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News Release

Date: October 10, 2012

Contact: Blake Androff (DOI), 202-208-6416

Nedra Darling (ASIA), 202-219-4150

Interior Approves Fort Berthold Land Trust Application for New Refinery in North Dakota

*Proposed refinery on tribal lands would process Bakken
crude for U.S. market, supporting American made energy and creating jobs*

WASHINGTON – As part of the Obama Administration’s all-of-the-above energy strategy to expand domestic energy production, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced approval of a ‘land-into-trust’ application from the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation. Today’s action is one in a series of necessary approvals that will enable the tribes to build the first U.S. refinery in decades, supporting American made energy – including domestic resources from the Bakken Formation – while also creating jobs.

“Today’s historic decision is another step forward in the Obama Administration’s all-of-the-above energy strategy and commitment to strengthen Tribal communities and generate jobs for rural America,” Salazar said. “By working with the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara people to place this land into trust status, we are supporting infrastructure that will help bring American oil and gas to market while promoting Tribal economic development and self-determination regarding land and resource use.”

If all required approvals are granted, the proposed MHA Nation Clean Fuels Refinery would be the first new refinery built in the United States in more than 30 years. Project developers estimate the refinery could create 800 to 1,000 construction jobs, up to 140 operations jobs, and millions in annual revenue streams to benefit the Tribes and surrounding rural communities. As proposed, the 13,000 barrel-per-day facility would refine Bakken Formation crude oil into diesel fuel, propane and naphtha products for the U.S. market. Since the President took office, domestic oil and gas production has increased each year, with domestic oil production currently at an eight year high, and natural gas production at its highest level ever.

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“Today’s action is an important step in the Three Affiliated Tribes’ proposal to develop the MHA Nation Clean Fuels refinery,” said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn, who approved the application as one of his first acts in office. “Approving the land into trust status will allow the Tribes to continue their work to develop the facility in a safe and responsible way that brings increased economic opportunity and employment to their people and to North Dakota.”

Today’s announcement is the latest in a series of Obama Administration initiatives to facilitate safe and responsible development of domestic energy resources on U.S. public lands and Indian trust lands across the country. Interior manages nearly 2 million subsurface acres of mineral estate in active areas of the Bakken play in North Dakota.

The Tribes requested that Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) accept a 469-acre piece of property into trust, with a proposed refinery on about 190 acres and the remaining acreage to be used for the production of feed for the Tribes’ buffalo herd.

Future federal permitting and oversight will be handled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety & Health Administration.

The BIA and EPA co-led the Environmental Impact Statement, with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Tribes as cooperating agencies. The BIA and EPA consulted with the Tribes, on a government-to-government basis, as well as with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and tribal and state historic preservation officers to determine compliance with EPA’s relevant regulations, the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. The proposed project received full public review and comment, and the final EIS was issued in August 2009.

The EPA issued a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit for the refinery in August 2011, a step under the Clean Water Act that details required conditions and limitations for the proposed refinery’s operations.

The thirty-day notice of the Department’s decision to acquire the land in trust will be published in the *Federal Register*.

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jeopardize the existence of federally listed fish, wildlife, or plants.

Applicant's Proposal

The applicant is requesting take of approximately 3.57 ac of occupied sand skink foraging and sheltering habitat incidental to construction of a commercial development, and seeks a 5-year permit. The 3.92-ac project site is located on 21.28-ac parcel #19-22-25-000100005200 within Section 19, Township 22 South, Range 25 East, Lake County, Florida. The applicant proposes to mitigate for the take of the sand skink by the purchase of 7.14 mitigation credits within the Hatchineha Ranch Conservation Bank.

Our Preliminary Determination

We have determined that the applicant's proposal, including the proposed mitigation and minimization measures, would have minor or negligible effects on the species covered in the HCP. Therefore, we determined that the ITP is a "low-effect" project and qualifies for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2 Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6 Appendix 1). A low-effect HCP is one involving (1) minor or negligible effects on federally listed or candidate species and their habitats, and (2) minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources.

Next Steps

We will evaluate the HCP and comments we receive to determine whether the ITP application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). If we determine that the application meets these requirements, we will issue ITP #TE83714A-0. We will also evaluate whether issuance of the section 10(a)(1)(B) ITP complies with section 7 of the Act by conducting an intra-Service section 7 consultation. We will use the results of this consultation, in combination with the above findings, in our final analysis to determine whether or not to issue the ITP. If the requirements are met, we will issue the permit to the applicant.

Public Comments

If you wish to comment on the permit application, HCP, and associated documents, you may submit comments by any one of the methods in **ADDRESSES**.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other

personal identifying information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority

We provide this notice under Section 10 of the Act and NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

Dated: October 5, 2012.

David L. Hankla,

Field Supervisor, Jacksonville Field Office, Southeast Region.

[FR Doc. 2012-25299 Filed 10-12-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

[GX13GG009950000]

Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Public Law 106-503, the Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee (SESAC) will hold its next meeting on the campus of the Colorado School of Mines, Ballroom B, in Golden, Colorado. The Committee is comprised of members from academia, industry, and State government. The Committee shall advise the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) on matters relating to the USGS's participation in the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program.

The Committee will receive reports on the status of activities of the Program and progress toward Program goals and objectives. The Committee will assess this information and provide guidance on the future undertakings and direction of the Earthquake Hazards Program.

Meetings of the Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee are open to the public.

DATES: October 29, 2012, commencing at 8:30 a.m. and adjourning at Noon on October 30, 2012.

Contact: Dr. William Leith, U.S. Geological Survey, MS 905, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 20192, (703) 648-6786, wleith@usgs.gov.

Dated: October 9, 2012.

David Newman,

Federal Liaison.

[FR Doc. 2012-25159 Filed 10-12-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4311-AM-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Land Acquisitions: Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs made a final agency determination to acquire approximately 468.39 acres of land into trust for the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (MHA Nation) on October 10, 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Mann-Klager, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Natural Resources, 115 Fourth Ave Southeast, Suite 400, Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401; phone: (605) 226-7621; email: diane.mann-klager@bia.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is published in the exercise of authority delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs by 209 Departmental Manual 8.1 and is published to comply with the requirements of 25 CFR 151.12(b) that notice be given to the public of the Secretary's decision to acquire land into trust at least 30 days prior to signatory acceptance of the land into trust. The purpose of the 30-day waiting period in 25 CFR 151.12(b) is to afford interested parties the opportunity to seek judicial review of final administrative decisions to take land into trust for Indian tribes and individual Indians before transfer of title to the property occurs.

On October 10, 2012, the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs decided to accept approximately 468.39 acres of land into trust for the MHA Nation; under the authority of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, 25 U.S.C. 465. The parcel is located on the Fort Berthold reservation, in Ward County, North Dakota, and is located in the northeast corner of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation west of Makoti, North Dakota, in N¹/₂ of Section 19 and NW¹/₄ of Section 20 of Township 152 North, Range 87 West, 5th Principal Meridian. The MHA Nation proposes to use the property to construct and operate a new "Clean Fuels Refinery" and grow forage for buffalo.

Dated: October 10, 2012.

Kevin K. Washburn,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

[FR Doc. 2012–25255 Filed 10–11–12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–4N–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLWO35000.L14300000.FR0000]

Renewal of Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: 30-day notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has submitted an information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to continue the collection of information from applicants for a land patent under the Color-of-Title Act. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) previously approved this information collection activity, and assigned it control number 1004–0029.

DATES: The OMB is required to respond to this information collection request within 60 days but may respond after 30 days. For maximum consideration, written comments should be received on or before November 14, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Please submit comments directly to the Desk Officer for the Department of the Interior (OMB #1004–0029), Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, fax 202–395–5806, or by electronic mail at *oir_docket@omb.eop.gov*. Please provide a copy of your comments to the BLM. You may do so via mail, fax, or electronic mail.

Mail: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 1849 C Street NW., Room 2134LM, Attention: Jean Sonneman, Washington, DC 20240.

Fax: to Jean Sonneman at 202–245–0050.

Electronic mail:
Jean_Sonneman@blm.gov.

Please indicate “Attn: 1004–0029” regardless of the form of your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Holdren, at 202–912–7335. Persons who use a telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339, to leave a message for Mr. Holdren. You may also review the information collection request online at *http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501–3521) and OMB regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 provide that an agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Until OMB approves a collection of information, you are not obligated to respond. In order to obtain and renew an OMB control number, Federal agencies are required to seek public comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d) and 1320.12(a)).

As required at 5 CFR 1320.8(d), the BLM published a 60-day notice in the **Federal Register** on June 13, 2012 (77 FR 35420), and the comment period ended August 13, 2012. The BLM received no comments. The BLM now requests comments on the following subjects:

1. Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper functioning of the BLM, including whether the information will have practical utility;
2. The accuracy of the BLM’s estimate of the burden of collecting the information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
3. The quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and
4. How to minimize the information collection burden on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other forms of information technology.

Please send comments as directed under **ADDRESSES** and **DATES**. Please refer to OMB control number 1004–0029

in your correspondence. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The following information is provided for the information collection:

Title: Color-of-Title Application (43 CFR Subparts 2540 and 2541).

Forms:

- Form 2540–1, Color-of-Title Application;
- Form 2540–2, Color-of-Title Conveyances Affecting Color or Claim of Title; and
- Form 2540–3, Color-of-Title Tax Levy and Payment Record.

OMB Control Number: 1004–0029.

Abstract: The Color-of-Title Act (43 U.S.C. 1068, 1068a, and 1068b) provides for the issuance of a land patent to a tract of public land of up to 160 acres, where the claimant shows peaceful, adverse possession of the tract in good faith for more than 20 years, as well as sufficient improvement or cultivation of the land. The information covered in this submission enables the BLM to determine whether or not such a claimant has made a showing that is sufficient under the pertinent statutory and regulatory criteria.

Frequency of Collection: Once.

Estimated Number and Description of Respondents Annually: 8 individuals, 1 group, and 1 association, which seek title to public land on the basis of adverse possession.

Estimated Reporting and Recordkeeping “Hour” Burden Annually: 30 hours.

Estimated Reporting and Recordkeeping “Non-Hour Cost” Burden: \$100.

The following table details the individual components and respective hour burdens of this information collection request:

A. Type of response	B. Number of responses	C. Hours per response	D. Total hours (Column B × Column C)
Color-of-Title Application/Individuals	8	3	24
Color-of-Title Application/Groups	1	3	3
Color-of-Title Application/Corporations	1	3	3
Totals	10	30