



NEW RELEASE

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BLM schedules additional public meeting for oil and gas EIS, extends public scoping period

SILT, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management has scheduled a fourth public scoping meeting for the Environmental Impact Statement analyzing 65 existing oil and gas leases on the White River National Forest and extended the public scoping period until May 16.

The fourth meeting will be held at the DeBeque Community Center May 1 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., in addition to the previously scheduled meetings April 15 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Glenwood Springs Community Center, April 16 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Carbondale Town Hall, and April 17 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Pitkin County Library in Aspen.

The format of the meetings will include opportunities for the public to provide written or oral comments, ask BLM and Forest Service specialists questions one-on-one, or ask questions during a formal question and answer session.

“Our goal is to provide the public opportunities to have their questions answered and to provide specific, effective comments,” said Steve Bennett, field manager for the Colorado River Valley Field Office in Silt.

The three-hour meetings will be divided as follows: The first 30 minutes will be an open house, followed by a 10-minute presentation and 20 minutes of formal Q&A. A 45-minute period for oral comments will begin an hour into the meeting, followed by a 30-minute continuation of the open house and concluding with a second 45-minute oral comment period.

To ensure as many people as possible can be heard during these meetings, oral comments will be limited to two minutes. More detailed comments can be submitted in writing.

The BLM is initiating an EIS to address National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) deficiencies identified by the Interior Board of Land Appeals for the 65 existing leases.

A “scoping period” gives the public a chance to tell the BLM what issues and concerns they think should be addressed in an EIS before the BLM begins drafting the document.

The BLM expects to release a draft of the EIS and alternatives for public review in early 2015. As a result of this EIS, the BLM could cancel the existing leases, modify the terms and conditions of the leases, or keep the existing terms and conditions of leases in place. The existing leases are entirely on land managed by the White River National Forest.

The BLM is conducting this EIS to address deficiencies in the existing environmental analyses for these leases. While the U.S. Forest Service determines which of its lands are available for oil and gas leasing and had the lead on the environmental analysis for those decisions, the BLM must either formally adopt the Forest Service analysis or perform its own analysis. The BLM did not formally adopt the Forest Service analysis and is performing its own analysis of these 65 leases through this EIS.

The EIS allows for a robust public involvement process, which begins with the scoping period announced April 1.

Additional information about the EIS scoping period is available at:
<http://www.blm.gov/co/crvfo>.

Scoping comments need to be received by May 16, 2014 and may be emailed to WRNFlases@blm.gov; faxed to 970-876-9090; or mailed to Bureau of Land Management, Colorado River Valley Field Office, 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652.

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.

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