

NATURAL RESOURCE PARTNERS LP

Form 424B7

March 16, 2011

**Table of Contents**

The information in this preliminary prospectus supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary prospectus supplement is not an offer to sell these securities, and is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities, in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

**Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(7)  
Registration No. 333-157595**

***SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, dated March 16, 2011  
PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT***  
(To Prospectus Dated March 19, 2010)

***Natural Resource Partners L.P.***

***6,000,000 Common Units  
Representing Limited Partner Interests***

***The selling unitholder, Adena Minerals, LLC, is selling 6,000,000 common units representing limited partner interests in us. The selling unitholder is currently the owner of approximately 19.8% of our common units. We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of the common units by the selling unitholder in the offering.***

***Our common units are listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol NRP. On March 15, 2011, the last reported sale price of our common units on the New York Stock Exchange was \$36.58 per unit.***

***Investing in our common units involves risks. Please read Risk Factors on page S-5 of this prospectus supplement.***

	<i>Per Common Unit</i>	<i>Total</i>
Public Offering Price	\$	\$
Underwriting Discount	\$	\$
Proceeds to the selling unitholder before expenses	\$	\$

***The selling unitholder has granted the underwriter a 30-day option to purchase up to an additional 900,000 common units from the selling unitholder on the same terms and conditions as set forth above.***

***NEITHER THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION NOR ANY OTHER REGULATORY BODY HAS APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED OF THESE SECURITIES OR PASSED UPON THE ACCURACY OR THE ADEQUACY OF THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT OR THE ACCOMPANYING BASE PROSPECTUS. ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.***

The underwriter expects to deliver the common units on or about March , 2011.

***MORGAN STANLEY***

*March , 2011*

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Prospectus Supplement**

<u>About This Prospectus Supplement</u>	S-ii
<u>Forward-Looking Statements</u>	S-ii
<u>Summary</u>	S-1
<u>Risk Factors</u>	S-5
<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	S-6
<u>Selling Unitholder</u>	S-6
<u>U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations</u>	S-7
<u>Underwriting</u>	S-9
<u>Legal</u>	S-13
<u>Experts</u>	S-13
<u>Information Incorporated By Reference</u>	S-14

**Prospectus**

About this Prospectus	i
Natural Resource Partners L.P.	1
The Guarantors	2
Cautionary Statement Concerning Forward-Looking Statements	3
Risk Factors	4
Use of Proceeds	5
Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges	6
Description of our Common Units	7
The Partnership Agreement	8
Cash Distributions	19
Description of Debt Securities	25
Material Income Tax Considerations	34
Investment in Natural Resources Partner L.P. by Employee Benefit Plans	51
Selling Unitholders	53
Legal Matters	53
Experts	53
Where You Can Find More Information	54

**Table of Contents**

**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT**

This document is in two parts. The first part is the prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering. The second part is the accompanying prospectus, which gives more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. Generally, when we refer to the prospectus, we are referring to both parts combined. If information in this prospectus supplement conflicts with information in the accompanying prospectus, you should rely on the information in this prospectus supplement.

You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any free writing prospectus that we may authorize to be delivered to you that relates to this offering. We, the selling unitholder and the underwriter have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. This prospectus supplement is not an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy our common units in any jurisdiction where such offer or sale would be unlawful. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any free writing prospectus relating to this offering of common units or the information that is incorporated by reference herein is accurate as of any date other than their respective dates. Our business, financial condition, and results of operations may have changed since those dates.

The selling unitholder is not making an offer of these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted.

**FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS**

Some of the information contained in or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement may contain forward-looking statements. These statements use forward-looking words such as may, will, anticipate, believe, expect, project or other similar words. These statements discuss goals, intentions and expectations as to future trends, plans, events, results of operations or financial condition or state other forward-looking information.

A forward-looking statement may include a statement of the assumptions or bases underlying the forward-looking statement. We believe we have chosen these assumptions or bases in good faith and that they are reasonable. However, we caution you that assumed facts or bases almost always vary from actual results, and the differences between assumed facts or bases and actual results can be material, depending on the circumstances. When considering forward-looking statements, you should keep in mind the risk factors and other cautionary statements in this prospectus and the documents we have incorporated by reference. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and are subject to various risks, uncertainties and assumptions.

Many of such factors are beyond our ability to control or predict. Please read Risk Factors on page S-5 of this prospectus supplement for a better understanding of the various risks and uncertainties that could affect our business and impact the forward-looking statements made in this prospectus. Readers are cautioned not to put undue reliance on forward-looking statements.

All forward-looking statements included in this prospectus and the documents we incorporate by reference and all subsequent written and oral forward-looking statements attributable to us or persons acting on our behalf are expressly qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement. The forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this prospectus supplement or, in the case of forward-looking statements contained in any document incorporated by reference, the date of such document, and we expressly disclaim any obligation or undertaking to update these statements to reflect any change in our expectations or beliefs or any change in events, conditions or circumstances on which any forward looking statement is based.



**Table of Contents**

**SUMMARY**

*This summary highlights information contained elsewhere in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. It does not contain all of the information that you should consider before making an investment decision. You should carefully read this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, and the documents incorporated by reference for a more complete understanding of our business and this offering. Please read Risk Factors on page S-5 of this prospectus supplement for more information about important factors that you should consider before investing in our common units.*

*As used in this prospectus supplement, we, us, or the partnership, means Natural Resource Partners L.P. and where the context requires, Natural Resource Partners L.P. and our operating company, NRP (Operating) LLC, and its subsidiaries. References in this prospectus supplement to our general partner refer to NRP (GP) LP. References in this prospectus supplement to the selling unitholder or Adena refer to Adena Minerals, LLC, the selling unitholder in this offering. Unless otherwise specifically stated, the information presented in this prospectus supplement assumes that the underwriter has not exercised its option to purchase additional common units.*

**Natural Resource Partners L.P.**

We are a limited partnership formed in April 2002, and we completed our initial public offering in October 2002. We engage principally in the business of owning, managing and leasing mineral properties in the United States. We own coal reserves in the three major U.S. coal-producing regions: Appalachia, the Illinois Basin and the Western United States, as well as lignite reserves in the Gulf Coast region. As of December 31, 2010, we owned or controlled approximately 2.3 billion tons of proven and probable coal reserves and we also owned approximately 228 million tons of aggregate reserves in a number of states across the country. We do not operate any mines, but lease reserves to experienced mine operators under long-term leases that grant the operators the right to mine our reserves in exchange for royalty payments. Our lessees are generally required to make payments to us based on the higher of a percentage of the gross sales price or a fixed price per ton, in addition to minimum payments.

**Business Strategies**

Our primary business strategies are to:

- maximize royalty revenues from our existing properties;
- expand and diversify our mineral reserves;
- explore new opportunities with our existing lessees; and
- add new lessees to diversify our mine operator base.

**Competitive Strengths**

We believe we are well positioned to execute our business strategies successfully because of the following competitive strengths:

- Our royalty structure generates stable cash flow.

We do not directly bear operating costs and risks.

We primarily lease to large lessees that have a diverse customer base.

Our reserves are diverse and strategically located.

We are well positioned to pursue acquisitions of additional mineral reserves.

We have experienced, knowledgeable management.

S-1

---



**Table of Contents**

**Acquisitions**

Since our initial public offering in October 2002, we have completed a number of acquisitions. Since the beginning of 2009, we completed the following acquisitions, which are briefly described below.

*East Tennessee Materials.* In March 2011, we acquired approximately 500 acres of mineral and surface rights related to limestone reserves located in McMinn County, Tennessee for a purchase price of approximately \$4.7 million, of which \$3.7 million was funded at closing.

*CALX.* In February 2011, we acquired approximately 508 acres of mineral and surface rights related to limestone reserves in Livingston County, Kentucky for a purchase price of \$16 million, of which \$11 million was funded at closing.

*BRP LLC.* In June 2010, we and International Paper Company formed BRP to own and manage mineral assets previously owned by International Paper. Some of these assets are currently subject to leases, and certain other assets have not yet been developed but are available for future development by the venture. In exchange for a \$42.5 million contribution we became the managing and controlling member with a 51% income interest plus a preferential cumulative annual distribution prior to profit sharing. Identified tangible assets in the transaction include oil and gas, coal and aggregate reserves, as well the rights to other unidentified minerals, which may include coal bed methane, geothermal, CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration, water rights, precious metals, industrial minerals and base metals. Certain properties, including oil and gas, coal and aggregates, as well as land leased for cell towers, are currently under lease and generating revenues.

*Rockmart Slate.* In June 2010, we acquired approximately 100 acres of mineral and surface rights related to slate reserves in Rockmart, Georgia from a local operator for a purchase price of \$6.7 million.

*Sierra Silica.* In April 2010, we acquired the rights to silica reserves on a 1,000 acre property in Northern California from Sierra Silica Resources LLC for \$17.0 million.

*North American Limestone.* In April 2010, we signed an agreement to build and own a fine grind processing facility for high calcium carbonate limestone located in Putnam County, Indiana. We will lease the facility to a local operator. The total cost for the facility is not to exceed \$6.5 million. As of the date of this prospectus supplement, we have funded approximately \$6.2 million of the acquisition.

*Northgate-Thayer.* In March 2010, we acquired approximately 100 acres of mineral and surface rights related to dolomite limestone reserves in White County, Indiana from a local operator for a purchase price of \$7.5 million.

*Massey-Override.* In March 2010, we acquired overriding royalty interests in approximately 1.6 million tons of coal reserves located in southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky from subsidiaries of Massey Energy. Total consideration for this purchase was \$3.0 million.

*AzConAgg.* In December 2009, we acquired approximately 230 acres of mineral and surface rights related to sand and gravel reserves in southern Arizona from a local operator for \$3.75 million.

*Colt.* In September 2009, we signed a definitive agreement to acquire approximately 200 million tons of coal reserves related to the Deer Run Mine in Illinois from Colt, LLC, an affiliate of the Cline Group, through several separate transactions for a total purchase price of \$255 million. As of December 31, 2010, we had acquired approximately 50.2 million tons of reserves associated with the initial production from the mine for approximately \$105 million. In

January 2011, we closed a transaction for \$70.0 million and acquired approximately 41.9 million tons of reserves. As of the date of this prospectus supplement, we had acquired approximately 92.1 million tons of reserves associated with the initial production from the mine. Future closings anticipated through 2012 will be associated with the completion of certain milestones related to the new mine's construction.

*Blue Star.* In July 2009, we acquired approximately 121 acres of limestone reserves in Wise County, Texas from Blue Star Materials, LLC for a purchase price of \$24.0 million.

*Gatling Ohio.* In May 2009, we completed the purchase of the membership interests in two companies from Adena Minerals, LLC, an affiliate of the Cline Group, and the selling unitholder in this offering. The companies

**Table of Contents**

own 51.5 million tons of coal reserves and infrastructure assets at Cline's Yellowbush Mine located on the Ohio River in Meigs County, Ohio. We issued 4,560,000 common units to the selling unitholder in connection with this acquisition. In addition, our general partner granted the selling unitholder a nine percent interest in itself.

*Massey-Jewell Smokeless.* In March 2009, we acquired from Lauren Land Company, a subsidiary of Massey Energy, the remaining four-fifths interest in coal reserves located in Buchanan County, Virginia in which we previously held a one-fifth interest. Total consideration for this purchase was \$12.5 million.

*Macoupin.* In January 2009, we acquired approximately 82 million tons of coal reserves and infrastructure assets related to the Shay No. 1 mine in Macoupin County, Illinois for \$143.7 million from Macoupin Energy, LLC, an affiliate of the Cline Group.

**Principal Executive Offices**

Our principal executive offices are located at 601 Jefferson, Suite 3600, Houston, Texas 77002, and our telephone number is (713) 751-7507. Our website is located at <http://www.nrplp.com>. Information on our website is not incorporated by reference into this prospectus and does not constitute a part of this prospectus unless specifically so designated and filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC.

**Table of Contents**

**THE OFFERING**

Common units offered	6,000,000 common units, or 6,900,000 common units if the underwriter exercises its option to purchase additional common units in full.
Common units outstanding before and after this offering	106,027,836 common units.
Use of proceeds	We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of our common units by the selling unitholder in this offering.
Cash distributions	<p>Our partnership agreement requires that we distribute all of our cash on hand as of the end of each quarter, less reserves established by our general partner. We refer to this cash as available cash, and we define it in our partnership agreement.</p> <p>We pay distributions approximately 45 days after March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31 to the unitholders of record on the applicable record date. On February 2, 2011, we paid a quarterly distribution for the quarter ended December 31, 2010 of \$0.54 per unit, or \$2.16 per unit on an annualized basis. We expect that the first distribution payable to the holders on the applicable record date of the common units offered hereby will be paid in May 2010.</p>
Estimated ratio of taxable income to distributions	<p>We estimate that if you purchase common units in this offering and own them through the record date for the distribution with respect to the period ending December 31, 2013, then you will be allocated, on a cumulative basis, an amount of federal taxable income for that period that will be less than 35% of the amount of cash distributed to you with respect to that period. Because royalties from coal leases are generally treated as long-term capital gain under current law, a substantial portion of the income that will be allocated to you is expected to be long-term capital gain. Long-term capital gain is currently taxed at a significantly lower maximum federal income tax rate (currently 15%) than ordinary income (currently 35%). If you are an individual taxable at the maximum rate of 35% on ordinary income, the estimated effect of this lower capital gains rate will be to produce an after-tax return to you that is the same as if the amount of federal taxable income allocated to you for that period were less than 25% of the cash distributed to you for that period. Please read U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations in this prospectus supplement and Material Income Tax Considerations in the accompanying prospectus.</p>
Risk factors	Please read Risk Factors on page S-5 of this prospectus supplement for more information about important factors that you should consider before investing in our common units.
New York Stock Exchange symbol	NRP



**Table of Contents**

**RISK FACTORS**

An investment in our common units involves a significant degree of risk. You should carefully consider the risk factors set forth under Item 1A of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010, together with all of the other information included in this prospectus and the documents that we have incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, before making an investment decision. Our business, financial condition or results of operations could be materially adversely affected by any of these risks.

S-5

---

**Table of Contents****USE OF PROCEEDS**

We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of our common units by the selling unitholder in this offering.

**SELLING UNITHOLDER**

The following table sets forth information concerning the selling unitholder and the number of common units the selling unitholder is offering. As of March 15, 2011, there were 106,027,836 common units outstanding.

	<b>Common Units Owned Immediately Prior to This Offering</b>		<b>Units Offered Hereby<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Common Units Owned Immediately After This Offering</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>		<b>Number<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Percent<sup>(1)</sup></b>
Adena Minerals, LLC	20,976,841	19.8%	6,000,000	14,976,841	14.1%

- (1) In the event that the underwriter exercises its option to purchase additional common units in full, a total of 6,900,000 common units would be sold by the selling unitholder. Immediately after such an exercise, the selling unitholder would own 14,076,841, or 13.3%, of our outstanding common units.

For more information on our relationship with the selling unitholder, please see the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus, including Item 7 Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Related Party Transactions Transactions with Cline Affiliates and Item 13 Certain Relationships and Related Transactions, and Director Independence in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010.

**Table of Contents**

**U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS**

The tax consequences to you of an investment in our common units will depend in part on your own tax circumstances. For a discussion of the principal federal income tax considerations associated with our operations and the purchase, ownership and disposition of common units, please read "Material Income Tax Considerations" in the accompanying base prospectus and "Tax Risks to our Common Unitholders" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010. You are urged to consult with your own tax advisor about the federal, state, local and foreign tax consequences particular to your circumstances.

**Ratio of Taxable Income to Distributions**

We estimate that if you purchase common units in this offering and own them through the period ending December 31, 2013, then you will be allocated, on a cumulative basis, an amount of federal taxable income for that period that will be 35% or less of the cash distributed to you with respect to that period. Thereafter, we anticipate that the ratio of allocable taxable income to cash distributions to the unitholders will increase. Because royalties from coal leases are generally treated as long-term capital gain under current law, a substantial portion of the income that will be allocated to you is expected to be long-term capital gain. Long-term capital gain is currently taxed at a significantly lower maximum federal income tax rate (currently 15%) than ordinary income (currently 35%). If you are an individual taxable at the maximum rate of 35% on ordinary income, the estimated effect of this lower capital gains rate will be to produce an after-tax return to you that is the same as if the amount of federal taxable income allocated to you for that period were less than 25% of the cash distributed to you for that period. These estimates are based upon the assumption that gross income from operations will approximate the amount required to make quarterly distributions of \$0.54 on all units and other assumptions with respect to the timing and amount of capital expenditures, cash flow, net working capital and anticipated cash distributions. These estimates and assumptions are subject to, among other things, numerous business, economic, regulatory, competitive and political uncertainties beyond our control. Further, the estimates are based on current tax law and tax reporting positions that we follow and with which the IRS could disagree. Accordingly, we cannot assure you that these estimates will prove to be correct. The actual ratio of taxable income to distributions could be higher or lower than expected, and any differences could be material and could materially affect the value of the common units. For example, the ratio of allocable taxable income to cash distributions to a purchaser of common units in this offering will be greater, and perhaps substantially greater, than our estimate with respect to the period described above if:

gross income from operations exceeds the amount required to maintain the current distribution amount on all units, yet we only distribute the current distribution amount on all units;

we make a future offering of common units and use the proceeds of the offering in a manner that does not produce substantial additional deductions during the period described above, such as to repay indebtedness outstanding at the time of this offering or to acquire property that is not eligible for depreciation or amortization for federal income tax purposes or that is depreciable or amortizable at a rate significantly slower than the rate applicable to our assets at the time of the offering; or

legislation is passed in response to President Obama's Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2012 that would limit or repeal long-term capital gains treatment for royalties from coal leases.

**Tax-Exempt Organizations and Non-U.S. Investors**



Ownership of units by employee benefit plans, other tax-exempt organizations, non-resident aliens, foreign corporations and other non-U.S. persons raises issues unique to those investors and, as described below, may have substantially adverse tax consequences to them. If you are a tax-exempt entity or a non-U.S. person, you should consult your tax advisor before investing in our common units. Please read **Material Income Tax Considerations Tax-Exempt Organizations and Other Investors** in the accompanying base prospectus.

Under current law, the highest marginal federal income tax rate applicable to ordinary income of individuals is 35% and the highest marginal federal income tax rate applicable to long-term capital gains (generally, capital gains on certain assets held for more than 12 months) of individuals is 15%. However, absent new legislation extending the current rates, beginning January 1, 2013, the highest marginal federal income tax rate applicable to ordinary

S-7

---

**Table of Contents**

income and long-term capital gains of individuals will increase to 39.6% and 20%, respectively. Moreover, these rates are subject to change by new legislation at any time.

A 3.8% Medicare tax on investment income earned by individuals, estates and trusts is scheduled to apply for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2012. For these purposes, investment income generally includes a unitholder's allocable share of our income and gain realized by a unitholder from a sale of common units. In the case of an individual, the tax will be imposed on the lesser of (1) the unitholder's net investment income or (2) the amount by which the unitholder's modified adjusted gross income exceeds \$250,000 (if the unitholder is married and filing jointly or a surviving spouse), \$125,000 (if the unitholder is married and filing separately) or \$200,000 (in any other case).

**Table of Contents**

**UNDERWRITING**

Under the terms and subject to the conditions contained in an underwriting agreement dated the date of this prospectus supplement, Morgan Stanley & Co. Incorporated, as the underwriter, has agreed to purchase, and the selling unitholder has agreed to sell to it, the number of common units indicated below:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number of Common Units</b>
Morgan Stanley & Co. Incorporated	
Total	

The underwriter is offering the common units subject to its acceptance of the common units from the selling unitholder and subject to prior sale. The underwriting agreement provides that the obligations of the underwriter to pay for and accept delivery of the common units offered by this prospectus supplement are subject to the approval of certain legal matters by its counsel and to certain other conditions. The underwriter is obligated to take and pay for all of the common units offered by this prospectus supplement if any such common units are taken. However, the underwriter is not required to take or pay for the common units covered by the underwriter's option described below.

The underwriter initially proposes to offer part of the common units directly to the public at the public offering price listed on the cover page of this prospectus supplement and part to certain dealers at a price that represents a concession not in excess of \$ per common unit under the public offering price. After the initial offering of the common units, the offering price and other selling terms may from time to time be varied by the underwriter.

The selling unitholder has granted to the underwriter an option, exercisable for 30 days from the date of this prospectus supplement, to purchase up to an aggregate of 900,000 additional common units at the public offering price listed on the cover page of this prospectus supplement, less underwriting discounts and commissions. To the extent the option is exercised, the underwriter will become obligated, subject to certain conditions, to purchase such additional common units, and the selling unitholder will be obligated pursuant to the option, to sell these units to the underwriter. If the underwriter's option is exercised in full, the total price to the public would be \$ , the total underwriter's discounts and commissions would be \$ and total proceeds to the selling unitholder would be \$ .

We estimate that our total expenses of this offering, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions will be approximately \$200,000.

The underwriter has informed us that they do not intend sales to discretionary accounts to exceed five percent of the total number of common units offered by it.

Our common units are listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol NRP.

We, our general partner, officers and directors of our general partner, Western Pocahontas Properties Limited Partnership, New Gauley Coal Corporation, Great Northern Properties Limited Partnership, and the selling unitholder have agreed that, without the prior written consent of the underwriter, we and they will not, during the period ending

60 days, or 90 days with respect to the selling unitholder, after the date of this prospectus supplement:

offer, pledge, sell, contract to sell, sell any option to purchase, grant any option, right or warrant to purchase, or otherwise transfer or dispose of directly or indirectly, any common units or any securities convertible into or exercisable or exchangeable for common units, other than pursuant to employee benefit plans, including our general partner's long-term incentive plan;

file any registration statement with the SEC relating to the offering of any common units or any securities convertible into or exchangeable for common units; or

S-9

---

**Table of Contents**

enter into any swap or other arrangement that transfers to another, in whole or in part, any of the economic consequences of ownership of the common units;

whether any such transaction described above is to be settled by delivery of common units or such other securities, in cash or otherwise. The restrictions described in this paragraph do not apply to:

the sale of common units to the underwriter;

acquisitions of assets, businesses or the capital stock or other ownership interests of businesses by us in exchange for common units if the recipient of such common units agrees not to dispose of any common units received in connection with the acquisition during the 60 day restricted period;

transfers of common units to affiliates of our general partner provided that such affiliates agree to be bound by the foregoing restrictions; or

in the case of the selling unitholder, will not restrict its ability to pledge common units (the Pledge Units ) pursuant to any bona fide loan agreement (the Loan Agreement ) with one or more national banks (the Lender ) or transfer some or all of the Pledge Units to the Lender upon a default or an event of default by it under the Loan Agreement.

In order to facilitate the offering of the common units, the underwriters may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the price of the common units. Specifically, the underwriter may sell more shares than it is obligated to purchase under the underwriting agreement, creating a short position. A short sale is covered if the short position is no greater than the number of shares available for purchase by the underwriter under the option to purchase additional common units. The underwriter can close out a covered short sale by exercising the option or purchasing common units in the open market. In determining the source of common units to close out a covered short sale, the underwriter will consider, among other things, the open market price of common units compared to the price available under the option. The underwriter may also sell common units in excess of the option, creating a naked short position. The underwriter must close out any naked short position by purchasing common units in the open market. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriter is concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of the common units in the open market after pricing that could adversely affect investors who purchase in the offering. As an additional means of facilitating the offering, the underwriter may bid for, and purchase common units in the open market to stabilize the price of the common units. The underwriter may also reclaim selling concessions allowed to an underwriter or a dealer for distributing the common units in the offering, if the underwriter repurchases previously distributed common units to cover underwriter short positions or to stabilize the price of the common units. These activities may raise or maintain the market price of the common units above independent market levels or prevent or retard a decline in the market price of the common units. The underwriter is not required to engage in these activities, and may end any of these activities at any time.

From time to time, the underwriter has provided, and continues to provide, investment banking services to us.

We, GP Natural Resource Partners LLC and our general partner and the underwriter have agreed to indemnify each other against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act or 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act. The selling unitholder and the underwriter have also agreed to indemnify each other against certain liabilities under the Securities Act.

**Selling Restrictions**

***European Economic Area***

In relation to each member state of the European Economic Area that has implemented the Prospectus Directive (each, a relevant member state), other than Germany, with effect from and including the date on which the

S-10

---

**Table of Contents**

Prospectus Directive is implemented in that relevant member state (the relevant implementation date), an offer of securities described in this prospectus may not be made to the public in that relevant member state other than:

to any legal entity which is a qualified investor as defined in the Prospectus Directive;

to fewer than 100 or, if the Relevant Member State has implemented the relevant provision of the 2010 PD Amending Directive, 150, natural or legal persons (other than qualified investors as defined in the Prospectus Directive), as permitted under the Prospectus Directive, subject to obtaining the prior consent of the relevant Dealer or Dealers nominated by the Issuer for any such offer; or

in any other circumstances falling within Article 3(2) of the Prospectus Directive;

provided that no such offer of securities shall require us or the underwriter to publish a prospectus pursuant to Article 3 of the Prospectus Directive.

For purposes of this provision, the expression an offer of securities to the public in any relevant member state means the communication in any form and by any means of sufficient information on the terms of the offer and the securities to be offered so as to enable an investor to decide to purchase or subscribe for the securities, as the expression may be varied in that member state by any measure implementing the Prospectus Directive in that member state, and the expression Prospectus Directive means Directive 2003/71/EC (and amendments thereto, including the 2010 PD Amending Directive, to the extent implemented in the Relevant Member State), and includes any relevant implementing measure in the Relevant Member State, and includes any relevant implementing measure in each relevant member state. The expression 2010 PD Amending Directive means Directive 2010/73/EU.

We have not authorized and do not authorize the making of any offer of securities through any financial intermediary on their behalf, other than offers made by the underwriter with a view to the final placement of the securities as contemplated in this prospectus. Accordingly, no purchaser of the securities, other than the underwriter, is authorized to make any further offer of the securities on behalf of us or the underwriter.

***United Kingdom***

We may constitute a collective investment scheme as defined by section 235 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA) that is not a recognized collective investment scheme for the purposes of FSMA (CIS) and that has not been authorized or otherwise approved. As an unregulated scheme, it cannot be marketed in the United Kingdom to the general public, except in accordance with FSMA. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are only being distributed in the United Kingdom to, and are only directed at (i) investment professionals falling within the description of persons in Article 14(5) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Promotion of Collective Investment Schemes) Order 2001, as amended (the CIS Promotion Order) or Article 19(5) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005, as amended (the Financial Promotion Order) or (ii) high net worth companies and other persons falling with Article 22(2)(a) to (d) of the CIS Promotion Order or Article 49(2)(a) to (d) of the Financial Promotion Order, or (iii) to any other person to whom it may otherwise lawfully be made, (all such persons together being referred to as relevant persons). The common units are only available to, and any invitation, offer or agreement to subscribe, purchase or otherwise acquire such common units will be engaged in only with, relevant persons. Any person who is not a relevant person should not act or rely on this document or any of its contents.

***Germany***

This document has not been prepared in accordance with the requirements for a securities or sales prospectus under the German Securities Prospectus Act (*Wertpapierprospektgesetz*), the German Sales Prospectus Act (*Verkaufprospektgesetz*), or the German Investment Act (*Investmentgesetz*). Neither the German Federal Financial Services Supervisory Authority (*Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht - BaFin*) nor any other German authority has been notified of the intention to distribute the common units in Germany. Consequently, the common units may not be distributed in Germany by way of public offering, public advertisement or in any similar manner and this document and any other document relating to the offering, as well as information or statements contained therein, may not be supplied to the public in Germany or used in connection with any offer for subscription of the common units to the public in Germany or any other means of public marketing. The common units are being

S-11

---



**Table of Contents**

offered and sold in Germany only to qualified investors which are referred to in Section 3, paragraph 2 no. 1 in connection with Section 2 no. 6 of the German Securities Prospectus Act, Section 8f paragraph 2 no. 4 of the German Sales Prospectus Act, and in Section 2 paragraph 11 sentence 2 no. 1 of the German Investment Act. This document is strictly for use of the person who has received it. It may not be forwarded to other persons or published in Germany.

***The Netherlands***

The common units may not be offered or sold, directly or indirectly, in the Netherlands, other than to qualified investors (*gekwalificeerde beleggers*) within the meaning of Article 1:1 of the Dutch Financial Supervision Act (*Wet op het financieel toezicht*).

***Switzerland***

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus are being communicated in Switzerland to a small number of selected investors only. Each copy of this document is addressed to a specifically named recipient and may not be copied, reproduced, distributed or passed on to third parties. The common units are not being offered to the public in Switzerland, and neither this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, nor any other offering materials relating to the common units may be distributed in connection with any such public offering.

We have not been registered with the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA as a foreign collective investment scheme pursuant to Article 120 of the Collective Investment Schemes Act of June 23, 2006 ( *CISA* ). Accordingly, the common units may not be offered to the public in or from Switzerland, and neither this prospectus supplements and the accompanying prospectus, nor any other offering materials relating to the common units may be made available through a public offering in or from Switzerland. The common units may only be offered and this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may only be distributed in or from Switzerland by way of private placement exclusively to qualified investors (as this term is defined in the *CISA* and its implementing ordinance).

**Table of Contents**

**LEGAL**

The validity of the common units has been passed upon for us by Vinson & Elkins L.L.P., New York, New York. Certain legal matters in connection with the common units offered hereby will be passed upon for the underwriter by Andrews Kurth LLP, Houston, Texas. Andrews Kurth LLP has in the past provided legal services to us on matters unrelated to this offering.

**EXPERTS**

The consolidated financial statements of Natural Resource Partners L.P. appearing in its Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010 and the effectiveness of Natural Resource Partners L.P.'s internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2010, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in their reports thereon, included therein and incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements of Natural Resource Partners L.P. are incorporated herein by reference in reliance upon such reports given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

S-13

---

**Table of Contents**

**INFORMATION INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE**

We file annual, quarterly and other reports with and furnish other information to the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file with or furnish to the SEC at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, NE, Room 1580, Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-732-0330 for further information on their public reference room. Our SEC filings are also available at the SEC's web site at <http://www.sec.gov>. You also can obtain information about us at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we have filed with the SEC. This means that we can disclose important information to you without actually including the specific information in this prospectus supplement by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is an important part of this prospectus. Information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede information in this prospectus and information previously filed with the SEC. We incorporate by reference into this prospectus the documents listed below and any future filings made with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act (excluding any information furnished under Items 2.02 or 7.01 on any current report on Form 8-K) after the date of this prospectus and until the termination of this offering:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010, filed on February 28, 2011;

the description of our common units contained in our Form 8-A initially filed September 27, 2002, and any subsequent amendment thereto filed for the purpose of updating such description; and

our Current Report on Form 8-K filed on January 14, 2011.

You may obtain any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus from the SEC through the SEC's website at the address provided above. You may request a copy of any document incorporated by reference into this prospectus, at no cost, by visiting our website at <http://www.nrplp.com>, or by writing or calling us at the following address:

Natural Resource Partners L.P.  
601 Jefferson Street  
Suite 3600  
Houston, Texas 77002  
Attention: Investor Relations Department  
Telephone: (713) 751-7555

Any statement contained herein, or in a document incorporated or considered to be incorporated by reference herein, shall be considered to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained herein or in any subsequently filed document that is or is considered to be incorporated by reference herein modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement that is modified or superseded shall not, except as so modified or superseded, constitute a part of this prospectus.

**Table of Contents**

**Prospectus**

**NATURAL RESOURCE PARTNERS L.P.  
NRP (OPERATING) LLC**

**Common Units  
Debt Securities**

We or selling unitholders may, in one or more offerings, offer and sell common units representing limited partner interests in Natural Resource Partners L.P.

We, together with NRP (Operating) LLC, may offer and sell debt securities described in this prospectus from time to time in one or more classes or series and in amounts, at prices and on terms to be determined by market conditions at the time of our offerings. We or one or more of our subsidiaries may unconditionally guarantee any series of debt securities offered by this prospectus, if so and to the extent identified in the related prospectus supplement.

We or selling unitholders may offer and sell these securities on a continuous or delayed basis. This prospectus describes the general terms of these securities and the general manner in which we or selling unitholders will offer the securities. The specific terms of any securities we or selling unitholders offer will be included in a supplement to this prospectus. We or selling unitholders will sell the securities on a firm commitment basis. The names of any underwriters and the specific terms of a plan of distribution will be stated in a supplement to this prospectus. Selling unitholders that are affiliates of Natural Resource Partners L.P. may be deemed underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and, as a result, may be deemed to be offering securities, indirectly, on our behalf. We will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of common units by selling unitholders.

**Investing in our common units and the debt securities involves risks. Limited partnerships are inherently different from corporations. You should carefully consider the risk factors incorporated by reference into this prospectus before you make an investment in our securities.**

Our common units are traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol NRP. We will provide information in the prospectus supplement for the trading market, if any, for any debt securities we may offer.

**Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.**

The date of this prospectus is March 19, 2010.

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<a href="#"><u>About This Prospectus</u></a>	i
<a href="#"><u>Natural Resource Partners L.P.</u></a>	1
<a href="#"><u>The Guarantors</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>Cautionary Statement Concerning Forward-Looking Statements</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Risk Factors</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>Use of Proceeds</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges</u></a>	6
<a href="#"><u>Description of our Common Units</u></a>	7
<a href="#"><u>The Partnership Agreement</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>Cash Distributions</u></a>	19
<a href="#"><u>Description of the Debt Securities</u></a>	25
<a href="#"><u>Material Income Tax Considerations</u></a>	34
<a href="#"><u>Investment in Natural Resource Partners L.P. by Employee</u></a>	51
<a href="#"><u>Benefit Plans</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>Selling Unitholders</u></a>	53
<a href="#"><u>Legal Matters</u></a>	53
<a href="#"><u>Experts</u></a>	53
<a href="#"><u>Where You Can Find More Information</u></a>	54

**In making your investment decision, you should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with any other information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it.**

**You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front cover of this prospectus. You should not assume that the information contained in the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the respective dates of those documents. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.**

### ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or the SEC, using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf registration process, we or selling unitholders may sell, in one or more offerings, common units of Natural Resource Partners L.P. or we may, over time, offer and sell any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. This prospectus generally describes Natural Resource Partners L.P. and the securities. Each time we or selling unitholders sell securities with this prospectus, we will provide you with a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add to, update or change information in this prospectus. Before you invest in our securities, you should carefully read this prospectus and any prospectus supplement and the additional information described under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**. To the extent information in this prospectus is inconsistent with information contained in a prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, together with additional information described under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**, and any additional information you may need to make your investment decision. As used in this prospectus, we, us, our and

Natural Resource Partners mean Natural Resource Partners L.P. and, where the context requires, our operating company, NRP (Operating) LLC, and its subsidiaries.

**Table of Contents**

**NATURAL RESOURCE PARTNERS L.P.**

Natural Resource Partners L.P. is a limited partnership formed in April 2002, and we completed our initial public offering in October 2002. We engage principally in the business of owning and managing coal properties in the three major coal-producing regions of the United States: Appalachia, the Illinois Basin and the Western United States. As of December 31, 2009, we owned or controlled approximately 2.1 billion tons of proven and probable coal reserves. We do not operate any mines, but lease coal reserves to experienced mine operators under long-term leases that grant the operators the right to mine our coal reserves in exchange for royalty payments. Our lessees are generally required to make payments to us based on the higher of a percentage of the gross sales price or a fixed price per ton of coal sold, in addition to minimum payments. As of December 31, 2009, our coal reserves were subject to 210 leases with 72 lessees. In 2009, our lessees produced 46.8 million tons of coal from our properties and our coal royalty revenues were \$196.6 million.

*Beginning in 2006, we added two new businesses:* coal infrastructure and ownership of aggregate reserves that are leased to operators in exchange for royalty payments similar to our coal royalty business. During 2009, our lessees produced 3.3 million tons of aggregates and our aggregate royalties were \$5.6 million, which includes a \$1.3 million bonus payment under the terms of one of our leases. Coal processing fees and coal transportation fees added \$7.7 million and \$12.5 million in revenue, respectively.

Our operations are conducted through, and our operating assets are owned by, our subsidiaries. We own our subsidiaries through a wholly owned operating company, NRP (Operating) LLC. NRP (GP) LP, our general partner, has sole responsibility for conducting our business and for managing our operations. Because our general partner is a limited partnership, its general partner, GP Natural Resource Partners LLC, conducts its business and operations, and the board of directors and officers of GP Natural Resource Partners LLC makes decisions on our behalf. Robertson Coal Management LLC, a limited liability company wholly owned by Corbin J. Robertson, Jr., owns all of the membership interests in GP Natural Resource Partners LLC. Subject to the Investor Rights Agreement with Adena Minerals, LLC, Mr. Robertson is entitled to nominate nine directors, five of whom must be independent directors, to the board of directors of GP Natural Resource Partners LLC. Mr. Robertson has delegated the right to nominate two of the directors, one of whom must be independent, to Adena Minerals.

Western Pocahontas Properties Limited Partnership, New Gauley Coal Corporation and Great Northern Properties Limited Partnership are three privately held companies that are primarily engaged in owning and managing mineral properties. We refer to these companies collectively as the WPP Group. Mr. Robertson owns the general partner of Western Pocahontas Properties, 85% of the general partner of Great Northern Properties and is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of New Gauley Coal Corporation.

The senior executives and other officers who manage the WPP Group assets also manage us. They are employees of Western Pocahontas Properties and Quintana Minerals Corporation, another company controlled by Mr. Robertson, and they allocate varying percentages of their time to managing our operations. Neither our general partner, GP Natural Resource Partners LLC, nor any of their affiliates receive any management fee or other compensation in connection with the management of our business, but they are entitled to be reimbursed for all direct and indirect expenses incurred on our behalf.

Our operations headquarters is located at 5260 Irwin Road, Huntington, West Virginia 25705 and the telephone number is (304) 522-5757. Our principal executive office is located at 601 Jefferson Street, Suite 3600, Houston, Texas 77002 and our telephone number is (713) 751-7507.

For additional information as to our business, properties and financial condition, please refer to the documents cited in Where You Can Find More Information.



**Table of Contents**

**THE GUARANTORS**

NRP (Operating) LLC, WPP LLC, WBRD LLC, ACIN LLC, Williamson Transport LLC, Little River Transport LLC, Hod LLC, Shepard Boone Coal Company LLC, Gatling Mineral, LLC and Independence Land, LLC are our subsidiaries as of the date of this prospectus. We own 100% of the membership interests in NRP (Operating) LLC. NRP (Operating) LLC owns 100% of the membership interests in WPP LLC, WBRD LLC, ACIN LLC, Williamson Transport LLC, Little River Transport LLC, Hod LLC, Shepard Boone Coal Company LLC, Gatling Mineral, LLC and Independence Land, LLC. Natural Resource Partners, WPP LLC, WBRD LLC, ACIN LLC, Williamson Transport LLC, Little River Transport LLC, Hod LLC, Shepard Boone Coal Company LLC, Gatling Mineral, LLC and Independence Land, LLC may unconditionally guarantee any series of debt securities of NRP (Operating) LLC offered by this prospectus, as set forth in a related prospectus supplement. Subject to any restrictions our credit agreement or other indebtedness agreements, NRP (Operating) LLC, WPP LLC, WBRD LLC, ACIN LLC, Williamson Transport LLC, Little River Transport LLC, Hod LLC, Shepard Boone Coal Company LLC, Gatling Mineral, LLC and Independence Land, LLC may unconditionally guarantee any series of debt securities of Natural Resource Partners offered by this prospectus, as set forth in a related prospectus supplement. As used in this prospectus, the term **Subsidiary Guarantors** means WPP LLC, WBRD LLC, ACIN LLC, Williamson Transport LLC, Little River Transport LLC, Hod LLC, Shepard Boone Coal Company LLC, Gatling Mineral, LLC and Independence Land, LLC and also includes NRP (Operating) LLC when discussing subsidiary guarantees of the debt securities of Natural Resource Partners. The term **Guarantor** means Natural Resource Partners in its role as guarantor of the debt securities of NRP (Operating) LLC.

**Table of Contents**

**CAUTIONARY STATEMENT CONCERNING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS**

Some of the information included in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and the documents we incorporate by reference contain forward-looking statements. These statements use forward-looking words such as may, will, anticipate, believe, expect, project or other similar words. These statements discuss goals, intentions and expectations as to future trends, plans, events, results of operations or financial condition or state other forward-looking information.

A forward-looking statement may include a statement of the assumptions or bases underlying the forward-looking statement. We believe we have chosen these assumptions or bases in good faith and that they are reasonable. However, we caution you that assumed facts or bases almost always vary from actual results, and the differences between assumed facts or bases and actual results can be material, depending on the circumstances. When considering forward-looking statements, you should keep in mind the risk factors and other cautionary statements in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and the documents we have incorporated by reference. These statements reflect Natural Resource Partners' s current views with respect to future events and are subject to various risks, uncertainties and assumptions.

Many of such factors are beyond our ability to control or predict. Please read Risk Factors for a better understanding of the various risks and uncertainties that could affect our business and impact the forward-looking statements made in this prospectus. Readers are cautioned not to put undue reliance on forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements contained in this prospectus and all subsequent written and oral forward-looking statements attributable to us or persons acting on our behalf are expressly qualified in their entirety by this cautionary statement.

**Table of Contents**

**RISK FACTORS**

An investment in our securities involves risks. Before you invest in our securities, you should carefully consider the risk factors included in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K, subsequent quarterly reports on Form 10-Q and those that may be included in the applicable prospectus supplement, as well as risks described in Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations and cautionary notes regarding forward-looking statements included or incorporated by reference herein, together with all of the other information included in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and the documents we incorporate by reference.

If any of these risks were to materialize, our business, results of operations, cash flows and financial condition could be materially adversely affected. In that case, our ability to make distributions to our unitholders or pay interest on, or the principal of, any debt securities, may be reduced, the trading price of our securities could decline and you could lose all or part of your investment.

**Table of Contents**

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

Except as otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will use the net proceeds we receive from the sale of the securities for general partnership purposes, which may include repayment of indebtedness, the acquisition of businesses, other capital expenditures and additions to working capital.

Any specific allocation of the net proceeds of an offering of securities to a specific purpose will be determined at the time of the offering and will be described in a prospectus supplement.

We will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of common units by selling unitholders.

Table of Contents**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

		<b>Years Ended December 31,</b>			
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges	3.84	6.95	4.57	7.22	9.32

For purposes of calculating the ratio of earnings to fixed charges:

fixed charges represent interest expense (including amounts capitalized), amortization of debt costs and the portion of rental expense representing the interest factor; and

earnings represent the aggregate of income from continuing operations (before adjustment for minority interest, extraordinary loss and equity earnings), fixed charges and distributions from equity investment, less capitalized interest.

**Table of Contents**

**DESCRIPTION OF OUR COMMON UNITS**

The common units represent limited partner interests in Natural Resource Partners that entitle the holders to participate in our cash distributions and to exercise the rights or privileges available to limited partners under our partnership agreement. For a description of the relative rights and preferences of holders of common units and our general partner in and to partnership distributions, see *Cash Distributions* in this prospectus.

Our outstanding common units are listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol *NRP*.

The transfer agent and registrar for our common units is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company.

**Status as Limited Partner or Assignee**

Except as described under *The Partnership Agreement Limited Liability*, the common units will be fully paid, and the unitholders will not be required to make additional capital contributions to us.

**Transfer of Common Units**

Each purchaser of common units offered by this prospectus must execute a transfer application. By executing and delivering a transfer application, the purchaser of common units:

becomes the record holder of the common units and is an assignee until admitted into our partnership as a substituted limited partner;

automatically requests admission as a substituted limited partner in our partnership;

agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions of, and executes, our partnership agreement;

represents that he has the capacity, power and authority to enter into the partnership agreement;

grants powers of attorney to officers of the general partner and any liquidator of our partnership as specified in the partnership agreement; and

makes the consents and waivers contained in the partnership agreement.

An assignee will become a substituted limited partner of our partnership for the transferred units automatically upon the recording of the transfer on our books and records. Our general partner will cause any transfers to be recorded on our books and records no less frequently than quarterly.

Transfer applications may be completed, executed and delivered by a purchaser's broker, agent or nominee. We are entitled to treat the nominee holder of a common unit as the absolute owner. In that case, the beneficial holders' rights are limited solely to those that it has against the nominee holder as a result of any agreement between the beneficial owner and the nominee holder.

Common units are securities and are transferable according to the laws governing transfer of securities. In addition to other rights acquired, the purchaser has the right to request admission as a substituted limited partner in our partnership for the purchased common units. A purchaser of common units who does not execute and deliver a

transfer application obtains only:

the right to assign the common unit to a purchaser or transferee; and

the right to transfer the right to seek admission as a substituted limited partner in our partnership for the purchased common units.

Thus, a purchaser of common units who does not execute and deliver a transfer application:

will not receive cash distributions or federal income tax allocations, unless the common units are held in a nominee or street name account and the nominee or broker has executed and delivered a transfer application; and

may not receive some federal income tax information or reports furnished to record holders of common units.

Until a common unit has been transferred on our books, we and the transfer agent, notwithstanding any notice to the contrary, may treat the record holder of the unit as the absolute owner for all purposes, except as otherwise required by law or stock exchange regulations.

**Table of Contents**

**THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

The following is a summary of the material provisions of our partnership agreement.

We summarize the following provisions of our partnership agreement elsewhere in this prospectus:

with regard to distributions of available cash, please see [Cash Distributions](#) ;

with regard to the transfer of common units, please see [Description of our Common Units](#) [Transfer of Common Units](#) ; and

with regard to allocations of taxable income and taxable loss, please see [Material Income Tax Considerations](#).

**Organization and Duration**

Our partnership was formed on April 9, 2002 and will remain in existence until dissolved in accordance with our partnership agreement.

**Purpose**

Our purpose under our partnership agreement is limited to serving as a member of the operating company and engaging in any business activities that may be engaged in by the operating company or its subsidiaries or that are approved by our general partner. The limited liability company agreement of the operating company provides that the operating company may, directly or indirectly, engage in:

its operations as conducted immediately before our initial public offering;

any other activity approved by our general partner but only to the extent that our general partner reasonably determines that, as of the date of the acquisition or commencement of the activity, the activity generates qualifying income as this term is defined in Section 7704 of the Internal Revenue Code; and

any activity that enhances the operations of an activity that is described in either of the preceding two clauses.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, our general partner does not have the authority to cause us to engage, directly or indirectly, in any business activity that it reasonably determines would cause us to be treated as an association taxable as a corporation or otherwise taxable as an entity for federal income tax purposes.

Although our general partner has the ability to cause us and the operating company or its subsidiaries to engage in activities other than the ownership of coal and mineral reserves and the leasing of those reserves to mine operators in exchange for royalties from the sale of coal or other minerals mined from our reserves, our general partner has no current plans to do so. Our general partner is authorized in general to perform all acts deemed necessary to carry out our purposes and to conduct our business.

**Power of Attorney**

Each limited partner and each person who acquires a unit from a unitholder and executes and delivers a transfer application grants to our general partner (and, if appointed, a liquidator), a power of attorney to, among other things,



execute and file documents required for our qualification, continuance or dissolution. The power of attorney also grants our general partner the authority to amend, and to make consents and waivers under, and in accordance with, our partnership agreement.

**Capital Contributions**

Unitholders are not obligated to make additional capital contributions, except as described below under Limited Liability.

## **Table of Contents**

### **Limited Liability**

***Participation in the Control of Our Partnership.*** Assuming that a limited partner does not participate in the control of our business within the meaning of the Delaware Revised Uniform Limited Partnership Act (the Delaware Act ) and that it otherwise acts in conformity with the provisions of our partnership agreement, its liability under the Delaware Act will be limited, subject to possible exceptions, to the amount of capital it is obligated to contribute to us for its common units plus his share of any undistributed profits and assets. If it were determined, however, that the right or exercise of the right by the limited partners as a group:

to remove or replace the general partner;

to approve some amendments to our partnership agreement; or

to take other action under our partnership agreement;

constituted participation in the control of our business for the purposes of the Delaware Act, then the limited partners could be held personally liable for our obligations under Delaware law to the same extent as the general partner. This liability would extend to persons who transact business with us and who reasonably believe that the limited partner is a general partner. Neither our partnership agreement nor the Delaware Act specifically provides for legal recourse against our general partner if a limited partner were to lose limited liability through any fault of the general partner. While this does not mean that a limited partner could not seek legal recourse, we have found no precedent for this type of a claim in Delaware case law.

***Unlawful Partnership Distributions.*** Under the Delaware Act, a limited partnership may not make a distribution to a partner if, after the distribution, all liabilities of the limited partnership, other than liabilities to partners on account of their partnership interests and liabilities for which the recourse of creditors is limited to specific property of the partnership, would exceed the fair value of the assets of the limited partnership. For the purpose of determining the fair value of the assets of a limited partnership, the Delaware Act provides that the fair value of property subject to liability for which recourse of creditors is limited shall be included in the assets of the limited partnership only to the extent that the fair value of that property exceeds the nonrecourse liability. The Delaware Act provides that a limited partner who receives a distribution and knew at the time of the distribution that the distribution was in violation of the Delaware Act shall be liable to the limited partnership for the amount of the distribution for three years. Under the Delaware Act, an assignee who becomes a substituted limited partner of a limited partnership is liable for the obligations of his assignor to make contributions to the partnership, except the assignee is not obligated for liabilities unknown to him at the time he became a limited partner and that could not be ascertained from the partnership agreement.

***Failure to Comply with the Limited Liability Provisions of Jurisdictions in Which We Do Business.*** Our subsidiaries currently conduct business in a number of states. Maintenance of limited liability for Natural Resource Partners, as the sole member of the operating company, may require compliance with legal requirements in the jurisdictions in which the operating company conducts business, including qualifying our subsidiaries to do business there. Limitations on the liability of members for the obligations of a limited liability company have not been clearly established in many jurisdictions. If it were determined that we were, by virtue of our member interest in the operating company or otherwise, conducting business in any state without compliance with the applicable limited partnership or limited liability company statute, or that the right or exercise of the right by the limited partners as a group to remove or replace our general partner, to approve some amendments to our partnership agreement, or to take other action under our partnership agreement constituted participation in the control of our business for purposes of the statutes of any relevant jurisdiction, then the limited partners could be held personally liable for our obligations under the law of that jurisdiction to the same extent as the general partner under the circumstances. We will operate in a manner that our

general partner considers reasonable and necessary or appropriate to preserve the limited liability of the limited partners.

**Table of Contents**

**Voting Rights**

The following matters require the unitholder vote specified below:

Issuance of additional units	No approval right.
Amendment of the partnership Agreement	Certain amendments may be made by the general partner without the approval of the unitholders. Other amendments generally require the approval of a unit majority. Please read <a href="#">Amendment of the Partnership Agreement</a> .
Merger of our partnership or the sale of all or substantially all of our assets	Unit majority. Please read <a href="#">Merger, Sale or Other Disposition of Assets</a> .
Amendment of the limited liability company agreement and other action taken by us as sole member of the operating company	Unit majority if such amendment or other action would adversely affect our limited partners (or any particular class of limited partners) in any material respect. Please read <a href="#">Action Relating to Operating Company</a> .
Dissolution of our partnership	Unit majority. Please read <a href="#">Termination and Dissolution</a> .
Reconstitution of our partnership upon dissolution	Unit majority.
Withdrawal of the general partner	The approval of a majority of the common units, excluding common units held by the general partner and its affiliates, is required for the withdrawal of the general partner prior to September 30, 2012 to prevent the withdrawal from being deemed a breach of our partnership agreement. Please read <a href="#">Withdrawal or Removal of the General Partner</a> .
Removal of the general partner	Not less than 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the outstanding units, including units held by our general partner and its affiliates. Please read <a href="#">Withdrawal or Removal of the General Partner</a> .
Transfer of the general partner interest	The general partner may transfer its general partner interest without a vote of our unitholders to an affiliate (other than an individual) or in connection with the general partner's merger or consolidation with or into, or sale of all or substantially all of its assets to another person (other than an individual). The approval of a majority of the common units, excluding common units held by the general partner and its affiliates, is required in other circumstances for a transfer of the general partner interest to a third party prior to September 30, 2012. Please read <a href="#">Transfer of General Partner Interest</a> .
Transfer of incentive distribution rights	Except for transfers to an affiliate (other than an individual) or another person (other than an individual) as part of the general partner's merger or consolidation with or into, or sale of all or substantially all of its assets to such person, the approval of a majority of the common units, excluding common units held by the general partner and its affiliates, is required in

most circumstances for a transfer of the incentive distribution rights to a third party prior to September 30, 2012. Please read [Transfer of Incentive Distribution Rights](#).

Transfer of ownership interests in the general partner

No approval required at any time. Please read [Transfer of Ownership Interests in the General Partner](#).

## **Table of Contents**

Matters requiring the approval of a unit majority require the approval of a majority of the common units.

### **Issuance of Additional Securities**

Our partnership agreement authorizes us to issue an unlimited number of additional partnership securities and rights to buy partnership securities for the consideration and on the terms and conditions established by our general partner in its sole discretion without the approval of any limited partners.

It is possible that we will fund acquisitions through the issuance of additional common units or other equity securities. Holders of any additional common units we issue will be entitled to share equally with the then-existing holders of common units in our distributions of available cash. In addition, the issuance of additional partnership common units or other equity securities may dilute the value of the interests of the then-existing holders of common units in our net assets.

In accordance with Delaware law and the provisions of our partnership agreement, we may also issue additional partnership securities that, in the sole discretion of our general partner, may have special voting rights to which the common units are not entitled.

Upon issuance of additional partnership securities, our general partner will be required to make additional capital contributions to the extent necessary to maintain its 2% general partner interest in us. Moreover, our general partner will have the right, which it may from time to time assign in whole or in part to any of its affiliates, to purchase common units or other equity securities whenever, and on the same terms that, we issue those securities to persons other than our general partner and its affiliates, to the extent necessary to maintain the percentage interest of the general partner and its affiliates, including such interest represented by common units that existed immediately prior to each issuance. The holders of common units do not have preemptive rights to acquire additional common units or other partnership securities.

### **Amendment of Partnership Agreement**

*General.* Amendments to our partnership agreement may be proposed only by or with the consent of our general partner, which consent may be given or withheld in its sole discretion. In order to adopt a proposed amendment, other than the amendments discussed below, our general partner is required to seek written approval of the holders of the number of units required to approve the amendment or call a meeting of the limited partners to consider and vote upon the proposed amendment. Except as described below, an amendment must be approved by a unit majority.

*Prohibited Amendments.* No amendment may be made that would:

enlarge the obligations of any limited partner without its consent, unless approved by at least a majority of the type or class of limited partner interests so affected;

enlarge the obligations of, restrict in any way any action by or rights of, or reduce in any way the amounts distributable, reimbursable or otherwise payable by us to our general partner or any of its affiliates without the consent of our general partner, which may be given or withheld in its sole discretion;

change the duration of our partnership;

provide that we are not dissolved upon an election to dissolve our partnership by our general partner that is approved by a unit majority; or

give any person the right to dissolve our partnership other than our general partner's right to dissolve our partnership with the approval of a unit majority.

The provision of our partnership agreement preventing the amendments having the effects described in any of the clauses above can be amended upon the approval of the holders of at least 90% of the outstanding units, voting together as a single class (including units owned by the general partner and its affiliates).

**Table of Contents**

*No Unitholder Approval.* Our general partner may generally make amendments to our partnership agreement without the approval of any limited partner or assignee to reflect:

a change in our name, the location of our principal place of our business, our registered agent or our registered office;

the admission, substitution, withdrawal or removal of partners in accordance with our partnership agreement;

a change that, in the sole discretion of our general partner, is necessary or advisable for us to qualify or continue our qualification as a limited partnership or a partnership in which the limited partners have limited liability under the laws of any state or to ensure that neither we, the operating company nor any of its subsidiaries will be treated as an association taxable as a corporation or otherwise taxed as an entity for federal income tax purposes;

an amendment that is necessary, in the opinion of our counsel, to prevent us or our general partner or its directors, officers, agents or trustees from in any manner being subjected to the provisions of the Investment Company Act of 1940, the Investment Advisors Act of 1940, or plan asset regulations adopted under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, or ERISA, whether or not substantially similar to plan asset regulations currently applied or proposed;

subject to the limitations on the issuance of additional partnership securities described above, an amendment that in the discretion of our general partner is necessary or advisable for the authorization of additional partnership securities or rights to acquire partnership securities;

any amendment expressly permitted in our partnership agreement to be made by our general partner acting alone;

an amendment effected, necessitated or contemplated by a merger agreement that has been approved under the terms of our partnership agreement;

any amendment that, in the discretion of our general partner, is necessary or advisable for the formation by us of, or our investment in, any corporation, partnership or other entity, as otherwise permitted by our partnership agreement;

a change in our fiscal year or taxable year and related changes;

a merger, conversion or conveyance effected in accordance with the partnership agreement; and

any other amendments substantially similar to any of the matters described in the clauses above.

In addition, our general partner may make amendments to our partnership agreement without the approval of any limited partner or assignee if those amendments, in the discretion of our general partner:

do not adversely affect the limited partners (including any particular class of limited partners as compared to other classes of limited partners) in any material respect;

are necessary or advisable to satisfy any requirements, conditions or guidelines contained in any opinion, directive, order, ruling or regulation of any federal or state agency or judicial authority or contained in any federal or state statute;



are necessary or advisable to facilitate the trading of limited partner interests or to comply with any rule, regulation, guideline or requirement of any securities exchange on which the limited partner interests are or will be listed for trading, compliance with any of which our general partner deems to be in the best interests of us and our limited partners;

are necessary or advisable for any action taken by our general partner relating to splits or combinations of units under the provisions of our partnership agreement; or

are required to effect the intent expressed in this prospectus or the intent of the provisions of our partnership agreement or are otherwise contemplated by our partnership agreement.

## **Table of Contents**

*Opinion of Counsel and Unitholder Approval.* Our general partner will not be required to obtain an opinion of counsel that an amendment will not result in a loss of limited liability to the limited partners or result in our being treated as an entity for federal income tax purposes if one of the amendments described above under - No Unitholder Approval should occur. No other amendments to our partnership agreement will become effective without the approval of holders of at least 90% of the units unless we obtain an opinion of counsel to the effect that the amendment will not affect the limited liability under applicable law of any limited partner in our partnership.

Any amendment that would have a material adverse effect on the rights or preferences of any type or class of outstanding units in relation to other classes of units will require the approval of at least a majority of the type or class of units so affected. Any amendment that reduces the voting percentage required to take any action is required to be approved by the affirmative vote of limited partners whose aggregate outstanding units constitute not less than the voting requirement sought to be reduced.

### **Actions Relating to Operating Company**

Without the approval of a unit majority, our general partner is prohibited from consenting on our behalf as the sole member of the operating company to any amendment to the limited liability company agreement of our operating company or taking any action on our behalf permitted to be taken by a member of our operating company, in each case that would adversely affect our limited partners (or any particular class of limited partners as compared to other classes of limited partners) in any material respect.

### **Merger, Sale or Other Disposition of Assets**

Our general partner is generally prohibited, without the prior approval of the holders of a unit majority, from causing us to, among other things, sell, exchange or otherwise dispose of all or substantially all of our assets in a single transaction or a series of related transactions, including by way of merger, consolidation or other combination, or approving on our behalf the sale exchange or other disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of our subsidiaries; provided that our general partner may mortgage, pledge, hypothecate or grant a security interest in all or substantially all of our assets without that approval. Our general partner may also sell all or substantially all of our assets under a foreclosure or other realization upon the encumbrances above without that approval.

If the conditions specified in the partnership agreement are satisfied, our general partner may merge our partnership or any of its subsidiaries into, or convey all of our assets to, a newly formed entity if the sole purpose of that merger or conveyance is to effect a mere change in our legal form into another limited liability entity. The unitholders are not entitled to dissenters' rights of appraisal under the partnership agreement or applicable Delaware law in the event of a merger or consolidation, a sale of all or substantially all of our assets or any other transaction or event.

### **Termination and Dissolution**

We will continue as a limited partnership until terminated under our partnership agreement. We will dissolve upon:

the election of our general partner to dissolve us, if approved by the holders of a unit majority;

the sale, exchange or other disposition of all or substantially all of the assets and properties of our partnership and the subsidiaries;

the entry of a decree of judicial dissolution of our partnership; or

the withdrawal or removal of our general partner or any other event that results in its ceasing to be our general partner other than by reason of a transfer of its general partner interest in accordance with our partnership agreement or withdrawal or removal following approval and admission of a successor.

Upon a dissolution under the last clause above, a unit majority may also elect, within specific time limitations, to reconstitute our partnership and continue its business on the same terms and conditions

## **Table of Contents**

described in our partnership agreement by forming a new limited partnership on terms identical to those in our partnership agreement and having as general partner an entity approved by a unit majority, subject to our receipt of an opinion of counsel to the effect that:

the action would not result in the loss of limited liability of any limited partner; and

neither our partnership, the reconstituted limited partnership, our operating company nor any of our other subsidiaries would be treated as an association taxable as a corporation or otherwise be taxable as an entity for federal income tax purposes upon the exercise of that right to continue.

## **Liquidation and Distribution of Proceeds**

Upon our dissolution, unless we are reconstituted and continued as a new limited partnership, the liquidator authorized to wind up our affairs will, acting with all of the powers of our general partner that the liquidator deems necessary or desirable in its judgment, liquidate our assets and apply the proceeds of the liquidation as provided in Cash Distributions Distributions of Cash upon Liquidation. The liquidator may defer liquidation or distribution of our assets for a reasonable period of time or distribute assets to partners in kind if it determines that a sale would be impractical or would cause undue loss to our partners.

## **Withdrawal or Removal of the General Partner**

Except as described below, our general partner has agreed not to withdraw voluntarily as general partner of our partnership prior to September 30, 2012 without obtaining the approval of the holders of at least a majority of the outstanding common units, excluding common units held by the general partner and its affiliates, and furnishing an opinion of counsel regarding limited liability and tax matters. On or after September 30, 2012, our general partner may withdraw as general partner without first obtaining approval of any unitholder by giving 90 days written notice, and that withdrawal will not constitute a violation of our partnership agreement. Notwithstanding the information above, our general partner may withdraw without unitholder approval upon 90 days notice to the limited partners if at least 50% of the outstanding common units are held or controlled by one person and its affiliates other than our general partner and its affiliates. In addition, our partnership agreement permits our general partner in some instances to sell or otherwise transfer all of its general partner interests in our partnership without the approval of the unitholders. See - Transfer of General Partner Interest.

Upon the withdrawal of our general partner under any circumstances, other than as a result of a transfer by our general partner of all or a part of its general partner interest in us, the holders of a majority of the outstanding common units may select a successor to that withdrawing general partner. If a successor is not elected, or is elected but an opinion of counsel regarding limited liability and tax matters cannot be obtained, we will be dissolved, wound up and liquidated, unless within 180 days after that withdrawal, the holders of a majority of the outstanding common units agree in writing to continue the business of Natural Resource Partners and to appoint a successor general partner. See - Termination and Dissolution.

Our general partner may not be removed unless that removal is approved by the vote of the holders of not less than 662/3% of the outstanding units, voting together as a single class, including units held by our general partner and its affiliates, and we receive an opinion of counsel regarding limited liability and tax matters. Any removal of

our general partner is also subject to the approval of a successor general partner by the vote of the holders of a majority of the outstanding common units. The ownership of more than 331/3% of the outstanding units by our general partner and its affiliates would give them the practical ability to prevent our general partner's removal.



## **Table of Contents**

Our partnership agreement also provides that if NRP (GP) LP is removed as our general partner under circumstances where cause does not exist and units held by the general partner and its affiliates are not voted in favor of that removal:

any existing arrearages in payment of the minimum quarterly distribution on the common units will be extinguished; and

the general partner will have the right to convert its general partner interest and its incentive distribution rights into common units or to receive cash in exchange for those interests based on the fair market value of those interests at the time.

In the event of removal of a general partner under circumstances where cause exists or withdrawal of a general partner where that withdrawal violates our partnership agreement, a successor general partner will have the option to purchase the general partner interest and incentive distribution rights of the departing general partner for a cash payment equal to the fair market value of those interests. Under all other circumstances where a general partner withdraws or is removed by the limited partners, the departing general partner will have the option to require the successor general partner to purchase the general partner interest of the departing general partner and its incentive distribution rights for fair market value. In each case, this fair market value will be determined by agreement between the departing general partner and the successor general partner. If no agreement is reached, an independent investment banking firm or other independent expert selected by the departing general partner and the successor general partner will determine the fair market value. Or, if the departing general partner and the successor general partner cannot agree upon an expert, then an expert chosen by agreement of the experts selected by each of them will determine the fair market value.

If the above-described options are not exercised by either the departing general partner or the successor general partner, the departing general partner's general partner interest and its incentive distribution rights will automatically convert into common units equal to the fair market value of those interests as determined by an investment banking firm or other independent expert selected in the manner described in the preceding paragraph.

In addition, we will be required to reimburse the departing general partner for all amounts due to the departing general partner, including, without limitation, all employee-related liabilities, including severance liabilities, incurred for the termination of any employees employed by the departing general partner or its affiliates for our benefit.

## **Transfer of General Partner Interest**

Except for transfer by our general partner of all, but not less than all, of its general partner interest in our partnership to:

an affiliate of our general partner (other than an individual); or

another entity as part of the merger or consolidation of our general partner with or into another entity or the transfer by our general partner of all or substantially all of its assets to another entity,

our general partner may not transfer all or any part of its general partner interest in our partnership to another person prior to September 30, 2012 without the approval of the holders of at least a majority of the outstanding common units, excluding common units held by our general partner and its affiliates. As a condition of this transfer, the transferee must, among other things, assume the rights and duties of our general partner, agree to be bound by the provisions of the partnership agreement, and furnish an opinion of counsel regarding limited liability and tax matters. Our general partner and its affiliates may at any time, however, transfer units to one or more persons without unitholder approval.

**Transfer of Incentive Distribution Rights**

The WPP Group may freely transfer their incentive distribution rights at any time. Our general partner or a later holder of the general partner's incentive distribution rights may transfer its incentive distribution rights to an affiliate of the holder (other than an individual) or to another entity as part of the merger or consolidation

## **Table of Contents**

of such holder with or into such other entity or the transfer by such holder or its affiliates, of all or substantially all of its assets to another entity, without the prior approval of the unitholders; provided that the transferee agrees to be bound by the provisions of the partnership agreement. Prior to September 30, 2012, other transfers of incentive distribution rights will require the affirmative vote of holders of a majority of the outstanding common units, excluding common units held by the general partner or its affiliates. On or after September 30, 2012, all of the incentive distribution rights will be freely transferable.

### **Transfer of Ownership Interests in the General Partner**

At any time, the partners of our general partner may sell or transfer all or part of their partnership interests in our general partner without the approval of the unitholders.

### **Change of Management Provisions**

Our partnership agreement contains specific provisions that are intended to discourage a person or group from attempting to remove NRP (GP) LP as our general partner or otherwise change our management. If any person or group other than our general partner and its affiliates acquires beneficial ownership of 20% or more of any class of units, that person or group loses voting rights on all of its units. This loss of voting rights does not apply to any person or group that acquires the units from our general partner or its affiliates and any transferees of that person or group approved by our general partner or to any person or group who acquires the units with the prior approval of the board of directors of our general partner.

Our partnership agreement also provides that if our general partner is removed under circumstances where cause does not exist and units held by our general partner and its affiliates are not voted in favor of that removal:

any existing arrearages in payment of the minimum quarterly distribution on the common units will be extinguished; and

our general partner will have the right to convert its general partner interest and its incentive distribution rights into common units or to receive cash in exchange for those interests.

### **Limited Call Right**

If at any time our general partner and its affiliates own more than 80% of the then-issued and outstanding limited partner interests of any class, our general partner will have the right, which it may assign in whole or in part to any of its affiliates or to us, to acquire all, but not less than all, of the remaining limited partner interests of the class held by unaffiliated persons as of a record date to be selected by our general partner, on at least 10 but not more than 60 days notice. The purchase price in the event of this purchase is the greater of:

the highest cash price paid by either of our general partner or any of its affiliates for any limited partner interests of the class purchased within the 90 days preceding the date on which our general partner first mails notice of its election to purchase those limited partner interests; and

the current market price as of the date three days before the date the notice is mailed.

As a result of our general partner's right to purchase outstanding limited partner interests, a holder of limited partner interests may have his limited partner interests purchased at an undesirable time or price. The tax consequences to a unitholder of the exercise of this call right are the same as a sale by that unitholder of his common units in the market. See **Material Income Tax Considerations** **Disposition of Common Units**.



**Meetings; Voting**

Except as described below regarding a person or group owning 20% or more of any class of units then outstanding, unitholders or assignees who are record holders of units on the record date will be entitled to notice of, and to vote at, meetings of our limited partners and to act upon matters for which approvals may be solicited. Common units that are owned by an assignee who is a record holder, but who has not yet been

## **Table of Contents**

admitted as a limited partner, shall be voted by our general partner at the written direction of the record holder. Absent direction of this kind, the common units will not be voted, except that, in the case of common units held by our general partner on behalf of non-citizen assignees, our general partner shall distribute the votes on those common units in the same ratios as the votes of limited partners on other units are cast.

Our general partner does not anticipate that any meeting of unitholders will be called in the foreseeable future. Any action that is required or permitted to be taken by the unitholders may be taken either at a meeting of the unitholders or without a meeting if consents in writing describing the action so taken are signed by holders of the number of units as would be necessary to authorize or take that action at a meeting. Meetings of the unitholders may be called by our general partner or by unitholders owning at least 20% of the outstanding units of the class for which a meeting is proposed. Unitholders may vote either in person or by proxy at meetings. The holders of a majority of the outstanding units of the class or classes for which a meeting has been called represented in person or by proxy shall constitute a quorum unless any action by the unitholders requires approval by holders of a greater percentage of the units, in which case the quorum shall be the greater percentage.

Each record holder of a unit has a vote according to his percentage interest in us, although additional limited partner interests having special voting rights could be issued. See - Issuance of Additional Securities. However, if at any time any person or group, other than our general partner and its affiliates, or a direct or subsequently approved transferee of our general partner or its affiliates or a person or group who acquires the units with the prior approval of the board of directors, acquires, in the aggregate, beneficial ownership of 20% or more of any class of units then outstanding, the person or group will lose voting rights on all of its units and the units may not be voted on any matter and will not be considered to be outstanding when sending notices of a meeting of unitholders, calculating required votes, determining the presence of a quorum or for other similar purposes. Common units held in nominee or street name accounts will be voted by the broker or other nominee in accordance with the instruction of the beneficial owner unless the arrangement between the beneficial owner and its nominee provides otherwise.

Any notice, demand, request, report or proxy material required or permitted to be given or made to record holders of common units under our partnership agreement will be delivered to the record holder by us or by the transfer agent.

## **Status as Limited Partner or Assignee**

Except as described above under - Limited Liability, the common units will be fully paid, and unitholders will not be required to make additional contributions.

An assignee of a common unit, after executing and delivering a transfer application, but pending its admission as a substituted limited partner, is entitled to an interest equivalent to that of a limited partner for the right to share in allocations and distributions from us, including liquidating distributions. Our general partner will vote and exercise other powers attributable to common units owned by an assignee who has not become a substitute limited partner at the written direction of the assignee. See - Meetings; Voting. Transferees who do not execute and deliver a transfer application will be treated neither as assignees nor as record holders of common units, and will not receive cash distributions, federal income tax allocations or reports furnished to holders of common units. See Description of our Common Units Transfer of Common Units.

## **Non-Citizen Assignees; Redemption**

If we or any of our subsidiaries are or become subject to federal, state or local laws or regulations that, in the reasonable determination of our general partner, create a substantial risk of cancellation or forfeiture of any property that we have an interest in because of the nationality, citizenship or other related status of any limited partner or assignee, we may redeem, upon 30 days advance notice, the units held by the limited partner or assignee at their

current market price. In order to avoid any cancellation or forfeiture, our general partner may require each limited partner or assignee to furnish information about his nationality, citizenship or related status. If a limited partner or assignee fails to furnish information about his nationality, citizenship or

## **Table of Contents**

other related status within 30 days after a request for the information or our general partner determines after receipt of the information that the limited partner or assignee is not an eligible citizen, the limited partner or assignee may be treated as a non-citizen assignee. In addition to other limitations on the rights of an assignee who is not a substituted limited partner, a non-citizen assignee does not have the right to direct the voting of his units and may not receive distributions in kind upon our liquidation.

## **Indemnification**

Under our partnership agreement, in most circumstances, we will indemnify the following persons, to the fullest extent permitted by law, from and against all losses, claims, damages or similar events:

our general partner;

any departing general partner;

any person who is or was an affiliate of a general partner or any departing general partner;

any person who is or was a member, partner, officer, director, employee, agent or trustee of any of our subsidiaries, a general partner or any departing general partner or any affiliate of any of our subsidiaries, a general partner or any departing general partner; or

any person who is or was serving at the request of a general partner or any departing general partner or any affiliate of a general partner or any departing general partner as an officer, director, employee, member, partner, agent or trustee of another person.

Any indemnification under these provisions will only be out of our assets. Unless it otherwise agrees in its sole discretion, our general partner will not be personally liable for, or have any obligation to contribute or loan funds or assets to us to enable us to effectuate indemnification. We are authorized to purchase insurance against liabilities asserted against and expenses incurred by persons for our activities, regardless of whether we would have the power to indemnify the person against liabilities under our partnership agreement.

## **Reimbursement of Expenses**

Our partnership agreement requires us to reimburse our general partner for all direct and indirect expenses it incurs or payments it makes on our behalf and all other necessary appropriate expenses allocable to us or otherwise reasonably incurred by our general partner in connection with operating our business. These expenses include salary, bonus, incentive compensation and other amounts paid to persons who perform services for us or on our behalf and expenses allocated our general partner by its affiliates. The general partner is entitled to determine expenses that are allocable to us in any reasonable manner determined by our general partner in its sole discretion.

## **Books and Records**

Our general partner is required to keep appropriate books of our business at our principal offices. The books will be maintained for both tax and financial reporting purposes on an accrual basis. For tax and fiscal reporting purposes, our fiscal year is the calendar year. We will furnish or make available to record holders of common units, within 120 days after the close of each fiscal year, an annual report containing audited financial statements and a report on those financial statements by our independent public accountants. Except for our fourth quarter, we will also furnish or make available summary financial information within 90 days after the close of each quarter.

We will furnish each record holder of a unit with information reasonably required for tax reporting purposes within 90 days after the close of each calendar year. This information is expected to be furnished in summary form so that some complex calculations normally required of partners can be avoided. Our ability to furnish this summary information to unitholders will depend on the cooperation of unitholders in supplying us with specific information.

## **Table of Contents**

Every unitholder will receive information to assist him in determining his federal and state tax liability and filing his federal and state income tax returns, regardless of whether he supplies us with information.

### **Right to Inspect Our Books and Records**

Our partnership agreement provides that a limited partner can, for a purpose reasonably related to his interest as a limited partner, upon reasonable demand and at his own expense, have furnished to him:

a current list of the name and last known address of each partner;

a copy of our tax returns;

information as to the amount of cash, and a description and statement of the agreed value of any other property or services, contributed or to be contributed by each partner and the date on which each became a partner;

copies of our partnership agreement, the certificate of limited partnership of the partnership, related amendments and powers of attorney under which they have been executed;

information regarding the status of our business and financial condition; and

any other information regarding our affairs as is just and reasonable.

Our general partner may, and intends to, keep confidential from the limited partners trade secrets or other information the disclosure of which our general partner believes in good faith is not in our best interests or which we are required by law or by agreements with third parties to keep confidential.

### **Registration Rights**

Under our partnership agreement, we have agreed to register for sale under the Securities Act and applicable state securities laws any common units or other partnership securities proposed to be sold by our general partner or any of its affiliates if an exemption from the registration requirements is not otherwise available. These registration rights continue for two years following any withdrawal or removal of our general partner. We have also agreed to include any partnership securities held by our general partner or its affiliates in any registration statement that we file to offer partnership securities for cash, except an offering relating solely to an employee benefit plan, for the same period. We are obligated to pay all expenses incidental to the registration, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions.

## **CASH DISTRIBUTIONS**

### **Distributions Of Available Cash**

*General.* Within approximately 45 days after the end of each quarter, we will distribute all available cash to unitholders of record on the applicable record date.

*Definition of Available Cash.* Available cash generally means, for each fiscal quarter, all cash on hand at the end of the quarter:

less the amount of cash reserves that the general partner determines in its reasonable discretion is necessary or appropriate to:

provide for the proper conduct of our business;

comply with applicable law, any of our debt instruments, or other agreements; or

provide funds for distributions to our unitholders and to our general partner for any one or more of the next four quarters;

plus all cash on hand on the date of determination of available cash for the quarter resulting from working capital borrowings made after the end of the quarter. Working capital borrowings are generally

## **Table of Contents**

borrowings that are made under our credit facility and in all cases are used solely for working capital purposes or to pay distributions to partners.

*Intent to Distribute the Minimum Quarterly Distribution.* We intend to distribute to holders of our common units on a quarterly basis at least the minimum quarterly distribution of \$0.25625 per quarter, or \$1.025 per year, to the extent we have sufficient cash from our operations after the establishment of cash reserves and the payment of fees and expenses, including reimbursements to our general partner. However, there is no guarantee that we will pay the minimum quarterly distribution on the common units in any quarter, and we will be prohibited from making any distributions to unitholders if it would cause an event of default, or an event of default exists, under our credit facility.

## **Operating Surplus and Capital Surplus**

*General.* All cash distributed to unitholders will be characterized either as operating surplus or capital surplus. We distribute available cash from operating surplus differently than available cash from capital surplus.

Maintenance capital expenditures are capital expenditures made to maintain, over the long term, the operating capacity of our assets as they existed at the time of the expenditure. Expansion capital expenditures are capital expenditures made to increase over the long term the operating capacity of our assets as they existed at the time of the expenditure. The general partner has the discretion to determine how to allocate a capital expenditure for the acquisition or expansion of coal reserves between maintenance capital expenditures and expansion capital expenditures, and its good faith allocation will be conclusive. Maintenance capital expenditures reduce operating surplus, from which we pay the minimum quarterly distribution, but expansion capital expenditures do not.

*Definition of Operating Surplus.* For any period, operating surplus generally means:

our cash balance on the closing date of our initial public offering; plus

\$15.0 million (as described below); plus

all of our cash receipts since the closing of our initial public offering, excluding cash from borrowings that are not working capital borrowings, sales of equity and debt securities and sales or other dispositions of assets outside the ordinary course of business; plus

working capital borrowings made after the end of a quarter but before the date of determination of operating surplus for that quarter; less

all of our operating expenses since the closing of our initial public offering, including the repayment of working capital borrowings, but not the repayment of other borrowings, and including maintenance capital expenditures; less

the amount of cash reserves that the general partner deems necessary or advisable to provide funds for future operating expenditures.

*Definition of Capital Surplus.* Capital surplus will generally be generated only by:

borrowings other than working capital borrowings;

sales of debt and equity securities; or



sales or other disposition of assets for cash, other than inventory, accounts receivable and other current assets sold in the ordinary course of business or as part of normal retirements or replacements of assets.

*Characterization of Cash Distributions.* We will treat all available cash distributed as coming from operating surplus until the sum of all available cash distributed since we began operations equals the operating surplus as of the most recent date of determination of available cash. We will treat any amount distributed in excess of operating surplus, regardless of its source, as capital surplus. We do not anticipate that we will make any distributions from capital surplus. As reflected above, operating surplus includes \$15.0 million in addition

## **Table of Contents**

to our cash balance on the closing date of our initial public offering, cash receipts from our operations and cash from working capital borrowings. This amount does not reflect actual cash on hand at closing that is available for distribution to our unitholders. Rather, it is a provision that will enable us, if we choose, to distribute as operating surplus up to \$15 million of cash we receive in the future from non-operating sources, such as assets sales, issuances of securities and long-term borrowings, which would otherwise be considered distributions of capital surplus. Any distributions of capital surplus would trigger certain adjustment provisions in our partnership agreement as described below. Please read - Distributions From Capital Surplus and - Adjustment of Minimum Quarterly Distribution and Target Distribution Levels.

### **Distributions of Available Cash from Operating Surplus**

We will make distributions of available cash from operating surplus for any quarter in the following manner:

first, 98% to all unitholders, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner until we distribute for each outstanding unit an amount equal to the minimum quarterly distribution for that quarter;

thereafter, in the manner described in - Incentive Distribution Rights below.

### **Incentive Distribution Rights**

Incentive distribution rights represent the right to receive an increasing percentage of quarterly distributions of available cash from operating surplus after the minimum quarterly distribution and the target distribution levels have been achieved. Our general partner and members and affiliates of the WPP Group currently hold 65% and 35%, respectively, of the incentive distribution rights. The WPP Group and its affiliates may transfer these rights, but our general partner may only transfer these rights separately from its general partner interest in accordance with restrictions in the partnership agreement.

If for any quarter:

we have distributed available cash from operating surplus to the common unitholders in an amount equal to the minimum quarterly distribution; and

we have distributed available cash from operating surplus on outstanding common units in an amount necessary to eliminate any cumulative arrearages in payment of the minimum quarterly distribution.

then, we will distribute any additional available cash from operating surplus for that quarter among the unitholders and the general partner in the following manner:

First, 98% to all unitholders, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until each unitholder receives a total of \$0.28125 per unit for that quarter (the first target distribution );

Second, 85% to all unitholders, pro rata, 13% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until each unitholder receives a total of \$0.33125 per unit for that quarter (the second target distribution );

Third, 75% to all unitholders, pro rata, 23% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until each unitholder receives a total of \$0.38125 per unit for that quarter (the third target distribution ); and

Thereafter, 50% to all unitholders, pro rata, 48% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner.

In each case, the amount of the target distribution set forth above is exclusive of any distributions to common unitholders to eliminate any cumulative arrearages in payment of the minimum quarterly distribution.

**Percentage Allocations of Available Cash from Operating Surplus**

The following table illustrates the percentage allocations of the additional available cash from operating surplus between the unitholders and our general partner up to the various target distribution levels. The

**Table of Contents**

amounts set forth under **Marginal Percentage Interest in Distributions** are the percentage interests of our general partner and the unitholders in any available cash from operating surplus we distribute up to and including the corresponding amount in the column **Total Quarterly Distribution Target Amount**, until available cash from operating surplus we distribute reaches the next target distribution level, if any. The percentage interests shown for the unitholders and the general partner for the minimum quarterly distribution are also applicable to quarterly distribution amounts that are less than the minimum quarterly distribution.

	<b>Total Quarterly Distribution Per Unit Target Amount</b>	<b>Marginal Percentage Interest in Distributions</b>		
		<b>Unitholders</b>	<b>General Partner</b>	<b>Holder of Incentive Distribution Rights</b>
Minimum Quarterly Distribution	up to \$0.25625	98%	2%	
First Target Distribution	above \$0.25625 up to \$0.28125	98%	2%	
Second Target Distribution	above \$0.28125 up to \$0.33125	85%	2%	13%
Third Target Distribution	above \$0.33125 up to \$0.38125	75%	2%	23%
Thereafter	above \$0.38125	50%	2%	48%

**Distributions from Capital Surplus**

We will make distributions of available cash from capital surplus, if any, in the following manner:

First, 98% to all unitholders, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until we distribute for each common unit that was issued in the initial public offering, an amount of available cash from capital surplus equal to the initial public offering price; and

Second, 98% to the common unitholders, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until we distribute for each common unit, an amount of available cash from capital surplus equal to any unpaid arrearages in payment of the minimum quarterly distribution on the common units; and

Thereafter, we will make all distributions of available cash from capital surplus as if they were from operating surplus.

*Effect of a Distribution from Capital Surplus.* The partnership agreement treats a distribution of capital surplus as the repayment of the initial unit price from the initial public offering, which is a return of capital. The initial public offering price less any distributions of capital surplus per unit is referred to as the unrecovered initial unit price. Each time a distribution of capital surplus is made, the minimum quarterly distribution and the target distribution levels will be reduced in the same proportion as the corresponding reduction in the unrecovered initial unit price. Because distributions of capital surplus will reduce the minimum quarterly distribution, after any of these distributions are made, it may be easier for the general partner to receive incentive distributions. Any distribution of capital surplus before the unrecovered initial unit price is reduced to zero cannot be applied to the payment of the minimum quarterly distribution or any arrearages.

Once we distribute capital surplus on a unit in an amount equal to the initial unit price, we will reduce the minimum quarterly distribution and the target distribution levels to zero and we will make all future distributions from operating

surplus, with 50% being paid to the holders of units, and 50% to the general partner.

**Adjustment of Minimum Quarterly Distribution and Target Distribution Levels**

In addition to adjusting the minimum quarterly distribution and target distribution levels to reflect a distribution of capital surplus, if we combine our units into fewer units or subdivide our units into a greater number of units, we will proportionately adjust:

the minimum quarterly distribution;

**Table of Contents**

the target distribution levels; and

the unrecovered initial unit price;

For example, if a two-for-one split of the common units should occur, the minimum quarterly distribution, the target distribution levels and the unrecovered initial unit price would each be reduced to 50% of its initial level. We will not make any adjustment by reason of the issuance of additional units for cash or property.

In addition, if legislation is enacted or if existing law is modified or interpreted in a manner that causes us to become taxable as a corporation or otherwise subject to taxation as an entity for federal, state or local income tax purposes, we will reduce the minimum quarterly distribution and the target distribution levels by multiplying the same by one minus the sum of the highest marginal federal corporate income tax rate that could apply and any increase in the effective overall state and local income tax rates. For example, if we became subject to a maximum marginal federal, and effective state and local income tax rate of 38%, then the minimum quarterly distribution and the target distributions levels would each be reduced to 62% of their previous levels.

**Distributions of Cash Upon Liquidation**

If we dissolve in accordance with our partnership agreement, we will sell or otherwise dispose of our assets in a process called a liquidation. We will first apply the proceeds of liquidation to the payment of our creditors. We will distribute any remaining proceeds to the unitholders and the general partner, in accordance with their capital account balances, as adjusted to reflect any gain or loss upon the sale or other disposition of our assets in liquidation.

There may not be sufficient gain upon liquidation of Natural Resource Partners to enable the holder of common units to fully recover their unrecovered initial unit price plus the minimum quarterly distribution for the quarter during which liquidation occurs plus any unpaid arrearages in payment of the minimum quarterly distribution on the common units. Any further net gain recognized upon liquidation will be allocated in a manner that takes into account the incentive distribution rights of the general partner.

*Manner of Adjustment for Gain.* The manner of the adjustment is set forth in the partnership agreement. If our liquidation occurs, we will allocate any gain to the partners in the following manner:

First, to our general partner and the holders of units who have negative balances in their capital accounts to the extent of and in proportion to those negative balances;

Second, 98% to the common unitholders, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until the capital account for each common unit is equal to the sum of:

- (1) the unrecovered initial unit price; plus
- (2) the amount of the minimum quarterly distribution for the quarter during which our liquidation occurs; plus
- (3) any unpaid arrearages in payment of the minimum quarterly distribution;

Third, 98% to all unitholders, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, pro rata, until we allocate under this paragraph an amount per unit equal to:

(1) the sum of the excess of the first target distribution per unit over the minimum quarterly distribution per unit for each quarter of our existence; less

(2) the cumulative amount per unit of any distributions of available cash from operating surplus in excess of the minimum quarterly distribution per unit that was distributed 98% to the units, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, pro rata, for each quarter of our existence;

**Table of Contents**

Fourth, 85% to all unitholders, pro rata, 13% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until we allocate under this paragraph an amount per unit equal to:

(1) the sum of the excess of the second target distribution per unit over the first target distribution per unit for each quarter of our existence; less

(2) the cumulative amount per unit of any distributions of available cash from operating surplus in excess of the first target distribution per unit that was distributed 85% to the unitholders, pro rata, 13% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner for each quarter of our existence;

Fifth, 75% to all unitholders, pro rata, and 23% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata, and 2% to the general partner, until we allocate under this paragraph an amount per unit equal to:

(1) the sum of the excess of the third target distribution per unit over the second target distribution per unit for each quarter of our existence; less

(2) the cumulative amount per unit of any distributions of available cash from operating surplus in excess of the second target distribution per unit that was distributed 75% to the unitholders, pro rata, 23% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata and 2% to the general partner for each quarter of our existence;

Thereafter, 50% to all unitholders, pro rata, 48% to the holders of the incentive distribution rights, pro rata and 2% to the general partner.

*Manner of Adjustments for Losses.* Upon our liquidation, we will generally allocate any loss to the general partner and the unitholders in the following manner:

First, 98% to the holders of common units in proportion to the positive balances in their capital accounts and 2% to the general partner until the capital accounts of the common unitholders have been reduced to zero; and

Thereafter, 100% to the general partner.

*Adjustments to Capital Accounts Upon the Issuance of Additional Units.* We will make adjustments to capital accounts upon the issuance of additional units. In doing so, we will allocate any gain or loss resulting from the adjustments to the unitholders and the general partner in the same manner as we allocate gain or loss upon liquidation. In the event that we make positive interim adjustments to the capital accounts, we will allocate any later negative adjustments to the capital accounts resulting from the issuance of additional units or distributions of property or upon liquidation in a manner which results, to the extent possible, in the capital account balance of the general partner equaling the amount which would have been in its capital account if no earlier positive adjustments to the capital accounts had been made.



**Table of Contents**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE DEBT SECURITIES**

The debt securities may be issued by Natural Resource Partners or NRP (Operating) LLC. Natural Resource Partners will issue debt securities under an indenture, among it, as issuer, any Subsidiary Guarantors and a trustee that we will name in the related prospectus supplement. NRP (Operating) LLC will issue debt securities under a separate indenture among itself, as issuer, the Guarantor, if any, any Subsidiary Guarantors and a trustee that we will name in the related prospectus supplement. Any Guarantor or Subsidiary Guarantors will also be parties to the indentures. The term **Trustee** as used in this prospectus refers to the trustee under either of the above indentures. References in this prospectus to an **Indenture** refer to the particular indenture under which Natural Resource Partners or NRP (Operating) LLC issues a series of debt securities. The debt securities will be governed by the provisions of the related Indenture and those made part of the Indenture by reference to the Trust Indenture Act of 1939.

This description is a summary of the material provisions of the debt securities and the Indentures. We urge you to read the forms of Indentures filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part because those Indentures, and not this description, govern your rights as a holder of debt securities.

**General**

Any series of debt securities:

will be issued only in fully registered form;

will be general obligations of the related issuer;

will be general obligations of Natural Resource Partners if it guarantees debt securities issued by NRP (Operating) LLC; and

will be general obligations of the Subsidiary Guarantors if they guarantee debt securities issued by Natural Resource Partners or NRP (Operating) LLC;

The Indenture does not limit the total amount of debt securities that may be issued. Debt securities under the Indenture may be issued from time to time in separate series, up to the aggregate amount authorized for each such series.

We will prepare a prospectus supplement and either an indenture supplement or a resolution of the board of directors of the general partner and accompanying officers' certificate relating to any series of debt securities that Natural Resource Partners or NRP (Operating) LLC offers, which will include specific terms relating to some or all of the following:

the form and title of the debt securities;

the total principal amount of the debt securities;

the date or dates on which the debt securities may be issued;

the portion of the principal amount which will be payable if the maturity of the debt securities is accelerated;

any right the issuer may have to defer payments of interest by extending the dates payments are due and whether interest on those deferred amounts will be payable;

the dates on which the principal and premium, if any, of the debt securities will be payable;

the interest rate which the debt securities will bear and the interest payment dates for the debt securities;

any optional redemption provisions;

any sinking fund or other provisions that would obligate the issuer to repurchase or otherwise redeem the debt securities;

**Table of Contents**

whether the debt securities are entitled to the benefits of any guarantees by either the Guarantor or the Subsidiary Guarantors;

whether the debt securities may be issued in amounts other than \$1,000 each or multiples thereof;

any changes to or additional Events of Default or covenants; and

any other terms of the debt securities.

This description of debt securities will be deemed modified, amended or supplemented by any description of any series of debt securities set forth in a prospectus supplement related to that series.

The prospectus supplement will also describe any material United States federal income tax consequences or other special considerations regarding the applicable series of debt securities, including those relating to:

debt securities with respect to which payments of principal, premium or interest are determined with reference to an index or formula, including changes in prices of particular securities, currencies or commodities;

debt securities with respect to which principal, premium or interest is payable in a foreign or composite currency;

debt securities that are issued at a discount below their stated principal amount, bearing no interest or interest at a rate that at the time of issuance is below market rates; and

variable rate debt securities that are exchangeable for fixed rate debt securities.

Interest payments on debt securities in certificated form may be made by check mailed to the registered holders or, if so stated in the applicable prospectus supplement, at the option of a holder, by wire transfer to an account designated by the holder.

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, debt securities may be transferred or exchanged at the office of the Trustee at which its corporate trust business is principally administered in the United States, subject to the limitations provided in the Indenture, without the payment of any service charge, other than any applicable tax or other governmental charge.

Any funds paid to the Trustee or any paying agent for the payment of amounts due on any debt securities that remain unclaimed for two years will be returned to the issuer, and the holders of the debt securities must look only to the issuer for payment after that time.

**Guarantees**

Natural Resource Partners may fully, irrevocably and unconditionally guarantee on an unsecured basis any series of debt securities of NRP (Operating) LLC. If a series of debt securities is so guaranteed, Natural Resource Partners will execute a notation of guarantee as further evidence of its guarantee. As used in this prospectus, the term Guarantor means Natural Resource Partners in its role as guarantor of the debt securities of NRP (Operating) LLC.

The payment obligations of Natural Resource Partners or NRP (Operating) LLC under any series of debt securities may be jointly and severally, fully and unconditionally guaranteed by the Subsidiary Guarantors, subject to any

restrictions in our credit agreement or other indebtedness agreements. If a series of debt securities is so guaranteed, the Subsidiary Guarantors will execute a notation of guarantee as further evidence of their guarantee. The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any guarantee by the Subsidiary Guarantors.

The obligations of each guarantor under its guarantee of the debt securities will be limited to the maximum amount that will not result in the obligations of the guarantor under its guarantee constituting a fraudulent conveyance or fraudulent transfer under Federal or state law, after giving effect to:

all other contingent and fixed liabilities of the guarantor; and

## **Table of Contents**

any collections from or payments made by or on behalf of any other guarantor in respect of the obligations of the guarantor under its guarantee.

The guarantee of any guarantor may be released under certain circumstances. If no default has occurred and is continuing under the Indenture, and to the extent not otherwise prohibited by the Indenture, a guarantor will be unconditionally released and discharged from the guarantee:

in the case of a Subsidiary Guarantor, automatically upon any sale, exchange or transfer, to any person that is not an affiliate of the issuer, of all of the issuer's direct or indirect limited liability company or other equity interests in the Subsidiary Guarantor;

automatically if the issuer exercises either its legal defeasance option or its covenant defeasance option as described below under "Defeasance";

automatically upon the merger of the guarantor into the issuer or any other guarantor or the liquidation and dissolution of the guarantor; or

in the case of a Subsidiary Guarantor, following delivery of a written notice by the issuer to the Trustee, upon the release or discharge of all guarantees by the Subsidiary Guarantor of any debt of the issuer for borrowed money (or a guarantee of such debt), except for any series of debt securities, other than a release or discharge as a result of payment of such guarantees.

The guarantee described in the fourth bullet point above is subject to restoration if the Subsidiary Guarantor again guarantees any debt of the issuer for borrowed money (or a guarantee of such debt), except for any series of debt securities.

## **Covenants**

The Indenture contains the following covenant for the benefit of the holders of all series of debt securities:

So long as any debt securities are outstanding, Natural Resource Partners will:

for as long as it is required to file information with the SEC pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or the Exchange Act, file with the Trustee, within 15 days after it is required to file with the SEC, copies of the annual reports and of the information, documents and other reports which it is required to file with the SEC pursuant to the Exchange Act;

if it is not required to file information with the SEC pursuant to the Exchange Act, file with the Trustee, within 15 days after it would have been required to file with the SEC, financial statements and a Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations, both comparable to what it would have been required to file with the SEC had it been subject to the reporting requirements of the Exchange Act; and

if it is required to furnish annual or quarterly reports to its unitholders pursuant to the Exchange Act, file with the Trustee any annual report or other financial reports sent to unitholders generally.

A series of debt securities may contain additional financial and other covenants. The applicable prospectus supplement will contain a description of any such covenants that are added to the Indenture specifically for the benefit

of holders of a particular series.

**Events of Default, Remedies and Notice**

*Events of Default*

Each of the following events will be an Event of Default under the Indenture with respect to a series of debt securities:

default in any payment of interest on any debt securities of that series when due that continues for 30 days;

**Table of Contents**

default in the payment of principal of or premium, if any, on any debt securities of that series when due at its stated maturity, upon redemption, upon required repurchase or otherwise;

default in the payment of any sinking fund payment on any debt securities of that series when due;

failure by the issuer or, if the series of debt securities is guaranteed by a guarantor, the guarantor, to comply for 60 days after notice with the other agreements contained in the Indenture, any supplement to the Indenture with respect to that series or any board resolution authorizing the issuance of that series;

certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of the issuer or, if the series of debt securities is guaranteed, any of the guarantors; or

if the series of debt securities is guaranteed by the Guarantor or the Subsidiary Guarantors:

any of the guarantees ceases to be in full force and effect, except as otherwise provided in the Indenture.

any of the guarantees is declared null and void in a judicial proceeding; or

the Guarantor or any Subsidiary Guarantor denies or disaffirms its obligations under the Indenture or its guarantee.

***Exercise of Remedies***

If an Event of Default, other than an Event of Default described in the fifth bullet point above, occurs and is continuing, the Trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may declare the entire principal of, premium, if any, and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all the debt securities of that series to be due and payable immediately.

A default under the fourth bullet point above will not constitute an Event of Default until the Trustee or the holders of 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series notify the issuer and, if the series of debt securities is guaranteed by the Guarantor and/or the Subsidiary Guarantors, the Guarantor and/or the Subsidiary Guarantors, of the default and such default is not cured within 60 days after receipt of notice.

If an Event of Default described in the fifth bullet point above occurs, the principal of, premium, if any, and accrued and unpaid interest on all outstanding debt securities of all series will become immediately due and payable without any declaration of acceleration or other act on the part of the Trustee or any holders.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series may rescind any declaration of acceleration by the Trustee or the holders with respect to the debt securities of that series, but only if:

rescinding the declaration of acceleration would not conflict with any judgment or decree of a court of competent jurisdiction; and

all existing Events of Default with respect to that series have been cured or waived, other than the nonpayment of principal, premium or interest on the debt securities of that series that has become due solely by the declaration of acceleration.

If an Event of Default occurs and is continuing, the Trustee will be under no obligation, except as otherwise provided in the Indenture, to exercise any of the rights or powers under the Indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders unless such holders have offered to the Trustee reasonable indemnity or security against any costs, liability or expense. No holder may pursue any remedy with respect to the Indenture or the debt securities of any series, except to enforce the right to receive payment of principal, premium or interest on its own debt securities when due, unless:

such holder has previously given the Trustee notice that an Event of Default with respect to that series is continuing;



**Table of Contents**

holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have requested that the Trustee pursue the remedy;

such holders have offered the Trustee reasonable indemnity or security against any cost, liability or expense;

the Trustee has not complied with such request within 60 days after the receipt of the request and the offer of indemnity or security; and

the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have not given the Trustee a direction that is inconsistent with such request within such 60-day period.

The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of a series have the right, subject to certain restrictions, to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the Trustee or of exercising any right or power conferred on the Trustee with respect to that series of debt securities. The Trustee, however, may refuse to follow any direction that:

conflicts with law;

is inconsistent with any provision of the Indenture;

the Trustee determines is unduly prejudicial to the rights of any other holder; or

would involve the Trustee in personal liability.

***Notice of Event of Default***

Within 30 days after the occurrence of an Event of Default, the issuer is required to give written notice to the Trustee and indicate the status of the default and what action it is taking or propose to take to cure the default. In addition, the issuer is required to deliver to the Trustee, within 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, a compliance certificate indicating that it has complied with all covenants contained in the Indenture or whether any default or Event of Default has occurred during the previous year.

Within 90 days after the occurrence of any default known to it, the Trustee must mail to each holder a notice of the default. Except in the case of a default in the payment of principal, premium or interest with respect to any debt securities, the Trustee may withhold such notice, but only if and so long as the board of directors, the executive committee or a committee of directors or responsible officers of the Trustee in good faith determines that withholding such notice is in the interests of the holders.

**Amendments and Waivers**

The issuer may amend the Indenture without the consent of any holder of debt securities to, among other things:

cure any ambiguity, omission, defect or inconsistency;

provide for the assumption by a successor of its obligations under the Indenture;

add Subsidiary Guarantors with respect to the debt securities;

secure the debt securities;

add covenants for the benefit of the holders or surrender any right or power conferred upon the issuer, the Guarantor or any Subsidiary Guarantor;

make any change that does not adversely affect the rights of any holder;

add or appoint a successor or separate Trustee;

comply with any requirement of the SEC in connection with the qualification of the Indenture under the Trust Indenture Act; or

establish the form or terms of the debt securities of any new series.

**Table of Contents**

In addition, the issuer may amend the Indenture if the holders of a majority in principal amount of all debt securities of each series that would be affected then outstanding under the Indenture consent to it. The issuer may not, however, without the consent of each holder of outstanding debt securities of each series that would be affected, amend the Indenture to:

reduce the percentage in principal amount of debt securities of any series whose holders must consent to an amendment;

reduce the rate of or extend the time for payment of interest on any debt securities;

reduce the principal of or extend the stated maturity of any debt securities;

reduce the premium payable upon the redemption of any debt securities or change the time at which any debt securities may or shall be redeemed;

make any debt securities payable in other than U.S. dollars;

impair the right of any holder to receive payment of premium, principal or interest with respect to such holder's debt securities on or after the applicable due date;

impair the right of any holder to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment with respect to such holder's debt securities;

release any security that has been granted in respect of the debt securities;

make any change in the amendment provisions which require each holder's consent;

make any change in the waiver provisions; or

except as provided in the Indenture, release the Guarantor or a Subsidiary Guarantor or modify the Guarantor's or such Subsidiary Guarantor's guarantee in any manner adverse to the holders.

The consent of the holders is not necessary under the Indenture to approve the particular form of any proposed amendment. It is sufficient if such consent approves the substance of the proposed amendment. After an amendment under the Indenture requiring the consent of the holders becomes effective, the issuer is required to mail to all holders a notice briefly describing the amendment. The failure to give, or any defect in, such notice, however, will not impair or affect the validity of the amendment.

The holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each affected series, on behalf of all such holders, and subject to certain rights of the Trustee, may waive:

compliance by the issuer, the Guarantor or a Subsidiary Guarantor with certain restrictive provisions of the Indenture; and

any past default under the Indenture;

except that such majority of holders may not waive a default:

in the payment of principal, premium or interest; or

in respect of a provision that under the Indenture cannot be amended without the consent of all holders of the series of debt securities that is affected.

### **Satisfaction and Discharge**

The Indenture will be discharged and will cease to be of further effect as to all outstanding debt securities of any series issued thereunder, when:

(a) either:

(1) all outstanding debt securities of that series that have been authenticated (except lost, stolen or destroyed debt securities that have been replaced or paid and debt securities for whose payment money

## **Table of Contents**

has theretofore been deposited in trust and thereafter repaid to the issuer) have been delivered to the Trustee for cancellation; or

(2) all outstanding debt securities of that series that have not been delivered to the Trustee for cancellation have become due and payable or will become due and payable at their stated maturity within one year or are to be called for redemption within one year under arrangements satisfactory to the Trustee and in any case the issuer has irrevocably deposited with the Trustee as trust funds cash, certain U.S. government obligations or a combination thereof, in such amounts as will be sufficient, to pay the entire indebtedness of such debt securities not delivered to the Trustee for cancellation, for principal, premium, if any, and accrued interest to the stated maturity or redemption date.

(b) the issuer has paid or caused to be paid all other sums payable by it under the Indenture with respect to the debt securities of that series; and

(c) the issuer has delivered to the Trustee an accountants certificate as to the sufficiency of the trust funds, without reinvestment, to pay the entire indebtedness of such debt securities at maturity.

## **Defeasance**

At any time, the issuer may terminate, with respect to debt securities of a particular series, all its obligations under such series of debt securities and the Indenture, which we call a legal defeasance. If the issuer decides to make a legal defeasance, however, the issuer may not terminate its obligations specified in the Indenture, including those:

relating to the defeasance trust;

to register the transfer or exchange of the debt securities;

to replace mutilated, destroyed, lost or stolen debt securities; or

to maintain a registrar and paying agent in respect of the debt securities.

At any time the issuer may also effect a covenant defeasance, which means it has elected to terminate its obligations under:

covenants applicable to a series of debt securities and described in the prospectus supplement applicable to such series, other than as described in such prospectus supplement, and any Event of Default resulting from a failure to observe such covenants;

the bankruptcy provisions described under Events of Default above with respect to the Guarantor or the Subsidiary Guarantors, if any; and

the guarantee provisions described under Events of Default above with respect to a series of debt securities.

The legal defeasance option may be exercised notwithstanding a prior exercise of the covenant defeasance option. If the legal defeasance option is exercised, payment of the affected series of debt securities may not be accelerated because of an Event of Default with respect to that series. If the covenant defeasance option is exercised, payment of the affected series of debt securities may not be accelerated because of an Event of Default specified in the fourth, fifth (with respect only to the Guarantor or a Subsidiary Guarantor (if any)) or sixth bullet points under Events of Default above or an Event of Default that is added specifically for such series and described in a prospectus supplement. If the issuer exercises either its legal defeasance option or its covenant defeasance option, any guarantee

will terminate with respect to that series of debt securities.

In order to exercise either defeasance option, the issuer must:

irrevocably deposit in trust with the Trustee money or certain U.S. government obligations for the payment of principal, premium, if any, and interest on the series of debt securities to redemption or stated maturity, as the case may be;

## **Table of Contents**

comply with certain other conditions, including that no bankruptcy or default with respect to the issuer has occurred and is continuing 91 days after the deposit in trust; and

deliver to the Trustee of an opinion of counsel to the effect that holders of the defeased series of debt securities will not recognize income, gain or loss for Federal income tax purposes as a result of such defeasance and will be subject to Federal income tax on the same amounts and in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if such defeasance had not occurred. In the case of legal defeasance only, such opinion of counsel must be based on a ruling of the Internal Revenue Service or a change in applicable Federal income tax law.

### **No Personal Liability of General Partner**

GP Natural Resource Partners LLC and its directors, officers, employees, incorporators and members, as such, will not be liable for:

any of the obligations of Natural Resource Partners or NRP (Operating) LLC or the obligations of the Guarantor or the Subsidiary Guarantors under the debt securities, the Indenture or the guarantees; or

any claim based on, in respect of, or by reason of, such obligations or their creation.

By accepting a debt security, each holder will be deemed to have waived and released all such liability. This waiver and release are part of the consideration for the issuance of the debt securities. This waiver may not be effective, however, to waive liabilities under the Federal securities laws and it is the view of the SEC that such a waiver is against public policy.

### **No Protection in the Event of a Change of Control**

Unless otherwise set forth in the prospectus supplement, the debt securities will not contain any provisions that protect the holders of the debt securities in the event of a change of control of the issuer or in the event of a highly leveraged transaction, whether or not such transaction results in a change of control of the issuer.

### **Book Entry, Delivery and Form**

A series of debt securities may be issued in the form of one or more global certificates deposited with a depository. We expect that The Depository Trust Company, New York, New York, or DTC, will act as depository. If a series of debt securities is issued in book-entry form, one or more global certificates will be issued and deposited with or on behalf of DTC and physical certificates will not be issued to each holder. A global security may not be transferred unless it is exchanged in whole or in part for a certificated security, except that DTC, its nominees and their successors may transfer a global security as a whole to one another.

DTC will keep a computerized record of its participants, such as a broker, whose clients have purchased the debt securities. The participants will then keep records of their clients who purchased the debt securities. Beneficial interests in global securities will be shown on, and transfers of beneficial interests in global securities will be made only through, records maintained by DTC and its participants.

DTC advises us that it is:

a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law;

- a banking organization within the meaning of the New York Banking Law;
- a member of the United States Federal Reserve System;
- a clearing corporation within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code; and
- a clearing agency registered under the provisions of Section 17A of the Exchange Act.



## **Table of Contents**

DTC is owned by a number of its participants and by the New York Stock Exchange, Inc., NYSE Alternext US LLC and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. The rules that apply to DTC and its participants are on file with the SEC.

DTC holds securities that its participants deposit with DTC. DTC also records the settlement among participants of securities transactions, such as transfers and pledges, in deposited securities through computerized records for participants' accounts. This eliminates the need to exchange certificates. Participants include securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations and certain other organizations.

Principal, premium, if any, and interest payments due on the global securities will be wired to DTC's nominee. The issuer, any guarantor, the Trustee and any paying agent will treat DTC's nominee as the owner of the global securities for all purposes.

Accordingly, the issuer, any guarantor, the Trustee and any paying agent will have no direct responsibility or liability to pay amounts due on the global securities to owners of beneficial interests in the global securities.

It is DTC's current practice, upon receipt of any payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, to credit participants' accounts on the payment date according to their respective holdings of beneficial interests in the global securities as shown on DTC's records. In addition, it is DTC's current practice to assign any consenting or voting rights to participants, whose accounts are credited with debt securities on a record date, by using an omnibus proxy.

Payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in the global securities, as well as voting by participants, will be governed by the customary practices between the participants and the owners of beneficial interests, as is the case with debt securities held for the account of customers registered in street name. Payments to holders of beneficial interests are the responsibility of the participants and not of DTC, the Trustee, the issuer or any guarantor.

Beneficial interests in global securities will be exchangeable for certificated securities with the same terms in authorized denominations only if:

DTC notifies the issuer that it is unwilling or unable to continue as depository or if DTC ceases to be a clearing agency registered under applicable law and a successor depository is not appointed by the issuer within 90 days; or

the issuer determines (subject to DTC's rules) not to require all of the debt securities of a series to be represented by a global security and notifies the Trustee of the decision.

## **The Trustee**

A separate trustee may be appointed for any series of debt securities. We may maintain banking and other commercial relationships with the Trustee and its affiliates in the ordinary course of business, and the Trustee may own debt securities.

## ***Limitations on Trustee if it is a Creditor***

The Indenture will limit the right of the Trustee, if it becomes a creditor of an issuer or guarantor, to obtain payment of claims in certain cases, or to realize on certain property received in respect of any such claim as security or otherwise.

*Certificates and Opinions to be Furnished to Trustee*

The Indenture will provide that, in addition to other certificates or opinions that may be specifically required by other provisions of the Indenture, every application by the issuer for action by the Trustee must be accompanied by a certificate of certain of the officers of GP Natural Resource Partners LLC or NRP (Operating) LLC and an opinion of counsel (who may be the issuer's counsel) stating that, in the opinion of the signers, all covenants or conditions precedent to such action have been complied with by the issuer.

## **Table of Contents**

### **Governing Law**

The Indenture and the debt securities will be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of New York.

### **MATERIAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS**

This section is a discussion of the material tax considerations that may be relevant to prospective unitholders who are individual citizens or residents of the United States and, unless otherwise noted in the following discussion, is the opinion of Vinson & Elkins L.L.P., counsel to our general partner and us, insofar as it relates to legal conclusions with respect to matters of United States federal income tax law. This section is based upon current provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Internal Revenue Code), existing and proposed Treasury regulations promulgated under the Internal Revenue Code (the Treasury Regulations) and current administrative rulings and court decisions, all of which are subject to change. Later changes in these authorities may cause the tax consequences to vary substantially from the consequences described below. Unless the context otherwise requires, references in this section to us or we are references to Natural Resource Partners L.P. and NRP (Operating) LLC.

The following discussion does not comment on all federal income tax matters affecting us or the unitholders. Moreover, the discussion focuses on unitholders who are individual citizens or residents of the United States and has only limited application to corporations, estates, trusts, nonresident aliens or other unitholders subject to specialized tax treatment, such as tax-exempt institutions, foreign persons, individual retirement accounts (IRAs), real estate investment trusts (REITs) or mutual funds. Accordingly, we urge each prospective unitholder to consult, and depend on, his own tax advisor in analyzing the federal, state, local and foreign tax consequences particular to him of the ownership or disposition of common units.

All statements as to matters of law and legal conclusions, but not as to factual matters, contained in this section, unless otherwise noted, are the opinion of Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. and are based on the accuracy of the representations made by us.

No ruling has been or will be requested from the Internal Revenue Service (the IRS) regarding any matter affecting us or prospective unitholders. Instead, we will rely on opinions of Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. Unlike a ruling, an opinion of counsel represents only that counsel's best legal judgment and does not bind the IRS or the courts. Accordingly, the opinions and statements made herein may not be sustained by a court if contested by the IRS. Any contest of this sort with the IRS may materially and adversely impact the market for our common units and the prices at which common units trade. In addition, the costs of any contest with the IRS, principally legal, accounting and related fees, will result in a reduction in cash available for distribution to our unitholders and our general partner and thus will be borne indirectly by our unitholders and our general partner. Furthermore, the tax treatment of us, or of an investment in us, may be significantly modified by future legislative or administrative changes or court decisions. Any modifications may or may not be retroactively applied.

For the reasons described below, Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. has not rendered an opinion with respect to the following specific federal income tax issues: (1) the treatment of a unitholder whose common units are loaned to a short seller to cover a short sale of common units (please see Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Treatment of Short Sales); (2) whether our monthly convention for allocating taxable income and losses is permitted by existing Treasury Regulations (please see Disposition of Common Units Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees); and (3) whether our method for depreciating Section 743 adjustments is sustainable in certain cases (please see Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Section 754 Election).

### **Partnership Status**

A partnership is not a taxable entity and incurs no federal income tax liability. Instead, each partner of a partnership is required to take into account his share of items of income, gain, loss and deduction of the partnership in computing his federal income tax liability, regardless of whether cash distributions are made to

**Table of Contents**

him by the partnership. Distributions by a partnership to a partner are generally not taxable to the partnership or the partner unless the amount of cash distributed to him is in excess of the partner's adjusted basis in his partnership interest.

Section 7704 of the Internal Revenue Code provides that publicly traded partnerships will, as a general rule, be taxed as corporations. However, an exception, referred to as the Qualifying Income Exception, exists with respect to publicly traded partnerships of which 90% or more of the gross income for every taxable year consists of qualifying income. Qualifying income includes income and gains derived from the marketing, transportation and storage of coal. Other types of qualifying income include interest (other than from a financial business), dividends, gains from the sale of real property and gains from the sale or other disposition of capital assets held for the production of income that otherwise constitutes qualifying income. We estimate that less than 1% of our current gross income is not qualifying income; however, this estimate could change from time to time. Based upon and subject to this estimate, the factual representations made by us and the general partner and a review of the applicable legal authorities, Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. is of the opinion that at least 90% of our current gross income constitutes qualifying income. The portion of our income that is qualifying income may change from time to time.

No ruling has been or will be sought from the IRS and the IRS has made no determination as to our status or the status of the operating company for federal income tax purposes or whether our operations generate qualifying income under Section 7704 of the Internal Revenue Code. Instead, we will rely on the opinion of Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. on such matters. It is the opinion of Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. that, based upon the Internal Revenue Code, its regulations, published revenue rulings and court decisions and the representations described below, we will be classified as a partnership and the operating company will be disregarded as an entity separate from us for federal income tax purposes.

In rendering its opinion, Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. has relied on factual representations made by us and our general partner. The representations made by us and our general partner upon which Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. has relied include;

Neither we nor the operating company has elected or will elect to be treated as a corporation; and

For each taxable year, more than 90% of our gross income has been and will be income that Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. has opined or will opine is qualifying income within the meaning of Section 7704(d) of the Internal Revenue Code.

We believe that these representations have been true in the past and expect that these representations will be true in the future.

If we fail to meet the Qualifying Income Exception, other than a failure that is determined by the IRS to be inadvertent and that is cured within a reasonable time after discovery (in which case the IRS may also require us to make adjustments with respect to our unitholders or pay other amounts), we will be treated as if we had transferred all of our assets, subject to liabilities, to a newly formed corporation, on the first day of the year in which we fail to meet the Qualifying Income Exception, in return for stock in that corporation, and then distributed that stock to the unitholders in liquidation of their interests in us. This deemed contribution and liquidation should be tax-free to unitholders and us so long as we, at that time, do not have liabilities in excess of the tax basis of our assets. Thereafter, we would be treated as a corporation for federal income tax purposes.

If we were treated as an association taxable as a corporation in any taxable year, either as a result of a failure to meet the Qualifying Income Exception or otherwise, our items of income, gain, loss and deduction would be reflected only on our tax return rather than being passed through to the unitholders, and our net income would be taxed to us at

corporate rates. In addition, any distribution made to a unitholder would be treated as either taxable dividend income, to the extent of our current or accumulated earnings and profits, or, in the absence of earnings and profits, a nontaxable return of capital, to the extent of the unitholder's tax basis in his common units, or taxable capital gain, after the unitholder's tax basis in his common units is reduced to zero. Accordingly, taxation as a corporation would result in a material reduction in a unitholder's cash flow and after-tax return and thus would likely result in a substantial reduction of the value of the units.

## **Table of Contents**

The discussion below is based on Vinson & Elkins L.L.P.'s opinion that we will be classified as a partnership for federal income tax purposes.

### **Limited Partner Status**

Unitholders who have become limited partners of Natural Resource Partners L.P. will be treated as partners of Natural Resource Partners L.P. for federal income tax purposes. Also:

assignees who have executed and delivered transfer applications, and are awaiting admission as limited partners, and

unitholders whose common units are held in street name or by a nominee and who have the right to direct the nominee in the exercise of all substantive rights attendant to the ownership of their common units will be treated as partners of Natural Resource Partners L.P. for federal income tax purposes.

As there is no direct or indirect controlling authority addressing assignees of common units who are entitled to execute and deliver transfer applications and thereby become entitled to direct the exercise of attendant rights, but who fail to execute and deliver transfer applications, Vinson & Elkins L.L.P.'s opinion does not extend to these persons. Furthermore, a purchaser or other transferee of common units who does not execute and deliver a transfer application may not receive some federal income tax information or reports furnished to record holders of common units unless the common units are held in a nominee or street name account and the nominee or broker has executed and delivered a transfer application for those common units.

A beneficial owner of common units whose units have been transferred to a short seller to complete a short sale would appear to lose his status as a partner with respect to those units for federal income tax purposes. Please see [Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership](#) [Treatment of Short Sales](#).

Income, gain, deductions or losses would not appear to be reportable by a unitholder who is not a partner for federal income tax purposes, and any cash distributions received by a unitholder who is not a partner for federal income tax purposes would therefore appear to be fully taxable as ordinary income. These holders are urged to consult their own tax advisors with respect to their tax consequences of holding common units in Natural Resource Partners L.P.

The references to unitholders in the discussion that follows are to persons who are treated as partners in Natural Resource Partners L.P. for federal income tax purposes.

### **Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership**

#### ***Flow-Through of Taxable Income***

We will not pay any federal income tax. Instead, each unitholder will be required to report on his income tax return his share of our income, gains, losses and deductions without regard to whether corresponding cash distributions are received by him. Consequently, we may allocate income to a unitholder even if he has not received a cash distribution. Each unitholder will be required to include in income his allocable share of our income, gains, losses and deductions for our taxable year ending with or within his taxable year. Our taxable year ends on December 31.

#### ***Treatment of Distributions***

Distributions by us to a unitholder generally will not be taxable to the unitholder for federal income tax purposes, except to the extent the amount of any such cash distribution exceeds his tax basis in his common units immediately

before the distribution. Our cash distributions in excess of a unitholder's tax basis generally will be considered to be gain from the sale or exchange of our common units, taxable in accordance with the rules described under [Disposition of Common Units](#). Any reduction in a unitholder's share of our liabilities for which no partner, including the general partner, bears the economic risk of loss, known as nonrecourse liabilities, will be treated as a distribution of cash to that unitholder. To the extent our distributions cause a unitholder's at risk amount to be less than zero at the end of any taxable year, he must recapture any losses deducted in previous years. Please see [Limitations on Deductibility of Losses](#).



**Table of Contents**

A decrease in a unitholder's percentage interest in us because of our issuance of additional common units will decrease his share of our nonrecourse liabilities, and thus will result in a corresponding deemed distribution of cash. This deemed distribution may constitute a non-pro rata distribution. A non-pro rata distribution of money or property may result in ordinary income to a unitholder, regardless of his tax basis in his common units, if the distribution reduces the unitholder's share of our unrealized receivables, including depreciation and depletion recapture, and/or substantially appreciated inventory items, both as defined in the Internal Revenue Code, and collectively, Section 751 Assets. To that extent, he will be treated as having been distributed his proportionate share of the Section 751 Assets and then having exchanged those assets with us in return for the non-pro rata portion of the actual distribution made to him. This latter deemed exchange will generally result in the unitholder's realization of ordinary income, which will equal the excess of (1) the non-pro rata portion of that distribution over (2) the unitholder's tax basis (generally zero) for the share of Section 751 Assets deemed relinquished in the exchange.

***Basis of Common Units***

A unitholder's initial tax basis for his common units will be the amount he paid for our common units plus his share of our nonrecourse liabilities. That basis will be increased by his share of our income and by any increases in his share of our nonrecourse liabilities. That basis will be decreased, but not below zero, by distributions from us, by the unitholder's share of our losses, by any decreases in his share of our nonrecourse liabilities and by his share of our expenditures that are not deductible in computing taxable income and are not required to be capitalized. A unitholder will have no share of our debt that is recourse to our general partner, but will have a share, generally based on his share of profits, of our nonrecourse liabilities. Please see *Disposition of Common Units* *Recognition of Gain or Loss*.

***Limitations on Deductibility of Losses***

The deduction by a unitholder of his share of our losses will be limited to the tax basis in his units and, in the case of an individual unitholder, estate, trust or a corporate unitholder (if more than 50% of the value of the corporate unitholder's stock is owned directly or indirectly by or for five or fewer individuals or some tax-exempt organizations) to the amount for which the unitholder is considered to be at risk with respect to our activities, if that is less than his tax basis. A common unitholder subject to these limitations must recapture losses deducted in previous years to the extent that distributions cause his at risk amount to be less than zero at the end of any taxable year. Losses disallowed to a unitholder or recaptured as a result of these limitations will carry forward and will be allowable as a deduction to the extent that his at-risk amount is subsequently increased, provided such losses do not exceed such common unitholder's tax basis in his common units. Upon the taxable disposition of a unit, any gain recognized by a unitholder can be offset by losses that were previously suspended by the at risk limitation but may not be offset by losses suspended by the basis limitation. Any loss previously suspended by the at-risk limitation in excess of that gain would no longer be utilizable.

In general, a unitholder will be at risk to the extent of the tax basis of his units, excluding any portion of that basis attributable to his share of our nonrecourse liabilities, reduced by (i) any portion of that basis representing amounts otherwise protected against loss because of a guarantee, stop loss agreement or other similar arrangement and (ii) any amount of money he borrows to acquire or hold his units, if the lender of those borrowed funds owns an interest in us, is related to the unitholder or can look only to the units for repayment. A unitholder's at-risk amount will increase or decrease as the tax basis of the unitholder's units increases or decreases, other than tax basis increases or decreases attributable to increases or decreases in his share of our nonrecourse liabilities.

In addition to the basis and at-risk limitations on the deductibility of losses, the passive loss limitations generally provide that individuals, estates, trusts and some closely-held corporations and personal service corporations can deduct losses from passive activities, which are generally trade or business activities in which the taxpayer does not materially participate, only to the extent of the taxpayer's income from those passive activities. The passive loss

limitations are applied separately with respect to each publicly traded partnership. Consequently, any passive losses we generate will only be available to offset our passive income generated in

## **Table of Contents**

the future and will not be available to offset income from other passive activities or investments, including our investments or investments in other publicly traded partnerships, or salary or active business income. Passive losses that are not deductible because they exceed a unitholder's share of income we generate may be deducted in full when he disposes of his entire investment in us in a fully taxable transaction with an unrelated party. The passive loss limitations are applied after other applicable limitations on deductions, including the at risk rules and the basis limitation.

A unitholder's share of our net income may be offset by any of our suspended passive losses, but it may not be offset by any other current or carryover losses from other passive activities, including those attributable to other publicly traded partnerships.

### ***Limitations on Interest Deductions***

The deductibility of a non-corporate taxpayer's investment interest expense is generally limited to the amount of that taxpayer's net investment income. Investment interest expense includes:

interest on indebtedness properly allocable to property held for investment;

our interest expense attributed to portfolio income; and

the portion of interest expense incurred to purchase or carry an interest in a passive activity to the extent attributable to portfolio income.

The computation of a unitholder's investment interest expense will take into account interest on any margin account borrowing or other loan incurred to purchase or carry a unit. Net investment income includes gross income from property held for investment and amounts treated as portfolio income under the passive loss rules, less deductible expenses, other than interest, directly connected with the production of investment income, but generally does not include gains attributable to the disposition of property held for investment or qualified dividend income. The IRS has indicated that the net passive income earned by a publicly traded partnership will be treated as investment income to its unitholders. In addition, the unitholder's share of our portfolio income will be treated as investment income.

### ***Entity-Level Collections***

If we are required or elect under applicable law to pay any federal, state, local or foreign income tax on behalf of any unitholder or our general partner or any former unitholder, we are authorized to pay those taxes from our funds. That payment, if made, will be treated as a distribution of cash to the partner on whose behalf the payment was made. If the payment is made on behalf of a person whose identity cannot be determined, we are authorized to treat the payment as a distribution to all current unitholders. We are authorized to amend our partnership agreement in the manner necessary to maintain uniformity of intrinsic tax characteristics of units and to adjust later distributions, so that after giving effect to these distributions, the priority and characterization of distributions otherwise applicable under our partnership agreement is maintained as nearly as is practicable. Payments by us as described above could give rise to an overpayment of tax on behalf of an individual partner in which event the partner would be required to file a claim in order to obtain a credit or refund.

### ***Allocation of Income, Gain, Loss and Deduction***

In general, if we have a net profit, our items of income, gain, loss and deduction will be allocated among our general partner and the unitholders in accordance with their percentage interests in us. At any time that distributions are made to our common units in excess of distributions to the subordinated units, or incentive distributions are made to our

general partner, gross income will be allocated to the recipients to the extent of these distributions. If we have a net loss, that loss will be allocated first to the general partner and the unitholders in accordance with their percentage interests in us to the extent of their positive capital accounts and, second, to the general partner.

## **Table of Contents**

Specified items of our income, gain, loss and deduction will be allocated to account for the difference between the tax basis and fair market value of our assets at the time of an offering, referred to in this discussion as **Contributed Property**. The effect of these allocations, referred to as **Section 704(c) Allocations**, to a unitholder purchasing common units from us in an offering will be essentially the same as if the tax basis of our assets were equal to their fair market value at the time of such offering. In the event we issue additional common units or engage in certain other transactions in the future **reverse Section 704(c) Allocations**, similar to the **Section 704(c) Allocations** described above, will be made to all holders of partnership interests immediately prior to such other transactions to account for the difference between the **book** basis for purposes of maintaining capital accounts and the fair market value of all property held by us at the time of such issuance or future transaction. In addition, items of recapture income will be allocated to the extent possible to the partner who was allocated the deduction giving rise to the treatment of that gain as recapture income in order to minimize the recognition of ordinary income by some unitholders. Finally, although we do not expect that our operations will result in the creation of negative capital accounts, if negative capital accounts nevertheless result, items of our income and gain will be allocated in an amount and manner as is needed to eliminate the negative balance as quickly as possible. An allocation of items of our income, gain, loss or deduction, other than an allocation required by the Internal Revenue Code to eliminate the difference between a partner's **book** capital account, credited with the fair market value of **Contributed Property**, and **tax** capital account, credited with the tax basis of **Contributed Property**, referred to in this discussion as the **Book-Tax Disparity**, will generally be given effect for federal income tax purposes in determining a partner's share of an item of income, gain, loss or deduction only if the allocation has substantial economic effect. In any other case, a partner's share of an item will be determined on the basis of his interest in us, which will be determined by taking into account all the facts and circumstances, including:

his relative contributions to us;

the interests of all the partners in profits and losses;

the interest of all the partners in cash flow; and the rights of all the partners to distributions of capital upon liquidation.

Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. is of the opinion that, with the exception of the issues described in **Section 754 Election** and **Disposition of Common Units** **Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees**, allocations under our partnership agreement will be given effect for federal income tax purposes in determining a partner's share of an item of income, gain, loss or deduction.

### ***Treatment of Short Sales***

A unitholder whose units are loaned to a **short seller** to cover a short sale of units may be considered as having disposed of those units. If so, he would no longer be treated for tax purposes as a partner with respect to those units during the period of the loan and may recognize gain or loss from the disposition. As a result, during this period:

any of our income, gain, loss or deduction with respect to those units would not be reportable by the unitholder;

any cash distributions received by the unitholder as to those units would be fully taxable; and

all of these distributions would appear to be ordinary income.

Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. has not rendered an opinion regarding the tax treatment of a unitholder whose common units are loaned to a short seller to cover a short sale of common units; therefore, unitholders desiring to assure their status as partners and avoid the risk of gain recognition from a loan to a short seller are urged to modify any applicable

brokerage account agreements to prohibit their brokers from borrowing and loaning their units. The IRS has announced that it is actively studying issues relating to the tax treatment of short sales of partnership interests. Please also read [Disposition of Common Units](#) [Recognition of Gain or Loss](#).

## **Table of Contents**

### ***Alternative Minimum Tax***

Each unitholder will be required to take into account his distributive share of any items of our income, gain, loss or deduction for purposes of the alternative minimum tax. The current minimum tax rate for noncorporate taxpayers is 26% on the first \$175,000 of alternative minimum taxable income in excess of the exemption amount and 28% on any additional alternative minimum taxable income. Prospective unitholders are urged to consult with their tax advisors as to the impact of an investment in units on their liability for the alternative minimum tax.

### ***Tax Rates***

Under current law, the highest marginal U.S. federal income tax rate applicable to ordinary income of individuals is 35% and the highest marginal U.S. federal income tax rate applicable to long-term capital gains (generally, capital gains on certain assets held for more than 12 months) of individuals is 15%. However, absent new legislation extending the current rates, beginning January 1, 2011, the highest marginal U.S. federal income tax rate applicable to ordinary income and long-term capital gains of individuals will increase to 39.6% and 20%, respectively. Moreover, these rates are subject to change by new legislation at any time.

### ***Section 754 Election***

We have made the election permitted by Section 754 of the Internal Revenue Code. That election is irrevocable without the consent of the IRS. The election will generally permit us to adjust a common unit purchaser's tax basis in our assets (inside basis) under Section 743(b) of the Internal Revenue Code to reflect his purchase price. This election does not apply to a person who purchases common units directly from us. The Section 743(b) adjustment belongs to the purchaser and not to other unitholders. For purposes of this discussion, a unitholder's inside basis in our assets will be considered to have two components: (1) his share of our tax basis in our assets (common basis) and (2) his Section 743(b) adjustment to that basis.

Where the remedial allocation method is adopted (which we have generally adopted as to all of our properties), the Treasury Regulations under Section 743 of the Internal Revenue Code require a portion of the Section 743(b) adjustment that is attributable to recovery property subject to depreciation under Section 168 of the Internal Revenue Code whose book basis is in excess of its tax basis to be depreciated over the remaining cost recovery period for the property's unamortized Book-Tax Disparity. Under Treasury Regulation Section 1.167(c)-1(a)(6), a Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to property subject to depreciation under Section 167 of the Internal Revenue Code, rather than cost recovery deductions under Section 168, is generally required to be depreciated using either the straight-line method or the 150% declining balance method. Under our partnership agreement, the general partner is authorized to take a position to preserve the uniformity of units even if that position is not consistent with these and any other Treasury Regulations. Please see Uniformity of Units.

Although Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. is unable to opine as to the validity of this approach because there is no direct or indirect controlling authority on this issue, we intend to depreciate the portion of a Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to unrealized appreciation in the value of Contributed Property, to the extent of any unamortized Book-Tax Disparity, using a rate of depreciation or amortization derived from the depreciation or amortization method and useful life applied to the property's unamortized Book-Tax Disparity, or treat that portion as non-amortizable to the extent attributable to property which is not amortizable. This method is consistent with the methods employed by other publicly traded partnerships but is arguably inconsistent with Treasury Regulation Section 1.167(c)-1(a)(6), which is not expected to directly apply to a material portion of our assets, and Treasury Regulation Section 1.197-2(g)(3). To the extent this Section 743(b) adjustment is attributable to appreciation in value in excess of the unamortized Book-Tax Disparity, we will apply the rules described in the Treasury Regulations and legislative history. If we determine that this position cannot reasonably be taken, we may take a

depreciation or amortization position under which all purchasers acquiring units in the same month would receive depreciation or amortization, whether attributable to common basis or a Section 743(b) adjustment, based upon the same applicable rate as if they had purchased a direct interest in our assets. This kind of aggregate approach may result in lower annual depreciation or amortization deductions



## **Table of Contents**

than would otherwise be allowable to some unitholders. Please see **Uniformity of Units**. A unitholder's tax basis for his common units is reduced by his share of our deductions (whether or not such deductions were claimed on an individual's income tax return) so that any position we take that understates deductions will overstate the common unitholder's basis in his common units, which may cause the unitholder to understate gain or overstate loss on any sale of such units. Please see **Disposition of Common Units** **Recognition of Gain or Loss**. The IRS may challenge our position with respect to depreciating or amortizing the Section 743(b) adjustment we take to preserve the uniformity of the units. If such a challenge were sustained, the gain from the sale of units might be increased without the benefit of additional deductions.

A Section 754 election is advantageous if the transferee's tax basis in his units is higher than the units' share of the aggregate tax basis of our assets immediately prior to the transfer. In that case, as a result of the election, the transferee would have, among other items, a greater amount of depreciation and depletion deductions and his share of any gain or loss on a sale of our assets would be less. Conversely, a Section 754 election is disadvantageous if the transferee's tax basis in his units is lower than those units' share of the aggregate tax basis of our assets immediately prior to the transfer. Thus, the fair market value of the units may be affected either favorably or unfavorably by the election. A basis adjustment is required regardless of whether a Section 754 election is made in the case of a transfer of an interest in us if we have a substantial built-in loss immediately after the transfer, or if we distribute property and have a substantial basis reduction. Generally, a built-in loss or a basis reduction is substantial if it exceeds \$250,000.

The calculations involved in the Section 754 election are complex and will be made on the basis of assumptions as to the value of our assets and other matters. For example, the allocation of the Section 743(b) adjustment among our assets must be made in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code. The IRS could seek to reallocate some or all of any Section 743(b) adjustment allocated by us to our tangible assets to goodwill instead. Goodwill, as an intangible asset, is generally nonamortizable or amortizable over a longer period of time or under a less accelerated method than our tangible assets. We cannot assure you that the determinations we make will not be successfully challenged by the IRS and that the deductions resulting from them will not be reduced or disallowed altogether. Should the IRS require a different basis adjustment to be made, and should, in our opinion, the expense of compliance exceed the benefit of the election, we may seek permission from the IRS to revoke our Section 754 election. If permission is granted, a subsequent purchaser of units may be allocated more income than he would have been allocated had the election not been revoked.

## **Tax Treatment of Operations**

### ***Accounting Method and Taxable Year***

We use the year ending December 31 as our taxable year and the accrual method of accounting for federal income tax purposes. Each unitholder will be required to include in income his share of our income, gain, loss and deduction for our taxable year ending within or with his taxable year. In addition, a unitholder who has a taxable year ending on a date other than December 31 and who disposes of all of his units following the close of our taxable year but before the close of his taxable year must include his share of our income, gain, loss and deduction in income for his taxable year, with the result that he will be required to include in income for his taxable year his share of more than one year of our income, gain, loss and deduction. Please read **Disposition of Common Units** **Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees**.

### ***Initial Tax Basis, Depreciation and Amortization***

The tax basis of our assets will be used for purposes of computing depreciation and cost recovery deductions and, ultimately, gain or loss on the disposition of these assets. The federal income tax burden associated with the difference between the fair market value of our assets and their tax basis immediately prior to an offering will be borne by our

unitholders holding interests in us prior to any such offering. Please see Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Allocation of Income, Gain, Loss and Deduction.

To the extent allowable, we may elect to use the depreciation and cost recovery methods that will result in the largest deductions being taken in the early years after assets are placed in service. Property we

## **Table of Contents**

subsequently acquire or construct may be depreciated using accelerated methods permitted by the Internal Revenue Code.

If we dispose of depreciable property by sale, foreclosure or otherwise, all or a portion of any gain, determined by reference to the amount of depreciation previously deducted and the nature of the property, may be subject to the recapture rules and taxed as ordinary income rather than capital gain. Similarly, a unitholder who has taken cost recovery or depreciation deductions with respect to property we own will likely be required to recapture some or all of those deductions as ordinary income upon a sale of his interest in us. Please read [Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership](#), [Allocation of Income, Gain, Loss and Deduction](#) and [Disposition of Common Units](#), [Recognition of Gain or Loss](#).

The costs we incur in selling our units (called [syndication expenses](#) ) must be capitalized and cannot be deducted currently, ratably or upon our termination. There are uncertainties regarding the classification of costs as organization expenses, which may be amortized by us, and as syndication expenses, which may not be amortized by us. The underwriting discounts and commissions we incur will be treated as syndication expenses.

### ***Valuation and Tax Basis of Our Properties***

The federal income tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of units will depend in part on our estimates of the relative fair market values, and the initial tax bases, of our assets. Although we may from time to time consult with professional appraisers regarding valuation matters, we will make many of the relative fair market value estimates ourselves. These estimates and determinations of basis are subject to challenge and will not be binding on the IRS or the courts. If the estimates of fair market value or basis are later found to be incorrect, the character and amount of items of income, gain, loss or deductions previously reported by unitholders might change, and unitholders might be required to adjust their tax liability for prior years and incur interest and penalties with respect to those adjustments.

### ***Coal Income***

Section 631 of the Internal Revenue Code provides special rules by which gains or losses on the sale of coal may be treated, in whole or in part, as gains or losses from the sale of property used in a trade or business under Section 1231 of the Internal Revenue Code. Specifically, Section 631(c) provides that if the owner of coal held for more than one year disposes of that coal under a contract by virtue of which the owner retains an economic interest in the coal, the gain or loss realized will be treated under Section 1231 of the Internal Revenue Code as gain or loss from property used in a trade or business. Section 1231 gains and losses may be treated as capital gains and losses. Please see [Sales of Coal Reserves](#). In computing such gain or loss, the amount realized is reduced by the adjusted depletion basis in the coal, determined as described in [Coal Depletion](#). For purposes of Section 631(c), the coal generally is deemed to be disposed of on the day on which the coal is mined. Further, Treasury Regulations promulgated under Section 631 provide that advance royalty payments may also be treated as proceeds from sales of coal to which Section 631 applies and, therefore, such payment may be treated as capital gain under Section 1231. However, if the right to mine the related coal expires or terminates under the contract that provides for the payment of advance royalty payments or such right is abandoned before the coal has been mined, we may, pursuant to the Treasury Regulations, file an amended return that reflects the payments attributable to unmined coal as ordinary income and not as received from the sale of coal under Section 631.

Our royalties from coal leases generally will be treated as proceeds from sales of coal to which Section 631 applies. Accordingly, the difference between the royalties paid to us by the lessees and the adjusted depletion basis in the extracted coal generally will be treated as gain from the sale of property used in a trade or business, which may be treated as capital gain under Section 1231. Please see [Sales of Coal Reserves](#). Our royalties that do not qualify under Section 631(c) generally will be taxable as ordinary income in the year of sale.



**Table of Contents**

***Coal Depletion***

In general, we are entitled to depletion deductions with respect to coal mined from the underlying mineral property. Subject to the limitations on the deductibility of losses discussed above, we generally are entitled to the greater of cost depletion limited to the basis of the property or percentage depletion. The percentage depletion rate for coal is 10%. If Section 631(c) applies to the disposition of the coal, however, we are not eligible for percentage depletion. Please see Coal Income.

Depletion deductions we claim generally will reduce the tax basis of the underlying mineral property. Depletion deductions can, however, exceed the total tax basis of the mineral property. The excess of our percentage depletion deductions over the adjusted tax basis of the property at the end of the taxable year is subject to tax preference treatment in computing the alternative minimum tax. Please see Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Alternative Minimum Tax. In addition, a corporate unitholder's allocable share of the amount allowable as a percentage depletion deduction for any property will be reduced by 20% of the excess, if any, of that partner's allocable share of the amount of the percentage depletion deductions for the taxable year over the adjusted tax basis of the mineral property as of the close of the taxable year.

***Sales of Coal Reserves***

If any coal reserves are sold or otherwise disposed of in a taxable transaction, we will recognize gain or loss measured by the difference between the amount realized (including the amount of any indebtedness assumed by the purchaser upon such disposition or to which such property is subject) and the adjusted tax basis of the property sold. Generally, the character of any gain or loss recognized upon that disposition will depend upon whether our coal reserves sold are held by us:

for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business (i.e. we are a dealer with respect to that property),

for use in a trade or business within the meaning of Section 1231 of the Internal Revenue Code, or

as a capital asset within the meaning of Section 1221 of the Internal Revenue Code.

In determining dealer status with respect to coal reserves and other types of real estate, the courts have identified a number of factors for distinguishing between a particular property held for sale in the ordinary course of business and one held for investment. Any determination must be based on all the facts and circumstances surrounding the particular property and sale in question.

We intend to hold our coal reserves for the purposes of generating cash flow from coal royalties and achieving long-term capital appreciation. Although our general partner may consider strategic sales of coal reserves consistent with achieving long-term capital appreciation, our general partner does not anticipate frequent sales, nor significant marketing, improvement or subdivision activity in connection with any strategic sales. In light of the factual nature of this question, however, there is no assurance that our purposes for holding our properties will not change and that our future activities will not cause us to be a dealer in coal reserves.

If we are not a dealer with respect to our coal reserves and we have held the disposed property for more than a one-year period primarily for use in our trade or business, the character of any gain or loss realized from a disposition of the property will be determined under Section 1231 of the Internal Revenue Code. If we have not held the property for more than one year at the time of the sale, gain or loss from the sale will be taxable as ordinary income.

A unitholder's distributive share of any Section 1231 gain or loss generated by us will be aggregated with any other gains and losses realized by that unitholder from the disposition of property used in the trade or business, as defined in Section 1231(b) of the Internal Revenue Code, and from the involuntary conversion of such properties and of capital assets held in connection with a trade or business or a transaction entered into for profit for the requisite holding period. If a net gain results, all such gains and losses will be long-term capital gains and losses; if a net loss results, all such gains and losses will be ordinary income and losses. Net Section 1231 gains will be treated as ordinary income to the extent of prior net Section 1231 losses of the

## **Table of Contents**

taxpayer or predecessor taxpayer for the five most recent prior taxable years to the extent such losses have not previously been offset against Section 1231 gains. Losses are deemed recaptured in the chronological order in which they arose.

If we are not a dealer with respect to our coal reserves and that property is not used in a trade or business, the property will be a capital asset within the meaning of Section 1221 of the Internal Revenue Code. Gain or loss recognized from the disposition of that property will be taxable as capital gain or loss, and the character of such capital gain or loss as long-term or short-term will be based upon our holding period in such property at the time of its sale. The requisite holding period for long-term capital gain is more than one year.

Upon a disposition of coal reserves, a portion of the gain, if any, equal to the lesser of (i) the depletion deductions that reduced the tax basis of the disposed mineral property plus deductible development and mining exploration expenses or (ii) the amount of gain recognized on the disposition, will be treated as ordinary income to us.

## **Disposition of Common Units**

### ***Recognition of Gain or Loss***

Gain or loss will be recognized on a sale of units equal to the difference between the amount realized and the unitholder's tax basis for the units sold. A unitholder's amount realized will be measured by the sum of the cash or the fair market value of other property received by him plus his share of our nonrecourse liabilities. Because the amount realized includes a unitholder's share of our nonrecourse liabilities, the gain recognized on the sale of units could result in a tax liability in excess of any cash received from the sale.

Prior distributions from us in excess of cumulative net taxable income for a common unit that decreased a unitholder's tax basis in that common unit will, in effect, become taxable income if the common unit is sold at a price greater than the unitholder's tax basis in that common unit, even if the price received is less than his original cost.

Except as noted below, gain or loss recognized by a unitholder, other than a dealer in units, on the sale or exchange of a unit will generally be taxable as capital gain or loss. Capital gain recognized by an individual on the sale of units held for more than twelve months will generally be taxed at a maximum U.S. federal income tax rate of 15% through December 31, 2010 and 20% thereafter (absent new legislation extending or adjusting the current rate. However, a portion of this gain or loss, which will likely be substantial, will be separately computed and taxed as ordinary income or loss under Section 751 of the Internal Revenue Code to the extent attributable to assets giving rise to depreciation recapture or other unrealized receivables or to inventory items we own. The term unrealized receivables includes potential recapture items, including depreciation and depletion recapture. Ordinary income attributable to unrealized receivables, inventory items and depreciation recapture may exceed net taxable gain realized upon the sale of a unit and may be recognized even if there is a net taxable loss realized on the sale of a unit. Thus, a unitholder may recognize both ordinary income and a capital loss upon a sale of units. Net capital losses may offset capital gains and no more than \$3,000 of ordinary income each year, in the case of individuals, and may only be used to offset capital gains in the case of corporations.

The IRS has ruled that a partner who acquires interests in a partnership in separate transactions must combine those interests and maintain a single adjusted tax basis for all those interests. Upon a sale or other disposition of less than all of those interests, a portion of that tax basis must be allocated to the interests sold using an equitable apportionment method, which generally means that the tax basis allocated to the interest sold equals an amount that bears the same relation to the partner's tax basis in his entire interest in the partnership as the value of the interest sold bears to the value of the partner's entire interest in the partnership. Treasury Regulations under Section 1223 of the Internal Revenue Code allow a selling unitholder who can identify common units transferred with an ascertainable holding

period to elect to use the actual holding period of the common units transferred. Thus, according to the ruling discussed above, a common unitholder will be unable to select high or low basis common units to sell as would be the case with corporate stock, but,



## **Table of Contents**

according to the Treasury Regulations, he may designate specific common units sold for purposes of determining the holding period of units transferred. A unitholder electing to use the actual holding period of common units transferred must consistently use that identification method for all subsequent sales or exchanges of common units. A unitholder considering the purchase of additional units or a sale of common units purchased in separate transactions is urged to consult his tax advisor as to the possible consequences of this ruling and application of the Treasury Regulations.

Specific provisions of the Internal Revenue Code affect the taxation of some financial products and securities, including partnership interests, by treating a taxpayer as having sold an appreciated partnership interest, one in which gain would be recognized if it were sold, assigned or terminated at its fair market value, if the taxpayer or related persons enter(s) into:

a short sale;

an offsetting notional principal contract; or

a futures or forward contract with respect to the partnership interest or substantially identical property.

Moreover, if a taxpayer has previously entered into a short sale, an offsetting notional principal contract or a futures or forward contract with respect to the partnership interest, the taxpayer will be treated as having sold that position if the taxpayer or a related person then acquires the partnership interest or substantially identical property. The Secretary of the Treasury is also authorized to issue regulations that treat a taxpayer that enters into transactions or positions that have substantially the same effect as the preceding transactions as having constructively sold the financial position.

### ***Allocations Between Transferors and Transferees***

In general, our taxable income and losses will be determined annually, will be prorated on a monthly basis and will be subsequently apportioned among the unitholders in proportion to the number of units owned by each of them as of the opening of the applicable exchange on the first business day of the month, which we refer to in this prospectus as the Allocation Date. However, gain or loss realized on a sale or other disposition of our assets other than in the ordinary course of business will be allocated among the unitholders on the Allocation Date in the month in which that gain or loss is recognized. As a result, a unitholder transferring units may be allocated income, gain, loss and deduction realized after the date of transfer.

Although simplifying conventions are contemplated by the Internal Revenue Code and most publicly traded partnerships use a similar simplifying convention, the use of this method may not be permitted under existing Treasury Regulations. Recently, however, the Department of the Treasury and the IRS issued proposed Treasury Regulations that provide a safe harbor pursuant to which a publicly traded partnership may use a similar monthly simplifying convention to allocate tax items among transferor and transferee unitholders, although such tax items must be prorated on a daily basis. Nonetheless, the proposed regulations do not specifically authorize the use of the proration method we have adopted. Existing publicly traded partnerships are entitled to rely on these proposed Treasury Regulations; however, they are not binding on the IRS and are subject to change until final Treasury Regulations are issued. Accordingly, Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. is unable to opine on the validity of this method of allocating income and deductions between transferor and transferee unitholders. If this method is not allowed under the Treasury Regulations, or only applies to transfers of less than all of the unitholder's interest, our taxable income or losses might be reallocated among the unitholders. We are authorized to revise our method of allocation between transferor and transferee unitholders, as well as unitholders whose interests vary during a taxable year, to conform to a method permitted under future Treasury Regulations.

A unitholder who owns units at any time during a quarter and who disposes of them prior to the record date set for a cash distribution for that quarter will be allocated items of our income, gain, loss and deductions attributable to that quarter but will not be entitled to receive that cash distribution.

## **Table of Contents**

### ***Notification Requirements***

A unitholder who sells any of his units is generally required to notify us in writing of that sale within 30 days after the sale (or, if earlier, January 15 of the year following the sale). A purchaser of units who purchases units from another unitholder is also generally required to notify us in writing of that purchase within 30 days after the purchase. Upon receiving such notifications, we are required to notify the IRS of that transaction and to furnish specified information to the transferor and transferee. Failure to notify us of a purchase may, in some cases, lead to the imposition of penalties. However, these reporting requirements do not apply to a sale by an individual who is a citizen of the United States and who effects the sale or exchange through a broker who will satisfy such requirements.

### ***Constructive Termination***

We will be considered to have been terminated for tax purposes if there are sales or exchanges which, in the aggregate, constitute 50% or more of the total interests in our capital and profits within a twelve-month period. For purposes of measuring whether the 50% threshold is reached, multiple sales of the same interest are counted only once. A constructive termination results in the closing of our taxable year for all unitholders. In the case of a unitholder reporting on a taxable year other than a fiscal year ending December 31, the closing of our taxable year may result in more than twelve months of our taxable income or loss being includable in his taxable income for the year of termination. A constructive termination occurring on a date other than December 31 will result in us filing two tax returns (and common unitholders receiving two Schedules K-1) for one fiscal year and the cost of the preparation of these returns will be borne by all common unitholders. We would be required to make new tax elections after a termination, including a new election under Section 754 of the Internal Revenue Code, and a termination would result in a deferral of our deductions for depreciation. A termination could also result in penalties if we were unable to determine that the termination had occurred. Moreover, a termination might either accelerate the application of, or subject us to, any tax legislation enacted before the termination. The IRS has recently announced a relief procedure whereby if a publicly traded partnership that has technically terminated requests and the IRS grants special relief, among other things, the partnership will be required to provide only a single Schedule K-1 to unitholder for the tax years in which the termination occurs.

### ***Uniformity of Units***

Because we cannot match transferors and transferees of units, we must maintain uniformity of the economic and tax characteristics of the units to a purchaser of these units. In the absence of uniformity, we may be unable to completely comply with a number of federal income tax requirements, both statutory and regulatory. A lack of uniformity can result from a literal application of Treasury Regulation Section 1.167(c)-1(a)(6). Any non-uniformity could have a negative impact on the value of the units. Please see Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Section 754 Election.

We intend to depreciate the portion of a Section 743(b) adjustment attributable to unrealized appreciation in the value of Contributed Property, to the extent of any unamortized Book-Tax Disparity, using a rate of depreciation or amortization derived from the depreciation or amortization method and useful life applied to the property's unamortized Book-Tax Disparity, or treat that portion as nonamortizable, to the extent attributable to property the common basis of which is not amortizable, consistent with the regulations under Section 743 of the Internal Revenue Code, even though that position may be inconsistent with Treasury Regulation Section 1.167(c)-1(a)(6), which is not expected to directly apply to a material portion of our assets and Treasury Regulation Section 1.197-2(g)(3). Please see Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Section 754 Election. To the extent that the Section 743(b) adjustment is attributable to appreciation in value in excess of the unamortized Book-Tax Disparity, we will apply the rules described in the Treasury Regulations and legislative history. If we determine that this position cannot reasonably be taken, we may adopt a depreciation and amortization position under which all purchasers acquiring units in the same month would receive depreciation and amortization deductions, whether attributable to a common basis or

Section 743(b) adjustment, based upon the same applicable methods and lives as if they had purchased a direct interest in our property. If this position is adopted, it may result in lower annual depreciation and amortization

## **Table of Contents**

deductions than would otherwise be allowable to some unitholders and risk the loss of depreciation and amortization deductions not taken in the year that these deductions are otherwise allowable. This position will not be adopted if we determine that the loss of depreciation and amortization deductions will have a material adverse effect on the unitholders. If we choose not to utilize this aggregate method, we may use any other reasonable depreciation and amortization method to preserve the uniformity of the intrinsic tax characteristics of any units that would not have a material adverse effect on the unitholders. The IRS may challenge any method of depreciating the Section 743(b) adjustment described in this paragraph. If this challenge were sustained, the uniformity of units might be affected, and the gain from the sale of units might be increased without the benefit of additional deductions. Please read *Disposition of Common Units* and *Recognition of Gain or Loss*.

## **Tax-Exempt Organizations and Other Investors**

Ownership of units by employee benefit plans, other tax-exempt organizations, non-resident aliens, foreign corporations and other non-U.S. persons raises issues unique to those investors and, as described below, may have substantially adverse tax consequences to them. If you are a tax-exempt entity or a non-U.S. person, you should consult your tax advisor before investing in our common units.

Employee benefit plans and most other organizations exempt from federal income tax, including individual retirement accounts and other retirement plans, are subject to federal income tax on unrelated business taxable income. Virtually all of our income allocated to a unitholder that is a tax-exempt organization will be unrelated business taxable income and will be taxable to it.

Non-resident aliens and foreign corporations, trusts or estates that own units will be considered to be engaged in business in the United States because of the ownership of units. As a consequence, they will be required to file federal tax returns to report their share of our income, gain, loss or deduction and pay federal income tax at regular rates on their share of our net income or gain. Moreover, under rules applicable to publicly traded partnerships, distributions to non-U.S. unitholders are subject to withholding at the highest applicable effective tax rate. Each non-U.S. unitholder must obtain a taxpayer identification number from the IRS and submit that number to our transfer agent on a Form W-8BEN or applicable substitute form in order to obtain credit for these withholding taxes. A change in applicable law may require us to change these procedures.

In addition, because a foreign corporation that owns units will be treated as engaged in a United States trade or business, that corporation may be subject to the United States branch profits tax at a rate of 30%, in addition to regular federal income tax, on its share of our income and gain, as adjusted for changes in the foreign corporation's U.S. net equity, which are effectively connected with the conduct of a United States trade or business. That tax may be reduced or eliminated by an income tax treaty between the United States and the country in which the foreign corporate unitholder is a qualified resident. In addition, this type of unitholder is subject to special information reporting requirements under Section 6038C of the Internal Revenue Code.

A foreign unitholder who sells or otherwise disposes of a common unit will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on gain realized from the sale or disposition of that unit to the extent the gain is effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business of the foreign unitholder. Under a ruling published by the IRS, interpreting the scope of effectively connected income, a foreign unitholder would be considered to be engaged in a trade or business in the U.S. by virtue of the U.S. activities of the partnership, and part or all of that unitholder's gain would be effectively connected with that unitholder's indirect U.S. trade or business. Moreover, under the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act, a foreign common unitholder generally will be subject to U.S. federal income tax upon the sale or disposition of a common unit if (i) he owned (directly or constructively applying certain attribution rules) more than 5% of our common units at any time during the five-year period ending on the date of such disposition and (ii) 50% or more of the fair market value of all of our assets consisted of U.S. real property interests at any time during the shorter of the

period during which such unitholder held the common units or the 5-year period ending on the date of disposition. Currently, more than 50% of our assets consist of U.S. real property interests and we do not expect that to change in the

## **Table of Contents**

foreseeable future. Therefore, foreign unitholders may be subject to federal income tax on gain from the sale or disposition of their units.

### **Administrative Matters**

#### ***Information Returns and Audit Procedures***

We intend to furnish to each unitholder, within 90 days after the close of each calendar year, specific tax information, including a Schedule K-1, which describes his share of our income, gain, loss and deduction for our preceding taxable year. In preparing this information, which will not be reviewed by counsel, we will take various accounting and reporting positions, some of which have been mentioned earlier, to determine each unitholder's share of income, gain, loss and deduction. We cannot assure you that those positions will in all cases yield a result that conforms to the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code, Treasury Regulations or administrative interpretations of the IRS. Neither we nor Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. can assure prospective unitholders that the IRS will not successfully contend in court that those positions are impermissible. Any challenge by the IRS could negatively affect the value of the units.

The IRS may audit our federal income tax information returns. Adjustments resulting from an IRS audit may require each unitholder to adjust a prior year's tax liability, and possibly may result in an audit of his return. Any audit of a unitholder's return could result in adjustments not related to our returns as well as those related to our returns.

Partnerships generally are treated as separate entities for purposes of federal tax audits, judicial review of administrative adjustments by the IRS and tax settlement proceedings. The tax treatment of partnership items of income, gain, loss and deduction are determined in a partnership proceeding rather than in separate proceedings with the partners. The Internal Revenue Code requires that one partner be designated as the Tax Matters Partner for these purposes. Our partnership agreement names our general partner as our Tax Matters Partner.

The Tax Matters Partner has made and will make some elections on our behalf and on behalf of unitholders. In addition, the Tax Matters Partner can extend the statute of limitations for assessment of tax deficiencies against unitholders for items in our returns. The Tax Matters Partner may bind a unitholder with less than a 1% profits interest in us to a settlement with the IRS unless that unitholder elects, by filing a statement with the IRS, not to give that authority to the Tax Matters Partner. The Tax Matters Partner may seek judicial review, by which all the unitholders are bound, of a final partnership administrative adjustment and, if the Tax Matters Partner fails to seek judicial review, judicial review may be sought by any unitholder having at least a 1% interest in profits or by any group of unitholders having in the aggregate at least a 5% interest in profits. However, only one action for judicial review will go forward, and each unitholder with an interest in the outcome may participate.

A unitholder must file a statement with the IRS identifying the treatment of any item on his federal income tax return that is not consistent with the treatment of the item on our return. Intentional or negligent disregard of this consistency requirement may subject a unitholder to substantial penalties.

#### ***Nominee Reporting***

Persons who hold an interest in us as a nominee for another person are required to furnish to us:

the name, address and taxpayer identification number of the beneficial owner and the nominee;

whether the beneficial owner is:

a person that is not a U.S. person;

a foreign government, an international organization or any wholly owned agency or instrumentality of either of the foregoing; or

a tax-exempt entity;



**Table of Contents**

the amount and description of units held, acquired or transferred for the beneficial owner; and

specific information including the dates of acquisitions and transfers, means of acquisitions and transfers, and acquisition cost for purchases, as well as the amount of net proceeds from sales.

Brokers and financial institutions are required to furnish additional information, including whether they are United States persons and specific information on units they acquire, hold or transfer for their own account. A penalty of \$50 per failure, up to a maximum of \$100,000 per calendar year, is imposed by the Internal Revenue Code for failure to report that information to us. The nominee is required to supply the beneficial owner of the units with the information furnished to us.

***Accuracy-Related Penalties***

An additional tax equal to 20% of the amount of any portion of an underpayment of tax that is attributable to one or more specified causes, including negligence or disregard of rules or regulations, substantial understatements of income tax and substantial valuation misstatements, is imposed by the Internal Revenue Code. No penalty will be imposed, however, for any portion of an underpayment if it is shown that there was a reasonable cause for that portion and that the taxpayer acted in good faith regarding that portion.

For individuals, a substantial understatement of income tax in any taxable year exists if the amount of the understatement exceeds the greater of 10% of the tax required to be shown on the return for the taxable year or \$5,000 (\$10,000 for most corporations). The amount of any understatement subject to penalty generally is reduced if any portion is attributable to a position adopted on the return:

for which there is, or was, substantial authority; or

as to which there is a reasonable basis and the pertinent facts of that position are disclosed on the return.

If any item of income, gain, loss or deduction included in the distributive shares of unitholders might result in that kind of an understatement of income for which no substantial authority exists, we must disclose the pertinent facts on our return. In addition, we will make a reasonable effort to furnish sufficient information for unitholders to make adequate disclosure on their returns and to take other actions as may be appropriate to permit unitholders to avoid liability for this penalty. More stringent rules apply to tax shelters, which we do not believe includes us or any of our investments, plans or arrangements.

A substantial valuation misstatement exists if (a) the value of any property, or the tax basis of any property, claimed on a tax return is 150% or more of the amount determined to be the correct amount of the valuation or tax basis, (b) the price for any property or services (or for the use of property) claimed on any such return with respect to any transaction between persons described in Internal Revenue Code Section 482 is 200% or more (or 50% or less) of the amount determined under Section 482 to be the correct amount of such price, or (c) the net Internal Revenue Code Section 482 transfer price adjustment for the taxable year exceeds the lesser of \$5 million or 10% of the taxpayer's gross receipts. No penalty is imposed unless the portion of the underpayment attributable to a substantial valuation misstatement exceeds \$5,000 (\$10,000 for most corporations). The penalty is increased to 40% in the event of a gross valuation misstatement. We do not anticipate making any valuation misstatements.

***Reportable Transactions***

If we were to engage in a reportable transaction, we (and possibly you and others) would be required to make a detailed disclosure of the transaction to the IRS. A transaction may be a reportable transaction based upon any of several factors, including the fact that it is a type of tax avoidance transaction publicly identified by the IRS as a listed transaction or that it produces certain kinds of losses for partnerships, individuals, S corporations, and trusts in excess of \$2 million in any single year, or \$4 million in any combination of 6 successive tax years. Our participation in a reportable transaction could increase the likelihood that our federal income tax information return (and possibly your tax return) would be audited by the IRS. Please see Information Returns and Audit Procedures.

## **Table of Contents**

Moreover, if we were to participate in a reportable transaction with a significant purpose to avoid or evade tax, or in any listed transaction, you may be subject to the following provisions of the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004:

accuracy-related penalties with a broader scope, significantly narrower exceptions, and potentially greater amounts than described above at Accuracy-Related Penalties.

for those persons otherwise entitled to deduct interest on federal tax deficiencies, nondeductibility of interest on any resulting tax liability; and

in the case of a listed transaction, an extended statute of limitations.

We do not expect to engage in any reportable transactions.

## **State, Local, Foreign and Other Tax Considerations**

In addition to federal income taxes, you may be subject to other taxes, such as state, local and foreign income taxes, unincorporated business taxes, and estate, inheritance or intangible taxes that may be imposed by the various jurisdictions in which we do business or own property or in which you are a resident. Although an analysis of those various taxes is not presented here, each prospective unitholder should consider their potential impact on his investment in us. We currently own assets and do business in a number of states, many of which impose income taxes. Current law may change. Moreover, we may also own property or do business in other jurisdictions in the future. Although you may not be required to file a return and pay taxes in some jurisdictions because your income from that jurisdiction falls below the filing and payment requirement, you might be required to file income tax returns and to pay income taxes in other jurisdictions in which we do business or own property, now or in the future, and may be subject to penalties for failure to comply with those requirements. In some jurisdictions, tax losses may not produce a tax benefit in the year incurred and may not be available to offset income in subsequent taxable years. Some jurisdictions may require us, or we may elect, to withhold a percentage of income from amounts to be distributed to a unitholder who is not a resident of the jurisdiction. Withholding, the amount of which may be greater or less than a particular unitholder's income tax liability to the jurisdiction, generally does not relieve a nonresident unitholder from the obligation to file an income tax return. Amounts withheld will be treated as if distributed to unitholders for purposes of determining the amounts distributed by us. Please see Tax Consequences of Unit Ownership Entity-Level Collections. Based on current law and our estimate of our future operations, the general partner anticipates that any amounts required to be withheld will not be material.

## **Tax Consequences of Ownership of Debt Securities**

A description of the material federal income tax consequences of the acquisition, ownership and disposition of any series of debt securities will be set forth on the prospectus supplement relating to the offering of such debt securities.

It is the responsibility of each unitholder to investigate the legal and tax consequences, under the laws of pertinent jurisdictions, of his investment in us. Accordingly, each prospective unitholder is urged to consult, and depend upon, his tax counsel or other advisor with regard to those matters. Further, it is the responsibility of each unitholder to file all state, local and foreign, as well as United States federal tax returns that may be required of him. Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. has not rendered an opinion on the state, local or foreign tax consequences of an investment in us.

**Table of Contents**

**INVESTMENT IN NATURAL RESOURCE PARTNERS L.P. BY EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS**

An investment in our common units or debt securities by an employee benefit plan is subject to additional considerations because the investments of these plans are subject to the fiduciary responsibility provisions of ERISA and the prohibited transaction provisions of ERISA and the Internal Revenue Code. For these purposes the term employee benefit plan includes, but is not limited to, qualified pension, profit-sharing, and stock bonus plans, certain Keogh plans, certain simplified employee pension plans, tax deferred annuities or IRAs established or maintained by an employer or employee organization and any entity that is deemed to hold the assets of any such plans. Among other things, consideration should be given to:

whether the investment is prudent under Section 404(a)(1)(B) of ERISA;

whether in making the investment, that plan will satisfy the diversification requirements of Section 404(a)(1)(C) of ERISA;

whether the investment is permitted under the terms of the applicable documents governing the plan;

whether the investment will constitute a prohibited transaction under Section 406 of ERISA and Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code (see below);

whether in making the investment, that plan will be considered to hold as plan assets (1) only the investment in our partnership units or (2) an undivided interest in our underlying assets (see below); and

whether the investment will result in recognition of unrelated business taxable income by the plan and, if so, the potential after-tax investment return. Please see Material Income Tax Considerations Tax-Exempt Organizations and Other Investors.

The person with investment discretion with respect to the assets of an employee benefit plan, often called a fiduciary, should determine whether an investment in us is authorized by the appropriate governing instrument and is a proper investment for the plan.

Section 406 of ERISA and Section 4975 of the Internal Revenue Code prohibit employee benefit plans, and also IRAs and certain other types of accounts that are not considered part of an ERISA employee benefit plan, from engaging in specified prohibited transactions involving plan assets with parties that are parties in interest under ERISA or disqualified persons under the Internal Revenue Code with respect to the plan. Certain statutory or administrative exemptions from the prohibited transaction rules under ERISA and the Code may be available to a plan that is directly or indirectly purchasing our common units or debt securities.

In addition to considering whether the purchase of our common units or debt securities is a prohibited transaction, a fiduciary of an employee benefit plan should consider whether the plan will, by investing in us, be deemed to own an undivided interest in our assets, with the result that our general partner would become an ERISA fiduciary of the investing plan and that our operations would be subject to the regulatory restrictions of ERISA, including its prohibited transaction rules, as well as the prohibited transaction rules of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Department of Labor regulations provide guidance with respect to whether the assets of an entity in which employee benefit plans acquire equity interests would be deemed plan assets under some circumstances. Under these regulations, an entity's assets generally would not be considered to be plan assets if, among other things:

(a) the equity interests acquired by employee benefit plans are publicly offered securities, i.e., the equity interests are part of a class of securities that is widely held by 100 or more investors independent of the issuer and each other, are freely transferable (as defined in the Department of Labor regulations), and are either registered under certain provisions of the federal securities laws or sold to the plan as part of a public offering under certain conditions;

**Table of Contents**

(b) the entity is an operating company, i.e., it is primarily engaged in the production or sale of a product or service other than the investment of capital either directly or through a majority-owned subsidiary or subsidiaries; or

(c) there is no significant investment by benefit plan investors, which is defined to mean that immediately after the most recent acquisition by a plan of any equity interest in the entity, less than 25% of the value of each class of equity interest (disregarding interests held by our general partner, its affiliates, and some other persons) is held by the employee benefit plans referred to above, IRAs and certain other plans (but not including governmental plans, foreign plans and certain church plans (as defined under ERISA)), and entities whose underlying assets are deemed to include plan assets by reason of a plan's investment in the entity.

Our assets should not be considered plan assets under these regulations because it is expected that any investment in us by an employee benefit plan will satisfy the requirements in (a) above.

Plan fiduciaries contemplating a purchase of our common units or debt securities should consult with their own counsel regarding the consequences under ERISA and the Internal Revenue Code in light of the serious penalties imposed on persons who engage in prohibited transactions or other ERISA violations.

**Table of Contents**

**SELLING UNITHOLDERS**

We are registering for resale an indeterminate number of our common units held by certain of our unitholders to be named in a prospectus supplement.

The prospectus supplement for any offering of our common units by a selling unitholder hereunder will include, among other things, the following information:

the name of each selling unitholder;

the nature of any position, office or other material relationship which each selling unitholder has had within the last three years with us or any of our predecessors or affiliates;

the number of common units held by each selling unitholder prior to the offering;

the number of common units to be offered for each selling unitholder's account; and

the number and (if one percent or more) the percentage of common units held by each of the selling unitholders after the offering.

**LEGAL MATTERS**

The validity of the securities offered in this prospectus will be passed upon for us by Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. Vinson & Elkins L.L.P. will also render an opinion on the material federal income tax considerations regarding the securities. If certain legal matters in connection with an offering of the securities made by this prospectus and a related prospectus supplement are passed on by counsel for the underwriters of such offering, that counsel will be named in the applicable prospectus supplement related to that offering.

**EXPERTS**

The consolidated financial statements of Natural Resource Partners L.P. and the consolidated balance sheets of NRP (GP) LP appearing in Natural Resource Partners L.P.'s Form 10-K/A for the year ended December 31, 2009 and the effectiveness of Natural Resource Partners L.P.'s internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2009, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in their reports thereon, included therein and incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements of Natural Resource Partners L.P. and consolidated balance sheets of NRP (GP) LP are incorporated herein by reference in reliance upon the reports of Ernst & Young LLP pertaining to such financial statements and the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

**Table of Contents**

**WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION**

We have filed a registration statement with the SEC under the Securities Act that registers the securities offered by this prospectus. The registration statement, including the attached exhibits, contains additional relevant information about us. The rules and regulations of the SEC allow us to omit some information included in the registration statement from this prospectus.

In addition, we file annual, quarterly and other reports and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-732-0330 for further information on the operation of the SEC's public reference room. Our SEC filings are available on the SEC's web site at <http://www.sec.gov>. We also make available free of charge on our website, at <http://www.nrplp.com>, all materials that we file electronically with the SEC, including our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, Section 16 reports and amendments to these reports as soon as reasonably practicable after such materials are electronically filed with, or furnished to, the SEC.

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we have filed with the SEC. This means that we can disclose important information to you without actually including the specific information in this prospectus by referring you to other documents filed separately with the SEC. These other documents contain important information about us, our financial condition and results of operations. The information incorporated by reference is an important part of this prospectus. Information that we file later with the SEC (excluding any information furnished pursuant to Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 on any Current Report on Form 8-K) will automatically update and may replace information in this prospectus and information previously filed with the SEC.

We incorporate by reference in this prospectus the documents listed below:

our annual report on Form 10-K/A for the year ended December 31, 2009;

our current report on Form 8-K filed January 26, 2010 (excluding information furnished pursuant to Item 7.01); and February 12, 2010 (excluding information furnished pursuant to Item 2.02);

the description of our common units in our registration statement on Form 8-A (File No. 001-31465) filed pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 on September 27, 2002; and

all documents filed by us under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (excluding any information furnished pursuant to Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 on any Current Report on Form 8-K) between the date of this prospectus and the termination of the registration statement.

You may obtain any of the documents incorporated by reference in this prospectus from the SEC through the SEC's website at the address provided above. You also may request a copy of any document incorporated by reference in this prospectus (including exhibits to those documents specifically incorporated by reference in this document), at no cost, by writing or calling us at the following address:

Natural Resource Partners L.P.  
601 Jefferson, Suite 3600  
Houston, Texas 77002  
Attention: Investor Relations  
Telephone: (713) 751-7507





**Table of Contents**

*Natural Resource Partners L.P.*

*6,000,000 Common Units*

*Representing Limited Partner Interests*

*PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT*

*March , 2011*

*MORGAN STANLEY*