

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management****[WY-930-01-1060-JJ]****Notice of Intent To Remove Wild Horses From Public Lands and Notice of Public Hearing on the Use of Helicopters and Motor Vehicles in Wild Horse Removal Operations****AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.**SUMMARY:** The Wild, Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act, as amended (PL 92-195), provides, among other things, that excess wild horses shall be removed from public lands.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) plans to remove 225 horses from the Stewart Creek Herd Management Area (HMA) and the area outside HMA boundaries known as I-80 North Beginning February 15, 2002, and continuing through March 30, 2002. This will reduce the population in the Stewart Creek HMA to the Appropriate Management Level (AML).

The Wild, Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act also provides for the use of aircraft and motor vehicles in all phases of the administration of the Act. The Code of Federal Regulations, at 43 CFR 4740.1 provides (a) that the authorized officer conducts a public hearing in the area where such use is to be made.

The BLM has and plans to continue use of helicopters in the removal of wild, free roaming horses from the public lands within the Rawlins, Lander, Rock Springs, Cody, and Big Horn Basin Field Office jurisdictions in calendar year 2002.

Pursuant to the requirements noted above, the BLM will conduct a public hearing on the use of helicopters and motor vehicles in gathering operations during the calendar year of 2002. The hearing will occur on Tuesday, February 12, 2002, at 3 p.m., in the large conference room of the Rock Springs Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management located at 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

DATES: *Hearing Date:* February 12, 2002. *Roundup dates:* March 1 through March 30, 2002.**ADDRESSES:** The Helicopter Hearing will be held at the Rock Springs Field Office, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901.**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** State Director, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 1828, Cheyenne, WY 82003-1828. Phone: (307) 775-6256.

Dated: January 14, 2002.

Alan R. Pierson,
State Director.

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BILLING CODE 4310-22-P**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Minerals Management Service****Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Alaska Region, Norton Basin****AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.**ACTION:** Call for Information and Nominations (Call).

SUMMARY: The Secretary's preliminary decision to consider offering the Norton Basin planning area in the Proposed OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007 provides for an 18-month "special-interest" process beginning with publication of this Call. Based on the information and specific nominations received as a result of this Call, a decision will be made whether to proceed with a sale. The MMS is issuing a Call at this time recognizing that the final decision on the 2002-2007 5-year program has not been made. Final delineation of the program areas and number of sales may change from that included in the proposed program.

DATES: Nominations and comments on the Call must be received no later than April 22, 2002.**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Please call Tom Warren at (907) 271-6691 in MMS's Alaska OCS Region regarding questions on the Call.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The objective of this "special-interest" leasing option is to foster exploration in a frontier OCS area that is estimated to have over 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas without investment of the considerable time and effort required for holding a typical lease sale. The general approach is to query industry regarding the level of interest in proceeding with a sale in Norton Basin that would offer only very small, very focused areas of specific interest for exploration. Norton Basin may contain quantities of natural gas, which might be used for western Alaska communities if economically feasible. We request comments from the general public on this special-interest leasing process, including the terms and conditions of a sale. The MMS will consider all comments and nominations in the decision on whether to proceed with leasing and on the terms and conditions of a lease sale proposal. A decision to offer an area for leasing will be conditioned on a commitment from

industry to explore the area leased within a specific time period.

This Call does not indicate a preliminary decision to lease in the area described below. If there is no interest expressed, the MMS will defer the sale for one year and reissue the Call the following year. If the MMS decides to proceed with the sale process, the MMS will make the final delineation of the specific areas for possible leasing at a later date in the presale process and in compliance with the final 5-year program and with applicable laws including all requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the OCS Lands Act (OCSLA).

Call for Information and Nominations*1. Authority*

This Call is published pursuant to the OCSLA as amended (43 U.S.C. 1331-1356, (1994)), and the regulations issued thereunder (30 CFR part 256); and in accordance with the Proposed OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program 2002 to 2007, issued October 26, 2001.

2. Purpose of Call

The purpose of the Call is to gather preliminary information, to request nomination of specific areas of interest to industry, and to request comments on the terms and conditions of offering these special interest lands. The Call also serves to initiate the scoping process to assist in preparation of the NEPA analysis for this proposal. This proposal is in keeping with section 102(9) of the OCSLA Amendments of 1978, which states as a purpose of the statute, "to insure that the extent of oil and natural gas resources of the OCS is assessed at the earliest practicable time." The objective of the "special-interest" leasing process is to encourage exploration in a frontier OCS area that might contain natural gas for potential use in local communities. Any sale would offer for lease both oil and gas.

Comments, information, and nominations on oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development and production within the Norton Basin are sought from all interested parties. Comments are also being sought on the terms and conditions of a sale in Norton Basin. Industry and other interested parties are strongly encouraged to contact the MMS, Alaska OCS Region, Mr. Tom Warren at (907) 271-6691, with questions or to discuss interest in the area. This early planning and consultation step is particularly important to this special interest lands process. The MMS will base its decision on whether to proceed with the presale