

the suitability of the land for R&PP Act classification, and particularly, whether the land is physically suited for use as an historic site, whether the use will maximize future use or uses of the land, whether the use is consistent with local planning and zoning, and if the use is consistent with state and federal programs.

Application Comments: Interested parties may submit comments regarding the specific use proposed in the application, the development plan, the management plan, whether the BLM followed proper administrative procedures in reaching the decision, or any other factor not directly related to the suitability of the land for management as an historic site.

Interested parties may submit comments regarding the proposed classification or conveyance of the subject land to the Field Manager, at the address listed above, up until May 23, 2005.

Any adverse comments will be evaluated by the BLM State Director who may sustain, vacate, or modify this realty action. In the absence of any adverse comments, the classification will become effective on June 7, 2005.

Michael D. Nedd,

State Director, Eastern States.

[FR Doc. 05-6982 Filed 4-7-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NM-030-1220-BZ]

Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for Potential Reroute of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in Hidalgo and Grant Counties, New Mexico

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The BLM Las Cruces Field Office is initiating the preparation of an RMPA which will include an EA for potential rerouting of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in Hidalgo and Grant Counties in southwestern New Mexico. The RMPA will allow for selection of an alternate route for the Trail that will consider reducing mileage of the trail and reducing agency costs and timeframes associated with development of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. The public is invited to participate in the scoping process to identify issues and planning

criteria to be considered in the development of the RMPA/EA. The BLM will maintain a mailing list of parties and persons interested in being kept informed about the RMPA/EA.

DATES: Comments will be accepted for 30-days following publication of this notice.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to the BLM Las Cruces Field Office, Attn. Mark Hakkila, 1800 Marquess, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005.

It is our practice to make Public comments, including names and street addressees of respondents, available for public review at the LCFO 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 EA document. 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:

Mark Hakkila, Team Leader at (505) 525-4341 or by e-mail at mhakkila@nm.blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM selected a 130-mile corridor for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail through the Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP), completed in 1993. The selected route goes from Antelope Wells, New Mexico on the south to the Continental Divide where it enters the Gila National Forest in the Burro Mountains on the north. Since completion of the Mimbres RMP, the Continental Divide Trail Alliance came into being as the main trail user advocacy group. The Alliance proposes to shorten the route so that hikers can start on the International boundary with Mexico north of the Big Hatchet Mountains. Additionally, the Gila National Forest has changed their selected route so that the Trail will exit the Burro Mountains at Engineer Canyon instead of along the Continental Divide. In order to select a route that meets these new criteria, the RMP must be amended. The RMPA/EA will be prepared by an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists including realty, recreation, cultural, minerals,

and hazardous materials specialists. Additional technical support will be provided by other specialists as needed.

Dated: January 27, 2005.

Edwin L. Roberson,

Field Manager, Las Cruces.

[FR Doc. 05-6977 Filed 4-7-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Minerals Management Service Panel Discussion on Published Natural Gas Index Pricing

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of panel discussion.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a panel discussion regarding Published Natural Gas Index Pricing—A Panel Discussion on Current Issues. The panel will be held on April 26, 2005, in Houston, Texas. The intent of the panel discussion is to bring together some of the leading experts in gas marketing to provide information that will be helpful in answering the following question:

Do the published natural gas price indices in the United States now have sufficient liquidity, transparency, and accuracy to truly represent the value of natural gas commodities in today's marketplace?

The MMS neither endorses nor opposes possible future use of published natural gas price indices as a basis for natural gas valuation for Federal royalties. This panel is being held in conjunction with the Seventh Annual Industry Awards Program, which honors exceptional mineral revenue reporting, commendable corporate leadership practices, and excellent safety records. Attendance at the panel discussion is free of charge. The cost of the awards program and luncheon is \$50, and we encourage you to register and pay online by credit card for the awards program and luncheon. All attendees should register by Friday, April 15, 2005. Information about the event, registration, hotel reservations, and award selection criteria are available at the following Web site: <http://www.mms.gov/awards>.

DATES: Tuesday, April 26, 2005. Panel hours are 8:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., central time. The awards program and luncheon is scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m., central time.

ADDRESSES: InterContinental Houston Hotel, 2222 West Loop-South, Houston, Texas, 77027, telephone (713) 627-7600.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary Williams, Manager, Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Compliance and Asset Management, Minerals Revenue Management, Minerals Management Service, telephone (303) 231-3403, FAX (303) 231-3744, e-mail to mary.williams@mms.gov, PO Box 25165, MS 392B2, Denver, Colorado 80225-0165.

Dated: March 23, 2005.

Lucy Querques Denett,

Associate Director for Minerals Revenue Management.

[FR Doc. 05-6985 Filed 4-7-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Minerals Management Service**

Gulf of Mexico, Outer Continental Shelf, Western Planning Area, Oil and Gas Lease Sale 196 (2005) Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of an environmental assessment.

SUMMARY: The Minerals Management Service is issuing this notice to advise the public that MMS has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for proposed Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas Lease Sale 196 in the Western Gulf of Mexico (GOM) (Lease Sale 196) scheduled for August 2005. Proposed Lease Sale 196 is the fourth Western Planning Area (WPA) lease sale scheduled in the *Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2002-2007 (5-Year Program, OCS EIS/EA MMS 2002-006)*. The preparation of this EA is an important step in the decisionmaking process for Lease Sale 196. The proposal for Lease Sale 196 (the offering of all available unleased acreage in the WPA) and its alternatives (the proposed action excluding the unleased blocks near biologically sensitive topographic features and no action) were identified by the MMS Director in January 2002 following the Call for Information and Nominations/Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and were analyzed in the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2003-2007; Central Planning Area Sales 185, 190, 194, 198, and 201; Western Planning Area Sales 187, 192, 196, and 200—Final Environmental Impact Statement; Volumes I and II* (Multisale EIS, OCS EIS/EA MMS 2002-052). The Multisale EIS analyzed the effects of a typical WPA lease sale by presenting a

set of ranges for resource estimates, projected exploration and development activities, and impact-producing factors for any of the proposed WPA lease sales. The level of activities projected for proposed Lease Sale 196 falls within these ranges. In this EA, which tiers from the Multisale EIS and incorporates that document by reference, MMS reexamined the potential environmental effects of the proposed action and its alternatives based on any new information regarding potential impacts and issues that were not available at the time the Multisale EIS was prepared. No new significant impacts were identified for proposed Lease Sale 196 that were not already assessed in the Multisale EIS. As a result, MMS determined that a supplemental EIS is not required and prepared a Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Dennis Chew, Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, MS 5410, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394. You may also contact Mr. Chew by telephone at (504) 736-2793.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In November 2002, MMS prepared a Multisale EIS that addressed nine proposed Federal actions that offer for lease areas on the GOM OCS that may contain economically recoverable oil and gas resources. Federal regulations allow for several related or similar proposals to be analyzed in one EIS (40 CFR 1502.4). Since each proposed lease sale and its projected activities are very similar each year for each planning area, a single EIS was prepared for the nine Central Planning Area (CPA) and WPA lease sales scheduled in the 5-Year Program. Under the 5-Year Program, five annual areawide lease sales are scheduled for the CPA (Lease Sales 185, 190, 194, 198, and 201) and five annual areawide lease sales are scheduled for the WPA (Lease Sales 184, 187, 192, 196, and 200). Lease Sale 184 was not addressed in the Multisale EIS; a separate EA was prepared for that proposal. The Multisale EIS addressed CPA Lease Sales 185, 190, 194, 198, and 201 scheduled for 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007, respectively, and WPA Lease Sales 187, 192, 196, and 200 scheduled for 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, respectively. Although the Multisale EIS addresses nine proposed lease sales, at the completion of the EIS process, decisions were made only for proposed CPA Lease Sale 185 and proposed WPA Lease Sale 187. In the year prior to each subsequent proposed lease sale, an additional NEPA review (an EA) will be conducted to address

any new information relevant to that proposed action. After completion of the EA, MMS will determine whether to prepare a FONNSI or a Supplemental EIS. The MMS will then prepare and send Consistency Determinations (CD's) to the affected States to determine whether the proposed lease sale is consistent with their federally-approved State coastal zone management programs. Finally, MMS will solicit comments via the Proposed Notice of Sale (PNOS) from the governors of the affected States on the size, timing, and location of the proposed lease sale. The tentative schedule for the prelease decision process for Lease Sale 196 is as follows: CD's sent to affected States, March 2005; PNOS sent to governors of the affected States, March 2005; Final Notice of Sale published in the **Federal Register**, July 2005; and Lease Sale 196, August 2005. To obtain single copies of the Multisale EIS, you may contact the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF). You may also view the Multisale EIS or check the list of libraries that have copies of the Multisale EIS on the MMS Web site at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov>.

Public Comments: Interested parties are requested to send comments on this EA/FONNSI within 30 days of this notice's publication. Comments may be submitted in one of the following three ways:

1. Comments may be submitted using MMS's Public Connect on-line commenting system at <https://occonnect.mms.gov>. This is the preferred method for commenting. From the Public Connect "Welcome" screen, search for "WPA Lease Sale 196 EA" or select it from the "Projects Open for Comment" menu.

2. Written comments may be enclosed in an envelope labeled "Comments on WPA Lease Sale 196 EA" and mailed (or hand carried) to the Regional Supervisor, Leasing and Environment (MS 5410), Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394.

3. Comments may be sent to the MMS e-mail address: environment@mms.gov.

All comments received will be considered in the decisionmaking process for Lease Sale 196.

EA Availability: To obtain a copy of this EA, you may contact the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114,