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Dated: July 14, 2010.

**Pablo R. Arroyave,**

*Deputy Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[LLUTG01100-09-L13100000-EJ0000]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and To Conduct Public Scoping for the Monument Butte Area Oil and Gas Development Project, Duchesne and Uintah Counties, UT

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Vernal Field Office, Vernal, Utah, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to study the impacts of various development alternatives for oil and natural gas resources in the Monument Butte Area. This notice announces the public scoping period.

**DATES:** A 30-day public scoping period will commence the date this notice is published in the **Federal Register**. Comments on issues, potential impacts, or suggestions for alternatives can be submitted in writing to the address listed below by September 24, 2010. Public meetings will be conducted during the scoping period in Duchesne and Vernal, Utah. The date, place, and

time will be announced through the local news media and the BLM Web site <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/vernal/planning.html> at least 15 days prior to the meetings.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- *Mail:* Bureau of Land Management, Vernal Field Office, 170 South 500 East, Vernal, Utah 84078.

- *E-mail:*

*UT\_Vernal\_Comments@blm.gov.*

- *Fax:* (435) 781-4410.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Mark Wimmer, BLM Project Lead, at (435) 781-4400.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This document provides notice that the BLM Vernal Field Office, Vernal, Utah, intends to prepare an EIS and hold a public scoping period. The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis and EIS alternatives. You may submit comments in writing to the BLM at the public scoping meetings, or you may submit them to the BLM using one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above. The public is encouraged to participate during the scoping process to help identify issues of concern related to the proposed action, determine the depth of the analysis needed for issues addressed in the EIS, identify potential mitigation measures, and identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS.

When submitting your comments, please reference the Monument Butte EIS for BLM's recordkeeping purposes. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The Vernal Field Office's Approved Resource Management Plan, RMP, (October 2008) directs the management of BLM-administered public lands within the analysis area. Implementation of oil and gas development in the Monument Butte Project Area would conform to all applicable conditions and requirements in the Vernal RMP.

The project and EIS will encompass approximately 119,830 acres in Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah.

The project is located on lands administered by the BLM (103,912 acres), the BIA-Uintah and Ouray Agency (36 acres), the State of Utah (12,866 acres), and private interests (3,016 acres). Mineral interests are owned by the BLM (89 percent), the State of Utah (10 percent), and private interests (less than 1 percent).

The Monument Butte oil and gas field has been largely developed. The proposed action consists of secondary recovery using waterflood methods and deep gas drilling. Waterflood methods involve the injection of water through formerly producing or new wells into the oil-producing geologic formation. Nearby actively producing wells then extract the hydrocarbons through the formation as the water displaces the oil. In addition to waterflood plans, some portions of the project area along the northwest and southern project boundaries would be subject to step out development (expansion away from existing development).

Integral to the project is the phased installation of a field electrification system in the project area to be completed over approximately 7 years. Electrical power would then be used to run water treatment and injection facilities, centralized tank batteries, compressor stations, engines and turbines at the proposed gas processing plant, and at most well site facilities to power dehydrators, separators, and pump jacks.

The project includes a total of 5,750 wells consisting of: 750 vertical oil wells (to be converted to injection wells for waterflood recovery), 2,500 directional oil wells, 2,500 vertical deep gas wells, 238 miles of new access road, 361 miles of upgraded road, 599 miles of rights-of-way (some collocated with roads), 20 new compressor stations, expansion of 3 existing compressor stations, 8 new and expansion of 6 existing electric water treatment and injection facilities, 12 new and expansion of 2 existing centralized tank batteries, 1 new 50 MMscf/d (Million standard cubic feet per day) centralized gas processing plant, 599 miles of overhead or buried electrical distribution/transmission lines for field-wide electrification, 1 freshwater collector well for waterflood operations, and 6 new 200-hp water pump stations.

The following resources have been identified by the Vernal Field Office as potentially impacted by the Monument Butte Project: Air quality, cultural resources, livestock grazing, paleontological resources, recreation, socioeconomics, soil resources, Pariette and Lower Green River Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, suitable Lower

Green River Wild and Scenic River segment, wilderness characteristics, threatened or endangered plant species, vegetation, visual resources, water resources, and wildlife. This is not an all-inclusive list, but rather a starting point for public input and a means of identifying resource disciplines needed to conduct the analysis.

**Juan Palma,**  
State Director.

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2009-N272; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

#### Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Ouachita Parish, LA

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability: Final comprehensive conservation plan and finding of no significant impact.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of our final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment for Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). In the final CCP, we describe how we will manage this refuge for the next 15 years.

**ADDRESSES:** You may obtain a copy of the CCP by writing to: Mr. George Chandler, North Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 11372 Highway 143, Farmerville, LA 71241. The CCP may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Web site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning/> under "Final Documents."

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. George Chandler; telephone: 318-726-4222; fax: 318-726-4667; e-mail: [george\\_chandler@fws.gov](mailto:george_chandler@fws.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

##### Introduction

With this notice, we finalize the CCP process for Black Bayou Lake NWR. We started this process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on May 8, 2008 (73 FR 26139).

The Black Bayou Lake NWR is a unit of the North Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex. In addition to Black Bayou Lake NWR, the Complex includes D'Arbonne, Upper Ouachita, Handy Brake, and Red River NWRs, and the Louisiana Farm Service Agency Tracts.

Each refuge has unique issues and has had separate planning efforts and public involvement.

The Black Bayou Lake NWR plays an important role regionally in fulfilling the national goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Its close proximity to a major metropolitan center gives the public the ability to participate in educational opportunities that promote wildlife stewardship and to learn about environmental issues.

Black Bayou Lake NWR, established in 1997, is 3 miles north of the city of Monroe, Louisiana, just east of Highway 165 in Ouachita Parish. It contains 4,522 acres of wetland, bottomland hardwood, and upland mixed pine/hardwood habitats. Although the suburban sprawl of the city of Monroe surrounds much of its boundary, the refuge itself represents many habitat types and is home to a diversity of plants and animals. Black Bayou Lake NWR is situated in the Mississippi Flyway, the Mississippi Alluvial Valley Bird Conservation Region, and the Lower Mississippi River Ecosystem.

Black Bayou Lake NWR was established for "the conservation of the wetlands of the nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions" 16 U.S.C. 3901 (b) (Wetlands Extension Act).

The central physical feature of the refuge is the lake itself. Black Bayou Lake, consisting of approximately 1,500 acres, is studded with baldcypress and water tupelo trees. The western half of the lake is open and deeper, unlike the eastern side, which is thick with trees and emergent vegetation. This portion of the lake is naturally filling in. The lake is owned by the city of Monroe, which manages its water level as a secondary source of municipal water. The Service has a 99-year free lease on the lake and some of its surrounding land, constituting a total of 1,620 acres. The refuge owns the remaining 2,902 acres, consisting of upland pine/hardwood and bottomland hardwood forests.

We announce our decision and the availability of the final CCP and FONSI for Black Bayou Lake NWR in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [40 CFR 1506.6(b)] requirements. We completed a thorough analysis of impacts on the human environment, which we included in the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (Draft CCP/EA). The CCP will guide us in managing and administering Black Bayou Lake

NWR for the next 15 years. Alternative B is the foundation for the CCP.

The compatibility determinations for wildlife observation and photography; environmental education and interpretation; big game hunting; small game hunting; migratory bird hunting; fishing; hiking, jogging, and walking; boating; all-terrain vehicles; plant gathering; bicycling; and forest management/timber harvest are available in the CCP.

#### Background

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) (Administration Act), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, requires us to develop a CCP for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose in developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year plan for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management, conservation, legal mandates, and our policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the Administration Act.

#### Comments

We made copies of the Draft CCP/EA available for a 30-day public review and comment period via a **Federal Register** notice on September 20, 2009 (74 FR 50237). We received four comments on the Draft CCP/EA.

#### Selected Alternative

The Draft CCP/EA identified and evaluated three alternatives for managing the refuge. After considering the comments we received and based on the professional judgment of the planning team, we selected Alternative B for implementation.

Under Alternative B, biological potential of historical habitats will be restored and enhanced, with most management actions emphasizing natural ecological processes to foster habitat functions and wildlife populations. We will focus our efforts on reducing invasive species threatening the biological integrity of the refuge. Baseline inventorying and monitoring of management actions will