

For a period of 45 days from the date of publication of this notice is in the **Federal Register**, interested parties may submit comments to the Bruneau Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho 83705. Any adverse comments will be reviewed by the Area Manager, who may sustain, modify, or vacate this realty action to accommodate the protest. If the protest is not accommodated, the comments are subject to review by the District Manager who may sustain, vacate, or modify this realty action. In the absence of any adverse comments, this realty action will become the final determination of the Department of Interior.

Dated: October 2, 1998.

Signe Sather-Blair,

Bruneau Area Manager.

[FR Doc. 98-27697 Filed 10-14-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-GG-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NM-030-1310-00]

Intent To Prepare A Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Public Land in Otero and Sierra Counties, NM

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an RMPA/EIS and invitation to participate in identification of issues and planning criteria.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, the BLM, Las Cruces Field Office will direct preparation of a Fluid Minerals Leasing RMPA/EIS by Dames and Moore, Inc., a qualified consultant. The RMPA/EIS will address fluid minerals (oil, gas, and geothermal) leasing and subsequent activities (e.g., exploration, development, and/or production) on public land in Otero and Sierra Counties, New Mexico. Planning efforts for the RMPA will determine which public land and fluid minerals should be made available for leasing and subsequent activities, and what requirements (stipulations) may be needed to protect other resource values. The EIS will identify the potential

impacts that fluid minerals leasing and subsequent activities could have on the environment and identify appropriate measures to mitigate those impacts.

The BLM will conduct three public scoping meetings. All of the public meetings will be informal to foster public attendance and input. The dates, times, and locations for these meetings are as follows:

Date	Location
Monday, November 2, 1998, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	Best Western Sally Port Inn, 2000 N. Main, Roswell, New Mexico.
Wednesday, November 4, 1998, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	Civic Center, 800 E. First St., Alamogordo, New Mexico.
Thursday, November 5, 1998, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	Civic Center, 400 W. Fourth St., Truth of Consequences, New Mexico.

DATES: Written comments will be accepted through November 16, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Theresa Hanley, BLM, Las Cruces Field Office, 1800 Marquess, Las Cruces, NM 88005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Theresa Hanley, Team Leader, at (505) 525-4342 or Russ Jentgen at (505) 525-4351.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of issuing Federal fluid mineral leases is to provide the opportunity to explore for and produce domestic resources of fluid minerals to meet the National demand for fluid minerals leasing through the Minerals Leasing Act of 1920, as amended. Previous environmental and planning documents were prepared to address fluid minerals leasing for this area (public land in Sierra and Otero Counties), including the Environmental Assessment for Oil and Gas and Geothermal Leasing in the White Sands Resource Area completed in 1981, and the White Sands RMP completed in 1986. However, large increases in oil and gas lease nominations in 1998 prompted the BLM to review the RMP. It was found to lack information to make leasing decisions commensurate with the increased leasing nominations and potential subsequent exploration and development. BLM is developing this RMPA/EIS to be consistent with current laws, regulations, and supplemental program guidance (BLM Manual Section 1624.2) for fluid minerals leasing and providing the public an opportunity to review the leasing decision-making. The RMPA/EIS will determine where and under what conditions fluid minerals leasing and subsequent activities will be

permitted. The determinations will provide the basis for timing, surface use, and no surface occupancy stipulations that will be attached to Federal fluid mineral leases. The RMPA/EIS also will identify the circumstances necessary for granting waivers, exceptions, or modifications to stipulations. The RMPA/EIS will be a Category 2 Amendment as defined in BLM Manual Section 1617.42.

The planning area will include public land in Otero and Sierra Counties, encompassing 2.4 million surface acres administered by BLM and 3.7 acres of Federal mineral estate.

It is anticipated that the RMPA/EIS process will require 24 months to complete and will include public and agency scoping, coordination and consultation with Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies, public review and public hearings on the published draft RMPA/draft EIS, a published proposed RMPA/final EIS, published Record of Decision, and Plan Amendment. Publication of the Record of Decision is anticipated in September 2000.

BLM public information and scoping will include notification to the public and Federal, state, tribal, and local agencies of the proposed action; identification by the public of the range of issues and concerns to be considered in the EIS; development of planning criteria; and the solicitation of assistance from the public to identify reasonable alternatives. In addition, the public will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the proposed project at scheduled public scoping meetings (see **SUMMARY** section of this notice).

Written comments should address: (1) Issues to be considered, (2) if the planning criteria are adequate for the issues, (3) feasible and reasonable alternatives to examine, and (4) relevant information having a bearing on the RMPA/EIS. BLM will maintain a mailing list of parties and persons interested in being kept informed about the progress of the RMPA/EIS.

Description of Possible Alternatives

A range of reasonable alternatives, including an alternative considering no action as required by NEPA, will be developed and analyzed in the EIS. Through scoping, the public will assist in developing the alternatives. One alternative will be selected as the agency-preferred alternative.

Anticipated Decisions and Criteria

The anticipated decisions will include answers to the following:

- Which public land and fluid minerals should be available for leasing and subsequent activities?

- On which lands are standard lease terms and conditions sufficient?

- Which public land should be available for leasing with constraints (e.g., timing limitations, no surface occupancy, controlled surface use)?

- Which leasing stipulations from existing plans are appropriate and sufficient to protect other resource values?

- Which public land should be closed to fluid minerals leasing?

Preliminary planning criteria for guiding the development of the RMPA/EIS include the following. Actions must:

- Comply with laws, executive orders, and regulations.

- Provide for orderly leasing and development of fluid minerals while providing for the protection of environmental resources and minimizing the extent of impact on the environment.

- Provide for the conservation of mineral resources.

- Provide for rehabilitation of affected land.

- Minimize soil erosion.

- Provide for protection of water resources.

- Provide for protection and management of plant and animal special status species.

- Provide for protection and management of wildlife and wildlife habitat.

- Provide for protection of cultural and paleontological resources.

- Provide for availability of recreation opportunities.

- Protect and enhance visual quality.

- Provide for public health and safety.

- Consider social and economic effects.

Resource concerns to be addressed include lands and access, minerals, soils, water resources, wilderness study areas, air quality, vegetation, wildlife, special status species, livestock grazing, cultural and paleontological resources, recreation, visual resources, and social and economic conditions.

Dated: October 8, 1998.

Josie Banegas,

Acting Field Manager, Las Cruces.

[FR Doc. 98-27640 Filed 10-14-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS).

ACTION: Notice to rescind notice to lessees and operators (NTL) 98-11N.

SUMMARY: This notice announces our decision to rescind NTL 98-11N, Guidelines for Suspension of Production Due to Uneconomic Market Conditions.

DATES: NTL 98-11N is rescinded effective on January 13, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: E. P. Danenberger at (703) 787-1600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We are in the process of updating our NTLs to reflect current technologies, correct regulatory citations, and include a statement on the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. In most instances we are not changing the requirements and information in the superseded NTLs. During this process we updated NTL 92-1N, "Guidelines for Application for Suspension of Production Due to Uneconomic Market Conditions" and superseded it by NTL 98-11N.

The superseded NTL 92-1N was developed in 1992 and was issued under the authority of 30 CFR 250.110(a)(5) which states, "To avoid continued operations which would result in premature abandonment of a producing well(s) or would not be economic." We have reviewed our policy in NTL 98-11N and determined that the regulations in 30 CFR 250.110 are sufficient to prevent premature abandonment of producing wells.

We expect lessees to diligently manage their leases by exploring, developing, and commencing production within the primary term. We will only grant SOPs for a lease when the lessee commits to production and provides a reasonable schedule of activities including measurable milestones. We will not grant suspensions for nonproducing leases solely to wait for uncertain economic or technological conditions to improve.

Based on this policy, NTL 98-11N is officially rescinded effective January 13, 1998, and no further SOPs will be approved under this NTL after that date. All currently approved SOPs will remain in effect until their specified expiration date or production begins, whichever occurs first.

For your reference, on February 13, 1998, we published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (63 FR 7335), titled "Postlease Operations Safety,"

revising the entire 30 CFR 250, subpart A. The proposed rule was subsequently corrected in a notice on March 9, 1998 (63 FR 11385). The comment period was extended once and closed on July 17, 1998. The current § 250.110 on suspension of production or other operations was renumbered § 250.119 in the proposed rule. Our regulatory policy on suspensions of production or operations will be reflected in the 30 CFR 250, subpart A, final rule.

The collection of information we refer to in this notice is authorized under 30 CFR 250, subpart A. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to inform you that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements in these regulations and assigned OMB control number 1010-0030.

Dated: October 8, 1998.

Carolita U. Kallaur,

Associate Director for Offshore Minerals Management.

[FR Doc. 98-27586 Filed 10-14-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Draft Environmental Impact Statement/General Management Plan Redwood National and State Parks, California; Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Pub. L. 91-190 as amended), the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) assessing four alternatives for, and potential impacts of, a proposed General Management Plan for Redwood National Park, California. In deference to public interest expressed to date from local governmental agencies, organizations, and other interested parties, the public comment period has been extended an additional month through November 8, 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Redwood National and State Parks are jointly managed. In addition to the DEIS, a draft Environmental Impact Report/General Plan was prepared concurrently. Copies of the documents and a 15-page summary can be reviewed at local libraries or park offices in Arcata, Orick, and Crescent City; internet access is available at "<http://www.nps.gov/planning/redw/dgmp/redwdgmp.htm>". A limited number of