

of approximately 672 wells per year using 28 drilling rigs and would be drilled over a period of approximately 20 years or until the resource base is fully developed. The construction of additional new roads, pipelines, and other support facilities would be similar to those described in the Proposed Action, but in some cases more facilities would be needed because of the higher number of wells and increased gas volumes produced. Total new surface disturbance under the Optimal Recovery Alternative would be approximately 42,620 acres, or 26 percent of the total GNBPA.

5. *Alternatives Considered, but Eliminated from Further Analysis*—The BLM considered two alternatives to the proposed project that were not carried forward for detailed analysis. These include a No Further Development Alternative under which no further development would take place in the GNBPA, and a Phased Development Alternative, which was intended to rotate concentrated disturbance activities through smaller, pre-defined areas (subareas), while the remainder of the GNBPA would be less impacted than under the Proposed Action. Under this alternative, oil and gas development activities would be restricted to one of several subareas within the GNBPA boundary. One subarea at a time would be opened to oil and gas construction and development activities for a limited time period, after which construction and development activities would cease. An indicator, such as successful interim reclamation within a subarea, would be required prior to developing a new subarea. Oil and gas extraction and processing would continue (*i.e.*, operational activities) in the subarea, while construction and development activities would move to another subarea. An additional intent is to encourage concurrent and efficient reclamation of surface disturbance. The No Further Development Alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis because ongoing oil and gas development continues on valid leases within the GNBPA as disclosed under existing NEPA decision documents, which are not being revisited under this EIS. The Phased Development Alternative was eliminated from further analysis because: (a) Phased development could not be imposed by the BLM on state, tribal, or private lands within the GNBPA; (b) the BLM would still be required to process reasonable access ROW applications for development of private and state leases within the subareas not currently being developed (BLM Manual, Part 2800.06

“Policy” [D]), allowing owners to develop for the reasonable use and enjoyment non-Federal lands surrounded by public lands managed under FLPMA; (c) phased development could delay benefits to surface owners within the GNBPA (*e.g.*, payments to the Ute Tribe for surface disturbance activities); (d) phased development would concentrate traffic and drilling activities to the active subarea, but production and maintenance activities in the existing field would continue regardless of subarea; (e) under phased development, operators would be unable to return to subareas where construction and development activity has ceased, which would prevent redevelopment of a subarea in the event of a change in commodity price or an improvement in drilling technology; and, (f) concentrated development under a Phased Development Alternative would focus surface disturbance impacts in individual grazing allotments, which could result in rapid reduction in forage and a corresponding reduction in animal unit months (AUMs).

The public is encouraged to comment on any of these alternatives. The BLM asks that those submitting comments make them as specific as possible with reference to chapters, page numbers, and paragraphs in the Draft EIS document. Comments that contain only opinions or preferences will not receive a formal response; however, they will be considered, and included, as part of the BLM decision-making process. The most useful comments will contain new technical or scientific information, identify data gaps in the impact analysis, or provide technical or scientific rationale for opinions or preferences.

Selma Sierra,
State Director.

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BILLING CODE 4310-DQ-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLNVB00000 L71220000.EX0000
LVTF0986020 241A.00; MO#4500011839;
10-08807; TAS: 14X8069]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Cortez Hills Expansion Project, Lander County, NV

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Battle Mountain District, Mount Lewis Field Office, Battle Mountain, Nevada, intends to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cortez Hills Expansion Project in Lander County, Nevada.

DATES: This notice initiates the NEPA process for the Supplemental EIS. We will provide opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft Supplemental EIS.

ADDRESSES: Background information, print and electronic copies of the 2008 Final EIS for the Cortez Hills Expansion Project are available at the BLM Battle Mountain District Office, 50 Bastian Road, Battle Mountain, Nevada, during regular business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Copies of the 2008 Final EIS are also available at the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/nv/battlemountain>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Christopher Worthington, (775) 635-4000, or *e-mail*: Christopher_Worthington@blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM signed a Record of Decision on November 12, 2008, for the Cortez Gold Mines (CGM) Cortez Hills Expansion Project, which is an expansion of existing open-pit gold mining and processing operations in northeastern Nevada. The project entails new surface disturbance of approximately 6,633 acres, including 6,412 acres of public land administered by the BLM Battle Mountain District and 221 acres of private land owned by CGM. The Notice of Availability of the Final Cortez Hills Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement, Nevada was published in the **Federal Register** on Oct. 3, 2008.

On December 3, 2009, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit partially reversed the lower court's denial of preliminary injunctive relief with respect to BLM's environmental analysis of air quality and water resource issues. The BLM subsequently elected to prepare a Supplemental EIS to refine the analysis of potential air quality effects and the dewatering mitigation effectiveness for the Cortez Hills Expansion Project.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7.

Gerald M. Smith,

District Manager, Battle Mountain.

[FR Doc. 2010-17420 Filed 7-15-10; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLCOF02000 L71220000.EA0000
LVTF09C6050]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Over The River™ Art Project, Colorado

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management,
Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed *Over The River™* Art Project (*Over The River™* Draft EIS) and by this notice is announcing the opening of the comment period.

DATES: To ensure comments will be considered, the BLM must receive written comments on the *Over The River™* Draft EIS on or before August 30, 2010. The BLM will announce future meetings or hearings and any other public involvement activities at least 15 days in advance through public notices, media releases, and/or mailings.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments related to the *Over The River™* Draft EIS by any of the following methods:

- *Web site:* <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/rgfo/planning/otr.html>.

- *E-mail:* co_otr_comments@blm.gov.

- *Fax:* (719) 269-8599.

- *Mail:* BLM Royal Gorge Field Office, Over the River Comments, 3028 E. Main St., Cañon City, Colorado 81212.

Please write "OTR Comments" in the subject line of comments that are e-mailed or faxed. Copies of the *Over The River™* Draft EIS are available in the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office at the above address, and on the project Web site listed above. A review copy of the *Over The River™* Draft EIS is available at the Cañon City Public Library, 516 Macon Ave., Cañon City, Colorado; Salida Regional Library, 405 "E" Street, Salida, Colorado; Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) office, 307 West Sackett Ave., Salida, Colorado; and the Denver Public Library, 10 W. Fourteenth Ave. Parkway, Denver, Colorado.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information contact Mr. Vincent Hooper, *Over The River™* Project Manager, at the Royal Gorge Field Office (see **ADDRESSES** above); telephone (719) 269-8555; or *e-mail:* co_otr_comments@blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The OTR Corporation (OTR Corp.), formed by the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, proposes to install a work of art, known as *Over The River™*, on Federal, State, and private lands adjacent to the Arkansas River between the cities of Salida and Cañon City in Colorado. It has filed with the BLM an application for a land use authorization under Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 U.S.C. 1732, and its implementing regulations, 43 CFR Part 2920. Following an estimated 2-year construction period, the exhibit is proposed for a 2-week display and viewing period in early August 2013. The proposed art exhibit is a no-fee visitor event. At the end of the 2-week exhibition period, the system of cables and anchors and other above-ground materials would be removed over an estimated 3-month period. The artists would be responsible for restoring the river corridor according to the standards defined by permitting and approval authorities.

The proposed art exhibit involves the installation of 925 porous, semi-transparent fabric panels, weighing an average of 140 lbs/panel. These panels would be suspended 8 to 25 feet above the water for a total of 5.9 miles in eight locations dispersed along a 42-mile stretch of the Arkansas River. A support structure of an estimated 9,100 steel anchors would be drilled along and into the banks of the Arkansas River to support 2,275 steel anchor transition frames for an estimated 1,275 steel cables that would support the fabric panels. OTR Corp. also proposes to construct two equipment laydown areas totaling approximately 56 acres (acreage includes visitor facilities) and a 4,000-square-foot warehouse/office building. Upon project completion, the warehouse would be donated to a public agency or deconstructed and removed from the site.

The earliest that the project would be exhibited is in 2013. An estimated 344,000 visitors (which includes 100,000 baseline visitors to the area) are expected to visit the Arkansas River canyon during the 2-week exhibition period. An additional 36,000 visitors are expected to view both the installation and the removal of the art. The resulting traffic in the area is estimated to be 118,620 cars during the overall

exhibition period, and 12,862 cars during installation and removal. It is assumed there would be an average of 2.9 visitors per vehicle.

The footprint of the proposed project would encompass approximately 310 acres. The project would be located primarily on Federal lands administered by the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office, but would also be located on lands owned or managed by the Colorado State Land Board (SLB), Union Pacific Railroad, and private landowners; lands leased by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW); and lands owned or cooperatively managed by Colorado State Parks in the AHRA. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Colorado State Patrol (CSP) have jurisdiction for activities along U.S. Highway 50. The majority of the project area is within Fremont County. However, a small portion at the western end of the project is within Chaffee County. Approximately 80 percent of the area in the proposed project would be located in the Arkansas Canyonlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), a BLM-specific designation that recognizes the need for recreation use as well as protection of outstandingly remarkable values.

The BLM Royal Gorge Field Office is the lead Federal agency responsible for preparing the EIS and complying with the requirements of NEPA and other applicable laws and regulations. Multiple cooperating agencies and permitting authorities have participated and provided input in the development of the Draft EIS including the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—which consists of CDOW, Colorado State Parks, and SLB—as well as CDOT, CSP, and Chaffee and Fremont counties.

Considerations for decisions to be made through the BLM's EIS process include:

- Whether to authorize, and under what terms and conditions, the artists' request for use of public lands;
- Which combination of project elements may be authorized if the proposed project is determined to result in unacceptable impacts and the artists' proposed action is not authorized in its entirety;
- Whether some or all mitigation measures identified in the EIS may be adopted or if additional measures may be required;
- Whether the project and its potential effects are in conformance with the Resource Management Plan (RMP), including the Arkansas Canyonlands ACEC; and
- Whether an amendment to the Royal Gorge Resource Area RMP is