
Worksheet
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

OFFICE: Elko District Office

TRACKING NUMBER: BLM-NV-E000-2010-001-DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: 3100

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: December 2010 Oil and Gas Lease Sale

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: See Exhibit A

APPLICANT (if any): This is a BLM initiated action, based on nominations from industry

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

The BLM, Elko District, proposes to have the State Director offer 123 parcels in the Elko District, totaling approximately 229476.97 acres currently nominated for oil and gas leasing in a state-wide competitive lease sale on December 8, 2009 (See **Attachment 1**, General Location Parcel Map). The parcels would be offered subject to leasing stipulations as identified in the Attachment 1 table. The full text of each stipulation is in **Attachment 2**. More detailed map(s) of the parcels are available upon request to the Elko District. **Exhibit A** is the parcel list containing legal descriptions of the nominated parcels. The parcels are within areas covered by the 1987 Elko and 1985 Wells Resource Management Plan (RMP), and all are designated as open to leasing. None of the parcels are in or close to a wilderness study area. Parcels in the Elko RMP planning area include 39 in the Mason Mountain area, 6 parcels in the Wild Horse area, one parcel in the Pine Valley area and one parcel in the Robinson Mountain area. Parcels in the Wells RMP planning area are in the Thousand Springs area (6), and in the Toano Draw area (69).

As noted in **Attachment 1, Table 1A** and **Attachment 2:**

- The stipulations for Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species (OG-010-05-01), and Raptor Nesting Sites (OG-010-05-02) would be attached to all leases.
- Special stipulation applicable to some of the proposed lease parcels are for Pronghorn Antelope (Crucial Winter Range - 2 parcels), and Sage Grouse (Strutting Grounds, Brood Rearing Areas and Crucial Winter Habitat - 90 parcels).
- The stipulation for Cultural Resources/Native American Consultation (OG-010-05-03) also would be attached to all leases. Many of the leases also include notices to advise the potential lessee of the presence of historic roads, trails, structures and/or railroads eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Five parcels would be subject to the National Historic Trails stipulation (OG-010-05-13).
- Sixty-two parcels are near the I-80 Low Visibility Corridor or Class II Visual Resources Management areas (OG-010-05-10).
- The six parcels in the area of Wildhorse Reservoir require application of the Special Recreation Management Area stipulation (OG-010-05-11).

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

**List applicable LUPs (for example, resource management plans; activity, project, management, or program plans; or applicable amendments thereto)*

LUP Name* Wells Resource Management Plan

Date Approved July 1985

LUP Name* Elko Resource Management Plan

Date Approved March 1987

Other document (s): December 2005 Lease Sale Decision Record, September 20, 2005

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions:

The 1985 Record of Decision (ROD) for the Wells RMP, page 25, provides that, *“The public lands will be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation’s needs for domestic sources of minerals.”* As a standard operating procedure, the ROD prescribes that, *“Time-of-day and/or time-of-year restrictions will be placed on construction activities associated with leasable and saleable mineral explorations and/or development that are in the immediate vicinity or would cross crucial sage grouse, crucial deer and pronghorn antelope winter habitats, antelope kidding areas, or raptor nesting areas.”*

The 1987 Elko RMP ROD determined lands subject to leasing as follows (Page 35 and Map 13):

- (1) Open – subject to standard leasing stipulations
- (2) Limited – subject to no surface occupancy (Special Recreation Managements Areas and sage grouse strutting grounds)
- (3) Limited – subject to seasonal restrictions (crucial deer winter range, crucial antelope yearlong habitat and sage grouse brood rearing areas).
- (4) Closed – wilderness and wilderness study areas recommended for designation.

The Minerals Objective is to: *“Maintain public lands open for exploration, development and production of mineral resources while mitigating conflicts with wildlife, wild horses, recreation and wilderness resources.”*

C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

December 2005 Oil and Gas Lease Sale Environmental Assessment (BLM/EK/PL-2005/005). FONSI/DR signed September 20, 2005

Note: The 2005 EA tiers to the environmental impact statements (EISs) for the 1987 Elko Resource Management Plan and the 1985 Wells Resource Management Plan (RMPs).

List by name and date other documents relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report).

See references for the 2005 EA

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

- 1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?**

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes. This action is similar to the action analyzed in the EA for the Elko District parcels offered in the December 2005 Oil and Gas Lease Sale. Geographic and resource conditions of the currently nominated parcels are similar to the parcels analyzed in the EA. There are no unusual situations that affect leasing of the parcels that would not be mitigated by the stipulations indicated by Attachment 1.

- 2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?**

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes. The analysis of impacts for the Proposed Action in the 2005 EA considered current information on natural, cultural, social and economic resources with respect to leasing activities. One of the alternatives analyzed in the 2005 EA was to defer consideration of nominated parcels for a future sale, pending further study needed before the Elko District could determine measures to best mitigate potential impacts to these resources. As noted in **Attachment 1B**, the Elko District is deferring consideration of the leasing 35 of the currently nominated parcels located in the Ruby Valley and Spruce Mountain Area (NV-09-12-77 through-80, NV-09-12-100 through -120, NV-09-127 through -135). The Elko District has requested the State Director defer consideration of offering 30 parcels in the Spruce Mountain area pending completion of an analysis to address potential wildlife, recreation, and archaeological and historic resource conflicts. In addition, the Elko District is requesting the State Director defer consideration of offering 5 parcels in the Ruby Valley area (NV-09-12-77 through-81) pending completion of an analysis to address potential Native American conflicts.

- 3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?**

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes. Issues and stipulations were identified using the same method used for the September 2005 EA. Elko District specialists screened the nominated parcels using data available from our Geographic Information System (GIS) in combination with reports and current information available from other agencies and sources, such as the Nevada Department of Wildlife and cultural reports. This includes consideration of the most recent list of sensitive species. There are no new circumstances or unusual conditions or concerns for the parcels in the Elko District

December 2009 Oil & Gas Lease Sale

Attachment 1

Table 1A – Lease Stipulations per Parcel

Table 1B – Deferred Parcels

General Parcel Location Map

Attachment 2

Elko District Lease Stipulations

Exhibit

Elko District - Nominated December 2009 Lease Sale Parcels Legal Descriptions