

National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

DATES: Written comments on the application should be received on or before June 16, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the application may obtain a copy by writing to the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Persons wishing to review the EA/HCP may obtain a copy by contacting Christina Longacre, Ecological Services Field Office, 10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78758 (512/490-0063). Documents will be available for public inspection by written request, by appointment only, during normal business hours (8:00 to 4:30) at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Austin, Texas. Written data or comments concerning the application and EA/HCP should be submitted to the Field Supervisor, Ecological Field Office, Austin, Texas at the above address. Please refer to permit number TE-010556-0 when submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christina Longacre at the above Austin Ecological Services Field Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 9 of the Act prohibits the "taking" of endangered species such as the golden-cheeked warbler. However, the Service, under limited circumstances, may issue permits to take endangered wildlife species incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for endangered species are at 50 CFR 17.22.

Applicants

Jim and John Hunt plan to construct two single family residences on City Park Road Austin, Travis County, Texas. This action will eliminate less than two acres of habitat and indirectly impact less than eight additional acres of golden-cheeked warbler habitat. The applicant proposes to compensate for this incidental take of golden-cheeked warbler habitat by donating \$1,500 per home into the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve to acquire/manage lands for the conservation of the golden-cheeked warbler and place the remaining balance of the property in a conservation easement in perpetuity.

Alternatives to this action were rejected because not developing the subject property with federally listed species present was not economically feasible and alteration of the project design would increase the impacts on

the listed species and surrounding environment.

Geoffery Haskett,

*Acting Regional Director, Region 2,
Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

[FR Doc. 99-12314 Filed 5-14-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Sevier County, AR, and Notice of Meeting To Seek Public Participation

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, has made available for public review a Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Sevier County, Arkansas, and plans to hold a public meeting in the vicinity of the refuge to solicit public comments on the Draft Plan. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with Service comprehensive planning policy, the National Environmental Act Policy, and implementing regulations to achieve the following:

- (1) advise other agencies and the public of our intention, and
- (2) obtain comments on the proposed plan and the other alternatives considered in the planning process.

DATES: The Service will hold the public meeting at 7 p.m. on June 3, 1999, at the Horatio Elementary School cafeteria, Horatio, Arkansas. The Draft Plan will be made available for review and comment. Written comments should be submitted no later than June 30, 1999, to the address below.

ADDRESSES: Comments and request for copies of the Draft Plan should be addressed to Mr. Ed Loth, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Regional Office, 1875 Century Boulevard, Atlanta, GA 30345, or by calling 404/679-7155.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge is a 27,000-acre area located between the Cossatot and Little rivers. This refuge was established to protect, enhance, and manage a valuable bottomland hardwood wetland ecosystem for the benefit of migratory and resident waterfowl, neotropical birds, wading birds, and other wetland-dependent wildlife. The area is considered a vital component of the North American

Waterfowl Management Plan and the Arkansas-Red Ecosystem Plan.

It is the desire of the Fish and Wildlife Service that Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge become "a model refuge that protects and manages biological diversity for the enjoyment and benefit of present and future generations." To achieve this vision, the refuge seeks to achieve the following four goals: (1) habitat management—maintain and restore diverse habitats designed to achieve refuge purpose and wildlife population objectives; (2) populations management—maintain viable, diverse populations of native flora and fauna consistent with sound biological principles; (3) land conservation—protect the area's wetlands and restore values through land protection strategies; and (4) wildlife-dependent recreation and education—develop and implement a quality wildlife-dependent recreation program that leads to enjoyable recreation experiences and a greater understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife resources.

The Draft Plan evaluates the following four alternatives for managing the refuge over the next 15 years: custodial management, minimal management, balanced management, and resource management. The Service believes the balanced management alternative is the best alternative to guide the refuge's future direction. In essence this alternative will:

- Increase protection of threatened and endangered species;
- Increase waterfowl and songbird utilization and production;
- Enhance resident wildlife populations;
- Restore wetlands and hydrology; and
- Provide long-term opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education.

Dated: May 4, 1999.

C. Monty Halcomb,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 99-12289 Filed 5-14-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[MT-921-09-1320-01; MTM 80697]

Coal Lease Offering

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of coal lease offering by sealed bid MTM 80697—Western Energy Company.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the coal resources in the lands described

below in Rosebud County, Montana, will be offered for competitive lease by sealed bid. This offering is being made as a result of an application filed by Western Energy Company, in accordance with the provisions of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (41 Stat. 437; 30 U.S.C. 181–287), as amended.

An Environmental Assessment of the proposed coal development and related requirements for consultation, public involvement, and hearing have been completed in accordance with 43 CFR part 3425. Concerns and issues expressed by the public during the public scoping process centered on social, economic, and cultural impacts to the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Tribes, hydrologic impacts to the area, and the need to do an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as the appropriate level of environmental documentation for the development of the coal resources. Three alternatives (Preferred, No Action, and Cultural Resource Avoidance) were developed to analyze impacts and to address issues relating to the proposed action. The Preferred Alternative, including special stipulations and mitigation measures, was chosen because it will maximize the beneficial use of the subject coal resource and will mitigate impacts to one historic site and two sites which have high values as traditional cultural properties.

The tract will be leased to the qualified bidder of the highest cash amount provided that the high bid meets the fair market value of the coal resource. The minimum bid for the tract is \$100 per acre, or fraction thereof. No bid that is less than \$100 per acre, or fraction thereof, will be considered. The minimum bid is not intended to represent fair market value. The fair market value will be determined by the authorized officer after the sale.

Coal Offered

The coal resource to be offered consists of all recoverable reserves in the following-described lands located approximately 10 miles west of the town of Colstrip:

T. 1 N., R. 39 E., P.M.M.

Sec. 2: N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 1 N., R. 40 E., P.M.M.

Sec. 6: Lots 1–4 S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$,

N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Sec. 8: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,

SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

Sec. 14: S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 2 N., R. 40 E., P.M.M.

Sec. 32: NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,

SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,

SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$,

N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Containing 1,401, Rosebud County, Montana.

The Rosebud seam, averaging 22.3 feet in thickness, is the only economically minable coal seam within the tract. The tract contains an estimated 27.6 million tons of recoverable reserves. Coal quality, as received, averages 8,360 BTU/lb., 25.52 percent moisture, 10.03 percent ash, and 0.97 percent sulfur. This coal bed is being mined in adjoining tracts by Western Energy Company.

Rental and Royalty

A lease issued as a result of this offering will provide for payment of an annual rental of \$3 per acre, or fraction thereof; and a royalty payable to the United States of 12.5 percent of the value of coal mined by surface methods and 8.0 percent of the value of coal mined by underground methods. The value of the coal shall be determined in accordance with 43 CFR 3485.2.

DATES: Lease Sale—The lease sale will be held at 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 16, 1999, in the Conference Room on the Sixth Floor of the Granite Tower Building, Bureau of Land Management, 222 North 32nd Street, Billings, Montana 59107.

Bids—Sealed bids *Clearly Marked* “Sealed Bid for MTM 80697 Coal Sale—not to be opened before 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 16, 1999” must be submitted on or before 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 16, 1999, to the cashier, Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, Second Floor, Granite Tower Building, 222 North 32nd Street, Post Office Box 36800, Billings, Montana 59107–6800. The bids should be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or be hand-delivered. The cashier will issue a receipt for each hand-delivered bid. Bids received after that time will not be considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Bidding instructions for the offered tract are included in the Detailed Statement of Lease Sale. Copies of the statement and the proposed coal lease are available at the Montana State Office. Casefile documents are also available for public inspection at the Montana State Office.

Dated: May 11, 1999.

Randy D. Heuscher,

Chief, Branch of Solid Minerals.

[FR Doc. 99–12315 Filed 5–14–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310 DN–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

Revegetation: Standards for Success

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), Interior.

ACTION: Request for public comments and notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: OSM will hold public meetings to solicit comments, concerns, and new ideas regarding the performance standards for determining the success of revegetation. We also invite written comments regarding this issue.

We prepared a concept paper to assist those interested in commenting in writing or preparing for the meetings. The concepts we presented are not an indication of any preconceived direction that new policies or rules would take. Instead, they represent a compilation of ideas and questions that have been raised. You, however, are not limited to these ideas or questions and we encourage you to bring forward new concepts or ideas for consideration.

DATES: *Written comments:* OSM will accept written comments until 5:00 p.m., c.d.t. on July 30, 1999.

Public meetings: We will meet with interested persons to receive comments on this issue until July 30, 1999. If requested, we will meet you on the dates and in the locations listed under **ADDRESSEES: Public Meetings.** You may also request additional meetings. In order to make proper arrangements for these additional meetings, make your request before June 30, 1999.

ADDRESSES: *Written comments and requests for concept paper:* You should hand deliver, mail, or e-mail written comments and requests for the concept paper to one of the persons listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.** You also may call one of the persons listed to obtain a copy of the concept paper.

Telefax: You may obtain copies of the concept paper from FAX ON DEMAND by calling (202) 219–1703 and following the instructions of the recorded announcement.

Internet: You may view or download the concept paper from the OSM homepage at www.osmre.gov.

Public meetings: If requested, we will meet with you, individually or in groups, at the following locations: May 27, 1999, in Bismarck, North Dakota; June 2, 1999, in Denver, Colorado; June 18, 1999, in Gillette, Wyoming; June 22, 1999, in Alton, Illinois; and June 24, 1999, in Knoxville, Tennessee. If you