

stabilized regions in the world. The Sandhills are characterized by rolling, vegetated hills and inter-dunal valleys which are oriented in a northwest to southeast direction. Many shallow lakes and marshes are interspersed in the lower valleys. Native grasses predominate. Wildlife diversity, except large ungulates and their predators, is relatively unchanged since early settlement.

The initial Refuge was 36,920 acres, acquired primarily from one large ranch. Additional lands were acquired between 1932 and 1937. Most lands were acquired or exchanged under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (45 Stat. 1222). Approximately 2,566 acres were acquired under the Resettlement Administration (Executive Order 7027, April 30, 1935), a drought and depression relief program.

The Nebraska Sandhills are one of the few large native prairie areas in the United States that have not been substantially converted to farmland or otherwise modified. Thus, most of the plant and animal species present when settlement began are still present today.

This Draft CCP/EA identifies and evaluates four alternatives for managing Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Garden County, Nebraska for the next 15 years.

Under the No Action Alternative, the refuge managers would continue current management and would not involve extensive restoration of wetlands and grassland habitat, nor improvements to roads, interpretive, and administrative facilities.

This alternative would result in managing grasslands through grazing, using permittee cattle, rest, and limited prescribed fire. The Refuge staff would conduct limited surveys and management for threatened and endangered species, use grazing, fire, beneficial insects, and herbicides to control exotic plants and weeds; maintain the current levels of hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation; stay with the current cooperative agreements and partnerships; and continue the current levels of wildlife and habitat monitoring.

Under Alternative 2, the refuge managers would provide for the reintroduction of a bison herd that would range freely on Crescent Lake NWR. The bison would be reintroduced to the Refuge through a special use permit by allowing a permittee to seasonally graze on Refuge land, following the guidelines of a grazing step-down plan. The public would have visible access to the bison herd, which would provide historical ecology

interpretation. With the reintroduction of the bison herd, the Refuge staff would increase monitoring of fire effects and wildlife trends. Over time, use of permittee cattle on the Refuge would be phased out. The Refuge staff would increase the use of prescribed fire to replicate historic fire frequency. Over a period of time, water control structures would be removed and lakes would return to natural levels. The Refuge staff would monitor and study threatened and endangered species to determine effects of historic management. The control of exotic plants would be done using increased prescribed fire along with beneficial insects and herbicides. The same number of lakes would remain open to fishing. The Refuge staff would continue current cooperative agreements and seek partnerships in bison management. The current hunting programs would be continued.

Under Alternative 3 the Refuge staff would actively manage grasslands using grazing with permittee cattle, rest, and prescribed fire. Water level management would be more intensively implemented. Existing water control structures would remain as necessary for draw-downs. The Refuge staff would increase monitoring, management, and research on threatened and endangered species. Control of weeds and exotic plants would be accomplished by use of grazing, beneficial insects, herbicides and increased prescribed fire. Current hunting programs would continue with limits on numbers of hunters instituted if crowding occurs. This alternative calls for the increase in number of Refuge lakes open to sport fishing and an increase in the fishery management of those open lakes. This alternative also calls for an increase in the levels of interpretation and environmental education. Continue current cooperative agreements and partnerships and seek additional ones. The Refuge would increase monitoring of wildlife and habitats.

Alternative 4 is the Service's preferred alternative that would enable Crescent Lake NWR staff to manage their resources for native birds and wild animals, and to pursue the desire to implement a more natural/historic management regime with bison and prescribed fire as historical habitat management tools.

Under this alternative the Refuge staff would, through a special use permit, reintroduce a bison herd on the 24,502-acre proposed Wilderness Area of the Refuge. The bison will be allowed to seasonally graze on Refuge land. The permittee would be required to follow the guidelines of a Bison Management step-down plan. The Refuge would

increase prescribed fire in this area and incrementally remove interior fences. A five-year monitoring program would be established in this area to document changes in grasslands and wildlife. After the five-year period, the Refuge staff would determine if bison grazing is truly compatible with a healthy grassland ecosystem. If not, they would return to permittee cattle as the primary grassland management tool.

Under this alternative, the Refuge would retain the lakes presently open to fishing.

This alternative includes the following management strategies that would monitor threatened and endangered species use and conduct applied research to determine methods to increase use:

- The Refuge would continue to transplant blowout penstemon in additional sites and protect trees for bald eagle roosts.
- Control weeds and exotic plants using a combination of prescribed fire, beneficial insects, and herbicides.
- Continue current fishing opportunities with an increased emphasis on public environmental education and interpretation.
- Continue current hunting opportunities and add limited waterfowl hunting.
- Current cooperative agreements and partnerships would continue, and the Refuge staff would seek outside funding to implement parts of the Plan.
- The Refuge staff would actively seek a partnering effort in bison management.
- Refuge staff would increase monitoring of grasslands and wildlife with emphasis on evaluation of the use of bison and fire to manage grasslands.

Dated: March 13, 2002.

John A. Blankenship,

Deputy Regional Director, Region 6, Denver, Colorado.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WO-310-1310-02-PB-24 1A]

**OMB Approval Number 1004-0185;
Information Collection Submitted to
the Office of Management and Budget
for Review Under the Paperwork
Reduction Act**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has submitted the proposed collection of information listed below to the Office Management and Budget

(OMB) for approval under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction (44 U.S.C. Chapter 3501 *et seq.*). On August 21, 2001, the BLM published a notice in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 43899) requesting comments on the collection. The comment period ended October 22, 2001. No comments were received. You may obtain copies of the proposed collection of information and related explanatory material by contacting the BLM Information Clearance Officer at the telephone number listed below.

OMB is required to respond to this request within 60 days but may respond after 30 days. For maximum consideration, your comments and suggestions on the requirement should be made within 30 days directly to the Office of Management and Budget, Interior Department Desk Officer (1004-0185), Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20503. Please provide a copy of your comments to the Bureau Information Collection Clearance Officer (WO-630) 1849 C St., NW., Mail Stop 401 LS, Washington, DC. 20240.

Nature of Comments: We specifically request your comments on the following:

1. Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper functioning of the Bureau of Land Management, including whether the information will have practical utility;
2. The accuracy of our estimates of the information collection burden, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions we use;
3. Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and
4. How to minimize the information collection burden on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Title: Onshore Oil and Gas Drainage Protection, 43 CFR 3100 and 3162.

OMB Approval Number: 1004-0185.

Abstract: Federal and Indian (except Osage) oil and gas lessees and operating rights owners must monitor drilling activities of offending wells that may result in drainage situations of Federal oil and gas mineral resources. Respondents are oil and gas companies, lessees, operators, operating rights owners, and individuals.

Form Number: None.

Frequency: On occasion; nonrecurring.

Description of Respondents: Lessees and operating rights owners.

Estimated Completion Time: For ease of reference, this table summarizes the burden items in this information collection request:

Type of analysis	Number of analyses and reporting per respondent	Hours
Preliminary	1,000 @ 2 hours	2,000
Detailed	100 @ 24 hours ..	2,400
Additional	10 @ 20 hours	200
Total	1,110	4,600

Annual Responses: 1,110.

Annual Burden Hours: 4,600.

Bureau Clearance Officer: Michael H. Schwartz (202) 452-5033.

Dated: April 5, 2002.

Michael H. Schwartz,

Bureau of Land Management, Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 02-10689 Filed 4-30-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-84-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CACA-44014]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Proposed Expansion/Modernization of an Existing Wallboard Manufacturing Facility and Associated Quarry Operation

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: United States Gypsum (USG) has proposed the expansion and modernization of USG's Plaster City wallboard manufacturing operations and Fish Creek Quarry operations located in Imperial County, California. Although USG's facilities are primarily on private land, several appurtenances cross public land. Using the U.S. government survey method, the areas within which the existing and proposed facilities are located are generally described as follows: SBBM, T.16S., R.11E. (Plaster City wallboard plant and portion of Interstate rail line); T.13S., R.9E. (Fish Creek quarry); T.13S., R.9E.; T.13S., R.10E.; T.14S., R.10E.; T.15E., R.10E., T.15S., R.11E.; T.16S., R.11E. (narrow gauge rail line between quarry and plant); T.16S., R.10E.; T.16S., R.11E. (water pipeline between Ocotillo and plant).

Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the BLM will direct the preparation of an environmental impact

statement (EIS) by a third-party contractor on the impacts of this proposed project. Interested members of the public are encouraged to identify significant issues or concerns related to the proposed action to determine the scope of the issues (including alternatives) that need to be analyzed and to eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not significant. One public scoping meeting will be held. The location and time of the meeting will be announced in local newspapers or may be obtained by contacting Nicole Riven at 760-337-4426 or e-mail nriven@ca.blm.gov. Comments recommending that the EIS address specific environmental issues should include supporting documentation. Written comments must be received at the El Centro Field Office no later than June 10, 2002. Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the El Centro Field Office during regular business hours and may be published as part of the EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street 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 and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to Greg Thomsen, Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, El Centro Field Office, 1661 South 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Self (760) 337-4426.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: USG's Plaster City wallboard plant has been in operation for over 55 years and is located adjacent to Evan Hewes Highway in Plaster City approximately 18 miles west of El Centro and 2 miles north of Interstate 8. The Fish Creek Quarry operations are located on Split Mountain Road approximately 26 miles north by northwest of Plaster City. The quarry operations are located within designated critical habitat for the Peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*). Water for the facility is delivered via pipeline from the Ocotillo-Coyote Wells Groundwater Basin. Generally, the overall expansion/modernization project consists of construction of new buildings, a