

treatment for remaining hydrocarbon contaminants and environmental monitoring.

Simplot has applied for two lease modifications to expand Federal Phosphate Lease I-27512 for the Panel F operations. They are a smaller 120-acre lease modification on the northern edge of the lease and a larger 400-acre modification on the southern edge of the lease. The proposed northern lease modifications would be included in all action alternatives. The issuance and mining of a southern lease modification would be evaluated as a separate alternative. Environmental impacts of mining operations within the lease modifications will be analyzed in this EIS.

Issues initially identified for the proposed mining of F and G panels include potential effects on: ground water and surface water quantity and quality, wildlife and their habitats; livestock grazing, wetlands and riparian habitat, socio-economics, FS inventoried roadless areas, visual resources, and cumulative effects.

At this early stage, the BLM and FS believe that it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft EISs must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal to be meaningful and alerts an agency to reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIS stage but are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F. 2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Due to these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 60-day comment period for the draft EIS. This is necessary so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the BLM and FS at a time when they can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

#### Possible Alternatives

The EIS will analyze the Proposed Action with and without issuing a lease modification on the southern margin of Panel F operations, alternative access/haul road alignment to access the Panel G operations and the No Action Alternative. Other alternatives may include: additional access and haul road designs, use of conveyors to transport

ore to the existing mill, revising the layout or sequencing of the proposed mining facilities, different methods for reducing impacts from overburden handling, and; other alternatives that could provide mitigation for impacts.

#### Tentative EIS Project Schedule

The tentative project schedule is as follows:

- *Begin Public Comment Period:* September 2003.
- *Hold Public Scoping Meetings:* September 2003.
- *Estimated date for Draft EIS:* March 2005.
- *Public Comment Period on Draft EIS:* 60 days from when the Notice of Availability is published in the **Federal Register**.
- *Final EIS Publication:* September 2005.
- *Decision:* October 2005.

#### Public Scoping Meetings

At least two public scoping meetings will be held. Each will be the open house type. The open houses will include displays explaining the project and provide a forum for commenting on the project. Meetings are currently planned for Pocatello, Idaho and Afton, Wyoming. The dates, times, and locations of the public scoping meetings will be announced in mailings and public notices issued by the BLM or may be obtained from James Blair, Bureau of Land Management, Pocatello Field Office, 1111 N. 8th Ave., Pocatello, Idaho 83201, or [http://www.id.blm.gov/offices/pocatello/sim\\_fg](http://www.id.blm.gov/offices/pocatello/sim_fg), phone (208) 478-6384.

#### Public Input Requested

The BLM and FS are seeking information and written comments from Federal, State and local agencies as well as individuals and organizations interested in, or affected by, the Proposed Action or Alternatives. To assist the BLM and FS in identifying issues and concerns related to the Proposed Action or Alternatives, comments for scoping, and later for the Draft EIS, should be as specific as possible.

Dated: August 14, 2003.

**Phil Damon,**

Manager, Pocatello Field Office, Bureau of Land Management.

**Jerry B. Reese,**

Forest Supervisor, Caribou-Targhee National Forest.

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[NV-030-5700-ER; N-76800, N-76897]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the North Valleys Water Projects

**AGENCY:** Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Carson City Field Office, Nevada.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the North Valleys Water Projects (Projects) located in Washoe County, Nevada.

**SUMMARY:** This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City Field Office intends to prepare an EIS to address the impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) resulting from construction and operation of two separate water supply and transmission projects located in Washoe County, Nevada. Rights-of-way applications were submitted to the BLM from Intermountain Water Supply, LTD and Fish Springs Ranch, LLC for production wells, pump stations, transmission pipelines, terminal water storage tanks and access road rights-of-way.

**DATES:** This notice initiates the public scoping process. Comments can be submitted in writing to the address listed below and will be accepted throughout the preparation of the Draft EIS. All public meetings will be announced through the local news media, scoping documents, and the BLM Web site at <http://www.nv.blm.gov/carson> at least 15 days prior to the event. Public meetings will be held throughout the EIS scoping and preparation period.

In order to ensure the widest range of public participation and input, presentations will be held, at a minimum, in Reno and Stead, Nevada. Early participation is encouraged and will assist in preparation of the EIS. In addition to the ongoing public scoping process, formal opportunities for public participation will be provided through comment on the draft and final documents.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to BLM Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701; Fax (775) 885-6147; email address [tknutson@nv.blm.gov](mailto:tknutson@nv.blm.gov). Comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the above address during regular business hours (7:30 am-5 pm), Monday through