

6, T. 10 S., R. 70 W., thence northeasterly along the middle of the main channel of the South Platte River approximately 22.6 miles, ending at the high water line of the Strontia Springs Reservoir, in sec. 30, T. 7 S., R. 69 W.

#### Segment 3: North Fork South Platte River

Beginning on the North Fork of the South Platte River from Insmont (upper end of Berger property) in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 33, T. 7 S., R. 72 W., thence easterly along the middle of the main channel of the North Fork of the South Platte River approximately 22.9 miles to the confluence with the main stem of the South Platte River in sec. 25, T. 7 S., R. 69 W.

Excepting nonfederal owned surface and mineral estate, and subject to valid existing rights, the provisions of existing withdrawals, and other segregations of record. A land list describing by Township, Range and Section, the Federal lands and interests crossed by the above-described segments and subject to this Notice of Proposed Withdrawal is available from the BLM at the address listed above.

The areas described aggregate approximately 14,919.26 acres in Jefferson, Teller, Park, and Douglas Counties.

The purpose of this proposed withdrawal is to protect important wild and scenic values which have been determined to meet the requirements for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

As proposed, the withdrawal would be for a period of 20 years or until Congress determines these segments should or should not be included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The use of a right-of-way or cooperative agreement instead of a withdrawal would not provide adequate protection for this area due to the broad scope and nondiscretionary nature of the general mining laws.

There are no alternative sites because the area of interest is determined by the location of the rivers.

Water will not be needed to fulfill the purpose of the requested withdrawal.

For a period of 90 days from the date of publication of this notice, all persons who wish to submit comments, suggestions, or objections in connection with this proposal may present their views in writing to the Colorado State Director, BLM, or David Crumley, USDA Forest Service, at the above addresses. However, those persons desiring to be heard at the public meeting must submit their requests by December 8, 2005. A list of scheduled speakers will be established. Unscheduled speakers will be heard if time allows.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, and records relating to the proposed withdrawal will be available for public review at the BLM Colorado State Office in Lakewood and the USDA Forest

Service Office in Pueblo during regular business hours.

Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses and from representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

The application will be processed in accordance with the regulations set forth in 43 CFR 2300.

For a period of 2 years from the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, the above described lands will be segregated from location and entry under the mining laws as specified above unless the application is denied or cancelled, or the withdrawal is approved, prior to that date. During this period, the lands will continue to be managed by the USDA Forest Service.

(Authority: 43 CFR 2310.3-1)

Dated: October 7, 2005.

**John D. Beck,**

*Acting Chief, Branch of Lands and Realty.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Minerals Management Service

#### Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Alaska OCS Region, Beaufort Sea Oil and Gas Lease Sale 202, March 2007

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

**ACTION:** Request for Information (RFI) and Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA).

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary's approved 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007 provides for 3 sales: Sales 186, 195, and 202 to be held in the Beaufort Sea Program Planning Area. The presale process incorporated planning and analysis for all three sales. From the initial step in the process (the Call for Information and Nominations (Call)) through the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Consistency Determination (CD) step, the process covered the multiple-sale proposals. However, we indicated that we would conduct and did conduct complete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), OCS Lands Act, and Coastal Zone Management Act processes for

each sale, including a proposed and final Notice of Sale. The environmental analysis and the CD for Sale 202 will focus primarily on new issues, new scientific information, and/or changes in the state's federally-approved coastal management plan.

The Call NOI to Prepare an EIS for Sales 186, 195, and 202 was published in the **Federal Register** on September 19, 2001, at 66 FR 48268. The Beaufort Sea Multiple-Sale Final EIS for these sales was released in February 2003 (OCS EIS/EA, MMS 2003-001). Sales 186 and 195 were held on September 24, 2003, and March 30, 2005, respectively. When the multiple-sale EIS was prepared, MMS indicated it would do an EA for Sales 195 and 202 if no significant new issues or impacts are identified. The MMS is now initiating a RFI for Beaufort Sea Sale 202.

**DATES:** Comments on the RFI and on the NOI must be received no later than 45 days following publication of this document in the **Federal Register** in envelopes labeled "Comments on the Request for Information for Beaufort Sea Sale 202" or "Comments on the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment" as appropriate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Please call Steve Flippen at (907) 334-5268 in MMS's Alaska OCS Region regarding questions on the RFI/NOI to prepare an EA.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The environmental analysis and the CD for Sale 202 will focus primarily on new issues and information that may have arisen since the completion of the EIS for Sales 186, 195, and 202 (February 2003) and on any changes that may have occurred in the state's coastal management plan. The process will lead to identification of the area to be included in the proposed Notice of Sale (NOS). Each of these steps, including the proposed NOS, provides for a public comment period. At the culmination of each step and after analysis of any public comments, the MMS will decide whether to proceed to the next step. This process will:

- Focus on the environmental analysis by identifying impact types and levels that may change since the analysis was done for Sales 186 and 195;
- Result in any new issues being more easily highlighted by the public;
- Eliminate issuance for public review the repetitive, voluminous EISs for each sale; and
- Result in a more efficient and responsive application of the NEPA.

The MMS will analyze all comments received in response to this RFI and re-examine information previously submitted in response to the Call and the draft and final EISs for Sales 186, 195, and 202. The MMS will then identify the area to be analyzed in the EA.

This RFI does not indicate a decision to lease in the area described below. Final delineation of the areas for possible leasing will be made after completion of the pre-sale steps described above and in compliance with the current 2002–2007 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program and applicable laws, including all requirements of the NEPA and the OCS Lands Act.

### Request for Information

#### 1. Authority

This RFI is published pursuant to the OCS Lands Act as amended (43 U.S.C. 1331–1356, (1994)) (OCS Lands Act), and the regulations issued thereunder (30 CFR 256), and in accordance with the OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program 2002–2007.

#### 2. Purpose of Request

The purpose of the RFI is to gather information for Oil and Gas Lease Sale 202 in the Beaufort Sea, scheduled for March 2007. Information on oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development and production within the Beaufort Sea is sought from all interested parties. This early planning and consultation step is important for ensuring that all interests and concerns are communicated to the U.S. Department of the Interior for decisions in the leasing process pursuant to the OCS Lands Act and regulations at 30 CFR 256.

The Call published in the **Federal Register** on September 19, 2001, requested information and nominations from industry for Sales 186, 195, and 202 in the Beaufort Sea Planning Area. The MMS will use the information submitted in response to that Call and any new information submitted in response to this RFI to determine the area that will be included in a NEPA analysis. It is not necessary to re-submit comments sent in response to the multiple-sale Call or for industry to re-submit their areas of interest if your comments or indications of interest have not changed since that time. This process seeks to identify new areas of concern and areas of interest to industry.

#### 3. Description of Area

The area that is the subject of this RFI is located offshore the State of Alaska in

the Beaufort Sea Planning Area. It extends offshore from about 3 nautical miles to approximately 60 nautical miles, in water depths from approximately 25 feet to 200 feet. A small portion of the outer limits of the sale area north of Harrison Bay drops to approximately 3,000 feet. This area consists of approximately 1,898 whole and partial blocks (about 9.9 million acres). A page-size map of the area accompanies this Notice. The map also shows the four deferral alternatives evaluated in the Beaufort Sea Final EIS for Sales 186, 195, and 202. The Department excluded the Barrow and Kaktovik deferral areas from Sales 186 and 195. A large scale RFI map showing the boundaries of the area on a block-by-block basis is available without charge from the Records Manager at the address given below, or by telephone request at (907) 271–6621. Copies of Official Protraction Diagrams (OPDs) are also available for \$2 each: Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, 3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500, Anchorage, Alaska, 99503–5823, <http://www.mms.gov/alaska>.

#### 4. Instructions on RFI

The RFI map delineates the area that is the subject of this request. Respondents are requested to indicate interest in and comment on any or all of the Federal acreage within the boundaries of the RFI area that they wish to have included in Beaufort Sea Sale 202.

If you wish to comment, you may submit your comments by any one of the following methods:

- You may mail comments to: Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, 3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500, Anchorage, Alaska 99503–5823.

You may also comment via e-mail to: [akrfi@mms.gov](mailto:akrfi@mms.gov). Please submit internet comments as an ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include “Attn: Comments on Request for Information for Beaufort Sea Sale 202” and your name and return address in your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the system that we have received your Internet message, contact us via e-mail to: [akwebmaster@mms.gov](mailto:akwebmaster@mms.gov).

- You may fax your comments to: MMS at (907) 334–5242.

- Finally, you may hand-deliver comments to: Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, 3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500, Anchorage, Alaska 99503–5823.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and addresses of respondents, available for public review

during regular business hours.

Individual respondents may request that we withhold their address from the rulemaking record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. We would withhold a respondent’s identity, as allowable by law, under certain circumstances. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

*A. Areas of Interest to the Oil and Gas Industry.* The MMS requests industry to submit any new information, including nomination of blocks that are of significant interest for exploration and development and production. Information and nominations submitted in response to the multiple-sale Call for Sales 186, 195, and 202, published on September 19, 2001, (66 FT 48268), will also be considered as information and nominations for the Sale 202 area identification process.

Nominations must be depicted on the RFI map by outlining the area(s) of interest along block lines. Nominators are asked to submit a list of whole and partial blocks nominated (by OPD and block number) to facilitate correct interpretation of their nominations on the RFI map. Although the identities of those submitting nominations become a matter of public record, the individual nominations are proprietary information. Nominators also are requested to rank blocks nominated according to priority of interest [e.g., priority 1 (high) or 2 (medium)]. Blocks nominated that do not indicate priorities will be considered priority 3 (low). Nominators must be specific in indicating blocks by priority and be prepared to discuss their range of interest and activity regarding the nominated area(s). The telephone number and name of a person to contact in the nominator’s organization for additional information should be included in the response. This person will be contacted to set up a mutually agreeable time and place for a meeting with the Alaska OCS Regional Office to present their views regarding the company’s nominations.

*B. Relation to Coastal Management Plans.* Comments also are sought on potential conflicts with approved local coastal management plans that may result from the sale and future OCS oil and gas activities. These comments

should identify specific coastal management plan policy of concern, the nature of the conflicts foreseen, and steps that MMS could take to avoid or mitigate the potential conflicts. Comments may be in terms of broad areas or restricted to particular blocks of concern. Commenters are requested to list block numbers or outline the subject area on the large-scale RFI map.

#### 5. Use of Information From the RFI

Information submitted in response to this RFI will be used for several purposes. Responses will be used to:

- Help to further identify areas of potential oil and gas development;
- Identify environmental effects and potential use conflicts not previously addressed in the final EIS and CD for Sales 186, 195, and 202 (OCS EIS/EA, MMS 2003-0010);
- Develop any additional lease terms and conditions/mitigating measures that may be necessary; and
- Identify any potential conflicts between oil and gas activities and the Alaska coastal management plan not addressed in the CDs for Sales 186 and 195.

#### 6. Existing Information

The MMS has acquired a substantial amount of information, including that gained through the use of traditional knowledge, on the issues and concerns related to oil and gas leasing in the Beaufort Sea.

An extensive environmental, social, and economic studies program has been underway in this area since 1975. The emphasis has been on geologic mapping, environmental

characterization of biologically sensitive habitats, endangered whales and marine mammals, physical oceanography, ocean-circulation modeling, and ecological and socio-cultural effects of oil and gas activities.

Information on the studies program, completed studies, and a program status report for continuing studies in this area is available on the MMS Web site <http://www.mms.gov/alaska>, or may be obtained from the Chief, Environmental Studies Section, Alaska OCS Region, by telephone request at (907) 334-5280, or by written request at the address stated under Description of Area. A request may also be made via e-mail to: [akwebmaster@mms.gov](mailto:akwebmaster@mms.gov).

#### 7. Tentative Schedule

The following is a list of tentative milestone dates applicable to Beaufort Sea Sale 202 covered by this Call: RFI published—October 2005. Area Identification—December 2005. NEPA/ EA Review (or Supplemental EIS) published—July 2006. Proposed Notice and CD—October 2006. Final NOS—February 2007. Tentative Sale Date—March 2007.

#### NOI To Prepare an Environmental Analysis

##### 1. Authority

The NOI is published pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) implementing the provisions of the NEPA of 1969 as amended [42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* (1988)].

##### 2. Purpose of NOI

Pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) implementing the procedural

provisions of the NEPA of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), MMS is announcing its intent to prepare an EA for Beaufort Sea Oil and Gas Lease Sale 202, scheduled for March 2007. The EA will be prepared to determine if there are significant new issues or impacts not previously addressed in the EIS for Sales 186, 195, and 202. If no significant new issues or impacts are identified, a Finding of No New Significant Impacts will be issued. If information is submitted in response to this RFI that identifies significant new issues, information, and/or impacts not previously addressed, a supplemental EIS may be prepared.

#### 3. Instructions on NOI

Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and other interested parties are requested to send their written comments on new information and issues that should be addressed in the EA to the Regional Supervisor, Leasing and Environment, Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, 3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500, Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5823. Comments should be enclosed in an envelope labeled "Comments on the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment for Beaufort Sea Sale 202." Comments are due no later than 45 days from publication of this Notice.

Dated: October 14, 2005.

**R.M. "Johnnie" Burton,**  
Director, Minerals Management Service.

**BILLING CODE 4310-MR-P**

