

comment, which consisted of a general invective about the U.S. Government and did not pertain to this information collection. We again invite comments concerning this information collection on: (1) Whether or not the collection of information is necessary, including whether or not the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents. Please note that the comments submitted in response to this notice are a matter of public record. Before including your address, phone number, email 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 OMB in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that it will be done.

Dated: November 26, 2012.

William Lellis,

Deputy Associate Director, Ecosystems Mission Area.

[FR Doc. 2012-29151 Filed 12-3-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4311-AM-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLMT921000-12-L13200000-EL0000-P; MTM 103852]

Notice of Invitation—Coal Exploration License Application MTM 103852, MT

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Members of the public are hereby invited to participate with Ambre Energy on a pro rata cost sharing basis in a program for the exploration of coal deposits owned by the United States of America in lands located in Big Horn County, Montana, encompassing 9,474.45 acres.

DATES: Any party seeking to participate in this exploration program must send written notice to both the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Ambre Energy as provided in the **ADDRESSES** section below no later than January 3, 2013 or 10 calendar days after the last publication of this Notice in the *Sheridan Press* newspaper, whichever is

later. This Notice will be published once a week for 2 consecutive weeks in the *Sheridan Press*, Sheridan, Wyoming. Such written notice must refer to serial number MTM 103852.

ADDRESSES: The proposed exploration license and plan are available for review from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, in the public room at the BLM Montana State Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, Montana.

A written notice to participate in the exploration licenses should be sent to the State Director, BLM Montana State Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101 and Ambre Energy, 170 South Main Street, Suite 700, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert Giovanini by telephone at 406-896-5084 or by email at rgiovanini@blm.gov; or Connie Schaff by telephone at 406-896-5060 or by email at cschaff@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The exploration activities will be performed pursuant to the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, 30 U.S.C. 201(b), and to the regulations at 43 CFR part 3410. The purpose of the exploration program is to gain additional geologic knowledge of the coal underlying the exploration area for the purpose of assessing the coal resources. The exploration program is fully described and will be conducted pursuant to an exploration license and plan approved by the BLM. The exploration plan may be modified to accommodate the legitimate exploration needs of persons seeking to participate.

The lands to be explored for coal deposits in exploration license MTM 103852 are described as follows:

Principal Meridian, Montana

- T. 8 S., R. 40 E.,
 Sec.27, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.28, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ and S $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec.29, S $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec.32, SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.34, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
 and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.
 T. 9 S., R. 39 E.,
 Sec.12, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.13, lots 1 thru 4, inclusive, W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$,
 and W $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec.24, lots 1 thru 4, inclusive, W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$,
 and W $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec.25, lots 1 thru 4, inclusive, W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$,
 and W $\frac{1}{2}$.
 T. 9 S., R. 40 E.,

- Sec.2, lots 1 and 2, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
 E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.4, lot 4, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.5, lots 1 thru 4, inclusive, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$,
 SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.7, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.8, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
 NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$,
 and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.11, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, and NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.17, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.18, lots 1 thru 4, inclusive, E $\frac{1}{2}$ and
 E $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec.19, lots 1 thru 3, inclusive, E $\frac{1}{2}$ and
 E $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec.20, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$,
 S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.23, E $\frac{1}{2}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, and
 SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.24, All;
 Sec.25, N $\frac{1}{2}$ and SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.26, All;
 Sec.29, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and
 N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec.30, lots 2 thru 4, inclusive, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$,
 and SE $\frac{1}{4}$.
 Containing 9,474.45 acres.

The Federal coal within the lands described for exploration license MTM 103852 is currently unleased for development of Federal coal reserves.

Phillip C. Perlewitz,

Chief, Branch of Solid Minerals.

[FR Doc. 2012-29224 Filed 12-3-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-DN-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLWO100000, L18200000.XX0000]

Notice of Availability of the BLM's Responses to Public Comments and of the BLM's Environmental Assessment on the Proposed Order of the Secretary on Oil, Gas, and Potash Leasing and Development Within the Designated Potash Area of Eddy and Lea Counties, NM

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: Under the authority of the Mineral Leasing Act, as amended, on December 3, 2012 the Secretary of the Interior issued Order 3324 (2012 Secretary's Order) to address oil, gas, and potash leasing and development within the Designated Potash Area in Eddy and Lea counties in New Mexico. The 2012 Secretary's Order supersedes a previous Order issued in 1986 and corrected in 1987 that addresses these issues. In developing the 2012 Secretary's Order, a draft Order was released for a public comment period that began on July 13, 2012 and ended

on August 31, 2012, 77 FR 41442. This Notice announces the availability of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) responses to the comments that were received during the comment period and the availability of the Environmental Assessment that was prepared by the BLM in developing the 2012 Secretary's Order.

DATES: Secretary's Order 3324 was published in the **Federal Register** on December 4, 2012.

ADDRESSES: The comments that were received, the comment responses, and the Environmental Assessment are available for review at the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/info/potash.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tony Herrell; telephone 505-954-2222; 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508; email: therrell@blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

An area near the town of Carlsbad in southeastern New Mexico contains large deposits of potash, oil, and gas. Oil and gas have been produced from this area since the early twentieth century. In 1925, potash (potassium-bearing salts primarily used for fertilizer) was discovered in this area and has been mined since 1930.

The Secretary issued the first Potash Order in 1939 (4 FR 1012, February 25, 1939). That Order withdrew approximately 43,000 acres of public land from oil and gas leasing to protect potash deposits. In 1951, the Secretary revoked the 1939 Order and issued a new Order authorizing concurrent development of oil and gas and potash reserves within an area comprising 298,345 acres under reciprocal lease stipulations to ensure that the development of either mineral would not interfere with development of the other (16 FR 10669, October 18, 1951). The Order was amended in 1965 (30 FR 6692, May 15, 1965), 1975 (40 FR 51486, November 5, 1975), and 1986 (51 FR 39425, October 28, 1986). A correction to the 1986 Order was issued in 1987 (52 FR 32171, August 26, 1987). The potash area designated by the corrected 1986 Order comprises approximately 497,000 acres, and the 2012 Secretary's Order, published on December 4, 2012, does not alter the boundaries of the area.

The potash deposits in this area occur from 800 feet to over 2,000 feet beneath the surface and are mined by both conventional and solution mining methods; conventional methods require miners to be underground. The oil and gas in the area is found in formations below the potash-bearing formations, so

oil and gas wells must extend through potash formations. If potash mining were to breach a well casing, or if a well casing near a potash mine failed for other reasons, gas could migrate into the mine workings, thus endangering the miners. Additionally, the potential for such a breach could raise the costs of potash mining due to the need to utilize enhanced ventilation techniques and specialized equipment needed to mine in a gas-filled environment. Given these safety risks, it has been a challenge to produce potash and oil and gas at the same time in the same area. This challenge has led to a long history of conflict between the potash and the oil and gas industries.

This conflict has resulted in a great deal of litigation regarding decisions made by the BLM on a variety of potash or oil and gas development applications. Nevertheless, leading members of the two industries have initiated efforts to work together over the past 2 years. A number of productive meetings and discussions have occurred among many of the parties involved in these previous disputes. Additionally, there have been significant advances in the technology of oil and gas drilling that could be used to reduce the conflict between such drilling and the extraction of potash. Further, the economic outlook for both the oil and gas industry and the potash industry has recently improved. The BLM has also worked with Sandia National Laboratories to investigate well-logging technology, gas migration in the potash formations, and standards to use for estimating the mineability of potash and potash cutoff grades. These circumstances led to review of the 1986 Secretary's Order.

The 2012 Secretary's Order

The 2012 Secretary's Order differs from the 1986 Order as described below.

The 2012 Secretary's Order authorizes the BLM to establish "Development Areas" where oil and gas wells can be drilled from one or more "Drilling Islands." The Drilling Island concept was first introduced in the 1975 Secretary's Order. In most cases, a single Drilling Island will be established for each Development Area, but if circumstances dictate, the BLM may establish additional Drilling Islands. Drilling Islands will be situated in such a manner that extended reach horizontal wells could access oil and gas within the associated Development Area. Unless there is a compelling reason for not operating under a unitization or communitization agreement, the 2012 Secretary's Order envisions that the oil and gas leases in a Development Area will be unitized under the regulations

found at 43 CFR subpart 3180 and developed by a unit operator, or operated under a communitization agreement as authorized under 43 CFR subpart 3105. These oil and gas reservoir management tools should lead to more orderly development of the oil and gas resources in the Development Area and minimize impacts to surface resources due to a reduction in the number of drill pads and associated roads, power lines, and other ancillary facilities. Moreover, the resulting reduction in the number and spacing of oil and gas drilling locations where wells penetrate the potash formation is expected to minimize impacts to potash resources and enhance the safety of underground potash miners.

The BLM envisions that a substantial portion of the Designated Potash Area will eventually be divided into Development Areas designed to minimize the impacts to potash mining while allowing for the development of oil and gas resources. The BLM expects that the oil and gas in Development Areas will largely be developed with extended-reach horizontal wells using the most current technology, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

The 2012 Secretary's Order retains several important features of the 1986 Order, including the boundaries of the Designated Potash Area established in the 1986 Order, as corrected in 1987. The Secretary's Order also retains language of the 1986 Order for stipulations for oil and gas leases and potash leases issued, reinstated, renewed, or readjusted in the Designated Potash Area.

The formatting is modified to be consistent with the Department of the Interior's (Department) style requirements for Secretary's Orders. These requirements were changed in 1992 and are recorded in Section 012 DM 1 of the Departmental Manual.

Comments on the Draft Order

The BLM received 28 comment letters during the comment period, including 41 distinct comments. These comments and the BLM's responses to them are available for review at the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/info/potash.html>.

Environmental Assessment

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*, and BLM's implementing regulations, the BLM prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in conjunction with the development of the 2012 Secretary's Order. Based on the EA, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was made.

The EA/FONSI is available for review at the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/info/potash.html>.

Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6, 43 CFR 3164.1, 43 CFR 3590.2.

Mike Pool,

Bureau of Land Management.

[FR Doc. 2012-29389 Filed 12-3-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLCA9300000;L14300000;EU0000;CAS 074589]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Amendment to the Redding Resource Management Plan and an Associated Environmental Assessment, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Redding Field Office, Redding, California, intends to prepare an amendment to the 1993 Redding Resource Management Plan (RMP) with an associated Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the sale of the reversionary interest held by the United States (U.S.) in 5 acres of land previously conveyed out of Federal ownership and by this notice is announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the RMP amendment with associated EA. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until January 3, 2013. In order to be included in the analysis, all comments must be received prior to the close of the 30-day scoping period. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation as appropriate.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related to the Redding RMP amendment and associated EA by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* iemry@blm.gov.
- *Fax:* 530-224-2172.
- *Mail:* Jennifer Mata, BLM Redding Field Manager, 355 Hemsted Drive, Redding, CA 96002.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Redding Field

Office, 355 Hemsted Drive, Redding, CA 96002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Ilene Emry, Realty Specialist, BLM Redding Field Office, telephone 530-224-2122; address 355 Hemsted Drive, Redding California 96002; email iemry@blm.gov. You may also request to have your name added to our mailing list. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM Redding Field Office, Redding, California is providing notice that it intends to prepare an RMP amendment with an associated EA for the 1993 Redding RMP; announces the beginning of the scoping process; and seeks public input on issues and planning criteria. The planning area is located in Butte County, California, and encompasses the reversionary interest held by the U.S. in 5 acres of land previously conveyed out of Federal ownership. The BLM has received a request from the Forbestown Lodge No. 50, Free and Accepted Masons, to purchase the reversionary held by the U.S., in the following described land:

Mount Diablo Meridian

T. 19 N., R. 6 E.,
Sec. 10, lot 27.

The area described aggregates 5.00 acres, more or less, in Butte County, California.

The land described above was conveyed in 1971 to the Forbestown Lodge No. 50, Free and Accepted Masons, a California non-profit association, under the authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926 (R&PP), for use as a public recreation site and meeting hall for the Lodge and public. The land is surrounded by private land, and is not contiguous to any other public land. When public land is conveyed under the authority of the R&PP, the U.S. retains a reversionary interest in the land which could result in title to the land reverting to the U.S. if the land is not used for the purposes for which it was conveyed or if the land is sold or transferred without the BLM's approval. The BLM is responsible for monitoring these reversionary interests in perpetuity to ensure the lands are used for the purposes for which they were conveyed. The reversionary interest in the land described above was not

specifically identified for sale in the 1993 Redding RMP, as amended, and a plan amendment is required to process a direct sale. The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and will guide the planning process. The BLM anticipates that the EA will consider both a plan amendment and the subsequent sale of the land and has identified local land uses and input from local governments as the primary preliminary issue of concern. The BLM anticipates that the EA will include, at a minimum, input from the disciplines of land use planning, biology and archaeology. This plan amendment will be limited to an analysis of whether the reversionary interest in the land described above meets the criteria for sale under Section 203 of the FLPMA, which are the planning criteria for this amendment.

You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria in writing to the BLM using one of the methods listed in the "ADDRESSES" section above. To be most helpful, you should submit comments by the close of the 30-day scoping period.

The BLM will use the NEPA public participation requirements to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 U.S.C. 470(f)) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources within the area potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both the NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA.

The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175 and other policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action that the BLM is evaluating, are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request, or be requested by the BLM, to participate in the development of the environmental analysis as a cooperating agency.

Before including your address, phone number, email 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.