

**SCOPING NOTICE**  
**for**  
**CROOKS GAP SEISMOGRAPH PROJECT**

**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Lander and Rawlins Field Offices**

April 11, 2002

**Description of Project**

The Lander Field Office has received a Notice of Intent to Conduct Geophysical Operations (NOI). The NOI involves a two-dimensional (2D) seismograph project of 12 lines covering approximately 155 linear miles across public, state and private lands in Fremont and Sweetwater Counties (see attached Location Map). The project area encompasses Whiskey Peak, Green Mountain, Crooks Gap, and Crooks Mountain as well as the northern part of the Great Divide Basin. The project involves BLM-administered public lands in the Lander and Rawlins Field Offices and is proposed by Anschutz Corporation.

The proposed geophysical operation would be a vibroseis project utilizing buggy vibrators as an energy source with the potential of drill holes and explosives in specific locations where steep terrain and ground cover prohibit the use of vibrators. The drill(s) would be transported using a helicopter, as would all recording cables and seisphones. The recording crews would set cables and seisphones utilizing all-terrain vehicles and foot traffic. Existing roads and trails would be utilized where possible and off-highway vehicle operations would employ a staggered-spread pattern in order to avoid excessive compaction of vegetation and soils. The vibrators would be equipped with all-terrain, low-pressure rubber tires to minimize surface impressions and impacts.

**Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents**

The Lander Resource Management Plan (RMP) Record of Decision (ROD)(June 6, 1987) directs management of BLM-administered public lands within a portion of the analysis area. The RMP states, "The entire Green Mountain Management Unit will be open for oil and gas leasing with some no- surface occupancy restrictions" (page 27). The ROD states further, "Geophysical activities associated with oil and gas exploration will generally be restricted in the same manner as other oil and gas exploration and development activities"( page 1). The Great Divide RMP (November 8, 1990) directs management of BLM-administered public lands in the remainder of the analysis area. The objective for management of oil and gas resources, as stated in the RMP, is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. The proposed geophysical project would be in conformance with both RMPs.

## **National Environmental Policy Act Compliance**

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality regulations on implementing NEPA, the Lander Field Office is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) that will describe and evaluate the probable impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. The purpose of an EA is to provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a Finding of No Significant Impact. The EA also provides the public and decision-makers with sufficient information to understand the environmental consequences of the proposal and to identify and develop appropriate mitigation measures to minimize environmental impacts.

One element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to:

- Identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the EA;
- Identify environmental issues and concerns related to the proposed project; and
- Determine the depth of analysis for issues to be addressed in the EA.

This scoping statement has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

## **IDENTIFIED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The following issues and concerns have been identified by the Lander and Rawlins Field Offices. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive lists, but rather a starting point for public input and a means of identifying the resource disciplines needed to conduct the analysis.

- Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- Wildlife (big game habitat, raptor nesting, greater sage-grouse breeding and nesting, potential mountain plover habitat)
- Slopes in excess of 25%
- Wetlands and riparian habitat

## **TIMING NEEDS OR REQUIREMENTS**

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigative

opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Your scoping comments are due by May 10, 2002. Please submit comments to:

Bureau of Land Management  
Lander Field Office  
P. O. Box 589  
1335 Main Street  
Lander, WY 82520

Comments may also be submitted via email to: [lander\\_wymail@blm.gov](mailto:lander_wymail@blm.gov).

Please note that comments, including names, email addresses, and street addresses of the respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name, email address, or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this plainly at the beginning of your comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

### **Public Participation**

Numerous individuals and organizations including federal agencies, state agencies, county governments, municipalities, media, public land users, industry representatives, individuals, grazing permittees, rights-of-way holders, landowners, special recreation permittees, and various organizations.

If you require additional information regarding this project, please contact Fred Georgeson at the above email or street address or phone 307/ 332-8415.

Attachment

