

Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal EIS

Newsletter #2 - February 2011

The Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is now available for public review and comment. The DEIS has been prepared in response to the Secretary of the Interior's proposed 20-year withdrawal of approximately 1 million acres of federal mineral estate in northern Arizona from the location and entry of new mining claims. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this document with 15 federal, state, local, and tribal cooperators in an effort to provide an objective analysis of the Proposed Action and alternatives based on the best available science.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action analyzed in the DEIS is the withdrawal of minerals in approximately 1,010,776 acres near Grand Canyon National Park from location and entry under the Mining Law of 1874 [United States Code 22-54] (Mining Law) for 20 years. This includes approximately 626,354 acres of public lands managed by the Arizona Strip Field Office, 360,349 acres of National Forest System lands managed by the Kaibab National Forest, 4,284 acres administered by the Arizona State Land Department, and 19,789 acres of private lands divided into three separate parcels (see Figure 1).

The underlying purpose of the Proposed Action is to protect the natural, cultural, and social resources in the Grand Canyon watershed from possible adverse effects of reasonably foreseeable locatable mineral exploration and development that could occur in the withdrawal area. This proposed withdrawal would prohibit the location of new mining claims. Exploration or development operations on BLM and National Forest System lands on existing mining claims under notices or plans of operation submitted after the effective date of the withdrawal would not be able to proceed unless the subject mining claim were determined to be valid under the Mining Law as of the date of the segregation, July 21, 2009.

Alternatives

The DEIS includes alternatives to the Proposed Action that would also be instrumental in achieving the underlying purpose and need described above. The Proposed Action is analyzed as Alternative B in the DEIS. The other alternatives include "no-action" or no withdrawal (Alternative A) and two additional "action" alternatives that propose withdrawal of more limited geographic areas that encompass particularly sensitive resources (Alternatives C and D).

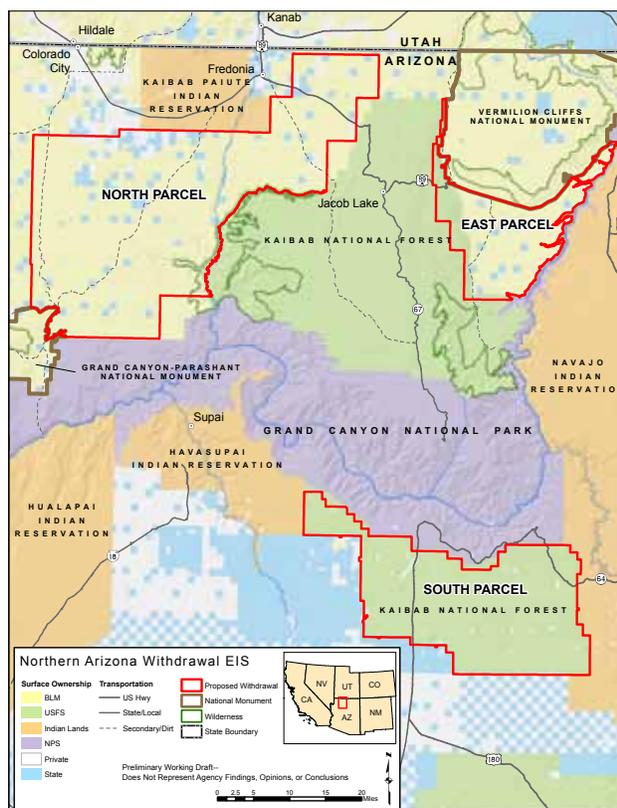


Figure 1

Comment Period

The DEIS was issued for public review on February 18, 2011. The DEIS comment period will last for 45 days, ending April 4, 2011.

Providing Comments

The BLM encourages the public to provide information and comments pertaining to the analysis presented in the DEIS. Your review and comments are critical to the success of this National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. If you wish to submit comments on the DEIS, we request that you make your comments as specific as possible. Comments will be more helpful if they include suggested changes, additional sources, or alternate methodologies, and if they reference a section or page number.

In order to be considered and to merit a written response, comments must be in writing (paper or electronic format),

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substantive, and timely. Substantive comments do one or more of the following:

- question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the DEIS.
- question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis.
- present valid new information relevant to the analysis.
- present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the DEIS.
- cause changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives.

Comments that are not substantive generally contain only opinion or preferences, but will be considered and included as part of the decision-making process. They will not, however, receive a formal response in the comment analysis section of the EIS.

Comments may be submitted electronically to: **NAZproposedwithdrawal@azblm.org**. Comments may also be submitted by mail to: Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal Project, ATTN: Scott Florence, District Manager, Bureau of Land Management Arizona Strip District Office, 345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790-6714.

Following the closing of the comment period on the DEIS, the BLM, in consultation with cooperating agencies, will respond to comments and prepare the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for publication in Fall 2011. After the Final FEIS has been published, the Secretary of the Interior will make a final decision.

Public Meetings

Public open house meetings are scheduled to be held the week of March 7, 2011. These meetings provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the EIS process and the document content and analysis, to ask questions of agency officials, and to provide public comments. Meetings are scheduled for the following locations from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., with a short formal presentation at 6:30 p.m.:

- **March 7, 2011**, BLM National Training Center, 9828 North 31st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ
- **March 8, 2011**, High Country Conference Center, 201 West Butler Avenue, Flagstaff, AZ
- **March 9, 2011**, Fredonia High School, 221 East Hortt Street, Fredonia, AZ
- **March 10, 2011**, Homewood Suites Hotel, 423 West 300 South, Salt Lake City, UT

Document Availability

The DEIS is available on the Internet at <http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/mining/timeout.htm>. Full printed copies are available for public inspection at the following locations:

- **BLM Arizona Strip District Office**, 345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790-6714
- **BLM Arizona State Office**, One N. Central Ave., Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004; Phoenix District Office, 21605 N. 7th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85027; Utah State Office, 440 W. 200 S. Suite 500, Salt Lake City, UT 84145
- **U.S. Forest Service Tonto National Forest**, 2324 E. McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85006; Kaibab National Forest, 800 S. 6th St., Williams, AZ 86046; Kaibab National Forest, 430 S. Main St., Fredonia, AZ 86022; Coconino National Forest, 1824 S. Thompson St., Flagstaff, AZ 86001
- **Public libraries**: Williams Public Library, 113 1st St., Williams, AZ 86046; Fredonia Public Library, 118 N. Main St., Fredonia, AZ 86022

Public comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Arizona Strip District Office, 345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790, during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All comments by organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.



For Further
Information
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