

Notices

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Friday, March 28, 2008

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Cibola National Forest Invasive Plant Management Project

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Cancellation of notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: On April 29, 2002, Forest Supervisor Liz Agpaoa signed a Notice of Intent (NOT) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cibola National Forest Invasive Plant Management Project. On May 3, 2002, the **Federal Register** published the Notice of Intent (NOT) (Volume 67, Number 86, pages 22389–22390). The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service is issuing this notice to advise the public that we are cancelling the notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for this proposed action. The initial proposal provided for the inclusion of all the administrative units on the Cibola National Forest including the Kiowa, Rita Blanca, Black Kettle, and McClellan Creek National Grasslands. The areas included in the proposal vary widely in geographical and ecological settings and conditions, from woodlands and forests to short-grass and tall-grass prairies. The wide range of biological and physical settings complicates the analysis and disclosure of effects. The Forest Service plans to reassess the proposal and determine the appropriate scope of the proposal and form of environmental documentation. The NEPA process will be re-initiated for any new proposed actions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Keith Baker, NEPA Coordinator, Cibola National Forest, 2113 Osuna Road NE., Albuquerque, NM 87113, Phone (505) 346–3820, Fax (505) 346–3901.

Dated: March 18, 2008.

Nancy Rose,
Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Bridger-Teton National Forest; Revised Notice of Intent To Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement To Analyze and Disclose New Information Relative to Oil and Gas Leasing of 44,720 Acres on the Big Piney Ranger District

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

SUMMARY: This notice revises an earlier Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) to analyze and disclose new information relative to oil and gas leasing of 44,720 acres on the Big Piney Ranger District. The Forest Service is providing this revised notice because the public scoping period is being extended. Scoping for a supplemental statement is not required [40 CFR 1502.9(c)(4)], but due to the length of time since scoping associated with the current leasing decision was conducted, comments specific to new issues or information that was not considered are being solicited.

DATES: Comments concerning new information or issues not previously considered in the leasing analysis must be postmarked by April 28, 2008. The Draft SEIS (DSEIS) is expected in November 2008. The estimated completion date for the Final SEIS (FSEIS) is April 2009.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Stephen Haydon, Forest Minerals Staff, Bridger-Teton National Forest, 340 N. Cache, PO Box 1888, Jackson, WY 83001–1888. Send electronic comments to: comments-intermtn-bridger-teton@fs.fed.us with the subject clearly titled “Leasing SEIS”.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Haydon, Project Leader.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This revised notice updates the original NOI, which appeared Monday, February 4, 2008, in the **Federal Register** (73 FR pages 6453–6454). The Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) made an oil and gas leasing decision in the Forest Plan

signed in 1990 after preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS). Subsequent Environmental Assessments were completed in the early 1990s to consider the impacts of oil and gas leasing in various Management Areas throughout the Forest. Since the early 1990s, several new issues bearing on oil and gas leasing have arisen and new information has become available since that decision. The Forest reviewed those issues and the new information and documented that review in a Supplemental Information Report dated February 25, 2004. The Forest Supervisor concluded that the new issues and information did not alter the previous leasing decision in the Forest Plan. Subsequently, in 2005 the Forest Service sent lease parcels covering 44,720 acres to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for competitive lease sale. The BLM offered, sold and issued leases on 20,963 acres in December 2005 and April 2006, and sold but did not issue leases on the remaining 23,757 acres in June and August 2006. Following protest and BLM State Director's Review, an appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) was filed for the December and April lease sales. This appeal included a “Request for Stay”, which was granted. Upon request by the BLM, IBLA remanded the appeals back to the BLM for resolution. This supplemental analysis will address the resource issues and effects analysis concerns identified by IBLA or as identified through this scoping effort.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose and need for action is to determine whether and to what extent analysis of new issues and information might alter the oil and gas leasing decision as it relates to the 44,720 acres forwarded to the BLM for competitive lease sale. This action is needed to address the appropriateness of the previous leasing decisions, to decide the final disposition of the suspended existing leases and lease parcels, and to be responsive to the IBLA remand requiring incorporation of the new issues and information in the BLM decision to lift the suspension of lease parcels and issue oil and gas leases.

Proposed Action

The proposed federal action is to lift the current suspension on the issued