

regarding surface management of leased National Forest System lands. The Caribou-Targhee National Forest Supervisor makes recommendations to the BLM concerning surface management and mitigation on leased lands within the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. For this proposal, the Forest Supervisor will make a decision whether to authorize off-lease facilities such as roads and power lines.

As a cooperating agency, the IDEQ has provided assistance and recommendations on aspects of the project pertaining to water quality and on water quality rules under their jurisdiction.

The agency Preferred Alternative would approve mining both leases described as Panel F and Panel G. The preferred mining alternative would be Alternative B—No External Seleniferous Overburden Fills. BLM would approve the proposed lease modifications. Based on analysis of surface and ground water impacts in Chapter 4, BLM would require construction of an infiltration barrier over seleniferous backfill, Alternative D. A Forest Service decision would approve power line placement on poles along the haul road, Alternative E, eliminating a separate power corridor. The transportation route between Panel F and existing mine would be constructed according to the Proposed Action. The preferred transportation route between Panel G and the existing mine is Alternative 2—East Haul/Access Road.

The proposed Mine & Reclamation Plan was submitted by J. R Simplot Company in April 2003. The proposed action consists of two open pits (Panel F on Federal phosphate lease I-27512 and Panel G on Federal phosphate lease I-01441), topsoil stockpiles, mine equipment parking and service areas, access and haul roads, a power line extension from the existing Smoky Canyon facilities, permanent external overburden storage areas, and runoff/sediment control facilities, electrical substation, warehouse and storage areas, repair shop, restrooms, fuel and lubricant storage. A new haul/access road to transport ore to the existing Smoky Canyon mill is proposed to be constructed from the south end of the existing Panel E approximately 2.5 miles to the proposed Panel F. As operations move south to Panel G, another haul road is proposed to transport ore 7.8 miles from Panel G north to Panel F. Much of these activities are proposed to occur within the Sage Creek Inventoried Roadless Area.

Ore would be hauled in trucks to the existing Smoky Canyon mill facility to

be concentrated. Ore concentrate from the mill would be transported to the existing Simplot fertilizer plant in Pocatello, Idaho via the existing slurry pipeline. Mill tailings would continue to be deposited in the currently approved and permitted tailings disposal facility.

Initially, overburden generated from Panel F would be trucked to the existing Panel E open pit and used as backfill. Remaining overburden from Panel F would then be placed as part of a 38-acre external fill and then as backfill in Panel F as soon as practical. Overburden generated from mining Panel G would be permanently placed in 138 acres of external fills at Panel G as well as backfill in the Panel G open pit.

Disturbed lands directly resulting from the proposed activities would total 1,340 acres. Ninety-five percent of the project disturbance would be fully reclaimed. This would leave unreclaimed a total of 71 acres of highwall, road cuts in steep terrain, pit bottoms not filled to contour, and mine roads left as replacements to existing Forest Service roads. New pits would disturb approximately 763 acres, roads would disturb about 284 acres, external overburden fills would cover 176 acres and there would be 117 acres of disturbance for other mine features such as runoff management facilities, water monitoring, a power line corridor and topsoil piles.

Reclamation of mining disturbances would include: Removal of facilities and equipment, backfilling pits, regrading slopes, restoring drainages, covering seleniferous fills with at least 4 feet of chert material, spreading 1 to 3 feet of topsoil, stabilizing surfaces, revegetation, testing and treatment for any remaining hydrocarbon contaminants, and environmental monitoring.

Simplot has applied for a lease modification to expand Federal Phosphate Lease I-27512 for the Panel F operations. The application includes a 120-acre tract to recover ore and construct a road from Panel E on the northern edge of the lease and a larger 400 acre tract on the southern edge of the lease to recover ore. Subsequent to BLM's and Forest Service's preparation of the DEIS, Simplot has also applied for a lease modification to I-01441 to accommodate 18 acres of off-lease external overburden fill. The environmental impacts of mining operations within the lease modifications are analyzed in this EIS. BLM will review the applications, under the Mineral Leasing Act, and inform the public in accordance with the

requirements of NEPA prior to any decision on these applications.

Alternatives

Issues were identified for the proposed mining of F and G panels by the agencies and by the public during the scoping process. They include potential effects on: ground water, surface water, geology and minerals, air quality and noise, soils, vegetation, wetlands, wildlife, fisheries and aquatic life, livestock grazing, recreation, Inventoried Roadless Areas, socio-economics, visual resources, cultural resources, and Tribal Treaty Rights. Alternatives to the proposed action were developed to address issues.

The EIS analyzes the environmental and human effects of the Proposed Action, six different mining alternatives, one no-action alternative, and eight different transportation alternatives. Mining alternatives include mining without one or any lease modifications, no external seleniferous overburden fills, no external overburden fills at all, construction of an infiltration barrier over seleniferous material, constructing the power line only within proposed disturbance, and using generators in Panel G instead of a power line. The transportation alternatives include one variation on the haul road between Panel F and the existing Panel E, two variations of a haul road from Panel G located east of the project area, a more direct—middle—haul road from Panel G to Panel F, a variation of the proposed West Haul Road, and using a conveyor system to transport ore from Panel G to the existing mill. If the conveyor transportation alternative is chosen then one of two different variations on moving people and equipment between Panel G and the existing mine were analyzed.

Dated: December 8, 2005.

Joe Kraayenbrink,
District Manager, Idaho Falls District, Bureau of Land Management.

Larry Timchak,
Forest Supervisor, Caribou-Targhee National Forest.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY-100-05-1310-DB]

Notice of Meeting of the Pinedale Anticline Working Group

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (1972), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Pinedale Anticline Working Group (PAWG) will meet in Pinedale, Wyoming, for a business meeting. Group meetings are open to the public.

DATES: The PAWG will meet January 31, 2006, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting of the PAWG will be held in the Lovatt room of the Pinedale Library, 155 S. Tyler Ave., Pinedale, WY.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Matt Anderson, BLM/PAWG Liaison, Bureau of Land Management, Pinedale Field Office, 432 E. Mills St., PO Box 738, Pinedale, WY, 82941; 307-367-5328.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Pinedale Anticline Working Group (PAWG) was authorized and established with release of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project on July 27, 2000. The PAWG advises the BLM on the development and implementation of monitoring plans and adaptive management decisions as development of the Pinedale Anticline Natural Gas Field proceeds for the life of the field.

The agenda for this meeting will include discussions concerning any modifications task groups may wish to make to their monitoring recommendations, a discussion on monitoring funding sources, and overall adaptive management implementation as it applies to the PAWG. At a minimum, public comments will be heard prior to lunch and adjournment of the meeting.

Dated: December 20, 2005.

Priscilla Mecham,

Field Office Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AZ-110-1430-ES; AZA-33001]

Notice of Realty Action; Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act Classification; Arizona

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The public lands listed below, located in Mohave County, Arizona, near the community of Littlefield have been examined and found suitable for classification for lease or conveyance to the Virgin River Domestic Wastewater Improvement District (VRDWID) under provisions of the R&PP Act for use as a wastewater treatment facility.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following public lands near the community of Littlefield, Mohave County, Arizona, have been examined and found suitable for classification for lease or conveyance to the VRDWID under the provisions of the R&PP Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 869 *et seq.*):

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 40 N., R. 15 W., sec. 19, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

T. 40 N., R. 16 W., sec. 24, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

(Including only those BLM administered lands between the southern right-of-way of Highway 91 and the top edge of the bluff overlooking the Virgin River.)

Containing 190 acres, more or less.

The lands are not needed for Federal purposes. Lease or conveyance is consistent with current BLM land use planning and would be in the public interest.

The lease/patent, when issued, will be subject to the following terms, conditions, and reservations:

1. Provisions of the R&PP Act and to all applicable regulations of the Secretary of the Interior.

2. A right-of-way for ditches and canals constructed by the authority of the United States.

3. All minerals shall be reserved to the United States, together with the right to prospect for, mine, and remove the minerals.

4. Valid existing rights.

5. Terms and conditions identified through the site-specific environmental analysis.

6. Those rights for power line and telephone line purposes granted to Dixie Escalante Electric under right-of-way AZA-36027 and Rio Virgin Telephone Company under rights-of-way AZAR-035969, AZA-30814, and AZA-17642.

7. The lessee/patentee by entering into the lease or accepting a patent, agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold the United States harmless from any costs, damages, claims, causes of action, penalties, fines, liabilities, and judgments of any kind or nature arising out of, or in connection with the lessee's/patentee's use, occupancy, or operations on the leased/patented real property.

This indemnification and hold harmless agreement includes, but is not

limited to, acts or omissions of the lessee/patentee and its employees, agents, contractors, lessees, or any third-party, arising out of or in connection with the lessee's/patentee's use, occupancy, or operations on the leased/patented real property which cause or give rise to, in whole or in part: (1) Violations of Federal, State, and local laws and regulations that are now, or may in the future become, applicable to the real property and/or applicable to the use, occupancy, and/or operations thereon; (2) Judgments, claims, or demands of any kind assessed against the United States; (3) Costs, expenses, or damages of any kind incurred by the United States; (4) Releases or threatened releases of solid or hazardous waste(s) and/or hazardous substances(s), pollutant(s) or contaminant(s), and/or petroleum product or derivative of a petroleum product, as defined by Federal and State environmental laws; off, on, into, or under land, property, and other interests of the United States; (5) Other activities by which solid or hazardous substance(s) or waste(s), pollutant(s) or contaminant(s), or petroleum product or derivative of a petroleum product as defined by Federal and State environmental laws are generated, stored, used, or otherwise disposed of on the leased/patented real property, and any cleanup response, remedial action, or other actions related in any manner to the said solid or hazardous substance(s) or waste(s), pollutant(s) or contaminant(s), or petroleum product or derivative of a petroleum product; (6) Natural resources damages as defined by Federal and State laws. Lessee/patentee shall stipulate that it will be solely responsible for compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local environmental laws and regulatory provisions, throughout the life of the facility, including any closure and/or post-closure requirements that may be imposed with respect to any physical plant and/or facility upon the real property under any Federal, State, or local environmental laws or regulatory provisions. In the case of a lease being issued, upon termination of the lease, lessee agrees to remove, at the request of BLM, any physical plant and/or facilities or improvements and restore the site to a condition acceptable to the BLM authorized officer. In the case of a patent being issued, this covenant shall be construed as running with the patented real property and may be enforced by the United States in a court of competent jurisdiction.

8. Any other rights or reservations that the authorized officer deems