

**DATES:** Written comments on the DEIS will be accepted through the close of business April 30, 1999. Oral and/or written comments may also be presented at three public hearings to be held:

Albuquerque, NM, February 23, 1999, 7:00 p.m., Mountain View Holiday Inn, 2020 Menaul Blvd, NE

Santa Fe, NM, February 24, 1999, 7:00 p.m., Santa Fe Community College, 6401 Richards Ave.

Farmington, NM, February 25, 1999, 7:00 p.m., Jemez Room 1, San Juan College, 4601 College Blvd., Room 7103 (Computer Science Lecture Hall)

A Navajo translator will be available at the Farmington hearing.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be sent to: Lee Otteni, Field Manager; Bureau of Land Management, Farmington Field Office; 1235 La Plata Highway, Suite A, Farmington, New Mexico 87401. Proprietary data should be identified as such to ensure confidentiality.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Christopher V. Barns at the address above, or call 505-599-6338.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The existing leases are found in the upper portions of Hunter Wash drainage in the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area.

The Proposed Action would approve Applications for Permit to Drill (APD's) 13 oil and gas wells (5 Fruitland Coal wells and 8 Gallup wells) on two leases and grant 3 off-lease Rights-of-Way (ROW's) on Federal surface totalling 8,137 feet.

Alternative A would approve the APD's but deny the ROW's.

The No Action Alternative would deny both the APD's and ROW's.

There is no Preferred Alternative in the DEIS. The anticipated impacts to the environment by each alternative are analyzed both in terms of severity and duration. Various mitigative measures are outlined. Several alternatives that were considered but dropped from further consideration also are briefly discussed.

A Notice of Intent was filed in the **Federal Register** on January 27, 1998. Scoping meetings were held in Farmington, NM and Santa Fe, NM on February 24 and 25, 1998, respectively. Any comments presented throughout the process have been considered.

Dated: January 19, 1999.

**Michelle Chávez,**

*State Director.*

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BILLING CODE 4310-FB-M

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[WY-010-1610-00]

#### Notice of Availability

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

**ACTION:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Worland Field Office, Wyoming, announces: (1) The availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Grass Creek Resource Management Plan (RMP), (2) the approved Grass Creek RMP, and (3) notice of off-road vehicle designations for the Grass Creek Planning Area.

**SUMMARY:** The ROD documents the selection and approval of the Grass Creek RMP. The Grass Creek RMP provides multiple use management direction for approximately 968,000 acres of public land surface and 1,171,000 acres of Federal mineral estate administered by the BLM in portions of Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park, and Washakie counties in north central Wyoming.

The draft EIS for the Grass Creek RMP was made available for public review and comment in January 1995. Comments received on the draft EIS were considered in preparing the proposed Grass Creek RMP and final EIS which was made available for public review and protest in August 1996.

Planning and management decisions are presented in the Grass Creek RMP for all BLM-administered public land and resource values and uses within the planning area including air quality; cultural, paleontological, and natural history resources; fire; forestlands; hazardous materials and wastes; lands and realty; livestock grazing; minerals; off-road vehicle use; recreation; vegetation; visual resources; watershed; wild horses; wildlife and fish habitat; and areas of critical environmental concern. Since wilderness values are addressed in other documents, the Grass Creek RMP does not address them.

The Grass Creek RMP is a comprehensive land use plan providing for multiple use. It is a refinement of the preferred alternative presented in the draft EIS and the proposed RMP presented in the final EIS. While the intent and general content of the Grass Creek RMP are not different from the proposed RMP, comments from the public, review by BLM staff, and new information obtained since the distribution of the final EIS have prompted some wording clarifications in the RMP.

This **Federal Register** Notice serves as the notice for the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) designations for the Grass Creek Planning Area as identified in the Grass Creek RMP. The ORV designations are described under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** in this notice.

**ADDRESSES:** Information on the Grass Creek RMP may be obtained from the Worland Field Office, P.O. Box 119 (101 South 23rd Street), Worland, Wyoming 82401-0119, (307) 347-5100.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bob Ross, Planning Coordinator, at the Worland Field Office, P.O. Box 119 (101 South 23rd Street), Worland, Wyoming 82401-0119, (307) 347-5100.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Thirteen protests were submitted to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management during the 30-day protest period for the Proposed Grass Creek RMP. Each protest letter was responded to and resolved by the Director. Resolution of the protests did not result in changes to any of the proposed land-use planning decisions.

The Grass Creek RMP includes the designation of the Upper Owl Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to protect fragile soils, alpine tundra, important wildlife habitat, and scenic values on approximately 16,300 acres of BLM-administered public lands. The management actions for the ACEC include limiting or prohibiting surface-disturbing activities and closing the area to, and pursuing withdrawal from, the staking and development of mining claims.

Three areas are designated special recreation management areas (SRMAs). These are the Absaroka Mountain Foothills (comprising about 68,000 acres of public land), Badlands (comprising about 208,600 acres of public land), and Bighorn River (comprising about 1,200 acres of public land). The remainder of the BLM-administered public lands in the planning area are designated an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA).

In the course of conducting the planning effort and preparing the Grass Creek RMP, public lands along all waterways in the planning area were reviewed to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. No public lands were found to meet the eligibility criteria.

Management of wilderness values is not addressed in the Grass Creek RMP. The BLM's recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior on four Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the Grass Creek Planning Area have been made under separate documentation. These areas were addressed in separate

wilderness EIS and wilderness report documents which are also on file in the Worland Field Office. The decisions regarding wilderness area designations are made by Congress. When Congress makes the wilderness decisions for the WSAs in the Grass Creek Planning Area, those decisions will be incorporated into the Grass Creek RMP.

The Grass Creek RMP includes the following Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) designations: areas open to off-road vehicle use, areas closed to off-road vehicle use, and areas with off-road vehicle use limited to designated roads and trails, limited seasonally, and limited to existing roads and trails. Maps of the ORV designations are on file in the Worland Field Office.

Specific designations are as follows: An open designation on approximately 900 acres west of Worland.

Closed designations on approximately 80 acres at the Duck Swamp-Bridger Trail Environmental Education Area and on approximately 900 acres at the Worland rifle range. In addition, public lands near the Sheep Mountain, Red Butte, Bobcat Draw Badlands, and Owl Creek wilderness study areas (about 52,460 acres) will be managed as closed to ORV use until activity planning specifically addresses ORV use in these areas.

Limited designations: Off-road vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails and limited seasonally on about 68,000 acres of public land in the Absaroka Mountain foothills. Off-road vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails on about 9,000 acres of public land in the Red Canyon Creek area south of Thermopolis. Off-road vehicle use in the Meeteetse Draw Rock Art area is limited to designated roads and trails on about 6,800 acres of public land. In the remainder of the planning area, ORV use on BLM-administered public land is limited to existing roads and trails.

Parties who are interested in and who wish to be involved in future activity planning and implementation of management actions that may involve or affect the resource values addressed in the Grass Creek RMP are requested to identify themselves. Please contact the Worland Field Office at the above address and request to be placed on a future contact list for activity planning and implementation activities concerning the Grass Creek RMP.

Dated: January 12, 1999.

**Alan R. Pierson,**  
State Director.

[FR Doc. 99-1967 Filed 1-27-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-22-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[NM-930-1020-00]

#### Availability of Draft Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, of Land Use Plans in New Mexico for Implementation of New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability, and Public Hearing Schedule.

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management announces the availability for public review of the Draft Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, of Land Use Plans in New Mexico for Implementation of New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. The Draft Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement addresses the effects of adopting statewide standards for public land health and guidelines for livestock grazing on BLM administered lands in New Mexico. When adopted the standards and guidelines would be incorporated into eight BLM land use plans that cover approximately 13.5 million acres of BLM-administered land. This action is proposed in accordance with revised regulations for livestock grazing on BLM-administered lands (43 CFR 4100). Notice also is given that public hearings will be held to seek public comment on the adequacy of the Draft Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, including alternatives and the impacts of those alternatives. **DATES:** Twelve public hearings have been scheduled. All hearings will have an afternoon and an evening session. The afternoon hearing will begin at 2:00 p.m. and continue until those signed up to speak have done so or until 5:00 p.m., at which time there will be a dinner recess. After a break for dinner the hearing will reconvene at 7:00 p.m. for the evening hearing and run until those signed up to speak have had an opportunity to do so. Both oral and written testimony will be accepted at the hearings. A 5-minute time limit will be placed on oral comments, which should be accompanied by a written synopsis of the presentation. Written and oral comments will be equally evaluated in full and considered in the

preparation of the Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Hearings are scheduled for the following locations and dates:

March 08, 1999—Crownpoint Institute of Technology, Crownpoint, NM.

March 09, 1999—Civic Center located at 200 West Arrington, Farmington, NM.

March 10, 1999—Cuba High School, 50 County Road 13, Cuba, NM.

March 11, 1999—Lucero Center in the Espanola Plaza, Espanola, NM.

March 15, 1999—Holiday Inn at Paseo Del Pueblo Sur, Taos, NM.

March 16, 1999—BLM Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 1474 Rodeo Rd., Santa Fe, NM.

March 17, 1999—BLM Office, Conference Room, 1800 Marquess St., Las Cruces, NM.

March 18, 1999—110 South Diamond, Deming, NM.

March 22, 1999—BLM Office, Conference Room, 435 Montano NE, Albuquerque, NM.

March 23, 1999—Otero County Courthouse, Commission Chambers, Room 253, 1000 New York Ave., Alamogordo, NM.

March 24, 1999—Carlsbad Public Library Annex at 101 St. Halagueno, Carlsbad, NM.

March 25, 1999—NM Military Institute, Toles Learning Center, Maybee Room, 101 W College, Roswell, NM.

Oral and written testimony will be accepted at the hearings.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the document must be postmarked on or before May 17, 1999 (closing date for public comments) and should be addressed to: J.W. Whitney, BLM Project Team Leader, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office, P.O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-7115, telephone: 505-438-7438. Copies of the Draft Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement are available at BLM field offices in Farmington, Taos, Albuquerque, Socorro, Las Cruces, Roswell and Carlsbad. The BLM and State have also requested County Managers to make individual copies available for review at each County Manager's Office throughout the State of New Mexico.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** J.W. Whitney, BLM Project Leader, BLM, New Mexico State Office, P.O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-7115.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the above address during regular business hours