



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Rawlins Field Office  
P.O. Box 2407 (1300 North Third Street)  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-2407

In Reply Refer To:  
1790

March 11, 2005

Re: Scoping Notice - Cherokee West 3D  
Seismic Survey Project  
Environmental Assessment

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is planning to prepare an Environmental Analysis (EA) for a proposed geophysical project to be known as the Cherokee West 3D Seismic Survey.

Kerr-McGee Corporation and Veritas DGC Land, Inc., have filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Conduct Geophysical Operations with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins, Rock Springs, and Little Snake River, Field Offices, for a seismic survey project on public, fee, and state lands within Sweetwater County, Wyoming, and Moffat County, Colorado. The proposed project is located within Townships 12 and 13 North, Ranges 96, 97, 98, and 99 West, 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian, in Wyoming and Colorado.

A scoping notice has been prepared for your review and information, both as an introduction to the proposed project and as a review of the basic procedures we intend to follow in the preparation of the EA. The scoping process is an opportunity for you to participate in the earliest phase of environmental assessment for the Cherokee West 3D Seismic Survey. We encourage your input and comments on the project. Information and comments you provide will enable us to assess alternatives for consideration in the environmental assessment.

We are conducting scoping for 30 days. If you are interested in participating in the scoping process, we request that you respond by supplying your written or e-mailed comments or concerns about the proposed activity by April 11, 2005. Please submit your comments to:

Tom Foertsch, Physical Scientist  
Bureau of Land Management  
Rawlins Field Office  
P.O. Box 2407  
1300 North Third Street  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301

E-mail: [rawlins\\_wymail@blm.gov](mailto:rawlins_wymail@blm.gov)

A link to the Scoping Notice will be posted on the Wyoming BLM Rawlins Field Office homepage at [www.wy.blm.gov/rfo](http://www.wy.blm.gov/rfo). Your response is important and will be considered in the environmental analysis process. If you do respond, we will consider your comments in the analysis for the project. Please note that public comments submitted for this scoping review, including names, e-mail addresses, and street addresses of the respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentially. If you wish to withhold your name, e-mail address, or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this plainly at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Thank you again for your interest in this process. If you have any questions regarding the project, your role, or our responsibilities, please contact Tom Foertsch, Project Lead, at the address shown above or phone (307) 328-4368.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Stoyen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "M" and "S".

Field Manager

Enclosure

**SCOPING STATEMENT  
CHEROKEE WEST 3D SEISMIC SURVEY  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE**

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

Kerr-McGee Corporation and Veritas DGC Land, Inc. (Veritas), have filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Conduct Geophysical Operations with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins Field Office, for a geophysical project on public, fee, and state lands within Sweetwater County, Wyoming, and Moffat County, Colorado. The proposed project is located in multiple Sections within Townships 12 and 13 North, Ranges 96, 97, 98, and 99 West, 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian, in Wyoming and Colorado. The proposed project is located approximately 80 miles southwest of Rawlins, Wyoming.

The area for the project encompasses approximately 164 square miles, of which approximately 3 square miles are state lands and 2 square miles are privately owned land. Those portions of the project occurring on private or state land are not subject to BLM authorization and would be permitted separately.

The seismic survey proposed action would use source energy generated by both vibroseis vehicles and shot hole methods. Vibroseis will be the primary method with buggy-drilled shot holes and helicopter portable shot holes used for infill in areas not suited for vibroseis. Four (4) buggy mounted vibrators (vibroseis) per source station will be utilized. Terrain will dictate the use of vibrators, buggy drills, and helicopter portable drills. No source points will be located within the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area, though receiver points will be distributed within a portion of the WSA.

Access within the project area will utilize existing roads and trails when possible. However, there will be required cross-country travel to access source locations. All-terrain vehicles will be utilized to access the source and receiver stations. A helicopter will be utilized to deploy and pick up recording equipment, to minimize off road vehicular traffic. Vehicular traffic is prohibited within the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area

The receiver station interval would be 220 feet, with lines 1,320 feet apart. The source station intervals would be 220 feet, with source lines 1,760 feet apart.

Staging areas will be located on private land if possible or on previously-disturbed BLM land. No permanent facilities will be constructed on the project. Cultural and sensitive resource sites will be avoided.

Shot hole plugging will be conducted in accordance with the Wyoming and Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission stipulations. All equipment, flagging, stakes, trash, etc., will be removed as the project proceeds. In addition, a final cleanup and repair of any damaged areas will be done upon completion of the project.

It is anticipated that operations would begin in the summer of 2005 and last approximately 75 days.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Great Divide Resource Management Plan (GDRMP)** - The GDRMP (November 8, 1990) directs the management of BLM-administered lands within the analysis area. The objective for management of geophysical exploration, as stated in the GDRMP, "is to provide opportunity for exploration of mineral resources and collection of geophysical data, while protecting resource values."

**Little Snake Resource Management Plan (LSRMP)** - The LSRMP (April 26, 1989) and the Oil and Gas Plan Amendment (October 1991) direct the management of BLM-administered lands within the Colorado portion of the analysis area. The management objectives for the analysis area are to provide for the development of the oil and gas resource, improve soil and watershed values, increase forage production, and enhance livestock grazing.

**Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP)** – The GRRMP (August 8, 1997) directs the management of BLM administered lands within the Rock Springs Field Office portion of the project area. The proposed project is in conformance with the management objective for Geophysical Exploration; to provide opportunity for exploration of mineral resources and collection of physical data, while protecting other resource values.

**Use Authorizations** - An approved Notice of Intent to Conduct Geophysical Operations is subject to the Terms and Conditions for a Notice of Intent to Conduct Geophysical Exploration. Other conditions of approval to protect important resources may be added to the authorization if analysis proves such measures would further reduce environmental impact.

## **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

On reviewing the proposal, the BLM has determined that an EA will be prepared. The impact analysis presented in the EA will result in one of three outcomes, as determined by the BLM, either: 1) the proposed project would not result in significant impacts and a Decision Record with a Finding of No Significant Impact (DR/FONSI) could be signed (which would allow the project to be implemented), or 2) the project, as proposed, would result in significant impacts and would require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or 3) no action would be approved under this proposal.

For this project, the BLM has determined that scoping activities will be conducted prior to the preparation of an EA:

- to determine reasonable development alternatives to be considered in the document
- to identify issues of concern related to the proposed project
- to determine the depth and range of analyses for issues addressed in the document

This scoping statement has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in, and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

## **IDENTIFIED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The following issues and concerns have been identified to-date. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather to serve as a starting point for public input. Once all issues and concerns have been gathered through scoping and BLM consideration of the project, corresponding resource disciplines will be identified to conduct analysis for individual issues and concerns.

- potential effects upon wildlife within the analysis area

- potential impacts to hunting areas and other recreation
- potential impacts to cultural and historical resources within the analysis area including the Cherokee Trail
- potential impacts to sensitive plants
- potential impacts to paleontological resources
- potential impacts to riparian and ground water resources
- potential impacts to sensitive soils within the project area
- potential impacts to the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area and lands with wilderness characteristics
- potential conflicts with wild horse gathering
- restoration of disturbed areas and control of nonnative plants

### **TIMING NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS**

Government agencies, the public, and other interested parties are encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to be considered, issues or concerns that should be assessed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure that the analysis process is comprehensive.

After a 30-day scoping period is completed and the EA is prepared, the EA will be released to the public for review and comment prior to a decision regarding authorization by the Rawlins Field Office.

The scoping period for this project ends on April 11, 2005. Please submit your comments to:

Tom Foertsch, Physical Scientist  
Bureau of Land Management  
Rawlins Field Office  
1300 North Third Street  
P.O. Box 2407  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301

E-mail: rawlins\_wymail@blm.gov

Please refer to the Cherokee West 3D Seismic Survey in your response.

### **REFERENCES CITED**

- U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 1990. Great Divide Resource Area Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan. Prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Rawlins Field Office, Rawlins, Wyoming. BLM-WY-PT-91-010-4410. 74 pp.
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 1989 Little Snake Resource Area Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan. Prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. 54 pp.
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 1991 Little Snake Resource Area Oil and Gas Amendment Record of Decision. Prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. 29 pp.

The Green River Resource Management Plan, related decisions, and GIS information can be found on the world wide web at: <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/WY/application/index.cfm?rmpid=87>