

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Lewistown Field Office  
920 Northeast Main  
Lewistown, Montana 59457**

**Decision Record and Leasing Recommendation  
Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-MT-L060-2012-0041-EA**

**Decision:**

It is my decision to implement the Preferred Alternative as identified in the Lewistown Field Office Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-MT-L060-2012-0041-EA, in which 4 parcels (1 whole and 3 partial) totaling 1,442.3 acres of federal mineral estate would be offered for lease at the October 23, 2012 competitive sale. Competitive leases will be issued for parcels sold at the sale, and noncompetitive leases may be issued for applications filed during the 2-year period following the sale. The remaining 17 parcels containing approximately 5,230.18 acres in whole or part will be deferred due to valuable wildlife habitat and are pending further review in the Lewistown Resource Management Plan.

**Authorities:**

The authority for this decision is contained in 43 CFR 3100.

**Compliance and Monitoring:**

Should the parcels be developed, monitoring may be required and would be addressed and analyzed under future NEPA documentation.

**Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations:**

For all parcels, standard terms and conditions, as well as the lease notices and stipulations identified by parcel in Appendix A of the EA, would apply and be attached to the lease parcel(s).

**Plan Conformance and Consistency:**

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the following BLM plans and associated Record of Decision(s): Fergus Management Framework Plan (MFP) (approved January 1978), and the Lewistown District Oil & Gas Environmental Assessment of the BLM Leasing Program (approved September 1981) and the Headwaters Resource Management Plan as approved in 1984.

**Alternatives Considered:**

No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative would exclude all 4 parcels within the Lewistown Field Office from the lease sale. Surface management would remain the same and ongoing oil and gas development would continue on surrounding federal, private, and state leases.

BLM Preferred Alternative. The preferred alternative would be to offer 4 parcels totaling 1,442.3 acres of federal mineral estate of federal minerals for competitive and/or noncompetitive lease issuance. The lease parcels to be offered are located in the following counties: Fergus, Pondera, and Teton. Standard terms and conditions, as well as stipulations identified in Appendix A of the EA would apply.

Alternatives Considered, but eliminated from further analysis: 17 parcels containing approximately 5,230.18 federal mineral acres in whole or part would be deferred from the upcoming lease sale. More specifically, the 17 lease parcels have been found to contain valuable wildlife habitat and will be analyzed during the Lewistown RMP revision.

**Public Comments:**

This EA was made available for a 30-day public comment period which ended on June 20, 2012. No substantive comments were received from the public during the 30-day comment period; however, after an internal review of the EA, some modifications have been made. Changes made to the analysis are noted with gray-scale shading and/or strikeout so the modifications to the EA can easily be identified. Refer to Chapter 5 of the updated EA for a summary of public participation and changes made to the EA.

**Rationale for the Decision:**

The decision to approve the Preferred Alternative is based on the following: 1) consistency with resource management and land use plans; 2) national policy; 3) agency statutory requirements; 4) relevant resource issues; and 5) application of measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

1. The decision is in conformance with the Fergus Management Framework Plan (MFP) (approved January 1978), and the Lewistown District Oil & Gas Environmental Assessment of the BLM Leasing Program (approved September 1981) and the Headwaters Resource Management Plan as approved in 1984.
2. It is the policy of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as derived from various laws, including the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended [30 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*] and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, to make mineral resources available for disposal and to encourage development of mineral resources to meet national, regional, and local needs.
3. The decision is consistent with all federal, state, and county authorizing actions required for implementation of the Preferred Alternative.
4. Standard terms and conditions as well as special stipulations would apply. Lease stipulations (as required by Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations 3101.1-3) were added to each parcel as identified by the LFO to address site specific resource concerns or new information not identified in the planning process.

Recommended by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Beyersdorf". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'G'.

Geoff Beyersdorf, Field Manager

Date October 19, 2012

Concurrence by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary L. Benes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'G'.

Gary "Stan" L. Benes, District Manager

Date October 19, 2012

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa M. Hanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'T'.

Theresa M. Hanley, Deputy State Director, Division of Resources

Date October 19, 2012