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BLM Begins New Look At Oil Shale Plans

The Bureau of Land Management announced today that it has begun the process to take a fresh look at commercial oil shale and tar sand plans issued under the previous Administration.

The BLM will publish in tomorrow's Federal Register a Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) governing allocation of oil shale and tar sands resources on BLM lands in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.

"The BLM remains committed to a thoughtful, orderly, and responsible oil shale development program," said BLM Director Bob Abbey. "Public involvement is a vital component in this process as we seek to develop critical information about oil shale development."

In 2008, the BLM published a Final PEIS that, in addition to expanding the acreage potentially available for commercial tar-sands leasing, amended 8 resource management plans (RMPs) in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming to make approximately 1.9 million acres of public lands potentially available for commercial oil shale development and 431,224 acres for tar sands leasing and development.

With commercial development of oil shale at least several years away, the new planning process will allow the BLM to take a fresh look at what public lands are best suited for oil shale and tar sands development. Final land-use decisions will be made in light of any new information about potential resource needs and impacts, and technological innovations.

The public is being invited to submit comments and concerns on potential resource issues that should be discussed in the NEPA analysis, including input on historic and cultural resources within the areas proposed for land use plan amendment. The BLM will also hold public scoping meetings on the following dates and locations:

April 26 in Salt Lake City, Utah - Little America Hotel, 500 South Main, Salt Lake City, (801) 596-5800, Wyoming Conf Room, (1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.);
 April 27 in Price, Utah - Holiday Inn Hotel, 838 Westwood Blvd, Price, (435) 637-8880, San Rafael/Skyline Meeting Room ; (1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.)
 April 28 in Vernal, Utah - Uintah Basin Applied Technology Center, 450 North 2000 West, Vernal, (435) 725-7100, Multi Use Rooms #1, 2, 3 (1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.)
 April 29 in Rock Springs, Wyoming - BLM Rock Springs Field Office, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, WY. (1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.)
 May 3 in Rifle, Colorado - Colorado Mountain College, West Garfield Campus, 3695 Airport Rd, Main Auditorium, Rifle, CO 8165(1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.)
 May 4 in Denver, Colorado - Denver West Marriott, 1717 Denver West Blvd, Golden, CO 80401(1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.)
 May 5 in Cheyenne, Wyoming - The Holiday Inn, 204 West Fox Farm Road, Cheyenne, WY (1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.)

The BLM manages more land - over 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

--BLM--

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