

Standard and Guidelines made through the Northwest Forest Plan and later adopted through the Medford District Resource Management Plan. Alternative G, the Preferred Alternative, has been determined to be consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan and Medford District Resource Management Plan.

Timothy B. Reuwsaat,

Medford District Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AK-025-04-1610-DO-089L]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) with an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula planning area in western Alaska.

SUMMARY: This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to prepare an RMP for the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula planning area, which includes public lands and resources managed by the Northern Field Office. This action will require a single EIS. The planning area includes approximately 13 million acres of BLM-administered lands in western Alaska and encompasses the area from Point Lay south to the Norton Sound, and from the Bering and Chukchi seas east to the Kobuk River. It includes the Seward Peninsula east to the Nulato Hills. The plan will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and BLM management policies. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns. The public scoping process will identify planning issues and develop planning criteria.

DATES: The public scoping period will begin upon publication of this notice. Formal scoping will end 90 days after publication of this notice. Comments on issues and planning criteria can be submitted in writing to the address

listed below. All public meetings will be announced through the local news media and the BLM Web site (<http://aurora.ak.blm.gov/>) at least 15 days prior to the event. The minutes and list of attendees for each meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days to any participants who wish to clarify the views they expressed.

Public Participation: Public meetings will be held throughout the plan scoping and preparation period. In order to ensure local community participation and input, public meetings will be held in several communities within the planning area. Early participation is encouraged and will help determine the future management of BLM-administered lands within the planning area. In addition to the ongoing public participation process, formal opportunities for public participation will be provided through comment on the alternatives and upon publication of the BLM draft RMP/EIS.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to: Field Manager, Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Planning, Bureau of Land Management, Northern Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99709-3844; Fax (907)-474-2282. Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Northern Field Office during regular business hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, 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 or organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Jeanie Cole by telephone at (907) 474-2340 or via e-mail at jeanie_cole@blm.gov.

Dated: January 12, 2004.

Susan M. Will,

Acting Manager, Northern Field Office.

[FR Doc. 04-2050 Filed 1-29-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-610-04-1220-AA]

Meeting of the California Desert District Advisory Council

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given, in accordance with Public Laws 92-463 and 94-579, that the California Desert District Advisory Council to the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, will participate in a field tour of the BLM-administered public lands on Friday, April 23, 2004, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and meet in formal session on Saturday, April 24, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Saturday meeting will be held at the Needles City Council Chambers, located 1111 Bailey, Needles, California.

The Council and interested members of the public will assemble for a field tour at the parking lot of the Best Western Colorado River Inn at 7:45 a.m. and depart 8 a.m. The Inn is located at 2371 West Broadway in Needles, California. Tour stops will include a dedication of a Route 66 interpretive display and a BLM grazing allotment. Presentations and discussions will focus on current grazing management and proposed revisions to the grazing regulations. The public is welcome to participate in the tour, but should plan on providing their own transportation, drinks, and lunch.

Agenda items for the Saturday Council meeting will include an update on the West Mojave Plan, reports by Council members serving on the grazing technical review team (TRT) and the Imperial Sand Dunes TRT, Council recommendations to Secretary of the Interior Gail Norton regarding the proposed revisions of BLM's grazing regulations, an overview to the Desert Manager's Group annual work plan, and a tentative presentation on the Clark County (Nevada) Habitat Conservation Plan.

All Desert District Advisory Council meetings are open to the public. Time for public comment may be made available by the Council Chairman during the presentation of various agenda items, and is scheduled at the end of the meeting for topics not on the agenda.

Written comments may be filed in advance of the meeting for the California Desert District Advisory Council, c/o Bureau of Land Management, Public Affairs Office, 22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, California 92553. Written comments also are accepted at the time of the meeting and, if copies

are provided to the recorder, will be incorporated into the minutes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Doran Sanchez, BLM California Desert District Public Affairs Specialist (909) 697-5220.

Dated: January 21, 2004.

Linda Hansen,

District Manager.

[FR Doc. 04-1960 Filed 1-29-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Alaska Region, Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

ACTION: Call for Information and Nominations.

SUMMARY: The Secretary's decision to consider offering the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin planning area in the OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007 provides for an 18-month "special-interest" process beginning with publication of this Call. Based on the information and specific nominations received as a result of this Call, a decision will be made whether to proceed with a sale.

DATES: Nominations and comments on the Call must be received no later than April 29, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please call Tom Warren at (907) 271-6691 in MMS's Alaska OCS Region regarding questions on the Call.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The objective of this "special-interest" leasing option is to foster exploration in a frontier OCS area of potential, but high economic cost, without investment of the considerable time and effort required for holding a typical lease sale. The general approach is to query industry regarding the level of interest in proceeding with a sale in the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin that would offer only very small, very focused areas of specific interest for exploration and to request nominations of such areas. The lease sale is being proposed to provide opportunities for industry to pursue the high resource potential of the Chukchi Sea area in conjunction with potential natural gas resources that may extend into the adjacent Hope Basin area. We also request comments from the general public on this special-interest leasing process, including the terms and conditions of a sale. The MMS will consider all comments and nominations

in the decision on whether and where within the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin to proceed with leasing and on the terms and conditions of a lease sale proposal. A decision to offer a nominated area for leasing will depend on a commitment from industry to explore the area leased within a specific time period.

This is the second Call issued for the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin for this 5-year program. The first Call was published in the **Federal Register** on March 25, 2003. No interest was expressed; therefore, the process was stopped and deferred to this year. If no interest is expressed in response to this Call, the MMS will defer the sale for one year and reissue the Call the following year. This process will continue throughout the 5-year program until there is sufficient interest to proceed with the planning steps toward a sale. No more than two rounds of lease issuance in the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin would occur during this 5-year program.

This Call does not indicate a preliminary decision to lease in the area described below. If the MMS decides to proceed with the sale process, the MMS will make the final decision on the specific areas for possible leasing at a later date in the presale process and in compliance with the 5-year program and with applicable laws including all requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the OCS Lands Act (OCSLA). The MMS may adjust the dimensions of a nominated area after discussions with the nominating company.

Call for Information and Nominations

1. Authority

This Call is published pursuant to the OCS Lands Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1331-1356, [1994]), and the regulations issued thereunder (30 CFR part 256 and 30 CFR part 260); and in accordance with the OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program 2002 to 2007, approved June 27, 2002.

2. Purpose of Call

The purpose of the Call is to gather preliminary information, to request nomination of specific areas of interest to industry, and to request comments on the terms and conditions of offering these special-interest lands. The Call also serves to initiate public outreach to assist in preparation of the NEPA analysis for this proposal. This proposal is in keeping with Sec. 102(9) of the OCS Lands Act Amendments of 1978, which states as a purpose of the statute, "* * * to insure that the extent of oil and natural gas resources of the OCS is assessed at the earliest practicable

time." The objective of the "special-interest" leasing process is to encourage exploration in a frontier OCS area that might contain natural gas for potential use in local communities, as well as oil to meet national energy needs. The sale would offer for lease both oil and gas.

We seek comments, information, and nominations on oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development and production within the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin are sought from all interested parties. We also seek comments on the terms, conditions, and economic incentives of a sale in the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin. We strongly encourage industry and other interested parties to contact the MMS, Alaska OCS Region, Mr. Tom Warren at (907) 271-6691, with questions or to discuss interest in the area. This early planning and consultation step is particularly important to this special-interest lands process. The MMS will base its decision on whether to proceed with the presale process and the terms and conditions of a sale on the nominations and other information received in response to this Call. This process will ensure a decision that considers the concerns of all respondents in future decisions in this leasing process pursuant to the OCS Lands Act and regulations at 30 CFR part 256 and 30 CFR part 260. We also encourage commenters to submit comments and suggestions on the "special-interest" leasing process in general using this process.

This Call is being issued in accordance with the OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program 2002 to 2007, approved June 27, 2002. The program offers two sales in the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin during the 5-year program. If no interest is expressed in response to this Call, the MMS will defer the sale for one year and reissue the Call the following year. This process will continue throughout the 5-year program until there is sufficient interest to proceed with the planning steps toward a sale. No more than two rounds of lease issuance in the Chukchi Sea/Hope Basin would occur during this 5-year program.

3. Description of Area

The area subject to this Call is located offshore the State of Alaska in the Chukchi Sea, between Cape Krusenstern and Point Barrow. The Chukchi Sea area consists of approximately 6,155 whole and partial blocks (about 34 million acres). It extends offshore from about 10 to approximately 200 miles in water depths from about 32 feet to approximately 230 feet. A small portion of the northeast corner of the area drops to approximately 3,000 feet. The Hope Basin area consists of approximately