

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****I. Abstract**

The NIWR-USGS National Competitive Grant Program issues an annual call for proposals to support research on water problems and issues of a regional or interstate nature beyond those of concern only to a single state and which relate to specific program priorities identified jointly by the USGS and the state water resources research institutes authorized by the Water Resources Research Act of 1984, as amended (42 U.S.C. 10301 *et seq.*). Any investigator at an accredited institution of higher learning in the United States is eligible to apply for a grant through a water research institute or center established under the provisions of the Act. Proposals involving substantial collaboration between the USGS and university scientists are encouraged. Proposals may be for projects of 1 to 3 years in duration and may request up to \$250,000 in federal funds. Successful applicants must match each dollar of the federal grant with one dollar from nonfederal sources. This program is authorized by the Water Resources Research Act of 1984, as amended (42 U.S.C. 10303(g)). The membership of the National Institutes for Water Resources consists solely of the State Water Resources Research Institutes. NIWR cooperates with the USGS in the identification of the research priorities and the solicitation and review of the proposals submitted to the NIWR-USGS National Competitive Grant Program.

**II. Data**

*OMB Control Number:* 1028-NEW.

*Title:* NIWR-USGS National Competitive Grant Program.

*Respondent Obligation:* Voluntary, necessary to obtain benefits.

*Frequency of Collection:* Annually.

*Description of Respondents:* Eligible applicants to this program are restricted to the 54 land grant universities housing the state water resources research institutes.

*Estimated Number of Annual Responses:* 72. We expect to receive approximately 65 applications and award 7 grants per year.

*Annual Burden Hours:* 3,984 hours. We expect to receive approximately 65 applications. It will take each applicant approximately 60 hours to complete the narrative and supporting documents. This includes the time for project conception and development, proposal writing, reviewing, and submitting the proposal application through Grants.gov (totaling 3,900 burden hours). We anticipate awarding 7 grants per year. The award recipients must submit a

final report at the end of the project. We estimate that it will take approximately 12 hours to complete the requirement for that report (totaling 84 hours).

*Annual Reporting and Recordkeeping "Non-Hour Cost":* We have not identified any "non-hour cost" burdens associated with this collection of information.

**III. Request for Comments**

On October 7, 2008, we published a **Federal Register** notice (73 FR 51645) announcing that we would submit this information collection to OMB for approval. The notice provided a 60-day comment period ending on December 7, 2008. We did not receive any comments in response to that notice.

We again invite comments concerning this ICR on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the agency to perform its duties, including whether the information is useful; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. 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.

Dated: November 9, 2009.

**John E. Scheffer,**

*Water Resources Research Act Program Coordinator.*

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**BILLING CODE 4311-AM-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Minerals Management Service**

**Notice of Availability of the Proposed Notice of Sale (NOS) for Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Lease Sale 213 in the Central Planning Area (CPA) in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM)**

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the proposed NOS for proposed Sale 213.

**SUMMARY:** The MMS announces the availability of the proposed NOS for proposed Sale 213 in the CPA. This Notice is published pursuant to 30 CFR 256.29(c) as a matter of information to the public. With regard to oil and gas leasing on the OCS, the Secretary of the Interior, pursuant to section 19 of the OCS Lands Act, provides the affected states the opportunity to review the proposed Notice. The proposed Notice sets forth the proposed terms and conditions of the sale, including minimum bids, royalty rates, and rentals.

**DATES:** Comments on the size, timing, or location of proposed Sale 213 are due from the affected states within 60 days following their receipt of the proposed Notice. The final NOS will be published in the **Federal Register** at least 30 days prior to the date of bid opening. Bid opening is currently scheduled for March 17, 2010.

Please address any comments or questions related to the proposed changes to the lease terms as presented below to Dr. Marshall Rose, MMS, Chief, Economics Division, at (703) 787-1536 or [marshall.rose@mms.gov](mailto:marshall.rose@mms.gov) within 30 days.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The MMS will use the recently revised Form MMS-2005 (October 2009) to convey leases. The form is available on the Internet at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/mmsforms/FormMMS-2005.pdf>.

The proposed NOS for Sale 213 and a "Proposed Notice of Sale Package" containing information essential to potential bidders may be obtained from the Public Information Unit, Gulf of Mexico Region, Minerals Management Service, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, Telephone: (504) 736-2519.

The MMS is accepting comments on the proposed revisions of the initial lease terms for blocks in water depths of 400 to less than 800 meters and 800 meters to less than 1600 meters. The proposed 5+3 term in 400 to less than 800 meters supersedes and replaces the previous 8-year lease term provisions for these water depths as provided by regulations at 30 CFR 256.37(a)(3) where commencement of an exploratory well is required within the first 5 years of the initial 8-year term to avoid lease cancellation. The 10-year initial lease term in 800 to less than 1600 meters is proposed to be changed to a 7-year initial lease term (commencement of an exploratory well within the initial

primary lease term would extend the lease term to 10 years). Please address any comments or questions related to this matter to Dr. Marshall Rose, MMS, Chief, Economics Division, at (703) 787-1536 or [marshall.rose@mms.gov](mailto:marshall.rose@mms.gov) within 30 days.

Dated: October 30, 2009.

**S. Elizabeth Birnbaum,**

Director, Minerals Management Service.

[FR Doc. E9-27489 Filed 11-13-09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-MR-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Minerals Management Service

#### Gulf of Mexico, Outer Continental Shelf, Central Planning Area, Oil and Gas Lease Sale 213 (2010) Environmental Assessment

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of an environmental assessment.

**SUMMARY:** The Minerals Management Service (MMS) is issuing this notice to advise the public, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*, that MMS has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for proposed Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas Lease Sale 213 in the Central Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Planning Area (Lease Sale 213) scheduled for March 2010. The preparation of this EA is an important step in the decision process for Lease Sale 213. The proposal for Lease Sale 213 was identified by the Call for Information and Nominations published in the **Federal Register** on October 9, 2008, and was analyzed in the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2007–2012; Western Planning Area Sales 204, 207, 210, 215, and 218; Central Planning Area Sales 205, 206, 208, 213, 216, and 222—Final Environmental Impact Statement; Volumes I and II* (Multisale EIS, OCS EIS/EA MMS 2007–018), and in the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2009–2012; Central Planning Area Sales 208, 213, 216, and 222; Western Planning Area Sales 210, 215, and 218—Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (Supplemental EIS, OCS EIS/EA MMS 2008–041).

This EA for proposed Lease Sale 213 analyzed the potential environmental effects of the proposed lease sale and its alternatives (excluding the unleased blocks near biologically sensitive topographic features; excluding the unleased blocks within 15 miles of the

Baldwin County, Alabama, coast; and no action) based on any new information regarding potential impacts and issues that were not available at the time the Supplemental EIS was prepared. This EA for proposed Lease Sale 213 also examined the potential environmental effects of the addition of two small areas within the Central Planning Area (CPA), located greater than 100 miles from the coasts of Alabama and Florida, that were not previously examined by the Supplemental EIS (OCS EIS/EA MMS 2008–041) or Multisale EIS (OCS EIS/EA MMS 2007–018) but that were included in the *OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2007–2012* (5-Year Program).

No new significant impacts were identified for proposed Lease Sale 213 that were not already assessed in the Multisale EIS or Supplemental EIS. As a result, MMS determined that an additional Supplemental EIS is not required and prepared a Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Bruce Baird, Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, MS 5410, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394. You may also contact Mr. Baird by telephone at (504) 731–1489.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In April 2007, MMS published a Multisale EIS that addressed 11 proposed Federal actions that would offer for lease areas on the GOM OCS that may contain economically recoverable oil and gas resources. Federal regulations allow for several related or similar proposals to be analyzed in one EIS (40 CFR 1502.4). Since each proposed lease sale and its projected activities are very similar each year for each planning area, a single EIS was prepared for the 11 Western Planning Area (WPA) and CPA lease sales scheduled in the proposed 5-Year Program. The Multisale EIS (OCS EIS/EA MMS 2007–018) addressed WPA Sale 204 in 2007, Sale 207 in 2008, Sale 210 in 2009, Sale 215 in 2010, and Sale 218 in 2011; and CPA Sale 205 in 2007, Sale 206 in 2008, Sale 208 in 2009, Sale 213 in 2010, Sale 216 in 2011, and Sale 222 in 2012. However, the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 repealed the Congressional moratorium on approximately 5.8 million acres located in the southeastern part of the CPA. Therefore, it was necessary to prepare additional NEPA documentation to address the MMS proposal to expand the CPA by the 5.8 million acre area. A Supplemental EIS was prepared for the remaining seven CPA and WPA lease sales scheduled in

the 5-Year Program. In September 2008, MMS published a Supplemental EIS (OCS EIS/EA MMS 2008–041) that addressed seven proposed Federal actions that would offer for lease areas on the GOM OCS that may contain economically recoverable oil and gas resources. An additional NEPA review (an EA) was conducted for proposed Lease Sale 213 to address any new information relevant to the proposed lease sale. Additional NEPA reviews will also be conducted prior to decisions on each of the four subsequent proposed lease sales. The purpose of these EAs is to determine whether to prepare a FONNSI or a Supplemental EIS. For each proposed lease sale, MMS prepares a Consistency Determination (CD) to determine whether the lease sale is consistent with each affected state's federally approved, coastal zone management program. Finally, MMS solicits comments via the Proposed Notice of Sale (NOS) from the governors of the affected states on the size, timing, and location of the lease sale. The tentative schedule for the prelease decision process for Lease Sale 213 is as follows: CDs sent to affected states, October 2009; Proposed NOS sent to governors of the affected states, November 2009; Final NOS published in the **Federal Register**, February 2010; and Lease Sale 213, March 2010.

**Public Comments:** Within 30 days of this Notice's publication, interested parties are requested to send comments on this EA/FONNSI. Comments may be submitted in one of the following two ways:

1. In written form enclosed in an envelope labeled "Comments on CPA Lease Sale 213 EA" and mailed (or hand carried) to the Regional Supervisor, Leasing and Environment (MS 5410), Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394.

2. Electronically to the MMS e-mail address: [environment@mms.gov](mailto:environment@mms.gov).

All comments received will be considered in the decisionmaking process for proposed Lease Sale 213.

**EA Availability:** To obtain a copy of this EA, you may contact the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Attention: Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 114, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394 (1–800–200–GULF). You may also view this EA on the MMS Web site at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/regulate/enviro/nepa/nepaprocess.html>.