

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

A thorough analysis of environmental impacts has been conducted, including potential impacts to cultural resources and federally –listed threatened and endangered species. Based on that analysis, I have determined that impacts will not be significant. Therefore an environmental impact statement is not needed.

Sam DesGeorges, Taos Field Office Manager

Date

DECISION RECORD

Proposal: The Museum of New Mexico (Museum) has submitted an application to the Bureau of Land Management under the authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926 (Act) and the Federal regulations at 43 CFR 2740 for the purpose of leasing public land under BLM's administration. If issued a lease, the Museum proposes to construct a Center for New Mexico Archeology (CNMA) which would consist of offices, collection facilities, laboratories and support infrastructure to house the Archeological Research Collections and the Office of Archeological Studies which are both units of the Museum. The Museum also proposes in the future to develop a portion of the leased land for collections storage and support services for all Museum divisions which include the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of International Folk Art. The subject land contains 26.81 acres and is located west of the Caja del Rio Road in lots 6 and lot 19, section 35, T. 17 N., R. 8 E., NMPM. Before the land would be leased, lots 6 and 19 would be combined into one lot and the lot acreage reduced as the eastern boundary of lot 19 would be moved westward to align with the boundary of the Caja Del Rio Road right-of-way.

With its application, the Museum has submitted to BLM a Management and Development Plan as required by Federal regulation. The Plan of Development as described in the environmental assessment (EA) proposes a three phase development plan with construction of the Collections Management Facilities and laboratories and office for the Office of Archeological Studies to be completed in the first phase. In Phase 2, a fabrication shop and studio for exhibit construction would be constructed along with the a storage facility for the Museum of Fine Arts. Phase 3 would involve the construction of storage facilities for the Museums of History and International Folk Art. A site plan of the proposed facilities is included in the EA. BLM would initially issue a lease to the Museum for a period of 5 years. If the Museum were in substantial compliance with the Plan of Development during or at the end of the 5 year period, the land would be conveyed to it through a United States patent.

Following the signing of this Decision Record, BLM will publish a Notice of Realty Action (NORA) in the Federal Register. The NORA will indicate that the subject parcels have been classified as suitable for lease and conveyance under the Act through the publication of a previous NORA on December 21, 1993. The 1993 NORA segregated the subject lands from appropriation under the public land laws and the general mining laws with the exceptions of lease or conveyance under the Act and leasing under the mineral leasing laws. The segregation remains in effect.

Decision to be Made: BLM only has authority to make decisions regarding lands and resources managed by the agency. In making this decision, BLM must determine whether or not the Proposed Action to lease the lands to the Museum best meet the needs of the Museum as described in the Purpose and Need section of the EA while minimizing impacts to resources on public land. BLM's decision is whether or not to authorize the proposed action and if so under what terms and conditions.

Decision: It is my decision to select the Proposed Action alternative, authorizing the issuance of a 5 year lease of BLM land to the Museum for the purpose of constructing and operating the CNMA facilities, as well as other Museum division facilities in accordance with the Plan of Development. In addition, I am adopting the mitigation measures described throughout the EA and summarized in section 4.3. "Mitigation and Monitoring Under BLM Direction".

Rationale for the Decision: My decision to authorize the right-of-way is based on the following rationale:

- The activities within the selected alternative are in conformance with the Taos Resource Management Plan (1988) and BLM policy and guidance.
- The major resource issues identified through BLM interdisciplinary review have been addressed in the analysis and considered in the decision. Based on the analysis in the EA, the impacts of the activities to be authorized are not expected to be significant.
- There are no adverse impacts to Federally-listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. Evaluation of potential impacts and mitigation measures to be taken in regards to the archeological site described in section 3.5 of the environmental assessment will be addressed in consultations between BLM, the New Mexico State Preservation Office and the Museum of New Mexico.
- Impacts to resources on BLM land from the implementation of the Proposed Action will be mitigated by stipulations issued with the lease. The stipulations will require the implementation of Best Management Practices as well as other measures in the construction of facilities and roads and the placement of utilities to minimize impacts to resources.

Sam Des Georges, Taos Field Office Manager

Date