

opportunities for solitude. The facilities and access points that would be provided would be concentrated together to minimize overall impacts to the Monument and to provide economies of scale in management and maintenance. Public access points and recreational facilities would be planned and developed along highways and in perimeter areas. Unlike Alternative C, existing facilities and infrastructure currently present would not be relocated or closed, such as the White Bluffs Boat Launch. Vehicle access into the Monument's interior would be less limited, although like Alternative C, much of the Monument would be open to foot and other non-motorized access. Facilities, such as the boat-in campsites along Hanford Reach provided for in this alternative, would be developed after inventories of resources are conducted and sensitive resources are identified in the area under consideration. Interpretation and education programs would serve greater numbers of people than Alternatives A, B, B-1 and F, but fewer than Alternatives C, D and E.

Alternative D. Alternative D provides the greatest degree of public access, recreational opportunities, and facilities development. The conservation, protection and monitoring of the biological, geological, paleontological and cultural resources described in the Proclamation would still be the primary priorities; however, more time, effort and resources would be devoted to public use than in the other alternatives, likely decreasing the resources and attention available to restoration activities. Resource inventories, identification of sensitive areas, and restoration activities would be concentrated in the areas of highest public use. Resource protection, restoration research, and monitoring would focus on the impacts created from recreational activities. Public access sites and facilities would be developed throughout the Monument and to a greater extent than Alternatives A, B, B-1, C, C-1 and F; access would be restricted from the most sensitive areas. Visitor facilities would include improved boat launches, auto tour routes, and campgrounds. Interpretation and education programs would serve the highest number of people of all the alternatives.

Alternative E. Alternative E was formulated by the Monument's Federal Advisory Committee during a workshop held June 16-17, 2004. It provides an alternate public use emphasis to that of Alternative D. Alternative E provides a high degree of public access and facilities development. It does this

through the combination of elements from Alternatives C and D. The underlying open space concept of Alternative C is maintained through the concentration of facilities in perimeter areas; however, access and areas open to the public more closely resemble Alternative D. Again, the conservation, protection and monitoring of the biological, geological, paleontological, and cultural resources described in the Proclamation is the top priority, but as in Alternative D, substantial effort and resources would be devoted to public use, likely decreasing the resources available for restoration activities. Resource inventories, identification of sensitive areas and restoration activities would be concentrated in areas of highest public use. Resource protection, restoration research, and monitoring would focus on impacts created from recreational activities. Public access points and facilities would be developed in perimeter areas and to a greater extent than Alternatives A, B and F; access would be restricted from the most sensitive areas. Visitor facilities would include improved boat launches and campgrounds. Interpretation and education programs would serve a high number of people, although not as many as Alternative D.

Alternative F. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) developed this alternative using Alternative B as its basis for management emphasis and public access. While similar to Alternative B, Alternative F would provide a slight increase in the areas open to public access. The one significant difference is the proposed addition of a public access permit system, with the possible establishment of fee areas. Interpretation and education programs would be provided; however, fewer people would be served than in Alternatives C, C-1, D and E.

Preferred Alternative. We have identified Alternative C-1, as described above, as our preferred alternative, pending a final selection to be documented in a Record of Decision.

Dated: May 23, 2008.

Renne R. Lohofener,
Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.
[FR Doc. E8-18445 Filed 8-14-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID-410-1990-EX-069D-241A, DEG080007]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Buffalo Gulch Mining Project, Cottonwood Field Office, Idaho County, ID

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management Cottonwood Field Office will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) consistent with the regulations pertaining to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under the provisions of Section 102(2)(c) of the NEPA, the BLM announces its intentions to prepare an EIS and solicit public comments regarding issues and resource information for this project.

The BLM will analyze a proposal from Elk City Mining, LLC (ECM) to advance the Buffalo Gulch Mining Project to full scale production near Elk City, Idaho County, Idaho. This project was originally permitted in 1990 but never went into production. ECM's Plan of Operations includes an open pit mining operation and a cyanide heap leach facility to recover gold from the mined ore on their unpatented mining claims.

DATES: The public scoping period for the Buffalo Gulch Mining Project will begin with publication of this NOI and end 30 days later. The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis and EIS alternatives. BLM will ensure the public is notified of all opportunities for involvement related to this proposal at least 15 days prior to the event. A public meeting in Elk City, Idaho, and possible field trip to the project site, is scheduled for August 28, 2008. Additional information about this or additional meetings will be announced through local news media outlets, individual mailings, and the following BLM Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/cottonwood.html>.

The draft EIS is expected to be distributed for public review and comment in the fall of 2009. The final EIS is expected to be completed four to six months later.

ADDRESSES: More detailed information about this project is available at the Cottonwood Field Office, 1 Butte Drive, Cottonwood, Idaho, 83522. Please

submit written comments to the Cottonwood Field Office, Attn: Stephanie Connolly, at the above address. Fax comments to (208) 962-3275. (Please indicate Buffalo Gulch Mining Project Comments on the fax cover sheet.) Electronic comments can be submitted to: Buffalo_Gulch_Mine_Comments@blm.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott Sanner, Project Leader, at (208) 769-5032 or e-mail: scott_sanner@blm.gov; or Stephanie Connolly, Cottonwood Field Office Manager, at (208) 962-3256 or e-mail: stephanie_connolly@blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A Plan of Operations for the Project was submitted to the BLM by the former mine proponent, the Idaho Gold Corporation, in December, 1989. The BLM prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and permitted the Project in 1990 but the mine never went into production. In December, 2007, ECM informed the BLM they had gained control of the Project and intended to advance the Buffalo Gulch Mining Project to full scale production under the 1989 Plan of Operations. Since the original environmental analysis was completed over 17 years ago, there are likely new or different issues relevant today that were not previously addressed.

As proposed, the total surface area disturbed during the life of the project is anticipated to be approximately 200 acres. This estimate includes the open pit, heap leach pad, waste rock dumps, solution ponds, and other ancillary mine facilities (e.g., shop, mine office, roads, power line, etc.). Under this Plan, mining would occur for about five years with simultaneous reclamation activities. Final reclamation would be completed within six months to one year after completion of mining and leaching operations.

The Buffalo Gulch Mine—Plan of Operations (as submitted in 1989) and the Environmental Assessment for the original Plan of Operations (completed in 1990) are posted on the Internet at: <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/cottonwood.html>.

On March 28 and May 16, 2008, scoping letters for the Buffalo Gulch Mining Project were mailed to known interested groups and individuals. Two public meetings were held on April 9, in Elk City, and on April 10, 2008, in Grangeville, Idaho. Based on the interdisciplinary team's knowledge of the issues, comments that have been received and other projects in this area, it has been determined that further

analysis is warranted and an EIS will be prepared.

The Cottonwood Field Office is seeking information, comments, and assistance from other agencies, organizations, Tribes, and individuals who may be interested in or affected by the Proposed Action. The Cottonwood Field Office will issue local press releases notifying the public of additional opportunities to meet with staff and to discuss the project in more detail. Issues previously identified during public scoping for this project as well as comments received as a result of this Notice will be used to prepare the EIS.

Issues identified to date include the following:

- Surface and ground water contamination.
- Transportation of hazardous materials, traffic levels and safety.
- Economic and social values.
- Air quality and noise.
- Fisheries and wildlife habitat.
- Cumulative impacts of past and likely future activities in the Elk City area.

If you have specific issues or other concerns that BLM should consider in the NEPA process, please identify them in writing. You may send comments to the BLM by mail, facsimile, or electronic mail. Comments may also be hand-delivered to the Cottonwood Field Office. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail 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.

Dated: August 11, 2008.

Gary D. Cooper,

District Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AK930-1310EI-241A]

National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska Oil and Gas Lease Sale 2008

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska Oil and Gas Lease Sale 2008 and Notice of Availability of the

Detailed Statement of Sale for Oil and Gas Lease Sale 2008 in the Petroleum Reserve.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management's Alaska State Office will hold an oil and gas lease sale bid opening for all available tracts in the Northeast Planning Area, tracts straddling the Ikpikpuk River in the Northeast and Northwest planning areas, and tracts in the southern portion of the Northwest Planning Area. With the exception of new tracts in the Northwest Planning Area north of the Colville River, all tracts have been offered previously. Additionally, leased tracts that have been relinquished will be available in this sale.

DATES: The oil and gas lease sale bid opening will be held at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, September 24, 2008. Sealed bids must be received by 3:45 p.m., Friday, September 19, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The oil and gas lease sale bids will be opened at the Wilda Marston Theater, ZJ Loussac Public Library, 3600 Denali St., Anchorage, Alaska. Sealed bids must be sent to Carol Taylor (AK932), BLM—Alaska State Office; 222 W. 7th Ave., #13; Anchorage, AK 99513-7599.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ted Murphy, (907) 271-4413.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: All bids must be submitted by sealed bid in accordance with the provisions identified in the Detailed Statement of Sale. They must be received at the BLM—Alaska State Office, ATTN: Carol Taylor (AK932); 222 W. 7th Ave., #13; Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599; no later than 3:45 p.m., Friday, September 19, 2008.

The Detailed Statement of Sale for the NPR—A Oil and Gas Lease Sale 2008 will be available to the public immediately after publication of this Notice. The Detailed Statement may be obtained from the BLM—Alaska Web site at <http://www.blm.gov/ak>, or by request from the Public Information Center, BLM—Alaska State Office; 222 W. 7th Ave., #13; Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599; telephone (907) 271-5960. The Detailed Statement of Sale will include, among other things, a description of the areas to be offered for lease, the lease terms, conditions, special stipulations, required operating procedures, and how and where to submit bids.

Authority: 43 CFR 3131.4-1(a).