

requirements for conformity determinations.

Tara Sweeney,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

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Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Competitive Mineral Materials Sale (COC-078119) at Parkdale, Fremont County, CO

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Royal Gorge Field Office, Canon City, Colorado, has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed competitive mineral materials sale at Parkdale, Fremont County, Colorado, and by this notice is announcing its availability.

DATES: The BLM will not issue a final decision until July 13, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Final EIS for the Proposed Competitive Mineral Materials Sale (COC-078119) at Parkdale, Fremont County, Colorado are available for review by appointment at the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office, 3028 East Main Street, Canon City, CO 81212. Please call (719) 269-8500 to request an appointment. The Final EIS is also available online at <https://go.usa.gov/xy6tn>. Click the "Documents" link on the left side of the screen to find the electronic version of the document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephanie Carter, Geologist; telephone: (719) 269-8551; address: 3028 East Main Street, Canon City, CO 81212; email: sscarter@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact Ms. Carter during normal business hours. The FRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM has prepared a Final EIS to evaluate an

application from Martin Marietta Materials, Inc. for a contract to mine 400-million net tons of aggregate reserves located on BLM managed lands, adjacent to their existing hard rock quarry northwest of Canon City, Colorado. The aggregate reserves consist of a granodiorite bedrock that will be mined utilizing blasting, crushing, and screening methods. The mining activity would be conducted on up to approximately 700 acres of BLM lands for up to 100 years, at a production of 4-million tons annually. The aggregate would be used in the production of asphalt and concrete, as well as a source of railroad ballast.

On July 31, 2019, the BLM published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS, initiating public scoping to identify issues through public participation and collaboration with partners (84 FR 37334). Initial scoping with internal staff, cooperating agencies and the public identified concerns related to air quality, inventoried lands with wilderness characteristics, wildlife and plant habitat, visual resources, as well as local and regional economies.

The purpose of this action is to respond to the applicant's request to obtain a renewable competitive contract to sell mineral materials located immediately adjacent to the existing Parkdale Quarry in Fremont County, Colorado. The need for the action is based on the BLM's multiple-use mission as set forth in FLPMA, which mandates that the public land resources be managed for a variety of uses, including mining. Pursuant to 30 U.S.C. 1602, the project would assist in the pursuit of measures that would assure the availability of materials critical to commerce, the economy and national security, and facilitate development of domestic resources to meet critical materials needs.

The BLM published a Notice of Availability on February 7, 2020, announcing the public comment period for the Draft EIS (85 FR 7329). The Draft EIS included alternatives that responded to the purpose and need, quantified the impacts to visual resources and air quality, and addressed strategies to minimize impacts to bighorn sheep populations. The Draft EIS was available for a 45-day public comment period. The BLM hosted a public meeting on February 26, in Canon City, Colorado, and received 145 comment submissions.

The Draft EIS evaluated in detail the Proposed Action (Alternative A), the No Action Alternative (Alternative B) and one action alternative (Alternative C). After the public comment period closed, the BLM prepared a Final EIS, which

reflects changes and adjustments based on information received during both internal and public comment on the Draft EIS. These changes specifically target surface and groundwater monitoring, design features, the mitigation framework, a more detailed performance-based reclamation protocol and revocation of two federal water reserve withdrawals.

In all alternatives, reclamation would be ongoing, following mining activity in an area, as soon as conditions would be feasible. Details of Alternative A include: Mined material would be used for concrete, asphalt, and railroad ballast products and would take place on approximately 700 acres of BLM-administered public lands for up to 100 years; the southwestern boundary of the proposed mining area would border the Arkansas River Canyonlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); surface mining would progress in five phases; mining direction for each phase would be from northwest to southeast, creating a "mine from behind" visual scenario from the Highway 50 corridor. Alternative B (no action) does not include any Federal interests and involves the continuation of surface mining on the existing private aggregate reserves, anticipated to last 15-30 years, with aggregate produced only for concrete and asphalt products. Alternative B consists of three phases, with the mining direction for phases 1 and 2 being west to east and phase 3 being north to south. Details on Alternative C include: Mined material would be used for concrete, asphalt, and railroad ballast products and would take place on approximately 633 acres of BLM-administered public lands for up to 100 years; the boundary of this footprint would not border the Arkansas River Canyonlands ACEC; surface mining would progress in six phases; mining direction for each phase would vary, so a "mine from behind" visual scenario from the Highway 50 corridor may not always be achieved.

The BLM did not identify a preferred alternative in the Draft EIS, but has identified a preferred alternative (Alternative A) in the Final EIS, as required by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations. Alternative A includes the footprint that appears to minimize the effects to visual resources from key observation points, and groundwater in areas to the south, as it relates to the proposed mining. The BLM considered comments on the Draft EIS received from the public, cooperating agencies and internal BLM review, and made changes in the Final EIS as appropriate. Public comments resulted in adding clarifying text and

correcting data discrepancies in the EIS but did not significantly change the alternatives.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6, 40 CFR 1506.10)

Jamie E. Connell,

Colorado State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Fish and Wildlife Service

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L16100000.DS0000 LXSSJ0740000; UTU-
93620; 13-08807]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Consider a Highway Right-of-Way, Draft Amended Habitat Conservation Plan and Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit for the Mojave Desert Tortoise, and Resource Management Plan Amendments, Washington County, UT and Notice of Intent for the Proposed Closure of Certain Federal Lands to Recreational Target Shooting, Washington County, UT

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; notice of ESA Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit application; and notice of intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (OPLMA), and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as co-lead agencies, announce the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider a right-of-way (ROW) application submitted by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) (referred to henceforth as the Northern Corridor Project), and potential amendments to the St. George Field Office and Red Cliffs National Conservation Area (NCA) Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

DATES: To ensure comments will be considered, the BLM and USFWS must receive written comments on the proposed Northern Corridor Project Draft EIS, including potential amendments to the St. George Field Office and Red Cliffs NCA RMPs, the

Draft Amended HCP and ITP application, and the potential closure of certain Federal lands to recreational target shooting by September 10, 2020. The BLM and USFWS will announce public involvement opportunities at least 15 days in advance through media releases, mailed notifications and/or the project website set out in the **ADDRESSES** section.

ADDRESSES: The Draft EIS, Draft Amended HCP, and ESA section 10 ITP application are available for review on the BLM ePlanning project website at <https://go.usa.gov/xw8TX>. Click the Documents and Reports link on the left side of the screen to find the electronic versions of these materials.

You may submit written comments related to the Northern Corridor Project Draft EIS, Draft Amended HCP, and proposed closure of certain Federal lands to recreational target shooting by either of the following methods:

- *Email:* BLM_UT_NorthernCorridor@blm.gov.

- *Mail:* Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Northern Corridor, 345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gloria Tibbetts, BLM Color Country District Planning and Environmental Coordinator, telephone (435) 865-3063; address 176 DL Sargent Dr., Cedar City, UT 84721; email BLM_UT_NorthernCorridor@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to leave a message or question for the above individual. The FRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Replies are provided during normal business hours. If you would like to request to view a hard copy, please call the St. George Field Office for more information at (435) 688-3200, Monday through Friday, except holidays. For information on the Draft Amended HCP or ITP application, contact Laura Romin, Acting Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, telephone (801) 554-7660; email utahfieldoffice_esa@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In compliance with section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA, the USFWS is considering the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) to Washington County, Utah. The ITP would authorize the take of the federally threatened Mojave desert tortoise incidental to covered activities such as residential and commercial development for a 25-year permit term. The application for the permit requires the County to amend their 1995 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to current standards and ensure impacts are

avoided, minimized, and mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. The 62,000-acre Red Cliffs Desert Reserve (Reserve), of which approximately 70 percent is now a National Conservation Area (NCA), was established pursuant to commitments in the 1995 HCP.

In accordance with the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019, Public Law 116-9, 16 U.S.C. 7913, and 43 CFR 8364.1, this notice also announces the opening of a concurrent public comment period regarding the proposed permanent closure of recreational target shooting within the proposed Reserve Zone 6 area southwest of St. George, Utah.

On September 4, 2018, UDOT submitted an application for a ROW grant for the Northern Corridor Project north of the City of St. George, Utah, on non-Federal and BLM-administered public lands across the NCA and Reserve, which was established for the Mojave desert tortoise under the 1995 Washington County HCP. The 1995 HCP expired in 2016 and was extended by the USFWS to allow Washington County (County) to amend the HCP pursuant to Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA. The Draft amended HCP includes the proposed Northern Corridor as a changed circumstance, with Zone 6 as the primary proposed addition to the conservation strategy. The USFWS received an application for an ITP dated January 30, 2015. The BLM is also considering amendments to the St. George Field Office and Red Cliffs NCA RMPs that would allow consideration of and mitigation (Zone 6) for the proposed Northern Corridor Project.

The Draft EIS considers four proposed actions: (1) Whether the BLM will approve a 1.9-mile ROW section of the approximately four-mile long Northern Corridor project that crosses the 62,000-acre Reserve, of which 45,000-acres were congressionally established as the Red Cliffs NCA; (2) Whether the BLM will amend the Red Cliffs NCA RMP to allow for a transportation ROW and/or corridor within the NCA; (3) Whether the USFWS will issue an ITP for the Mojave desert tortoise for specific land use and land development activities in Washington County; and (4) Whether the BLM will amend the St. George Field Office RMP to modify management on approximately 3,471 acres within a 6,800-acre area (Zone 6) outside the Reserve and NCA to offset the ROW impacts. The other half of Zone 6 is owned by the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration.

The BLM is required to respond to UDOT's application for a ROW under