

disputes between rival locators over possessory rights since Congress has provided for such determinations in local courts.

Dated: October 9, 1997.

**Jimmie Buxton,**

*Branch Chief, Lands and Minerals.*

[FR Doc. 97-27713 Filed 10-20-97; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[CACA 31137; FES 97-33]

#### Notice of Availability

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Needles Resource Area.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability for the Castle Mountain Mine Expansion Project, Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and in coordination with the County of San Bernardino in its administration of the California Environmental Quality Act as amended, notice is hereby given that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared, with the assistance of a third party consultant, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the proposed Castle Mountain Mine Expansion Project and has made copies available for public and agency review. The Final EIS/EIR addresses the potential environmental impacts associated with expansion and continued operation of an open pit heap leach gold mine in northeastern San Bernardino County, California.

**DATES:** Comments on the Final EIS/EIR must be received no later than 4 p.m., November 17, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be addressed to: George R. Meckfessel, U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management, Needles Resource Area, 101 West Spikes Road, Needles California 92363.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** George R. Meckfessel, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, telephone (760) 326-7000.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Viceroy Gold Corporation has proposed to mine additional ore adjacent to deposits currently being mined at the Castle Mountain Mine, an open-pit heap-leach gold mine. Under the present operating permits, mining, processing and reclamation could continue through December 31, 2010. The mine operating

period would be extended 10 years past the currently permitted time to 2010. Under the proposed expansion, these activities could continue through December 31, 2020. The Proposed Action would increase areas of open pit, create an overburden storage site, and expand the heap leach pad, on approximately 485 acres. Mining and processing methods, and rates would not change. Previous permitted and proposed surface disturbances at the conclusion of mining would total 1,375 acres of the 3,910-acre project area.

**Molly S. Brady,**

*Area Manager.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Minerals Management Service

#### Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of the Availability of Environmental Documents Prepared for Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Mineral Exploration Proposal on the Alaska OCS.

**SUMMARY:** The Minerals Management Service (MMS), in accordance with Federal regulations (40 CFR Section 1501.4 and Section 1506.6) that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), announces the availability of a NEPA-related Environmental Assessment prepared by the MMS for oil and gas exploration activities proposed on the Alaska OCS. This listing includes the only proposal for which a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared by the Alaska OCS Office in the 3-month period preceding this Notice.

#### Proposal

The proposal is for exploratory-drilling operations that would be conducted in accordance with the OCS Lands Act. The purpose of the Environmental Assessment (EA) is to evaluate the probable environmental effects of the operations, described in the Exploration Plan (EP) for the ARCO Warthog No. 1 Exploration Well, dated July 1997. The Warthog drill site would be located within Camden Bay in the Beaufort Sea, near several former drill sites and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The bottom-hole location would be under adjacent State of Alaska lands on the inner continental shelf. The methods by which the exploratory well would be drilled are detailed in the EP

and in the associated Environmental Report and Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan. Additional details about the proposed operations are included in **Federal Register** Notice 62-FR-37881, summarizing an ARCO application for an Incidental Harassment Authorization from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

#### Location

Lease	Block
OCS-Y-1663	NR 06-04 7067
	(additional lease)
OCS-Y-1662	NR 06-04 7066

**EA Number:** EA No. AK 97-01.

**FONSI Date:** August 14, 1997.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Persons interested in reviewing environmental documents for the proposal listed above, or in obtaining information about EA's and FONSI's prepared for activities on the Alaska OCS, are encouraged to contact the Alaska OCS Regional office of MMS.

The FONSI and associated EA are available for public inspection between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday at: Minerals Management Service, Alaska OCS Region, Resource Center, 949 East 36th Avenue, Room 330, Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4363, phone: (907) 271-6070 or (907) 271-6621 or toll free at 1-800-764-2627. Request may also be sent to MMS at akwebmaster@mms.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The MMS prepares EA's and FONSI's for proposals which relate to exploration for oil and gas resources on the Alaska OCS. The EA's examine the potential environmental effects of activities described in the proposals and present MMS conclusions regarding the significance of those effects. The EA is used as a basis for determining whether or not approvals of the proposals constitute major Federal actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment in the sense of NEPA 102(2)(C). A FONSI is prepared in those instances where MMS finds that approval will not result in significant effects on the quality of the human environment. The FONSI briefly presents the basis for that finding and includes a summary or copy of the EA.

This Notice constitutes the public Notice of Availability of environmental documents required under the NEPA regulations.

Dated: October 14, 1997.

**John Goll,**

*Regional Director, Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service.*

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