

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**U.S. Geological Survey****[GX12LC00BM6P2BB FY12/13]****Agency Information Collection
Activities: Comment Request****AGENCY:** U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Interior.**ACTION:** Notice of an extension of an information collection (1028–0082).

SUMMARY: To comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), we are notifying the public that we will submit to OMB an information collection request (ICR) to renew approval of the paperwork requirements for “Bird Banding Lab (4 USGS forms).” This notice provides the public and other Federal agencies an opportunity to comment on the paperwork burden of this form. This collection is scheduled to expire on November 30, 2012.

DATES: You must submit comments on or before September 11, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Please send your comments concerning the IC to the USGS to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, Shari Baloch, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive MS 807, Reston, VA 20192 (mail); 703–648–7199 (fax); or smbaloch@usgs.gov (email). Use Information Collection Number 1028–0082 in the subject line.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request additional information about this ICR, contact Bruce Peterjohn, (301) 497–5646 (phone) or bpeterjohn@usgs.gov (email).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Bird Banding Laboratory.

OMB Control Number: 1028–0082.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: The USGS Bird Banding Laboratory is responsible for monitoring the trapping and marking of wild migratory birds by persons holding Federal permits. The Bird Banding laboratory collects information using three forms: (1) The Application for Federal Bird Marking and Salvage Permit, (2) The Bird Banding Permit Renewal Form, (3) The Bird Banding Recovery Report, and one electronic database, *Bandit*.

We will protect information from respondents considered proprietary under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and its implementing regulations (43 CFR part 2), and under regulations at 30 CFR 250.197, “Data and information to be made available to the public or for limited inspection.” Responses are voluntary. No questions of a “sensitive” nature are asked.

Affected Public: General Public.

Respondent Obligation: Voluntary.

Frequency of Collection: On occasion.

Estimated Number and Description of Respondents: 152,500 individuals encountering a banded bird and volunteer bird banders.

Annual Burden Hours: 28,150 hours (300 hours for permit applications, 100 hours for renewals, 4,250 hours for banding recovery reports, and 23,500 hours for the *Bandit* software).

Estimated Annual Reporting and Recordkeeping “Hour” Burden: The currently approved “hour” burden for this collection is 28,048 hours. We estimate the time to complete each form is: 30 minutes for the Permit Application form, 2 minutes for Bird Banding Permit renewal form, 5 minutes for Recovery Report form, and 4 hours for the *Bandit* software.

Estimated Reporting and Recordkeeping “Non-Hour Cost” Burden: We have not identified any “non-hour cost” burdens associated with this collection of information.

Public Disclosure Statement: The PRA (44 U.S.C. 3501, et seq.) provides that an agency may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Until OMB approves a collection of information, you are not obligated to respond.

Comments: We are soliciting comments as to: (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) how to enhance the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) how to minimize the burden on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

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: July 2, 2012.

Anne Kinsinger,

Associate Director for Ecosystems, USGS.

[FR Doc. 2012–17088 Filed 7–12–12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4311–AM–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management****[LLNM910000 L13100000.EJ0000]****Notice of Availability of the Draft Order of the Secretary on Oil and Gas and Potash Development Within the Designated Potash Area, 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, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a draft Order of the Secretary of the Interior (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 draft Secretary’s Order would supersede the current Secretary’s Order that addresses those issues. By this notice, the BLM announces the opening of a 30-day public comment period regarding the draft Secretary’s Order. The revised guidelines in the draft Secretary’s Order are designed to further promote the efficient development of potash, oil, and gas resources, while minimizing conflict between the industries and ensuring the safety of operations. Among other benefits, the revised guidelines are expected to enhance the safety of underground potash miners and allow for full development of oil and gas leaseholds with fewer environmental impacts.

DATES: To ensure that comments will be considered, the BLM must receive written comments on the draft Secretary’s Order within 30 days following the date this Notice of Availability is published in the **Federal Register**.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments related to the draft Secretary’s Order by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* therrell@blm.gov;
- *Fax:* 505–954–2115; or
- *Mail:* Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office, 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87508.

The draft Secretary’s Order is available at the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/info/potash.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tony Herrell, Deputy State Director, Mineral Resources; telephone 505-954-2222; address 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87508; email: therrell@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: An area near the town of Carlsbad in southeastern New Mexico has large deposits of potash, oil, and gas. Oil and gas have been produced from this area since the early twentieth century. Potash (potassium bearing salts primarily used for fertilizer) was discovered in this area in 1925 and has been mined since 1930.

The Secretarial Potash Order was first issued by the Department of the Interior (Department) in 1939 (4 FR 1012, February 25, 1939). That Order withdrew 43,000 acres of public land from oil and gas leasing in order to protect potash deposits. The Order was amended in 1951 (16 FR 10699, October 18, 1951) to allow for multiple mineral development in a larger area and established special lease terms for use in both potash leases and oil and gas leases. Such lease terms were designed to facilitate the protection of mineral resources and the safety of miners. The Order was also 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 draft Order would 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 breached a well casing, or if a well casing near a potash mine failed for other reasons, gas could enter the mine workings, thus endangering the miners. Additionally, such a breach would raise the costs of potash mining due to the need for enhanced ventilation

techniques and specialized equipment needed to mine in a gassy environment. Accordingly, given these safety risks, while potash and oil and gas are found in the same area, they cannot readily be produced at the same time. Thus, there has been a long history of conflict between the potash and the oil and gas industries.

This conflict has resulted in a great deal of litigation in this area regarding decisions made by the BLM on a variety of development applications. Nevertheless, over the past several years, the two industries have initiated efforts to work together. There have been productive meetings and discussions between 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. All of these factors have combined to encourage coordination between these two industries. 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 have led to this current review of the 1986 Secretary's Order.

The draft Secretary's Order differs from the 1986 Order in several important ways. First, the formatting is modified to be consistent with the Department's style requirements for Secretary's Orders. These requirements were changed in 1992. See 012 DM 1 in the Departmental Manual.

Next, the draft Secretary's Order is built on a foundation of "co-development." This new term is used to describe concurrent development of potash and oil and gas from the Designated Potash Area through a cooperative effort between the industries under this draft Secretary's Order.

Next, the draft Secretary's Order authorizes the BLM to establish "Development Areas." Development Areas are blocks of Federal oil and gas leases, to be identified by the BLM, that could be developed as a unit from one or more "Drilling Islands." The draft Secretary's Order envisions that the oil and gas leases in a Development Area would 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. This would lead to more orderly development of the oil and gas resources in the Development Area and minimize impacts to surface resources and potash resources.

The draft Secretary's Order also defines new terms for classifying lands with regard to their potash values. "Barren Areas" are defined as lands within the designated Potash Area where sufficient data is available to establish that the area lacks mineable potash resources. "Unknown Areas" are areas within the Designated Potash Area where there is an absence of data to classify the potash mineralization of the lands. While Barren Areas may be preferred locations for Drilling Islands, Unknown Areas may warrant protection from oil and gas drilling until such time as data is available to properly classify the potash mineralization.

It is envisioned that the majority 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. It is intended that Development Areas will be developed with extended reach horizontal wells using the most current technology, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

As described in the draft Secretary's Order, wells would be drilled from a Drilling Island established within the Development Area. In most cases, a single Drilling Island would be established for each Development Area. However, when circumstances dictate, BLM could establish additional Drilling Islands. Drilling Islands would be situated in such a manner that extended-reach horizontal wells could access oil and gas within the associated Development Areas. Under the draft Secretary's Order, in areas leased for potash or containing "Measured Reserves" (i.e., areas where potash is known to exist in sufficient thickness and quality to be mineable), the Development Areas would generally be larger, potentially requiring the most aggressive use of extended-reach horizontal wells. In other areas, Development Areas could be smaller, and the use of extended-reach horizontal wells would likely be less.

By further utilizing a drilling island concept for oil and gas development that was first introduced in the 1986 Secretary's Order, full development of oil and gas leaseholds would occur with less impact to the environment because of the reduction in the number of drill pads and associated roads, power lines, and other ancillary facilities required to develop the oil and gas resource. The safety of the underground potash miners

would also be enhanced by a reduction in the number and spacing of oil and gas drilling locations where wells penetrate the potash formation.

The draft 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 draft Secretary's Order also retains language of the 1986 Order for special terms and conditions for oil and gas leases and potash leases issued, readjusted, or reinstated in the Designated Potash Area. The draft Secretary's Order seeks to retain the wording of the 1986 Order to the extent practicable.

The provisions in this draft Secretary's Order are consistent with the Department's regulations, onshore orders, and the oil and gas lease form. The Department's existing regulations and onshore orders allow the BLM to impose conditions of approval on permits to drill and require protection of other mineral resources, other natural resources, environmental quality, life, health, safety, and property. See 43 CFR subparts 3162.1, 3164.1, and 3165.1. The oil and gas lease form (BLM form 3100-11) provides that the rights granted in the lease are subject to the Secretary's subsequent formal orders when not inconsistent with the lease rights. The lease form also provides that lessees will take reasonable measures that BLM deems necessary to minimize adverse impacts to other resources and to other land uses or users. The provisions in the draft Secretary's Order are also consistent with the regulations governing potash leasing, exploration, and development. See 43 CFR part 3500 and subpart 3190.

Before including your phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information with the submission of your comments, you should be aware that your entire submission—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority: 43 CFR 3164.1, 43 CFR 3590.2.

Jesse Juen,

New Mexico State Director.

[FR Doc. 2012-16909 Filed 7-12-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLNMA01200 L16100000.DP000/
LXSS034G0000]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Rio Puerco Field Office, New Mexico

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Rio Puerco Field Office and by this notice is announcing the opening of the public comment period.

DATES: To ensure that comments will be considered, the BLM must receive written comments on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS within 90 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes this notice of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The BLM will announce future meetings or hearings and any other public participation activities at least 15 days in advance through public notices, media releases, and/or mailings.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments related to the Rio Puerco Draft RMP/Draft EIS by any of the following methods:

- **Web site:** <http://www.blm.gov/nm/riopuerco>.

- **Email:**

BLM NM RPFO Comments@blm.gov.

- **Fax:** 505-761-8911, attn.: Angel Martinez.

- **Mail:** 435 Montañito Road NE., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107, attn.: Angel Martinez.

Copies of the Rio Puerco Draft RMP/Draft EIS are available at the Rio Puerco Field Office, at the above address; the New Mexico State Office at 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the Grants Field Station at 202 Smokey Circle, Grants, New Mexico.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information contact Angel Martinez, Planning and Environmental Coordinator; telephone 505-761-8918; address 435 Montañito Road NE., Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87107; email a1martinez@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 service 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: In the Rio Puerco Draft RMP/Draft EIS, the BLM analyzes the environmental consequences of four alternative land-use plans under consideration for managing approximately 744,387 acres of surface estate and 3.4 million acres of subsurface mineral estate. These lands, administered by the BLM Rio Puerco Field Office, are located within Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley, Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia counties in central New Mexico.

This land-use plan would replace the current Rio Puerco RMP, which was approved in 1986. The RMP revision is needed to provide updated management decisions for a variety of uses and resources, including land-tenure adjustments, land-use authorizations, mineral resources, recreation, areas with special management designations, lands with wilderness characteristics, livestock grazing, transportation access, renewable energy, visual resources, wildland/urban interface, and others. The approved Rio Puerco RMP will apply only to the BLM-administered public lands and Federal mineral estate.

The four alternatives analyzed in detail in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS are as follows:

- Alternative A, No Action, or a continuation of existing management;
- Alternative B, which would emphasize resource conservation and protection;
- Alternative C, the BLM's Preferred Alternative, which would provide for a balance of resources uses with protections; and
- Alternative D, which would allow for a greater opportunity for resource use and development.

Among the special designations under consideration within the range of alternatives, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) are proposed to protect certain resource values. Pertinent information regarding these ACECs, including proposed designation acreages and resource-use limitations, is summarized below. Each alternative considers a combination of resource-use limitations for each ACEC. A more detailed summary of the proposed ACECs by alternative is available at the project Web site.

- *Bluewater Canyon ACEC* (currently 97 acres; Alternatives B-D would