

provides flood control, agricultural water supply, groundwater protection and conservation, waterfowl management, and environmental enhancement and restoration. The Grand Prairie Region and Bayou Meto Basin, Arkansas, flood-control project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1950 and deauthorized by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986. This project was reauthorized by the WRDA of 1996 with an expanded scope that includes groundwater protection and conservation, agricultural water supply, and waterfowl management. Language in the Fiscal Year 1998 Appropriations Act directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to initiate a reevaluation of the Bayou Meto Basin from within available funds. The appropriations acts for fiscal year 1999 and 2000 provided funding to continue to reevaluation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ken Bright, telephone (901) 544-0745, CEMVM-PM, 167 North Main Street, Room B-202, Memphis, TN 38103-1894. Questions regarding the DEIS may be directed to Mr. Edward Lambert, telephone (901) 544-0707, CEMVM-PM-E.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Proposed Action

The Eastern Arkansas Region Comprehensive Study, completed in 1990, indicated that a feasible plan of improvement for agricultural water supply and conservation exists for the Bayou Meto Basin, Arkansas. The Bayou Meto Basin Project general reevaluation will focus on developing a plan of improvement that will meet the flood control and water supply needs of the project area while providing substantial net environmental benefits. Preliminary studies indicate the a combination of measures of needed to meet the water supply needs of the project area. Identified water-supply components are (1) water conservation (increased irrigation efficiencies), (2) groundwater protection and conservation, (3) additional on-farm storage, and (4) a system to import surface water from the Arkansas River. Irrigation and flood-control features will be designed to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts; alternative plan designs will include recommendations from state and Federal natural resource agencies. Moreover, a major emphasis will be placed on the formulation of environmental project features. Measures to create and/or restore fish and wildfish habitat (including waterfowl habitat), improve water quality, and protect existing surface

water and groundwater resources will be integral components of all alternative plans. The project area encompasses 779,109 acres between the Arkansas and White rivers in east central Arkansas; it includes portions of Arkansas, Jefferson, Lonoke, and Prairie counties.

2. Alternatives

Alternatives will be developed that provide flood control, agricultural water supply, groundwater conservation and protection, waterfowl management, and environmental enhancement and restoration. Comparisons will be made among alternative plans, and alternative plans will be compared to the "no action" alternative.

3. Scoping Process

An intensive public involvement program has been initiated and will be maintained throughout the study to (1) solicit input from individuals and interested parties so that problems, needs, and opportunities within the project area can be properly identified and addressed and (2) provide status updates to concerned organizations and the general public. Affected Federal, state, and local agencies; affected Indian tribes; and other interested private organizations and parties are encouraged to participate in the scoping process. Significant issues to be analyzed include potential impacts (negative and positive) to groundwater and surface water resources, fisheries, water quality, wetlands, wildlife, endangered species, cultural resources, and agricultural lands. Two public scoping meetings will be held within the project area. The first scoping meeting will be held on February 15, 2000, 5:30 p.m., at the England Elementary School, 400 East DeWitt, England, Arkansas. The second meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2000, 5:30 p.m., at the Lonoke Primary School, 800 Lincoln Street, Lonoke, Arkansas. It is anticipated that the DEIS will be available for public review during the fall of 2002. A public meeting will be held during the review period to receive comments and address questions concerning the DEIS.

Dated: January 26, 2000.

Daniel W. Krueger,

Colonel, Corps of Engineers, District Engineer.
[FR Doc. 00-2545 Filed 2-3-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Proposed Mining Activities Associated With Hobet Mining, Inc.'s (Hobet) Spruce No. 1 Surface Mine Located Near Blair, in Logan County, West Virginia

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Huntington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), in cooperation with several Federal and State cooperating agencies will prepare (in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act) an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will evaluate potentially significant impacts to the natural, physical, and human environment as a result of the proposed mining activities associated with Hobet's Spruce No. 1 Surface Mine.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions concerning this proposal to Teresa Hughes, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District, Attn: Regulatory Branch-OR-FS, 502 8th Street, Huntington, West Virginia, 25701. Telephone (304) 529-5710 or electronic mail at Teresa.D.Huges@Lrh01.usace.army.mil. Requests to be placed on the mailing list should also be sent to this address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael D. Gheen, Chief of Regulatory Branch, Attn: Regulatory Branch-OR-F, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington district, 502 8th Street, Huntington, West Virginia 25701, Telephone (304) 529-5487 or electronic mail at Michael.D.Gheen@Lrh01.usace.army.mil

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Corps invites comments and suggestions regarding potential effects of the proposed action, including the regulatory issues and significant environmental effects to be addressed in the EIS, to promote open communication and better decision making. All persons and organizations that have an interest in the proposed project, including affected Federal, state and local agencies, affected Indian tribes, and other interested private organizations and parties, are urged to participate in this NEPA environmental analysis process. Written comments from the public regarding the

environmental and regulatory issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIS will be accepted. The Corps will hold public meetings to receive public input, either verbal or written, on relevant environmental and regulatory issues that should be addressed in the EIS. The locations and starting times of the public meetings will be announced.

In accordance with 40 CFR 1506.5(c) and 33 CFR Part 325, Appendix B, (8)(f)(2), it is our understanding that Hobet will secure the services of a contractor for the preparation of an EIS. Hobet solicited bids for prospective contractors. Hobet will employ Michael Baker, Jr., Inc. to prepare the EIS for the proposed mining activities associated with the Spruce No. 1 Surface Mine.

The Corps and its cooperating agencies implement Federal and State laws with which mining operations and associated discharges to waters of the United States must comply. The cooperating agencies involved in this NEPA process are the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection (WVDEP). Each of the cooperating Federal and State agencies will provide their expertise in compiling information and evaluating potential impacts of the proposed project. OSM is responsible for national administration of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA); it has delegated the authority for the SMCRA programs for surface mining operations in West Virginia to the State of West Virginia DEP. Discharges of fill material into waters of the United States are regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the Corps and applicable 404 regulations issued by the Corps and EPA. Other discharges to waters of the United States are subject Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, administered nationally by the EPA with authority for the program delegated to the State of West Virginia (DEP). Coordination with the FWS will be accomplished in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA). Coordination required by other laws and regulations will also be conducted.

This EIS will evaluate potentially significant environmental impacts associated with Hobet's proposed Spruce No. 1 Surface mine on water quality, streams, aquatic and terrestrial habitat, habitat fragmentation, the hydrological balance, and other individual and cumulative effects. Cumulative environmental impacts may include the efficacy of stream

restoration; the viability of reclaimed streams compared to natural waters; the impact of valley fills on aquatic life, wildlife and nearby residents; biological and habitat analyses; and practicable alternatives for in-stream placement of excess overburden; measures to minimize stream filling to the maximum extent practicable; and the effectiveness of mitigation and reclamation measures.

The activity is to remove overburden to expose coal seams in order conduct surface mining activities on the Spruce No. 1 mining area. The proposed action is to issue a 404 permit to authorize the discharge of overburden into the streams in the surrounding project area.

The scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7 and 33 CFR Part 325, Appendix B) will consist of determining the extent to which potentially significant issues shall be analyzed. It shall define the study area based on the resources potentially affected, opportunities, and geographic areas likely affected by alternative plans. It shall identify current and potential future planning related activities to and not part of the study under consideration. The process shall identify and review consultation requirements, so that cooperating agencies (as defined in 40 CFR 15 CFR 1508.12) may prepare required analyses and studies concurrently with the study under consideration. Coordination of such agencies will be in accordance with Executive Order 12372 and 33 CFR 384. The process shall also indicate tentative planning and a decision making schedule.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and address of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered.

To assist the Corps in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments should be as specific as possible. These comments will assist in early scoping and later development of alternatives for the DEIS.

Michael D. Gheen,

Chief, Regulatory Branch.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Secretary of Energy Advisory Board; Notice of Open Meeting

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

SUMMARY: This notice announces an open meeting of the Secretary of Energy

Advisory Board. The Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463, 86 Stat. 770), requires that agencies publish these notices in the **Federal Register** to allow for public participation.

DATES AND TIMES: Friday, February 11, 2000, 9:00 am-3:00 pm.

ADDRESSES: Conference Rooms A-106/A-107, U.S. Department of Energy, Nevada Operations Office, 232 Energy Way, North Las Vegas, Nevada 89030-4199. Note: Members of the public who plan to attend this open meeting are requested to contact Mr. Darwin Morgan, Director of the Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Energy, Nevada Operations Office in advance of the meeting in order to facilitate access to the meeting site. Mr. Morgan may be reached at (702) 295-3521 or via e-mail at morgan@nv.doe.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Betsy Mullins, Executive Director, or Richard Burrow, Deputy Director, Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (AB-1), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20585, (202) 586-7092 or (202) 586-6279 (fax).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (The Board) is to provide the Secretary of Energy with essential independent advice and recommendations on issues of national importance. The Board and its subcommittees provide timely, balanced, and authoritative advice to the Secretary of Energy on the Department's management reforms, research, development and technology activities, energy and national security responsibilities, environmental cleanup activities, and economic issues relating to energy.

Tentative Agenda

Friday, February 11, 2000

- 9:00 am-9:15 am—Welcome & Opening Remarks—SEAB Chairman Andrew Athy
- 9:15 am-9:35 am—Opening Remarks—Energy Secretary Bill Richardson
- 9:35 am-9:45 am—Introduction of New Board Members
- 9:45 am-10:15 am—Briefing on the DOE's Racial Profiling Task Force Report
- 10:15 am-11:00 am—Board Action on the Laboratory Operations Board's External Members' Report on Laboratory Directed Research and Development.
- 11:00 am-11:45 am—Updates on SEAB Subcommittees and Working Group Activities:
 - Russia Task Force
 - Education Working Group
- 11:45 am-1:00 pm—Lunch
- 1:10 pm-1:30 pm—Updates on SEAB Subcommittees and Working Group Activities:
 - Openness Advisory Panel