

deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8330, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to contact Mr. Visser.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 5 CFR 1320.12(a) requires BLM to provide 60-day notice in the **Federal Register** concerning a collection of information contained in regulations in 43 CFR Part 4130 to solicit comments on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. BLM will receive and analyze any comments sent in response to this notice and include them with its request for approval from the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*

The Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) of 1934 (43 U.S.C. 315, 315 *et seq.*) the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 *et seq.*) provide the authority for the BLM to administer the livestock grazing program consistent with land-use plans, multiple-use objectives, sustained yield, environmental values, economic considerations, and other factors. BLM administers the grazing program generally by issuing grazing permits or leases that specify allowable livestock use by location, number and period. BLM recognizes that to sustain and conserve resources, minor annual adjustments of grazing terms and conditions as specified on a multi-year term permit or lease are needed to balance actual grazing use with available forage and water. Therefore, rather than relying solely upon the terms and conditions of the permit or leases as a record of the use made during any one year, BLM can require submission of information that more accurately reflects the grazing use. Sections 3 and 15 of the TGA and regulations in 43 CFR 4130.3-2(d) provide that BLM may require permittees or lessees to furnish a record

of their actual grazing use. The regulations at 43 CFR 4130.8-1(e) provide for a grazing fee payment after the grazing season under specified circumstances.

BLM uses this information for two specific purposes:

a. To *calculate the fees due for the grazing use completed*. Fees are due the United States upon issuance of a billing notice and must be paid in full prior to grazing use, except when an allotment management plan (AMP) provides for delayed payment and has been incorporated into a grazing permit or lease. In this latter situation, BLM will issue a billing notice based upon the actual grazing use completed at the end of the grazing period or year (43 CFR 4130.8-1(e)). BLM uses the information collected to bill for grazing use or to make up a part of the allotment monitoring records. The permittee and lessee must keep accurate and current records for the period of time covered by his/her permit or lease. The information collected includes allotment and pasture location of the grazing, the date and numbers of livestock permitted on or removed from the range, and the kind or class of livestock grazed.

b. To *obtain information needed to monitor and evaluate livestock grazing use*. The purposes of the information are to determine if adjustments in the amount of use are needed, or if other management actions could achieve the desired effects. Knowledge of actual livestock grazing use is essential in the monitoring and the evaluation of the livestock grazing management program. Information on the specific use is essential for an accurate and complete analysis and evaluation of the effects of livestock grazing during particular periods of time, as interrelated with other factors such as climate, growth characteristics of the vegetation, and utilization levels on the plants. Failure to collect this information would result in BLM having unsatisfactory data and a reduced capability to make adjustments in grazing use or management.

Without this information, the BLM could not fulfill its responsibility to manage uses of the public land as required by law. The required information is only available from the grazing operators. Because the actual grazing use that occurs is not constant from year to year, BLM requires information for each grazing season for which grazing use is sought.

Based on BLM's experience administering the activities described above, the public reporting burden for the information collected estimates to

average 25 minutes per response. Because of the variations in size and complexity of range livestock operations, some of the 15,000 responses may take a few minutes in one recording session to complete the form, while others may take up to 60 minutes combined through several sessions during the grazing year, with each requiring a few minutes to enter the required data. The respondents include permittees and lessees required to furnish a record of the actual grazing use. The frequency of response is annually. The estimated number of responses per year is 15,000. The estimated total annual burden is 6,250 hours. BLM specifically requests your comments on its estimate of the amount of time that it takes to prepare a response.

BLM will summarize all responses to this notice and include them in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: December 14, 2000.

Michael Schwartz,

BLM Information Collection Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[(CA-610-5101-ER-G032) CACA-40467]

Proposed Right-of-Way for an AT&T Corp. Buried Fiber Optic Telecommunications System and Plan Amendment

AGENCY: California Desert District, Bureau of Land Management.

ACTION: Notice of availability of an Environmental Assessment for a fiber optic telecommunications system from Lemesa, Texas to Los Angeles, California.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 202 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (California Desert District), as lead agency, along with the U.S. Forest Service (Cleveland National Forest) and U.S. Marine Corps (Camp Pendleton) as cooperating agencies, have prepared an Environmental Assessment for a right-of-way proposed by AT&T Corp. for a buried fiber optic telecommunications line and associated facilities. This system, running from Lamesa, Texas to Los Angeles, California, is called the AT&T NexGen/Core Fiber Optic Telecommunications Project ("Project").

The proposed action, which crosses federal lands in the States of California, Arizona and New Mexico, includes an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan which, if approved, will allow an exception to construct portions of this project along existing highways instead of within designated utility corridors on federal lands in Riverside, Imperial and San Diego Counties, California.

The proposed Project would consist of five links or points-of-presence (POP) connecting: (1) Lamesa to El Paso, Texas; (2) El Paso to Tucson, Arizona; (3) Tucson to Blythe, California; (4) Blythe to San Diego, California; and (5) San Diego to Los Angeles, California. The purpose being to construct, operate and maintain a buried fiber optic telecommunications system, including signal regeneration or optical amplification stations located every 40–50 miles, between Texas and California.

Copies are available for public review at Bureau of Land Management offices in: Las Cruces, New Mexico; Safford, Tucson, Phoenix and Yuma, Arizona; and Palm Springs, El Centro, and Riverside, California. In addition copies will be available at the Environmental Office of Camp Pendleton as well as the Descanso Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest. Furthermore, public reading copies may be downloaded from the following website: http://www.ca.blm.gov/cdd/att_nexgen_ea.html.

DATES: Written comments on this document must be submitted or postmarked no later than February 20, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on this document should be addressed to: Stephen Johnson, Special Projects Manager, BLM California Desert District, 6221 Box Springs Blvd., Riverside, CA 92507.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Johnson, Special Projects Manager, at the above address or by phone at (909) 697–5233.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The project configuration, as proposed and including measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts on the environment, is being considered along with a “No Project” and “Utility Corridor” alternative. The BLM has been asked to issue rights-of-way for portions of this fiber optic system that cross public lands.

The California portion of this Project, which as proposed includes an exception to the CDCA Plan to construction portions along existing roads instead of within designated

utility corridors, begins at the Point of Presence (POP) in Blythe, California, and would travel in a southwesterly direction along Highway 78 and Old Highway 80 through the following city jurisdictions: Blythe, Brawley, El Centro, El Cajon, La Mesa, and San Diego. From San Diego north to Los Angeles the route would primarily parallel the coast traversing the U.S. Marine Corps Camp Pendleton. In addition, the route would pass through large portions of unincorporated areas in Riverside, Imperial and San Diego Counties, and besides public lands administered by the BLM, it would also cross the Descanso Ranger District of Cleveland National Forest, the USMC’s Camp Pendleton, as well as the La Posta and Campo Indian Reservations. It would require an urban build through San Diego and Los Angeles, terminating at the POP in Los Angeles, California.

The fiber optic telecommunications system project entails the design and construction of a six-duct conduit system and ancillary facilities to accommodate digital broadband Internet Protocol. Ancillary facilities would include: regeneration stations and Optical Amplification (Op Amp) Stations spaced an average of 50 miles; buried splice boxes placed at 2,500-foot intervals; and marker poles placed 500 feet apart. The Project, as described in the EA, should contribute small to no additional impact to the environment and would operate entirely within previously disturbed and routinely maintained road rights-of-way.

Dated: December 12, 2000.

Alan Stein,

Acting District Manager.

[FR Doc. 00–32205 Filed 12–18–00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[MT–020–1610–DH CBMP]

Notice of Intent To Amend the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and Conduct Scoping Meetings, Montana

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Miles City and Billings Field Offices, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: BLM will prepare an Oil and Gas Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) jointly with the State of Montana (State). The planning area for the BLM will be the BLM-administered

oil and gas estate within the Powder River and Billings RMP areas. The planning area for the State will be potential coal bed methane development areas around the state. The RMP Amendment will be based on the existing statutory requirements and will meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. The RMP Amendment will guide BLM’s oil and gas decisions within the Powder River and Billings RMP areas and help the State evaluate effects of further oil and gas permit applications. The Draft EIS and RMP Amendment is scheduled for completion by September 2001. The Final EIS and Proposed RMP Amendment is scheduled for March 2002.

The public is asked to help BLM and the State identify issues, concerns and alternatives. Draft Planning Criteria to help guide the effort have also been developed for public comment.

DATES: Any issues, concerns, or alternatives should be submitted to BLM on or before January 17, 2001. Public scoping meetings are scheduled as follows:

1. January 4, 2001, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Billings, Montana
2. January 9, 2001, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Broadus, Montana
3. January 9, 2001, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Ashland, Montana
4. January 10, 2001, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Miles City, Montana
5. January 11, 2001, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Helena, Montana

ADDRESSES: All submissions should be sent to the following address: BLM, Mary Bloom, BLM Project Leader, 111 Garryowen Road, Miles City, Montana, 59301.

The public scoping meetings will be held at the following locations:

1. Billings—Lewis and Clark Room in the Student Union Building of the Montana State University-Billings
2. Broadus—Community Center at the Powder River County Fairgrounds
3. Ashland—Multi-purpose Room of the Ashland Public Elementary School on Highway 212
4. Miles City—Room 106 of Miles Community College
5. Helena—Director’s Conference Room #111, Metcalf Building, 1520 East Sixth Avenue

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Bloom, BLM Project Leader, (406) 233–3649.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM and the State of Montana are co-leads for the effort. The BLM’s planning area is BLM-administered oil and gas in the