

Ogden District Ranger decisions: *Ogden Standard Examiner*, Ogden, Utah
Logan District Ranger decisions: *Logan Herald Journal*, Logan, Utah

Dated: December 18, 2002.

Jack G. Troyer,

Regional Forester.

[FR Doc. 02-32512 Filed 12-24-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Equity 23-21 and 32-4 Oil and Gas Wells, Dakota Prairie Grassland, Billings County, North Dakota

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environment impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of the construction of the well pads, access roads, production facilities, utilities, and pipelines proposed under the Surface Use Plan of Operations (SUPO's) for the Equity 23-21 and 32-4 oil and gas wells located in the Bell Lake Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA).

The purpose and need of these oil and gas well projects is to honor valid existing lease rights which grant the exclusive right to drill for, mine, extract, remove and dispose of all oil and gas (except helium) in the lands described within the lease, together with the right to build and maintain necessary improvements thereupon.

This proposal is consistent with the provisions of the Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG) Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), specifically Goal 2c, Objective 1, which focuses on providing opportunities for oil and gas exploration consistent with the DPG LRMP. This proposal is consistent with key energy legislation including the Energy Security Act of 1980, the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act of 1982, the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987, Executive Order 13212, and the Forest Services's Energy Implementation Plan.

Decisions to be made under this proposal include: whether to approve, deny, or modify the Surface Use Plan of Operations as submitted and whether to allow the use of herbicides for control of vegetation and noxious weeds on the well pads and access roads.

Preliminary issues include the fact that the proposed projects are located within the Bell Lake Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). Honoring the oil

and gas lease will mean that access roads and well pads will be constructed in the Bell Lake IRA.

ADDRESSES: The responsible official is David M. Pieper, Dakota Prairie Grasslands Supervisor. Please send written comments to Ronald W. Jablonski, Jr., District Ranger, Medora Ranger District, 161 21st Street West, Dickinson ND 58601. Comments may also be electronically submitted to rjablonski@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Adams, ID Team Leader, Medora Ranger District, 161 21st Street West, Dickinson ND 58601 or by e-mail to jcadams@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Forest Service proposes to approve the SUPO's for the Equity 23-21 and 32-4 oil and gas well sites located in the NESW of Section 21, T143N, R103W, and the SWNE of Section 4, T143N, R103W, Billings County, North Dakota. This proposal would occur on National Forest System lands. The SUPO includes construction, maintenance, and reclamation proposals for the well pads, access roads, and needed oil production facilities, pipelines, and electric lines.

The Equity 23-21 and 32-4 proposals would include constructing approximately 4,475 and 2,501 feet of new access road, respectively. Each well pad would disturb an area, approximately 2.5 acres in size. Pipelines and electric utilities would be buried along the access roads. Production facilities (*i.e.*, tanks, heater treater, and well pump) would be located on each well pad.

The entire 11,270 acre Bell Lake IRA is leased for oil and gas exploration and development. There are 320 acres of private mineral rights within the IRA. Under the recently signed DPG LRMP, the area within the IRA is to be managed as Management Area (MA) 6.1 "Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis". This MA directs that valid leases will be honored.

Public participation is important to this analysis. Part of the goal of public involvement is to identify additional issues and to refine general issues. Scoping notices will be mailed to the public on or before January 10, 2003.

People may visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. Two periods are specifically designated for comments on the analysis: (1) During the scoping process, and (2) during the draft EIS period.

During the scoping process, the Forest Service seeks additional information and comments from individuals,

organizations, and federal, state, and local agencies that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on this action, particularly in terms of issues and alternative development.

The draft EIS is anticipated to be available for review in May of 2003. The final EIS is planned for completion in August of 2003.

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**. The Forest Service will also publish a legal notice of its availability in the Bismarck Tribune Newspaper, Bismarck, North Dakota. The 45-day comment period will begin the day after the legal notice is published.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519,553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final environment impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental

Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

The responsible official will make the decision on this proposal after considering comments and responses, environmental consequences discussed in the final EIS, applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The decision and reasons for the decision will be documented in a Record of Decision.

Dated: December 19, 2002.

David M. Pieper,

Dakota Prairie Grasslands Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 02-32509 Filed 12-24-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Southwest Idaho Resource Advisory Committee, Boise, ID. USDA, Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-393), the Boise and Payette National Forests' Southwest Idaho Resource Advisory Committee will meet Wednesday, January 15, 2003 in Boise, Idaho for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The business meeting on January 15, begins at 10:30 AM, at the Idaho Counties Risk Management Program Building, 3100 Vista Avenue, Boise, Idaho. Agenda topics will include review and approval of project proposals, and an open public forum.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Randy Swick, Designated Federal Officer, at (208) 634-2290.

Dated: December 18, 2002.

Cliff Steele,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Payette National Forest.

[FR Doc. 02-32527 Filed 12-24-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Wrangell-Petersburg Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Wrangell-Petersburg Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will meet beginning at 8 a.m. on Friday, January 17 through noon, Saturday, January 18, 2003, in Wrangell, Alaska. The purpose of this meeting is to review and discuss proposals for funding under Title II, Public Law 106-393, H.R. 2389, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, also called the "Payments to States" Act. Public testimony regarding the proposals will also be taken.

DATES: The meeting will be held commencing at 8 a.m. on Friday, January 17 through noon, Saturday, January 18, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at Harding's Old Sourdough Lodge, 1104 Peninsula, Wrangell, Alaska.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Chip Weber, Wrangell District Ranger, PO Box 51, Wrangell, AK 99929, phone (907) 874-2323, e-mail cweber@fs.fed.us, or Patty Grantham, Petersburg District Ranger, PO Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833, phone (907) 772-3871, e-mail pgrantham@fs.fed.us. For further information on RAC history, operations, and the application process, a website is available at www.fs.fed.us/r10/payments.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This will be the second meeting of the committee, and will focus on the review and discussion of proposals received by the RAC for funding under Title II of the payments to States legislation (Pub. L. 106-393). Deadline for proposals during this round of funding consideration is January 6, 2003. No proposals will be recommended for funding at their initial reading. The meeting is open to the public. Public input opportunity will be provided and individuals will have the opportunity to address the committee at that time.

Dated: December 18, 2002.

Scott Fitzwilliams,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 02-32528 Filed 12-24-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Mill Creek Watershed, Richland County, WI

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service.

ACTION: Notice of a finding of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regulations (7 CFR part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Mill Creek Watershed, Richland County, Wisconsin.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Krapf, Water Resources Staff Leader, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 6515 Watts Road, Suite 200, Madison, Wisconsin, 53719. Telephone (608) 276-8732.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, Don Baloun, Acting State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project purpose is flood prevention. The planned works of improvement include the floodproofing of two dwellings which are in the hydraulic shadow of Structure Number 10, and the enactment of a county floodplain zoning ordinance which restricts future development within the hydraulic shadow of Structure Number 10. Sediment will be removed from the pond behind the dam. The dam plunge pool will be brought up to current NRCS Standards. The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and to various federal, state, and local agencies and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FONSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment are on file and may be reviewed by contacting Thomas Krapf.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.