

Service is seeking suggestions and information from the public and other agencies on the scope of issues related to the proposed withdrawal, including the range of alternatives that should be considered in the environmental review documents required under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Service is also seeking comments on other elements related to the future of the refuge including, but not limited to, habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection, public use, cultural resources, refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. Information on dates and deadlines is provided below.

DATES: Comments should be received on or before March 12, 1999. The meeting dates are:

5. Wednesday, February 17, 1999, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Las Vegas, NV.
2. Thursday, February 18, 1999, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Pahrump, NV.
3. Thursday, February 18, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Amargosa Valley, NV.

ADDRESSES: Comments regarding the scope of the environmental review document and other issue related to the future of the refuge should be sent to the Division of Refuge Planning (ARW/RPL), Fish and Wildlife Service, 911 N.E. 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-4181. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for electronic access and filing addresses. The meeting locations are:

1. Las Vegas, NV—Las Vegas Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 4765 Vegas Drive.
5. Pahrump, NV—Bob Ruud Community Center, 150 East Basin Road at Highway 160.
5. Amargosa Valley, NV—Amargosa Valley Community Center, 821 East Farm Road.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles J. Houghten, 503-232-2231.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background Information

On July 22, 1998 a petition was approved allowing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to file an application to withdraw 5,360 acres of reserved Federal minerals from location and entry under the mining laws, but not the mineral leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights, and 9,459.66 acres of public lands from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general land laws, including the mining laws, but not the mineral leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights. The legal description of these lands is as published in 63 FR 43190, August 12, 1998. A copy of the legal description is

available by contacting Charles J. Houghten at the address or phone number listed above. The public lands and reserved minerals proposed for withdrawal are within the existing boundary of the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Nye County, Nevada. Private lands within the existing boundary are not affected by the proposed withdrawal.

The Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, located in the Amargosa Valley northwest of Pahrump, Nevada, was established in 1984. The primary purpose of the refuge is to provide for the protection and recovery of endangered fish and plants. At least 24 plants and animals that occur here are found nowhere else in the world. This diversity of native life distinguishes the Ash Meadows ecosystem as having a greater concentration of endemic species than any other local area in the United States, and the second greatest in all of North America. Twelve of these species are listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Service believes that settlement, sale, location, entry, and other mining activities would disturb, degrade, or destroy critical surface habitat within the refuge. The purpose of the proposed 20-year withdrawal is to protect seeps, springs, and associated habitats for the 24 plants and animals that are unique to the Ash Meadows ecosystem.

In addition, by Federal law all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System are to be managed in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). The CCP guides management decisions and identifies refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. This planning process may consider many elements, including habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection, public use, and cultural resources. Public input into this planning process is essential. Although a decision to develop a CCP for this refuge at this time has not been made, the Service is soliciting information from the public regarding issues that should be addressed should the decision be made to proceed with the development of a CCP. A formal notice of any decision to prepare a CCP will be made at a future date.

Scoping and Public Meetings

Three public meetings have been scheduled. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for interested persons and agencies to comment on the scope of the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement and issues related to the proposed

withdrawal. Each meeting will have an open house format. A brief overview of the proposed withdrawal will be presented at the opening of the meeting. After this presentation, refuge management, planning, and environmental compliance staff will be available to discuss and receive comments on the proposed withdrawal.

Electronic Access and Filing Addresses

You may submit comments by electronic mail (e-mail) to: r1planning_guest@fws.gov (Please type "Ash Meadows" in the subject line).

Authority

This notice is published in accordance with the regulations set forth in 43 CFR part 2300, and pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), (NEPA Regulations 40 CFR parts 1500-1508) to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues and alternatives that would be analyzed or considered in preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, and other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, including the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Executive Order 12996, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: January 7, 1999.

Dan Walsworth,

Acting Manager, California/Nevada Operations, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ES-930-08-1310-00-241A; MSES 47867]

Mississippi: Proposed Reinstatement of Terminated Oil and Gas Lease

Under the provisions of Public Law 97-451, a petition for reinstatement of oil and gas lease MSES 47867, Greene County, Mississippi, was timely filed and accompanied by all required rentals and royalties accruing from June 1, 1998, the date of termination.

No valid lease has been issued affecting the lands. The lessee has agreed to new lease terms for rentals and royalties at rates of \$10 per acre and 16⅓ percent. Payment of \$500 in administrative fees and a \$125 publication fee has been made.

The Bureau of Land Management is proposing to reinstate the lease effective

June 1, 1997, subject to the original terms and conditions of the lease and the increased rental and royalty rates cited above. This is in accordance with section 31(d) and (e) of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 188 (d) and (e)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thelma Wright at (703) 440-1546.

Dated: January 5, 1999.

Gwen W. Mason,

Associate State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service (MMS)

Minerals Management Advisory Board Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Scientific Committee (SC); Notice of Vacancies and Request for Nominations

The Minerals Management Service is seeking interested and qualified individuals to serve on its Minerals Management Advisory Board OCS SC during the period of October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2001. The initial 2-year term may be renewable for up to an additional 4 years. The OCS SC is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to advise the Director of the MMS on the appropriateness, feasibility, and scientific value of the OCS Environmental Studies Program (ESP) and environmental aspects of the offshore oil and gas program. This ESP, which was authorized by the OCS Lands Act as amended (Section 20), is administered by the MMS and covers a wide range of field and laboratory studies in biology, chemistry, and physical oceanography, as well as studies of the social and economic impacts of OCS oil and gas development. The work is conducted through award of competitive contracts and interagency and cooperative agreements. The OCS SC reviews the relevance of the information being produced by the ESP and may recommend changes in its scope, direction, and emphasis.

The OCS SC comprises distinguished scientists in appropriate disciplines of the biological, physical, chemical, and socioeconomic sciences. The selection is based on maintaining disciplinary expertise in all areas of research, as well as geographic balance. Demonstrated knowledge of the scientific issues related to OCS oil and gas development is essential. Selection is made by the Department of the Interior on the basis of these factors.

Interested individuals should send a letter of interest and resume within 60 days to: As. Phyllis Clark, Program Specialist, Environmental Division, Minerals Management Service, 381 Alden Street, Mail Stop 4040, Virginia 20170. She may be reached by telephone on (703) 787-1716 or e-mailed at Phyllis.Clark@1mms.gov.

Dated: January 8, 1999.

Carolita U. Kallaur,

Associate Director for Offshore Minerals Management.

[FR Doc. 99-768 Filed 1-12-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

Notice of Proposed Information Collection

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) is announcing its intention to request approval for the collections of information for 30 CFR parts 774 and 778.

DATES: Comments on the proposed information collection must be received by March 15, 1999, to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to John A. Trelease, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, 1951 Constitution Ave, NW, Room 210-SIB, Washington, DC 20240. Comments may also be submitted electronically to jtreleas@osmre.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request a copy of the information collection request, explanatory information and related forms, contact John A. Trelease, at (202) 208-2783.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR 1320, which implement provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), require that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies information collections that OSM will be submitting to OMB for extension. These collections are contained in 30 CFR part 774, Revision; Renewal; and Transfer, Assignment, or

Sale of Permit Rights; and part 778, Permit Applications—Minimum Requirements for Legal, Financial, Compliance, and Related Information.

OSM has revised burden estimates, where appropriate, to reflect current reporting levels or adjustments based on reestimates of burden or respondents. OSM will request a 3-year term of approval for each information collection activity.

Comments are invited on: (1) The need for the collection of information for the performance of the functions of the agency; (2) the accuracy of the agency's burden estimates; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collection; and (4) ways to minimize the information collection burden on respondents, such as use of automated means of collection of the information. A summary of the public comments will be included in OSM's submissions of the information collection requests to OMB.

The following information is provided for each information collection: (1) Title of the information collection; (2) OMB control number; (3) summary of the information collection activity; and (4) frequency of collection, description of the respondents, estimated total annual responses, and the total annual reporting and recordkeeping burden for the collection of information.

Title: Revisions; Renewals; and Transfer, Assignment, or Sale of Permit Rights—30 CFR 774.

OMB Control Number: 1029-0088.

Summary: Sections 506 and 511 of P.L. 95-87 provide that persons seeking permit revisions, renewals, transfer, assignment, or sale of their permit rights for coal mining activities submit relevant information to the regulatory authority to allow the regulatory authority to determine whether the applicant meets the requirements for the action anticipated.

Bureau Form Number: None.

Frequency of Collection: On occasion.

Description of Respondents: Surface coal mining permit applicants and State regulatory authorities.

Total Annual Responses: 5,442.

Total Annual Burden Hours: 100,470 hours.

Title: Permit Applications—Minimum Requirements for Legal, Financial, Compliance, and Related Information—30 CFR 778.

OMB Control Number: 1029-0034.

Summary: Section 507(b) of P.L. 95-87 provides that persons conducting coal mining activities submit to the regulatory authority all relevant information regarding ownership and control of the property affected, their