

which have been restored to BLM jurisdiction. (The decision record describes these as restored lands). The process used in developing the plan amendment involved the publication of an Environmental Assessment (EA) (WY-020-EA9-126) in September 1999 to document the review of existing planning decisions in the 1990 Cody RMP. The purpose of that review was to determine (1) Which of the decisions would apply to the restored lands; (2) whether any decisions would need to be deferred because further analysis was needed before RMP decisions could be applied or made for any of the restored lands; and (3) whether it would be necessary to pursue new withdrawals to protect specific resources on any of the restored lands. By virtue of the former Bureau of Reclamation withdrawals, the lands have remained closed to surface entry and (or) mining, prohibiting activities such as desert land entry, the transfer of public lands through sale or exchange, and the staking and development of mining claims for locatable minerals. In addition, a moratorium on leasing Federal minerals on the restored lands was enacted by the Wyoming BLM State Director, pending completion of the planning review and the establishment of multiple-use management decisions for the restored lands.

The planning review determined that there was sufficient National Environmental Policy Act analysis, as documented in the 1990 Environmental Impact Statement for the Cody RMP and the September 1999 EA, to adopt existing Cody RMP decisions for the restored lands. The review further established that, generally, the lands will be opened to surface entry and (or) mining through the publication of "opening orders" in the **Federal Register**, but that new closures will be pursued on about 651.83 acres to provide for expansion of the Park County Landfill and to protect public safety, scenic resources, and recreational opportunities. With the publication of the decision record and RMP amendment, the moratorium on leasing Federal minerals on the restored lands has been lifted.

The decision record also puts applicable restored lands in the Rivers and Historic Trails Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs). Public lands within these SRMAs will be managed intensively for recreational use. The remaining restored lands are included within the Cody Planning Area extensive recreation management area. ORV Designations have been adopted, as well, and are described under

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION in this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Hare, Assistant Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Cody Field Office, P.O. Box 518, Cody, Wyoming 82414-0518, or call (307) 587-2216.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: EA WY-020-EA9-126 was available for a formal 30-day review and protest period during September and October 1999. For 60 days ending on November 8, 1999, the public also had an opportunity to comment on potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The State of Wyoming participated in a 60-day Governor's consistency review during the same period. Six comment letters addressing 33 concerns were received and were carefully considered in developing the decision record. There were no protests received, nor any comments, on potential ACEC. Comments received on the EA resulted in a number of changes, additions, and clarifications reflected in the decision record and plan amendment.

The plan amendment includes the following ORV Designations: Vehicle use on the restored lands is limited to designated roads and trails in the following areas: (1) Essential and recovery habitat for threatened or endangered species, (2) areas with fragile soils or with Class I or II visual resource management ratings, and (3) areas containing significant cultural or paleontological resources. In the remainder of the planning area, ORV use on BLM-administered public land is limited to existing roads and trails. "Existing" roads and trails are roads and trails in existence as of the date the decision record was signed (March 3, 2000) and any BLM-authorized roads and trails constructed after that date. Until activity planning specifically addresses the use of over-the-snow vehicles, they will be subject to the same requirements and limitations as all other vehicles.

Parties who are interested in, and who wish to be involved in, future activity planning and implementation of management actions that may involve, or affect, the resource values addressed in the Cody RMP (including the RMP amendment for the restored lands) are requested to identify themselves. Please contact the Cody Field Office and request to be placed on a future contact list for activity planning and implementation activities concerning the Cody RMP.

Dated: June 5, 2000.

Alan R. Pierson,
State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Completion of an Environmental Assessment on Exploration, Development, and Production Operations and Activities in the Deepwater Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service, Interior.

ACTION: Completion of an environmental assessment.

SUMMARY: The Minerals Management Service (MMS) has completed an environmental assessment (EA) on exploration, development, and production activities in the deepwater areas (generally beyond 1,000 feet water depth) of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The MMS is mandated to manage the development of OCS oil and natural gas resources, while also ensuring safe operations and protection of the human and natural environment. To meet these objectives, MMS has used the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process as a planning tool to assist in managing these activities and assure appropriate environmental reviews. The findings of the EA are summarized below.

Based on the information and analyses in the EA, MMS has determined that a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on regional deepwater activities on the Gulf of Mexico OCS is not required. Most deepwater operations and activities are substantially the same as those associated with conventional operations and activities on the continental shelf. These deepwater components and activities include anchoring, mooring, stationkeeping, most drilling and well completion activities (the exceptions are discussed below), well test and cleanup operations, flaring/burning, facility installation and production operations, host facilities, pipeline installation and operations, alternative transportation options, operational emissions, routine produced-water discharges, support service activities, decommissioning, and site clearance. Existing NEPA documents, established project-specific and programmatic NEPA review

processes, and established mitigation measures are fully sufficient to address these deepwater components and associated activities.

Specific deepwater operations and activities that are substantially different from those associated with conventional operations and activities on the continental shelf have been addressed by requiring specific mitigation measures, initiating a more in-depth EA, and initiating an EIS.

Seafloor discharges from pre-riser and riserless drilling operation, and the discharge of synthetic-based drilling fluids (SBF) and cuttings wetted with SBF may pose potentially significant localized impacts to chemosynthetic communities. An appropriate mitigation measure has been developed to avoid or reduce the potential for significant impacts from these factors. Deepwater wells must be at least 1,000 ft away from any potential high-density chemosynthetic communities. Notice to Lessees (NTL) 98-11 is being modified to include this 1,000 ft buffer zone around all deepwater well sites. As the NTL goes through the formal review and implementation process, this mitigation is currently being applied on a site-by-site basis. Accidental spills of chemical products and the subsea release of oil are low-probability events. Extensive mitigation measures for spill prevention and response are currently required.

Deepwater seismic surveying operations are essentially the same as seismic surveying operations on the continental shelf. Historically, the potential impacts of noise associated with seismic surveying have been considered insignificant, and the EA supports this view. As this position has recently become controversial, the potential impacts of geological and geophysical (G&G) activities, including seismic surveying operations, on the GOM OCS are currently being analyzed in detail in a separate EA. The decision on the need to prepare an EIS on seismic surveying operations is pending completion of the G&G EA.

The use of floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) systems represents new and unusual technology for the GOM OCS and may pose potentially significant impacts to the marine and coastal environments. The need for an EIS was recognized early during the preparation of this EA. A Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS was published in the **Federal Register** on June 10, 1999.

Copies of the EA are available from the Public Information Office (MS 5034), Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans,

Louisiana 70123-2394 by asking for publication MMS 2000-001. Copies of the Technical Report (OCS Report MMS 2000-015) prepared in support of the EA will also be available in mid-July 2000. Both the EA and the Technical Report will eventually be available on CD and will be placed on the MMS website <http://www.mms.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Questions regarding the EA should be directed to Ms. Deborah Cranswick, Leasing and Environment, at (504) 736-2744.

Questions regarding deepwater operations should be directed to Mr. Jim Regg, Field Operations, at (504) 736-2843. The mailing address is Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394.

Dated: June 6, 2000.

J. Hammond Eve,

Acting Regional Director, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Reclamation

[FES 00-20]

Woodbridge Irrigation District and City of Lodi's Lower Mokelumne River Restoration Program, San Joaquin County, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the final environmental impact report/ environmental impact statement (Final EIR/EIS).

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Woodbridge Irrigation District (WID), and the City of Lodi have prepared a joint final EIR/EIS for the Lower Mokelumne River Restoration Program (LMRRP). The LMRRP encompasses an area located in northern San Joaquin County along the lower Mokelumne River between Camanche Dam and the Mokelumne and Cosumnes Rivers. The Proposed Project comprises four elements: Improving fish passage at Woodbridge Dam, upgrading the fish screen at the WID diversion, placing screens on unscreened or underscreened riparian diversions on the Mokelumne River between Camanche Dam and the Cosumnes Rivers on a voluntary basis, and restoring riparian vegetation along

the Mokelumne River. The final EIR/EIS describes and presents the environmental effects of the four elements of the program. The first two elements are addressed at a project level in this final EIR/EIS, including five fish passage alternatives and five optional fish passage actions. The remaining two elements are addressed at a programmatic level. The preferred alternative is to construct a new dam and new fish-passage facilities, and includes optional actions to improve predator control below the dam, move the WID diversion point to just upstream of the dam, and construct a downstream splash pool.

DATES: Reclamation will not make a decision on the proposed action until after Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance has been completed. After ESA compliance has been completed, Reclamation will complete a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will state the action that will be implemented and will discuss all factors leading to the decision.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the final EIR/EIS may be requested from Mr. Anders Christensen, Woodbridge Irrigation District, 18777 N. Lower Sacramento Road, Woodbridge, California 95258, or Mr. Buford Holt, Bureau of Reclamation, 16349 Shasta Dam Boulevard, Shasta Lake, California 96019.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for locations where copies of the final EIR/EIS are available for public inspection.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Buford Holt, Bureau of Reclamation, at (530) 275-1554; or Mr. Anders Christensen, Woodbridge Irrigation District, at (209) 369-6808.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The LMRRP was developed to implement important elements from resource management plans prepared by CALFED, USFWS, and DFG. The goal of the LMRRP is to substantially increase fall-run chinook salmon and steelhead populations, enhance critical and limiting aquatic habitats, and restore riparian ecosystem integrity and diversity. In addition to a No-Project Alternative, which involves the continued operation of the existing Woodbridge Dam and fish passage facilities, four action alternatives are examined, including: (1) Construct new fish passage facilities on the existing Woodbridge Dam; (2) construct a new Woodbridge Dam with operable weir gates and new fish passage facilities; (3) construct a new Woodbridge Dam with operable weir gates and new fish passage facilities, and diversion pumps;