

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Lewistown Field Office  
920 NE Main Street  
Lewistown, MT 59457**

**Decision Record and Leasing Recommendation  
Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-MT-060-2013-0015-EA**

**Decision:**

It is my decision to implement Alternative B (the Preferred Alternative) as identified in the Lewistown Field Office (LFO) Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Assessment (EA), DOI-BLM-MT-060-2013-0015-EA, in which three parcels containing 800 acres of federal minerals with private surface would be offered for lease at the October 22, 2013, 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.

**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 parcels.

**Plan Conformance and Consistency:**

The alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the land use decisions described in the Headwaters Resource Management Plan (RMP) and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (1984).

**Alternatives Considered:**

Alternative A – No Action. The No Action Alternative would exclude three lease parcels 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.

Alternative B – Proposed Action and BLM Preferred Alternative. The proposed action would be to offer the three parcels for competitive and/or noncompetitive lease issuance, in conformance with the land use planning decisions. The lease parcels are located within the LFO in Pondera County. Standard terms and conditions, as well as stipulations identified in Appendix A of the EA would apply.

**Public Comments:**

On May 20, 2013, this EA was made available for a 30-day public comment period. One written submission was received after the 30-day comment period, which resulted in 86 individually-coded substantive comments. After review and consideration of the substantive comments, some modifications were made to the analysis and are denoted with gray-scale shading and/or strikeout in the updated EA. Refer to Chapter 5 of the updated EA for a summary of substantive comments and changes made to the EA.

On July 24, 2013, the Bureau of Land Management provided notice that three parcels of land (800 acres of federal mineral estate) would be offered in a competitive oil and gas lease sale on October 22, 2013; this lease sale notice initiated a 30-day protest period for the lease sale. No protests were received by the Lewistown Field Office.

**Rationale for the Decision:**

The decision to approve Alternative B, 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 Headwaters RMP and accompanying EIS (November 1983), as amended.
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:**

Adam Carr, Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist  
Date October 17, 2013

Concurrence by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoff Beyersdorf". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end.

Geoff Beyersdorf, Acting District Manager  
Date October 17, 2013

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James A. Albano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James A. Albano, Acting Deputy State Director, Division of Resources  
Date October 21, 2013