

**SCOPING STATEMENT
WESTSIDE IRRIGATION DISTRICT LAND CONVEYANCE PROJECT**

**Westside Irrigation District,
and
Bureau of Land Management, Worland Field Office
and
Wyoming Water Development Commission**

Introduction

In July 2004, the Bureau of Land Management, Worland Field Office, issued a scoping statement for the Westside Irrigation District land conveyance project. Comments were accepted from the public until August 23rd, and scoping meetings were held in Worland and Basin, Wyoming. As a result of the comments received during that time, and consultation with the Co-Lead Agency, Cooperating Agencies, and the project proponent, BLM has decided to proceed directly with the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) without an intervening environmental assessment. Accordingly, on February 22, 2005 BLM published a notice of intent to prepare an EIS. Publication of the notice initiated an additional 30-day scoping period for the draft EIS.

Parties who submitted comments during the original scoping period in July-August 2004 do not need to resubmit those comments. All comments received during that period will be given full consideration in the EIS, and commentors will remain on the EIS mailing list.

Further information regarding the project can be found in the July 2004 scoping statement, available at the Worland field office, or online (see below.)

Description of Project

Public Law 106-485 (Nov. 9, 2000; 114 Stat. 2199) directs the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Land Management, to convey all right, title and interest (excluding mineral interest) in a parcel of public land in Big Horn County and Washakie County, Wyoming. The parcel of land to be conveyed comprises approximately 16,500 acres (see map). Conveyance is to be made to the Westside Irrigation District, at appraised value. The sale to the District is to take place after “completion of an environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act” (NEPA) by the Worland Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Project Collaboration

Co-Lead Agency for the preparation of the EIS will be the Wyoming Water Development Commission. The WWDC will use the document in support of any future funding decisions should the Westside Irrigation District file an application with the Commission for water supply development assistance. Cooperators identified to date include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Big Horn County Commission and the Washakie County Commission.

Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents

The document which directs management of federal lands within the project area is the Grass Creek Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision approved in 1998. The Grass Creek RMP states that landownership adjustments by sale would be considered on a case-by-case basis, following criteria and factors established in Appendix 4 of the Plan. In considering any sale, “BLM will consult with county commissioners and other representatives of local government in the affected areas. Other affected and interested citizens will be given opportunities to comment as well.”

Timing Requirements

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

All comments received to date will be considered in the EIS. You do not need to resubmit comments you may have already sent.

Comments are due by close of business, **March 25, 2005**. Please submit your comments to:

Don Ogaard, Project Manager
BLM – Worland Field Office
PO Box 119
Worland, WY 82401

307.347.5160

E-mail: wymail_westside@blm.gov

Project documents and information can be found at: <http://www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/wfodocs/westside>

Bill Hill, Field Manager

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**Lawrence M. Besson, Director
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