

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

In compliance with NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), we have made an initial determination that the activities proposed by this permit are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Dated: February 13, 2008.

Lynn Lewis,

Assistant Regional Director, Acting,
Ecological Services, Region 3, Fort Snelling,
Minnesota.

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BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY-920-1320-EL, WYW174407]

Notice of Competitive Coal Lease Sale, Wyoming

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Competitive Coal Lease Sale.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that certain coal resources in the South Maysdorf Coal Tract described below in Campbell County, Wyoming, will be reoffered for competitive lease by sealed bid in accordance with the provisions of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*).

DATES: The lease sale reoffer will be held at 10 a.m., on Tuesday, April 22, 2008. Sealed bids must be submitted on or before 4 p.m., on Monday, April 21, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The lease sale will be held in the First Floor Conference Room (Room 107), of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone Road, P.O. Box 1828, Cheyenne, WY 82003. Sealed bids must be submitted to the Cashier, BLM Wyoming State Office, at the address given above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mavis Love, Land Law Examiner, or Robert Janssen, Coal Coordinator, at 307-775-6258, and 307-775-6206, respectively.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This coal lease sale is being held in response to a lease by application (LBA) filed by Cordero Mining Company, Gillette, Wyoming. The South Maysdorf Coal Tract was previously offered on November 28, 2007, and the one bid received at that sale was rejected

because it did not meet the Bureau of Land Management's estimate of fair market value. The coal resource to be offered consists of all reserves recoverable by surface mining methods in the following-described lands located in central Campbell County approximately 3-4 miles east of State Highway 59, 6-11 miles south of Bishop Road, and adjacent to the western and southern lease boundary of the Cordero Rojo mine:

- T. 46 N., R. 71 W., 6th P.M., Wyoming
Section 4: Lots 5 through 7, 10 through 15, 18 through 20;
Section 9: Lots 1 through 5;
Section 10: Lots 1 through 6;
Section 11: Lots 1 through 12;
T. 47 N., R. 71 W., 6th P.M., Wyoming
Section 21: Lots 1 through 3, 6 through 11, 14 through 16;
Section 28: Lots 1 through 3, 6 through 11, 14 through 16;
Section 33: Lots 1 through 3, 6 through 11, 14 through 16.

Containing 2,900.24 acres more or less.

The tract is adjacent to Federal and State of Wyoming leases to the east and north controlled by the Cordero Rojo Mine. It is adjacent to additional unleased Federal coal to the west and south. It is also adjacent to about 540 acres of private coal controlled by the Cordero Rojo Mine. All of the acreage offered has been determined to be suitable for mining except for the main line railroad right-of-way in the far southeast portion of the LBA. Features such as the county roads and pipelines can be moved to permit coal recovery. The Belle Fourche River crosses the LBA, but can be diverted to allow mining. In addition, numerous oil and/or gas wells have been drilled on the tract. The estimate of the bonus value of the coal lease will include consideration of the future production from these wells. An economic analysis of this future income stream will determine whether a well is bought out and plugged prior to mining or re-established after mining is completed. The surface estate of the tract is owned by Cordero Mining Company, Cordero Rojo, Inc., a private individual, and the United States.

The tract contains surface mineable coal reserves in the Wyodak seam currently being recovered in the adjacent, existing mine. On the LBA tract, the Wyodak seam is generally a single seam averaging about 60 feet thick. An area containing no coal trends east/west across portions of section 4 in the southern portion of the LBA. Also, the southern portion of the LBA may have a rider of approximately 5-7 feet thick, which splits off the main seam with interburden ranging from 4-25 feet

thick. Overburden depths to the Wyodak seam range from 60-340 feet thick on the LBA.

The tract contains an estimated 288,082,000 tons of mineable coal. This estimate of mineable reserves includes the main Wyodak seam and rider mentioned above but does not include any tonnage from localized seams or splits containing less than 5 feet of coal. It does not include the adjacent State of Wyoming or private coal although these reserves are expected to be recovered in conjunction with the LBA. It also excludes coal within and along the railroad right of way as required by typical mining practices. The total mineable stripping ratio (BCY/Ton) of the coal is about 3.5:1. Potential bidders for the LBA should consider the recovery rate expected from thick seam and multiple seam mining.

The Maysdorf South LBA coal is ranked as subbituminous C. The overall average quality on an as-received basis is 8404 BTU/lb with about 0.29% sulfur. These quality averages place the coal reserves near the lower/middle of the range of coal quality currently being mined in the Wyoming portion of the Powder River Basin.

The tract will be leased to the qualified bidder of the highest cash amount provided that the high bid meets or exceeds the BLM's estimate of the fair market value of the tract. The minimum bid for the tract is \$100 per acre or fraction thereof. No bid that is less than \$100 per acre, or fraction thereof, will be considered. The bids should be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or be hand delivered. The Cashier will issue a receipt for each hand-delivered bid. Bids received after 4 p.m., on Monday, April 21, 2008, will not be considered. The minimum bid is not intended to represent fair market value. The fair market value of the tract will be determined by the Authorized Officer after the sale. The lease issued as a result of this offering will provide for payment of an annual rental of \$3.00 per acre, or fraction thereof, and a royalty payment to the United States of 12.5 percent of the value of coal produced by strip or auger mining methods and 8 percent of the value of the coal produced by underground mining methods. The value of the coal will be determined in accordance with 30 CFR 206.250.

Bidding instructions for the tract offered and the terms and conditions of the proposed coal lease are available from the BLM Wyoming State Office at the addresses above. Case file documents, WYW174407, are available for inspection at the BLM Wyoming State Office.

Dated: March 6, 2008.

Larry Claypool,

Acting Deputy State Director, Minerals and Lands.

[FR Doc. E8-4891 Filed 3-17-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-670-08-1220-DO]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area in Imperial County, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, USDI.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Desert District, El Centro Field Office, will prepare the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP). The management plan will amend the CDCA plan. The management plan is needed to replace the existing management plan (1987) which has become outdated as a result of the federal listing of and designation of critical habitat for Peirson's milk-vetch as a threatened species, designation of the North Algodones Dunes as wilderness, and substantial changes in visitor use. A 2006 Federal court order remanded a previous 2003 ISDRA RAMP to BLM for further consideration. The 2006 court order also vacated and remanded the previous U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) critical habitat designation for the federally threatened Peirson's milk-vetch. On February 14, 2008, the FWS published a final rule revising critical habitat for the Peirson's milk-vetch.

DATES: The public is invited to submit comments on the scope of the plan amendment and EIS. Written comments must be postmarked by May 31, 2008. Three public meetings will be held in El Centro, California; San Diego, California; and Phoenix, Arizona. The time and place for these meetings will be published in the San Diego Union Tribune, Arizona Republic, Imperial Valley Press, and the Yuma Daily Sun at least 15 days prior to the meetings. BLM intends to complete the management plan under an accelerated schedule by fall 2009. This schedule

will allow BLM to replace the temporary administrative closures of five areas in the ISDRA (**Federal Register:** November 16, 2000—Volume 65, Number 222) with a long term management plan prior to the beginning of the peak recreation use period in 2009–2010.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 2000, the Center for Biological Diversity, and others (Center) filed for injunctive relief in U.S. District Court against BLM alleging that BLM was in violation of section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by failing to formally consult with the FWS on the effects of adoption of the CDCA Plan, as amended, upon threatened and endangered species. In 2006 the court vacated and remanded BLM's 2005 Record of Decision (ROD) approving the 2003 ISDRA RAMP/Final EIS. The order and injunction: (1) Remanded the 2003 RAMP for further consideration by BLM; (2) vacated and remanded to the FWS portions of the Biological Opinion (BO) for the 2003 RAMP; and (3) required that BLM maintain the temporary vehicle closure of five areas to protect the Peirson's milk-vetch until such time as a new RAMP, final EIS, ROD, and BO are completed and filed with the court.

The ISDRA project area encompasses approximately 150,000 acres of public lands bounded to the west by the Old Coachella Canal, to the east by the Union Pacific Railroad, to the North by Mammoth Wash, and to the south by Interstate 8 and the California/Mexico border. The primary activities in the ISDRA include camping and off highway vehicle use. Issues addressed in the RAMP/EIS will include: wildlife and botany; cultural resources and paleontology; water resources; noise; land use; geology and soils; mineral resources; socioeconomics; hazardous materials and solid waste; public health; visual resources; and traffic and transportation.

The following Planning Criteria will be utilized during production of this document:

- The plan will be completed in compliance with FLPMA, NEPA, and all other relevant Federal law, Executive orders, and management policies of the BLM;
- The planning process will include an EIS that will comply with NEPA standards;
- The Plan will set forth a framework for managing recreational activities in order to maintain existing natural landscapes and to provide for the enjoyment and safety of the visiting public.
- Where existing planning decisions are still valid, those decisions may

remain unchanged and be incorporated into the new RMP (or amendment);

- The plans will recognize valid existing rights; and
- Native American Tribal consultations will be conducted in accordance with policy and Tribal concerns will be given due consideration. The planning process will include the consideration of any impacts on Indian trust assets.
- Consultation with the SHPO will be conducted throughout the plan.
- Consultation with USFWS will be conducted throughout the plan.

The tentative project schedule is as follows:

- Draft plan amendment/draft EIS—February 2009.
- Proposed plan amendment/final EIS—July 2009.
- Record of Decision—October 2009.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis and planning process. The scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7) for this analysis will include identification of issues and viable alternatives as well as identification and notification of interested groups, individuals and agencies to determine level of participation and obtain additional information concerning issues to be addressed in the RAMP/EIS.

Comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the El Centro Field Office during normal working hours (8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. except holidays), and may be published as part of the EIS or other related documents. 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. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety. Relevant documents will be available for inspection at the El Centro Field Office during normal working hours. Some documents will also be posted on the BLM internet Web site.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Erin Dreyfuss, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, El Centro Field Office, California Desert District,