

water supply pump station with the water filtration/injection plants.

The BLM consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about potential effects on listed threatened and endangered species from project construction and operation. The Service reviewed the DEIS and provided comments. In March 2005, the BLM submitted a Biological Assessment to the Service, concluding that the project may adversely affect the Uintah Basin hookless cactus; may adversely affect the Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail and razorback sucker; and may adversely modify designated Critical Habitat for the four fish species through depletions from the Upper Colorado River System. In its Biological Opinion, the Service concurred with the BLM's conclusions for these species.

The Biological Opinion contains recommended conservation measures to protect and recover the Uinta Basin hookless cactus and the four Colorado River native fish. The BLM has adopted nearly all these conservation measures (with minor modifications), and has included these measures in the conditions of approval. One exception is the Service's recommendation that no further surface occupancy by oil and gas facilities be approved in the Pariette ACEC. Due to valid existing lease rights, the BLM cannot stipulate a blanket "no surface occupancy" requirement for oil and gas development within this ACEC. However, BLM has decided to defer authorization of new wells and access roads within the ACEC boundaries until the needed inventories are completed.

The FEIS is a complete document. It includes the Biological Opinion received from the Service, plus a presentation of substantive public comments received on the DEIS. The FEIS also includes BLM's responses to these comments. The FEIS includes changes to the text in response to public comments on the DEIS. These changes were made to clarify, correct and/or expand information to aid the public's understanding of the proposed project, reasonable alternatives and their effects on the environment.

Dated: August 31, 2005.

**William Stringer,**

*Field Manager, Vernal Field Office.*

[FR Doc. 05-21043 Filed 10-20-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Initiate the Public Scoping Process

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, notice is hereby given that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Challis Field Office, will be directing the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will analyze the mining impacts resulting from L&W Stone's Amended Plan of Operations in Custer County, Idaho.

**DATES:** The scoping comment period will commence with the publication of this notice and will end 45 days after publication of this notice. Two public meetings will be held during the scoping comment period. Comments on the scope of the EIS, including concerns, issues, or proposed alternatives that should be considered in the EIS should be submitted in writing to the address below. The dates of public meetings to be held in Challis and Boise, Idaho will be announced through the local media, newsletters, and BLM's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) mailing list. The draft EIS is expected to be available for public review and comment in June 2006 and the final EIS is expected to be available in August 2007.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to Chuck Horsburgh, Project Leader, Idaho Falls District Office, 1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401. Faxes should be sent to 208-524-7505. Comments received on this proposal, including names and addresses, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection during regular office hours, Monday-Friday, 8-4:30 p.m. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials for organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Chuck Horsburgh, Project Leader, Idaho Falls District Office, 1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401; or phone at (208) 524-7530.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** L&W Stone Corporation mines locatable flagstone on public lands administered by the BLM's Challis Field Office in Custer County, Idaho. L&W Stone submitted an Amended Plan of Operations for their quarry under the 43 CFR 3809 Regulations in December 2002. The BLM completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) regarding the Amended Plan of Operations, signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and approved the project. As a result of a lawsuit that was filed objecting to that approval, the BLM was ordered by a Federal District Court judge to prepare an EIS for the Amended Plan of Operations. The Amended Plan of Operations will serve as the basis for the EIS project description. The BLM will analyze a range of alternatives in the EIS. As proposed in the Amended Plan of Operations, the quarry would operate for up to 40 years. The main product that is mined is large-diameter sheets of rock called flagstone which is used in both indoor and outdoor decorative construction.

Dated: August 30, 2005.

**David Rosenkrance,**

*Challis Field Manager, BLM.*

[FR Doc. 05-21042 Filed 10-20-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-GG-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[WY-100-05-1310-DB]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas and Exploration and Development Project, Sublette County, Wyoming, and Possible Amendment to the Pinedale Resource Management Plan

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct public scoping and prepare an SEIS to the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas, and Exploration and Development Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD), July 2000.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Pinedale Field Office, announces its intent to prepare an SEIS on the potential impacts of authorizing year round natural gas and condensate/oil development activities within the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas and Exploration and Development Project Area (PAPA). This supplemental environmental impact analysis may be used to amend the Pinedale Resource Management Plan (1988). The Pinedale Field Manager is the authorized officer for this project.

**DATES:** This notice initiates the public scoping process. The BLM can best use public input if comments and resources information are submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice. To provide the public with an opportunity to review the proposal and project information, the BLM will host a meeting in Pinedale, Wyoming. The BLM will notify the public of the meeting date, time, and location at least 15 days prior to the event. Announcement will be made by news release to the media, individual letter mailings, and posting on the BLM Web site listed below if it is available.

**ADDRESSES:** Please send written comments or resource information to the Bureau of Land Management, Pinedale Field Office, Matt Anderson, Project Manager, 432 East Mill Street, P.O. Box 768, Pinedale, Wyoming 82941. Electronic mail may be sent to: [WYMail\\_PAPA\\_YRA@blm.gov](mailto:WYMail_PAPA_YRA@blm.gov).

Your response is important and will be considered in the environmental analysis process. If you do respond, we will keep you informed of decisions resulting from this analysis. Please note that public comments and information submitted regarding this project including names, street addresses, and e-mail addresses of the respondents will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name, address, or e-mail address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this plainly at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by the law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Bureau of Land Management, Matt Anderson, Project Manager, 432 East Mill Street, P.O. Box 768, Pinedale, Wyoming 82941. Mr. Anderson may also be reached by telephone at (307) 367-5328, or by sending an electronic message to: [matt\\_anderson@blm.gov](mailto:matt_anderson@blm.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The BLM completed an FEIS and issued a ROD for the PAPA in July 2000. The BLM conducted this analysis in response to oil and gas field development activities on the Pinedale Anticline. The previous analysis considered three (3) exploration and development scenarios based on the density of well pad development by aliquot section, each with its own mitigation. To protect big game crucial winter range, the FEIS delineated areas within the PAPA where oil and gas development and its associated human activities would be restricted during the winter months from November 15 through April 30.

The FEIS and ROD provided that the BLM could grant limited exceptions to this winter closure period based on conditions at the time of authorization such as presence of wintering animals or depth of snow cover. However, each exception was to be made on a case-by-case basis, annually, and usually with the condition that should winter conditions prevail, activities would cease.

Starting in winter 2002-2003, the BLM authorized Questar Exploration and Development Company (Questar) to continue gas development operations at one well pad within big game crucial winter range under the condition that Questar cooperate fully with Wyoming Game and Fish in conducting studies on the impacts of these operations consistent with the ongoing Sublette Mule Deer Study. In November 2004, the BLM approved a proposal made by Questar to expand its winter development activities and continue conducting studies on the impacts to wildlife (Questar Year-Round Drilling Proposal Environmental Assessment, November 2004).

Since then, other operators within the Pinedale Anticline have expressed interest in conducting development activities, including year-round drilling and completion within big game crucial winter range, leading to BLM's decision to supplement the PAPA FEIS and ROD.

**Description of the Proposed Action**

On September 16, 2005, the BLM received from Anschutz Pinedale Corporation (Anschutz), Shell Exploration and Production Company (Shell), and Ultra Resources Inc. (Ultra) representing themselves and other lease

holders in the area (collectively referred to as the Operators), a proposal for year-round access to drill and develop leaseholds within the PAPA. The Operators propose to conduct year round drilling and development activities within the PAPA including areas the State deems to be big game crucial winter range. The PAPA encompasses approximately 197,345 acres of primarily Federal lands (nearly 80 percent), and State and private land. Approximately 83 percent of the mineral estate underlying the PAPA is Federally-owned. The Operators have proposed developing the oil and gas resources from between 400 and 475 pad locations with multiple wells from each pad. The bottom hole well spacing is proposed at approximately 1 well per 10 acres. The Operators propose to conduct natural gas drilling and development, including placement of ancillary facilities such as gas gathering lines and road construction on a year-round basis. Development is expected to take 15 to 18 years as proposed with an operational field life of approximately 50 years.

To develop an entire aliquot section (640 acres) at a bottom hole spacing of approximately 1 well per 10 acres, the Operators propose to place one large well pad in a central location where feasible. Where topographical conditions are limiting, the Operators propose to construct two well pads per section. The centralized well pads are estimated to range in size from 10 to 15 acres for a pad with 16 well bores and 20 to 30 acres for a pad with 64 well bores.

Whenever possible the Operators propose to reuse and expand existing pads before constructing new pads. Well pads would accommodate the simultaneous drilling of multiple directional wells and completion and production operations. Concurrent with the drilling and development activities, the Operators propose to collect data, monitor, and study and evaluate the effects of these types of activities during the winter months (November 15 through April 30) on big game, sage-grouse and other sage brush obligates and their habitats. This proposal is in accordance with BLM's multiple-use mandate and the goals and objectives of the President's National Energy Policy.

**Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the year-round drilling proposal is to exercise existing lease rights and expedite production of domestic oil and gas resources from the PAPA in an efficient and orderly manner and deliver those resources to the market and consumers. One of the

identified needs for the EIS at this time is based on the continuing increase in the United States' demand for natural gas. Year round development will expedite delivery of trillions of cubic feet of natural gas and thousands of barrels of oil/condensate to the market. Identified benefits that may be derived from oil and gas development also include increased royalty and tax revenue to local, State and Federal governments and additional opportunities for employment and economic benefits at the local and regional level. This proposal meets the goals and objectives of the National Energy Policy.

#### **Anticipated Issues and Management Concerns**

Preliminary issues identified at this time include: (1) Paleontological, archaeological, historic and cultural resources; (2) wildlife, including big game species (mule deer, antelope, etc.); (3) Threatened and Endangered plant and animal species; (4) BLM sensitive species such as the greater sage-grouse; (5) surface and ground water resources; (6) transportation and road access; (7) vegetation (including the potential introduction of noxious weeds, short-term re-vegetation and rehabilitation of disturbed areas, and long-term establishment and stabilization of perennial vegetation through recommended reclamation measures); (8) air quality and existing scenic quality of the landscape; (9) socio-economic impact; and (10) potential for amendment to the Pinedale Resource Management Plan.

This list of preliminary issues is not final. Identification of additional issues and/or issue refinement through the public participation process is anticipated. Comments should address: (1) Issues to be considered for analysis; (2) reasonable alternatives; and (3) relevant information for consideration relating to the analysis of year-round field development in the PAPA. The EIS will consider comments and other issues/concerns raised during the scoping period in addition to those issues identified in this notice. The BLM may use the information collected during the scoping period to: (1) Develop/analyze appropriate mitigation as Conditions of Approval under which the proposed development may take place; (2) consider potential reasonable alternatives to the proposed action; or (3) both.

#### **Consistency With Land Use Plans, NEPA, and Potential Plan Amendments**

The Pinedale RMP/EIS revision is currently under development. The BLM

will ensure that its actions with respect to future decisions are consistent with the applicable laws and regulations. In the event the decision on this EIS includes an amendment to the existing Pinedale RMP, the amendment will be based on the following preliminary Planning Criteria: (1) The plan amendment will recognize the existence of valid existing rights; (2) lands covered in the RMP amendment will be public lands, which include federal mineral estate with private surface; (3) the BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where possible, to jointly determine the desired future condition of public lands; (4) the BLM will make all possible attempts to ensure that its management prescriptions and amended planning actions are as complementary as possible to other planning jurisdictions, within the boundaries described by law and policy; (5) the BLM will consider the management prescriptions on adjoining lands to minimize inconsistent management and, to the extent possible, BLM will coordinate inventories, planning, and management programs with other federal, state, tribal, and local governments and agencies; (6) management prescriptions will focus on the relative values of resources and not necessarily the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or economic output; (7) to the extent possible, the BLM will use current scientific information, research, new technologies and the results of resource assessments, monitoring and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or recover impaired ecosystems; and (8) the plan amendment will be completed in compliance with FLPMA, NEPA, and all other relevant federal laws, executive orders and management policies of the BLM.

#### **Alternatives**

The BLM has identified three preliminary alternatives including the proposed action:

- The no action alternative which would continue to allow drilling and development subject to winter restrictions.
- An alternative that would provide for year-round drilling and development activities without winter restrictions.
- An alternative that would provide for limited year-round drilling and development activities combined with application of timing restrictions to only the most critical wildlife habitats.

#### **Site-Specific NEPA**

While this EIS is intended to analyze site-specific impacts, additional site-specific NEPA analysis and/or documentation may be required before individual activities are approved based on a review of the specific conditions and any new information on environmental effects not considered in existing NEPA documentation at the time activities are proposed.

**Alan L. Kesterke,**

*Associate State Director.*

[FR Doc. 05-21170 Filed 10-20-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-22-P**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

#### **Bureau of Land Management**

[CO-923-1430-ET; COC-28810]

#### **Public Land Order No. 7647; Revocation of 2 Secretarial Orders and 15 Executive Orders; Colorado**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Public land order.

**SUMMARY:** This order revokes 2 Secretarial Orders and 15 Executive Orders insofar as they affect approximately 1,189,600 acres of public lands, National Forest System lands, and patented lands with federally-reserved mineral interests which were withdrawn for coal classifications in Colorado. These lands are no longer needed for the purpose for which they were withdrawn. This order will open the public lands to surface entry and nonmetalliferous mining, the National Forest System lands to such forms of disposition as may by law be authorized on National Forest System lands and to nonmetalliferous mining, and the federally-reserved mineral interests to nonmetalliferous mining.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 21, 2005.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Doris E. Chelius, BLM Colorado State Office, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215, 303-230-3706.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** These withdrawals were made to protect the coal reserves for the United States. Coal was declared a leasable mineral by the Mineral Leasing Act and the protection from these withdrawals is no longer needed.

#### **Order**

By virtue of the authority vested in the Secretary of the Interior by section 204(a) of the Federal Land Policy and