, natural and synthetic ANTIMONY, metal and oxide CHROMIUM all forms STONE (DIMENSION PEAT TITANIUM MINERAL CONCENTRATES ARRASIVES ellicon carbida TIN, refined COBALT ZINC, refined ABRASIVES fused aluminum oxide BARITE BAUXITE TELLURIUM GARNET (INDUSTRIAL RHENIUM SILVER PLATINUM DIAMOND (INDUSTRIAL), bort, grit, dust, and powder ALLIMINA. NICKEL ALUMINUM VANADIUM MAGNESIUM COMPOUNDS GERMANIUM IODINE MAGNESIUM METAI SELENIUM TUNGSTEN ZIRCONIUM, ores and concentrates SILICON, metal and ferrosilicor LEAD, refined COPPER, refined FEI DSPAR SALT PERLITE PALLADIUM LITHIUM BROMINE CADMIUM, unwrought MICA (NATURAL), scrap and flake CEMENT VERMICULITE 100% 0% mineral

Led to the U.S. Critical Minerals Initiative



SER Research emphasizes UNCONVENTIONAL & SECONDARY resources

Anderson **COAL** Seam at Dry Fork Mine Powder River Basin, Wyoming

CBM PRODUCED WATER

Centennial

discharge facility, Powder River Basin, Wyoming

dge. Wyoming

Powerplant ASH Capped Landfill. Powder River Basin, Wyoming

Photo: SER

Photo: Christine Reed

Research emphasizes UNCONVENTIONAL & SECONDARY resources

Anderson **COAL** Seam at Dry Fork Mine Powder River Basin, Wyoming



Goal of co-production and maximization of usable material

Powerplant ASH Capped Landfill. Powder River Basin, Wyoming

Photo: SER https://coy

s-py-more-than-100-feet-wyofile/

For Wyoming, REEs in Coal present a tremendous opportunity

2021 U.S. Coal Production by State



Coal production by state. data from DOE-EIA. [Credit: WSGS]

- 1/3 of all minable coal in the US
- > 40% of coal mined in U.S. sourced from Wyoming
- More than 5,500 jobs and almost
 \$700M to state and local governments (https://wyoenergy.org/portfolio/)

10% increase in Coal production would provide >900 jobs and > \$75M in tax revenue TO WYOMING Anderson Coal Seam (Paleocene Fort Union Formation) at Dry Fork Mine Powder River Basin, Wyoming



- 14 operating coal mines in Wyoming (+ 2 Greenfield)
 - 10 operating coal power plants in Wyoming
- Wyoming coal shipped to power plants in >25 US states

CORE-CM <u>Phase I</u>: Program and Objectives





Major Project Objectives

- > Develop a coalition team to achieve project objectives
- Complete detailed assessments, that meaningfully contributes to DOE's CORE-CM goals nationally.
- Strategic planning for regional economic growth and job creation, associated technology innovation around coal and other materials.
- Define regional economic growth potential around existing strengths, energy infrastructure, business and industry, including planning for the leveraging of highly trained workforces, existing and novel coal technologies, and energy infrastructure in development of CORE-CM supply chains.
- Develop a preliminary strategic plan for increasing the supply of CORE-CM materials to manufacturers nationally
- > Assemble a committed network of stakeholders and communities

<u>CORE-CM Phase I</u>: Two (2) SER-led CORE-CM Projects

<u>CORE-CM Phase I</u>: Methods Development and Growing Database

806 new samples and **130** previously unreported data are currently utilized within the GGRB-WRB CORE-CM coal assessment strategy

36,450 new geochemical data points and **4090** previously unreported data points are produced that include concise location information

690 new samples and **658** samples from previous related SERstudies are currently in the PRB CORE-CM assessment strategy

34,762 new geochemical data points and **30,954** data points from previous related SER-studies that include concise location information

A Machine Learning Screening Tool for Rare Earth Elements and Critical Minerals at the Mine Scale

2.5 year project: March 2023 -August 2025

Math.

Statistics.

Science

School of **Energy Resources**

Wyodak Coal Mine

Task 1.0 – Characterization

- catalog the existing data from core and well-logs
- add new samples from outcrop and core
- add new chemical and mineralogical data -
- utilize advanced analytical techniques -
 - ICP-MS, microprobe, elemental mapping (XRF), Raman spectroscopy, XRD, etc...

Task 2.0 – ML model development

- training of unsupervised ML model to extract REE/CM signatures
- construct high-resolution 3D geological framework model using Task 1 outputs and signatures learned with ML model

REE Extraction from Powder River Basin Coal Byproducts and Mining Waste, in response to DOE's Technology Commercialization Fund (TCF)

University

~4 year project: December 2020 – February 2025

Campbell County

ENERGY

Year 1

Assessment of PRB feedstocks and REE extraction technology testing/optimization per each feedstock tested.

Year 2

Feedstock(s) down select paired with optimized technology selection for that feedstock(s) demonstration.

Year 3

Technology upscaling to achieve pilotscale REE extraction on site. Pilot-scale facility to be located in the PRB by project end date.

School of

Energy Resources

REE Extraction from Powder River Basin Coal Byproducts and Mining Waste, in response to DOE's Technology Commercialization Fund (TCF)

~4 year project: December 2020 – February 2025

<u>CORE-CM Phase I</u>: Economic Assessment of Infrastructure, Industries, & Businesses

workers, students, and others

consistent development platform

Daniel Cooley (dcooley3@uwyo.edu)

1

Offer workforce training

<u>CORE-CM Phase I</u>: Basin-specific Feedstocks Categorized & Ranked

Greater Green River Basin & Wind River Basin (GGRB-WRB; Area 9)

Prospective Technology Innovation Center Sectors

Powder River Basin (PRB; Area 7)

Technology Innovation Centers (TICs) development dependent on:

- specific feedstocks
- technology readiness
- existing industry and workforce

The goal for CORE-CM projects are TICs

TIC	DEVELOP	PMENT &	PRIORIT	ZATION	IN PI	RB
C	Feedstock	P	rocess	Product		
CM/REE		GR	DUP A	Carbon-Produ	based)+	High Volume Products
CM/REE Separation	Waste Coal and Sediments		Coal Select	ive High V Produ	alue →	CM/REE Processing Waste
High Volume Products	Carbon-based Products	Current and Ti	Coal Mining hermal Use	High CM	/REE Coal	CM/REE
CM/REE Processing +	High Value Products			and se	aments	CM/REE
Al-Si Building Materials	Fly Ash	<u> </u>		→ Clini	er)-	Potential CM/REE Separation
CM/REE ←	CM/REE Separation	Zeolites]	Road	lase	CM/REE
CO ₂ for CCUS	CO ₂ to Products	Flue Gas)	Bottom	Ash	CM/REE Separation
GROUP B	Poter CM S	ntial Unconventional	→ СМ	Build Mater	ing ials	CM/REE
Bear Lodge Alkaline Complex	Conv REE S	ventional Separation		4	GROUI	PC
OTHER		In Early Deve	lopment	Urani Mini	um ng	CM/REE Separation
In Early Investig	tion	Halleck Cre Mountain	ek / Red Pluton	Nuclear	Power (CM/REE
Heavy Mineral Sa Paleoplacer Legacy Hard-rock Tailings	Mine	Conventional REE Separation CM CM CM Separation	REE I Unconventional iration	Benton Asso Sedi	lites and clated ments	CM/REE Separation CM/REE
Oil and Gas Prod Water	uced	Regional I	lesources with Pot	ential to Bolster CN	/REE Supply	Chain
Use in CM/REE Supply Chain	CM/REE	Stillwater Com	Igneous plex		Butte Mi Distric	ning tt
CM CM Sep	aration			DRE-CM TIC		

<u>CORE-CM Phase II</u>: CORE-CM Regional Framework

https://netl.doe.gov/resource-sustainability/critical-minerals-and-materials/core-cm

Similar focus to Phase I CORE-CM but on a Regional Scale

CORE-CM Phase II: Regions & Budgets

Period of Performance: 3 years **Project Funding:**

Total Project \$2,574,095

https://netl.doe.gov/resource-sustainability/critical-mineralsand-materials/core-cm

Great Plains & Interior Highlands (GPIH; Region 4)

Period of Performance: 3 years **Project Funding:**

Total Project \$10,181,914

Phase II: Leadership and Coalitions

Rocky Mountain (RM; Region 6)

Phase II Leadership

- University of Wyoming
- University of Utah
- New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology
- Colorado School of Mines Phase II Coalition Team
- Idaho National Laboratory
- Sandia National Laboratory
- Los Alamos National Laboratory
- Colorado Geological Survey
- Utah Geological Survey
- Wyoming Geological Survey
- Lamar University
- Western Wyoming Community College
- Montana Technological University
- Western Colorado University
- Utah State University Eastern
- Utah Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Initiative
- Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado

nttps://netl.doe.gov/resource-sustainability/critical-minerals-andmaterials/core-cm

Huge coalition teams with many partners, stakeholders, and supporters

Great Plains & Interior Highlands (GPIH; Region 4)

Phase II: Region 4 Leadership

• University of Wyoming

Phase II: Region 4 Coalition Team

- University of North Dakota/ Energy and Environmental Research Center
- Kansas Geological Survey
- Colorado School of Mines
- Pennsylvania State University
- Oklahoma Geological Survey
- South Dakota School of Mines & Technology
- University of Texas at Austin
- Los Alamos National Laboratory
- Battelle
- Western Fuels Wyoming
- Navajo Transitional Energy Company
- Peabody Energy
- Black Hills Corporations
- Waypoints Wyoming
- Montana Department of Commerce
- Nebraska Geological Survey

Example of ecosystem development in Wyoming leveraging TICs

Wyoming has opportunity to be <u>a NEXUS in the CORE-CM Supply Chain</u>

REE+CM related Activities in Wyoming

Wide-range of other REE+CM related actives in Wyoming. SER is, or has been, active in most all of them.

	Carbon Storage Project
×	Nuclear
₽ ₽ ₽	Pipeline
٢	Hydrogen
¢.	Methane Mitigation
	Carbon Engineering
(Da)	Mining
\bigcirc	Oil & Gas
j	Class VI Database
	Critical Mineral and Rare Earth Element

SER & University of Wyoming : Science Facilities (Center for Economic Geology)

- A) Ion Chromatograph: Can detect REEs in fluid samples such as oil and gas brines
- **B)** pXRF Analyzer: Can detect elemental concentrations in solid and liquid samples
- **C-D)** Petrographic/stereo microscopes for examining rock samples and thin sections
- **E-F)** Sample Prep Station: Drying, grinding, and ashing samples in preparation for measuring elemental concentrations

SER & University of Wyoming : Science Facilities (Other UW Laboratories)

CCCC Laboratory (SER)

Facility dedicated to research supporting the future of Wyoming coal and creating economic development and diversification opportunities

Geochemistry Analytical Laboratory (G&G)

Facility which conducts chemical analyses of aqueous and solid materials using high-precision analytical instruments (e.g., moisture, volatiles, and ash in coals, REEs, PGEs, and more)

Materials Characterization Laboratory (G&G)

Facility which specializes in characterization of chemical composition, crystalline structure, morphology, and fabric of natural and man-made solid materials

ICP-MS

ICP-OES

TGA

SER & University of Wyoming : Science Facilities (potential future instrumentation)

Future Instrumentation & Research: *NanoSIMS-HR*

- Ion microprobe capable of generating elemental and isotopic maps of geological and biological samples at nanometer resolution
- Applications:
 - Detecting rare earth element enrichment on small scales
 - Fingerprinting the source of critical minerals in Wyoming ore deposits
 - Discovering previously unknown concentrations of economically valuable minerals (e.g., "Invisible Gold" example to right)

https://www.cameca.com/products/sims/nanosims-hr

SER & University of Wyoming: REE-related Teaching & Outreach

SCIENCE INITIATIVE ROADSHOW

Participation in conferences and workshops

- Geological Society of America Connects 2023, including Pardee Keynote Symposium on Critical Minerals Policy
- DOE Tribal Clean Energy Summit, 2022 and 2024
- Annual Resource Sustainability Meeting, 2022-2024
- International Pittsburgh Coal Conference, 2023
- Battelle Innovations in Climate Science, 2023
- National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program, 2023
- National Academies of Science and Engineering Workshop on Mineral Resources Workforce, 2024
- Joint University of Wyoming-University of Utah virtual town hall focused on critical minerals research
- Hosted a presentation on Tribal Sovereignty for University of Wyoming leadership

Rare Element Resources – Bear Lodge Project

https://www.rareelementresources.com/home

2024 Bull Hill Total Rare Earth Mineral Resource Summary

Resource Class	Metric Tonnes	%TREO	Contained TREO Metric Tonnes	Recovered Nd/Pr Metric Tonnes			
	(millions)		(1000's)	(1000's)			
Measured	2.04	4.53	92.4	18.4			
Indicated	3.98	3.85	153.1	31.3			
Measured & Indicated (M&I)	6.02	4.08	245.5	49.7			
Inferred	1.90	3.61	68.5	14.4			

Physical Upgrade Plant

Artist Rendering of a Potential Hydromet Plant

Hydromet Plant (Upton, WY)

- 245,000 tons of TREOs (Measured and Indicated)
 - Most ready technologically
- Existing relationship with the School of Energy Resources

American Rare Earths – Halleck Creek Project

Table 10-4:	Estimated Rare Earth Resources at Halleck Creek (1,000 ppm TREO Cut-off)
-------------	--

Classification	Tonnage		Grade	9		Contained Material				
		TREO	LREO	HREO	MREO	TREO LREO H		HREO	MREO	
	t	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	t t t		t	t	
Measured	206,716,068	3,720	3,352	370	904	769,018	692,935	76,550	550 186,836	
Indicated	1,272,604,372	3,271	2,900	360	852	4,162,386	3,689,999	458,140	1,084,256	
Meas + Ind	1,479,320,439	3,334	2,963	361	859	4,931,405	4,382,934	534,691	1,271,092	
Inferred	1,147,180,795	3,239	2,878	361	837	3,715,661	3,302,005	413,651	960,355	
Grand Total	2,626,501,234	3,292	2,926	361	850	8,647,066	7,684,939	948,341	2,231,447	
Rounded	2,627,000,000	3,292	2,926	361	850	8,647,000	7,685,000	948,000	2,231,000	

- 1.5B tons of TREOs (Measured and Indicated)
- SER and Department of Geology assistance investigating REE mineralization

'UW in Your Community' Event April 17 in Wheatland

Published April 02, 2024

Phoebe Futcher Geology Ph.D. Student

Rare earth minerals explained

Dr. Lily Jackson (SER Research Professional) speaking at UW in Your Community event

Ramaco Resources – Brook Mine Project

Table 1.0-1 Current Brook Mine In-Place REO Exploration Target Tonnage and Grade Estimates (Ash-Basis)

	Total	Total	Primary		Secondary										
	Model	Model	Magı	Magnetics		Magnetics		Heavy		Light		Total		Ga and Ge	
	Volume	Mass	Tons	Grade	Tons	Grade	Tons	Grade	Tons	Grade	Tons	Grade	Tons	Grade	
Range	(M CY)	(M Tons)	(000)	(ppm)	(000)	(ppm)	(000)	(ppm)	(000)	(ppm)	(000)	(ppm)	(000)	(ppm)	
Low	2,025	3,922	260	93	72	26	39	14	853	301	1,105	392	114	47	
High	2,025	3,922	325	116	90	32	49	17	1066	377	1,382	490	143	59	

- 1-1.5M tons of (*estimated) REEs, Ga & Ge
- SER presence & participation at the Ramaco Resources Rodeo
- Existing SER collaboration with NETL scientists

Dr. Holly Krutka (SER Director)speaking at 2024 Ramaco Research Rodeo

School of Energy Resources

- Minerals Team (Center for Economic Geology Research) collaborates with:
 - Other SER Centers of Excellence
 - UW faculty and researchers from multiple colleges & departments
 - Universities, State Governments and Geological Surveys, US Geological Survey, National Labs, Department of Energy, and many Industry Partners

Many at SER have strong connections to the University of Wyoming education system

ENERGY ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND CAREERS PROGRAM