

with Native American Tribal Governments" (59 FR 22951) and 512 DM 2:

This draft handbook does not directly affect tribal resources. The draft handbook contains guidance on public participation in the development of CCAAs, including tribes according to Secretarial Order #3206 on Federal-Tribal trust responsibilities and the Endangered Species Act. Therefore, the effect of this guidance on Native American Tribes would be determined on a case-by-case basis with individual CCAAs. Although the development of a CCAA is the applicant's responsibility, we will recommend the inclusion of Native American tribes during the development of the CCAA if tribal resources are affected. Under Secretarial Order 3206, the Service will, at minimum, share with the applicant any information provided by the tribes, through the public comment period or formal submissions, and advocate the incorporation of measures that will restore or enhance Tribal trust resources. In those instances where permit applicants choose not to invite affected tribes to participate in those negotiations, the Service will consult with the affected tribes to evaluate the effects of the proposed CCAA on tribal trust resources and will provide the information resulting from such consultation to the CCAA applicant prior to the submission of the draft CCAA for public comment. After consultation with the tribes and the non-federal landowner and after careful consideration of the tribe's concerns, the Service must clearly state the rationale for the recommended final decision and explain how the decision relates to the Service's trust responsibility. Accordingly:

- a. We have not yet consulted with the affected tribe(s). This will be addressed with individual CCAAs.
- b. We have not yet treated tribes on a government-to-government basis. This will be addressed with individual CCAAs.
- c. We will consider tribal views in the development of individual CCAAs.
- d. We have not yet consulted with the appropriate bureaus and offices of the Department about the identified effects of this draft handbook on Indian tribes. This will be addressed with individual CCAAs.

Dated: March 20, 2003.

**Steve Williams,**

*Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. 03-15697 Filed 6-20-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[AK-930-1310-AG]

#### **Notice of Intent To Amend the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan and To Prepare an Accompanying Environmental Impact Statement, Request for Information, and Call for Nominations and Comments**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to amend the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) Integrated Activity Plan (IAP) and to prepare an accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Request for Information, and Call for Nominations and Comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), as amended; the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), as amended; Title I of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 (42 U.S.C. 6501 *et seq.*), as amended by the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1981, Pub. L. 96-514, 94 Stat. 2957, 2964 (codified in 42 U.S.C. 6508); the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Pub. L. 96-487, 94 Stat. 2371, section 810, 16 U.S.C. 3120; and the regulations at 43 CFR parts 2360 and 3130; the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alaska State Office, is preparing an amendment to the existing IAP for the Northeast portion of the NPR-A and an accompanying EIS. The purpose of this Notice is to seek comment on the proposed amendment and to call for nomination of areas to be considered for oil and gas leasing. Information and comments on specific issues to be addressed in the amendment are sought from all interested parties. This early planning and consultation step is important for ensuring that all interests and concerns are communicated to the BLM Alaska State Director for decisions in land use, planning and management.

**DATES:** Responses to this request for information and comments, and call for nominations must be received no later than September 30, 2003. Nominations must be submitted in envelopes labeled "Nominations Related to the NPR-A IAP/EIS" to protect the confidentiality of the nominations. Information, comments, and nominations submitted in response to this publication will assist in early scoping and later development of alternatives for the IAP/

EIS. Comments are sought on activities and measures to protect surface resources within the planning area, including the Teshepuk Lake and Colville River Special Areas, fish and wildlife, and historical and scenic values. Comments are sought on subsistence uses and needs within the plan area and possible impacts on subsistence from other uses of the area. Comments should include recommendations for particular sections of the plan area that are of value for surface and subsurface resources, as well as conditions, and restrictions that would protect surface resources. Comments are also sought on any potential conflicts with approved coastal management plans (CMPs) and other land use plans that may result from possible future activities in the area. These comments should identify specific policies of concern as listed in CMPs or other plans, the nature of the conflicts foreseen, and steps that BLM could take to avoid or mitigate the potential conflicts. Comments may be in terms of broad areas or restricted to particular townships of concern.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be submitted to the Northeast NPR-A Amendment Planning Team Leader, 222 West 7th Avenue, #13 Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599. The original Call map with nominations must be submitted to the NPR-A Planning Team Leader at the above address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Curt Wilson, (907) 271-5546, by e-mail at [c1wilson@ak.blm.gov](mailto:c1wilson@ak.blm.gov) or by mail at 222 W. 7th Avenue, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7599.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The BLM published a Record of Decision (ROD) October 7, 1998, for the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. Among other decisions, this document makes 589,000 acres in the Teshepuk Lake area unavailable for leasing and restricts an additional 268,862 acres to leasing, but with no permanent facilities and no exploratory wells. The ROD also contains a set of prescriptive stipulations that are very specific and in some cases may be inappropriately or needlessly restrictive.

The BLM initiated an oil and gas leasing program for the planning area in May of 1999 and has conducted two successful lease sales. Many lease tracts were sold around the perimeter of the Teshepuk Lake area. In the four years since the initial lease sale industry has completed many miles of additional seismic lines and drilled 14 exploratory wells after environmental assessments