

**DATES:** The meeting will be from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. January 20, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

David B. Hunsaker, Bureau of Land Management, National Historic Oregon Trail, Interpretive Center, P.O. Box 987, Baker City, OR 97814, (Telephone 541-523-1845).

**Richard T. Watts,**

*Vale ADM/Operations-Field Services.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[UT-912-00-0777-XQ]

**Notice of Meeting; Utah Resource Advisory Council**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management.

**ACTION:** Notice of Meeting of the Utah Advisory Council.

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management's Utah Statewide Resource Advisory Council meeting will be held on January 20-21, 2000, in Provo, Utah.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide the Council with an overview of Utah's recreation management program as well as developing guidelines for recreation management.

The meeting will be held at the Hampton Inn, (Sundance Room), 1511 South 40 East, Provo, Utah. It is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. on January 20 and conclude at noon on January 21. A public comment period, where members of the public may address the Council, is scheduled from 12:30-1:00 p.m. on January 20. All meetings of the BLM's Resource Advisory Council are open to the public.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Sherry Foot, Special Programs Coordinator, Utah State Office, Bureau of Land Management, 324 South State Street, Salt Lake City, 84111; phone (801) 539-4195.

Dated: January 10, 2000.

**Sally Wisely,**

*Utah BLM State Director.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[WY-040-00-1330-DB]

**Kemmerer and Rock Springs Field Office Areas, Wyoming, Planning Review Concerning Proposed Closure to Oil and Gas Leasing in Trona Mining Areas to Protect Health and Safety**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to conduct a planning review and request for public participation concerning closing portions of the trona mining areas to oil and gas leasing for protection of health and safety, with potential to amend the Kemmerer and Green River (Rock Springs) Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to modify mineral management objectives.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.2(C) that the Rock Springs and Kemmerer Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are proposing to close the Special Sodium Drilling Area—A in southwest Wyoming to oil and gas leasing and coincidental development of oil and gas reserves on existing oil and gas leases to provide for the continued health and safety of underground miners. A planning review of existing land-use decisions would be conducted to evaluate how to best manage mineral resource and to provide for the recognized health and safety of underground miners. Any needed changes in existing management or any new management actions to be prescribed for the area will be identified and if necessary, the Kemmerer and Green River RMPs amended.

The Joint Industry Committee (JIC), representing trona, and oil and gas industry groups and interests, has worked for four years addressing issues on the complexities of coincidental development of underground trona and deep oil and gas within the Mechanical Mining Trona Area (MMTA). Technical studies and analysis with safety and economic comparisons show that the mineable trona within the MMTA should be completely extracted before development of deep natural gas resources. The JIC has recommended the following approach:

- Expand the MMTA boundary to include a one-mile lateral safety buffer, known as the Special Sodium Drilling Area-A (SSDA-A). The SSDA-A consists of 218,613 acres of Federal minerals managed by the BLM, 30,959 acres of State of Wyoming-owned

mineral estate, and 223,873 acres of privately held minerals.

- Amend the RMPs to close the SSDA-A to oil and gas leasing and development of deep natural gas wells. Drilling of deep natural gas wells would be prohibited until completion of conventional underground trona mining and abandonment of the underground trona mines. Hydrocarbon resources in the MMTA would be conserved for future development.

- Adopt special rules for drilling operations, well completion, production, and abandonment of shallow natural gas wells within the SSDA-A. Shallow gas drilling could be allowed within the SSDA-A on existing oil and gas leases, subject to special rules currently under development.

- Outside of the SSDA-A but within the Known Sodium Leasing Area, allow oil and gas leasing, and drilling of deep natural gas wells utilizing the special rules for drilling operations, well completion, production, and abandonments procedures as adopted by the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (WOGCC) for the entire Special Sodium Drilling Area.

Closure to oil and gas leasing and development of the deep natural gas reserves within the SSDA-A and adoption of these recommendations is problematic due to existing federal and State of Wyoming oil and gas leases within the SSDA-A. These existing leases do not provide limitations on the depth of oil and gas drilling operations. The JIC and BLM have identified several options for addressing this problem:

1. Maintain the current suspension on existing oil and gas leases until conventional underground mining of trona has been completed and miners are no longer working underground.

2. Allow current suspensions to expire and place conditions of approval on applications to drill in order to prevent drilling of deep natural gas wells. Development of shallow natural gas wells may be allowed subject to special rules (once they are adopted by the WOGCC).

3. Existing Federal and State lessees could be given preferential right to trade oil and gas leases within the SSDA-A for other Federal or State leases of comparable value.

4. Purchase existing Federal and State oil and gas leases by one or more of the following:

- (A) Give the leaseholder a royalty credit against future oil and gas production on other leases held by the lessee.

- (B) Allocate a portion of future sodium royalties to purchase oil and gas leases from the lessee.

(C) Federal budget disbursement.  
 (D) Private agreements between trona producers and oil and gas lessees.

The BLM is seeking public comment on these options and asking the public for additional options that should be addressed in the environmental analysis for the land use plan amendments.

**DATES:** Send comments to Ted Murphy, Associate Field Manager for Lands and Minerals, BLM, Rock Springs Field Office, 307-352-0321. Comments are due March 3, 2000 and may be sent via regular mail to BLM, Rock Springs Field Office, 280 Highway 191, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901, or email rock\_spring\_wymail@blm.gov. Please refer to "Coincidental Development" in the subject field.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ted Murphy, Associate Field Manager for Lands and Minerals, BLM, Rock Springs Field Office, 307-352-0321. Documents supporting JIC recommendations and BLM options may be viewed at the Rock Springs Field Office, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming (307-352-0256), Kemmerer Field Office, 312 Highway 189 North, Kemmerer, Wyoming (307-828-4500), and the Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming (307-775-6261).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** History has shown that mining, and oil and gas operations can behave unpredictably despite the best efforts in the application of newest technology and strict operating practices. Studies, performed under the direction of the JIC, have proven that coincidental development of trona and oil and gas within the MMTA could have catastrophic consequences. This finding is based on the analysis of current drilling and completion standards used in the Green River Basin and the potential for uncontrolled fluid migration from oil and gas wells into the underground mine(s). The safety and well being of underground miners employed in the trona industry is of paramount importance. Therefore, action must be taken to resolve this issue.

Written comments in response to this notice, including the names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the BLM Rock Springs office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) after the comment period closes and may be published as part of the environmental process. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public

review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Dated: January 13, 2000.

**Alan R. Pierson,**

*State Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[NV-030-5700-77; N-61479]

#### Realty Action: Recreation and Public Purposes Act Classification; Washoe County, Nevada

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of realty action.

**SUMMARY:** The following public land in Washoe County, Nevada has been examined and found suitable for classification for lease/conveyance to the Holy Cross Catholic Community under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 869 *et seq.*):

A parcel of land in section 14, Township 20 North, Range 20 East, Mount Diablo Meridian, Nevada, more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the corner of sections 14, 15, 22, and 23, Township 20 North, Range 20 E, MDM, Nevada; N. 89°59'21" E., on the line between sections 14 and 23, 650.00 feet distance; N. 0°32'51" E., on a line parallel to the south one half mile of the west boundary of section 14, 1000.00 feet distance; S. 89°59'21" W., on a line parallel to the west one half mile of the south boundary of section 14, 650.00 feet distance; S. 0°32'51" W., on the line between section 14 and 15, 1000.00 feet distance to the corner of sections 14, 15, 22, and 23, and the point of beginning.

The parcel of land contains 14.92 acres more or less.

**Note:** This description will be replaced by lot designation upon final approval of the official plat of survey.

Holy Cross Catholic Community proposes to use the land for a worship center. The land is not needed for federal purposes. Lease/conveyance is consistent with current BLM land use planning and would be in the public interest. Issuance of a 5-year lease with a purchase option is proposed. The

lease/patent when issued, will be subject to the provisions of the R&PP Act and to all applicable regulations of the Secretary of the Interior, and will contain the following reservations to the United States:

1. A right-of-way thereon for ditches and canals constructed by the authority of the United States, Act of August 30, 1890 (43 U.S.C. 945).

2. All mineral deposits in the land so patented, and to it, or persons authorized by it, the right to prospect, mine and remove such deposits from the same under applicable law and regulations to be established by the Secretary of the Interior.

And will be subject to:

Those rights for road and underground utility purposes granted to the City of Sparks, Nevada, its successors or assigns, by right-of-way N-59826 pursuant to the Act of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761).

Those rights for a water pump station granted to Sierra Pacific Power Company, its successors or assigns, by right-of-way N-61493 pursuant to the Act of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761).

Those rights for an underground gas line granted to Sierra Pacific Power Company, its successors or assigns, by right-of-way N-62493 pursuant to the Act of February 25, 1920 (41 Stat 437).

Upon publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, the land will be segregated from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the general mining laws, except for lease or conveyance under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act and leasing under the mineral leasing laws. For a period of 45 days after publication of this notice, interested parties may submit comments regarding the proposed lease/conveyance or classification to the Acting Assistant Manager, Non-Renewable Resources, Bureau of Land Management, Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701.

#### Classification Comments

Interested parties may submit comments involving the suitability of the land for a worship center. Comments on the classification are restricted to whether the land is physically suited for the proposal, whether the use will maximize the future use or uses of the land, whether the use is consistent with local planning and zoning, or if the use is consistent with State and Federal programs.

#### Application Comments

Interested parties may submit comments regarding the specific use proposed in the application and plan of development, whether the BLM followed proper administrative procedures in reaching the decision, or