

on a Bureau of Reclamation irrigation and flood control reservoir. “* * * shall be administered by him (Secretary of the Interior) directly or in accordance with cooperative agreements * * * and in accordance with such rules and regulations for the conservation, maintenance, and management of wildlife, resources thereof, and its habitat thereon, * * *.” 16 U.S.C. 715d (Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act). During the comprehensive planning process, management goals, objectives, and strategies will be developed to carry out the purpose of the Refuge and to comply with laws and policies governing refuge management and public use of refuges. Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge is open to public use.

The Service requests input as to which issues affecting management or public use should be addressed during the planning process. The Service is especially interested in receiving public input in the following areas:

—What do you value most about this Refuge?

—What problems or issues do you see affecting management or public use of this Refuge?

—What changes, if any, would you like to see in the management of this Refuge?

The Service has provided the above questions for your optional use. The Service has no requirement that you provide information. The Planning Team developed these questions to facilitate gathering information about individual issues and ideas. Comments received by the Planning Team will be used as part of the planning process.

Opportunities for public input will also be provided at public meetings during the week of May 19, 2003. Exact dates and times for these public meetings are yet to be determined, but will be announced via local media.

All information provided voluntarily by mail, phone, or at public meetings (e.g., names, addresses, letters of comment, input recorded during meetings) becomes part of the official public record. If requested under the Freedom of Information Act by a private citizen or organization, the Service may provide copies of such information.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NEPA Regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, Executive Order 12996, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: March 3, 2003.

John A. Blankenship,

Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY–060–1320–EL, WYW151634]

Notice of availability of West Hay Creek Coal Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Federal Coal Notice of Hearing, Wyoming

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability (NOA) of a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on a maintenance lease for a Federal coal tract in the decertified Powder River Federal Coal Production Region, Wyoming, and notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the implementing regulations, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the West Hay Creek Coal DEIS and announces a public hearing pursuant to 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3425.4.

The DEIS analyzes and discloses to the public direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of issuing a Federal coal lease in the Wyoming portion of the Powder River Basin. The BLM is considering a coal lease issuance as a result of an August 31, 2000 application made by Triton Coal Company, LLC to lease approximately 838 acres (approximately about 130 million in-place tons of coal) of Federal coal near the Buckskin Mine in Campbell County, Wyoming.

The purpose of the public hearing is to solicit comments on the DEIS on the proposed competitive sale of the Federal coal in the West Hay Creek Coal tract, and on the fair market value and maximum economic recovery of the Federal coal.

DATES: Written comments on the DEIS will be accepted for 60 days following the date that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes their NOA of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**. The public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. MST, on April 16, 2003, at the Clarion Hotel, 2009 South Douglas Highway, Gillette, Wyoming. Requests to be included on the mailing list and to receive copies of the DEIS and notification of the comment period and hearing date should be sent to the

address, facsimile number, or electronic address listed below.

The BLM asks that those submitting comments on the DEIS make them as specific as possible with reference to page numbers and chapters of the document. Comments that contain only opinions or preferences will not receive a formal response; however, they will be considered and included as part of the BLM decision-making process.

ADDRESSES: Please address questions, comments, or concerns to the Casper Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Patricia Karbs, 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604, fax them to 307–261–7587, or send e-mail comments to the attention of Patricia Karbs at

casper_wymail@blm.gov. A copy of the DEIS has been sent to affected Federal, State, and local Government agencies; persons, and entities identified as potentially being affected by a decision to lease the Federal coal in this tract; and persons who indicated to the BLM that they wished to receive a copy of the DEIS. Copies of the DEIS are available for public inspection at the following BLM office locations: BLM Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009; and BLM Casper Field Office, 2987 Prospector Lane, Casper, Wyoming 82604.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Casper Field Office at the address listed above during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. 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 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia Karbs or Mike Karbs at the above address, or telephone: 307–261–7600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 31, 2000, Triton Coal Company, LLC, (Triton) filed a coal lease application for a maintenance tract containing approximately 130 million tons of Federal coal covering approximately 838 acres. Triton, the operator of the Buckskin Mine approximately 12 miles

north of Gillette, Wyoming, applied to lease the tract as a maintenance tract to extend the life of their existing mining operations under the provisions of the Leasing on Application regulations at 43 CFR 3425. This tract, case number WYW151634, is referred to as the West Hay Creek Coal tract.

On November 5, 2001, BLM received a request from Triton to modify the West Hay Creek Coal tract. The following lands in Campbell County, Wyoming are included in the tract as currently filed:

Sixth Principal Meridian, Wyoming

T. 52 N., R. 72 W.

Sec. 17, lot:

5(S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$)—10.265 acres

6(S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$)—10.265 acres

7(S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$)—10.3475 acres

8(S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$)—10.3475 acres

9—41.32 acres

10—41.32 acres

11—41.12 acres

12—41.12 acres

13—41.18 acres

14—41.18 acres

Sec. 18, lot:

13(E $\frac{1}{2}$)—21.035 acres

20(E $\frac{1}{2}$)—20.75 acres

Sec. 19, lot:

5(E $\frac{1}{2}$)—20.71 acres

12(E $\frac{1}{2}$)—20.84 acres

13(E $\frac{1}{2}$)—20.935 acres

20(E $\frac{1}{2}$) 21.065 acres

Sec. 20, lot:

2(W $\frac{1}{2}$,W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$) 31.1175 acres

3—41.39 acres

4—41.28 acres

5—41.30 acres

6—41.41 acres

7(W $\frac{1}{2}$,W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$)—31.1325 acres

10(W $\frac{1}{2}$,W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$)—31.1475 acres

11—41.42 acres

12—41.32 acres

13—41.34 acres

14—41.44 acres

Total Acres: 838.0975

The tract as currently filed includes an estimated 130 million tons of in-place coal.

The Buckskin Mine is adjacent to the lease application area and has an approved mining and reclamation plan from the Land Quality Division of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Mine has an approved air quality permit from the Air Quality Division of the Wyoming DEQ to mine up to 27.5 million tons of coal per year.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) is a cooperating agency in the preparation of the DEIS. If the tract is leased as a maintenance tract, the new lease will be incorporated into the existing mining and reclamation plan for the adjacent mine. The Secretary of the Interior must approve the revision to the MLA (Mineral Leasing Act) mining plan

before the Federal coal can be mined. If the tract is leased, OSM is the Federal agency that would be responsible for recommending approval, approval with conditions, or disapproval of the revised MLA mining plan to the Office of the Secretary of the Interior.

The DEIS analyzes leasing the tract as applied for as described above as a separate Proposed Action. As part of the coal leasing process, BLM has identified and is evaluating other tract configurations which add, or subtract, Federal coal to avoid bypassing coal or to prompt competitive interest in the unleased Federal coal in this area. The tract configuration that BLM has identified is described and analyzed as a separate alternative in the DEIS. The DEIS also analyzes the alternative of rejecting the application to lease Federal coal as the No Action Alternative. The other two alternatives evaluate alternate tract configurations considered by BLM. Under these alternatives, a competitive sale would be held and a lease issued for Federal coal lands included in a tract modified by the BLM.

The Proposed Action and Alternatives being considered in the DEIS are in conformance with the "Approved Resource Management Plan for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management Buffalo Field Office" (April 2001), the USDA Forest Service "Final EIS for the Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revision" (May 2001) and the BLM "Platte River Resource Area Resource Management Plan" (1985).

Dated: January 17, 2003.

Alan L. Kesterke,

Associate State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR-110-6332-DQ; HAG-02-0284]

Notice of Availability of the Proposed Hellgate Recreation Area Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 27-Mile Section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River (From the Mouth of the Applegate River to Grave Creek)

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Medford District Office, Grants Pass Resource Area.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 202 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, a Recreation

Area Management Plan and FEIS have been completed for a portion of the Medford District. The FEIS describes and analyzes future options for managing the 27-mile section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River (from the mouth of the Applegate River to Grave Creek) in southern Josephine County, Oregon.

The Rogue River was one of eight rivers identified as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System when the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed in 1968. Designated rivers are classified as wild, scenic, or recreational. The 27-mile stretch of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River Hellgate Recreation Area from the confluence of the Applegate River to Grave Creek was classified as a recreational river.

The need for action is based on BLM visitor use reports that show increases in water-based visitor use activities, a recreation use study, and public scoping efforts, which identified visitor use conflicts, particularly between jet boaters and floaters during the summer months and between jet boaters and anglers during the fall fishing season. The purpose of the action is to: (1) Replace the 1978 Rogue National Wild and Scenic River Activity Plan for the Hellgate Recreation Section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River, (2) provide management direction and guidance on the management of the Hellgate section pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542, October 2, 1968), (3) conform with management direction contained in the 1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, and (4) maintain a mix of river recreation uses and users common to the river since its designation in 1968 as a National Wild and Scenic river.

The FEIS analyzes five alternatives ranging from fewer watercraft and less visitor use to maximum watercraft and visitor use. The Proposed Action (Alternative E) manages the level of recreational use while protecting the environment and the outstandingly remarkable values. The Proposed Action minimizes potential impacts to the fisheries resource and increases fishing opportunities. The Proposed Action also maximizes floating opportunities. Except for commercial motorized tour boats, commercial motorized angling boats, and special boating events, overall recreational use levels would be unregulated and continue to increase until the use limit is reached. The number of permits for commercial motorized tour boats, commercial motorized angling boats, and special boating events is unchanged from the