

relinquished have been re-leased. Thus, leases that may be uneconomic at today's oil and gas prices can be re-leased and developed later as economic, geologic, or technological conditions changes. In this case, allowing market conditions and future discoveries to determine the best time to explore and develop tracts is preferable to offering financial incentives for current development.

In addition, we considered other issues that would have impacts on implementing a sound program of royalty relief for nonproducing leases.

#### *Auction and Tract Evaluation Process Impacts*

Reducing royalties on nonproducing leases could distort the auction process because some losing bidders may have submitted higher bids had they known that lease royalty rates could be reduced. Also, the program would complicate fair market value determinations because lease stipulated royalty rates could change before the start of production.

#### *Workload Impacts*

The potential workload associated with a relief program could become burdensome and drain MMS resources from other important jobs. Even a program of categorical relief (i.e., one based on predetermined qualifying criteria such as drill depth or pressure) could create a significant new workload. Although certain criteria may have substantial impact on project costs, many factors ultimately determine a project's economic viability. The effort to develop comprehensive qualifying criteria and keep them up to date may actually create more of a workload for MMS than accepting applications on a case-by-case basis.

#### *Revenue Impacts*

We considered the proposal to offer certain relinquished tracts at a lower royalty rate. However, the relinquishment of a tract, even if it is on the indicated hydrocarbons list, and its failure to be re-leased at the next lease sale, are not absolute determinants of its current or future economic viability. Tracts in the Central and Western Gulf may be offered time and again. As noted earlier, tracts that are uneconomic at one time may be re-leased and developed with changes in oil and gas prices or advances in technology that reduce drilling and production costs or enhance ultimate resource recovery. In these cases, the government would receive royalties at the regular royalty rate plus any bonus received on re-leasing.

In summary, the economic climate for the oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico does not warrant taking action at this time. We will continue to monitor activities in the Central and Western Gulf and will move to exercise the authority if changed conditions require it.

We welcome all comments on issues related to this Notice and will consider them in determining the nature and timing of future actions.

Dated: April 21, 1998.

**Walter Cruickshank,**  
*Associate Director for Policy and Management Improvement.*

[FR Doc. 98-11012 Filed 4-24-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-MR-M

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Minerals Management Service

#### **Outer Continental Shelf, Western Gulf of Mexico, Oil and Gas Lease Sale 171**

**AGENCY:** Minerals Management Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Availability of the proposed notice of sale.

Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf (OCS); Notice of Availability of the Proposed Notice of Sale for Proposed Oil and Gas Lease Sale 171 in the Western Gulf of Mexico. This Notice of Availability is published pursuant to 30 CFR 256.29(c), as a matter of information to the public.

With regard to oil and gas leasing on the OCS, the Secretary of the Interior, pursuant to section 19 of the OCS Lands Act, as amended, provides the affected States the opportunity to review the proposed Notice of Sale. The proposed Notice sets forth the proposed terms and conditions of the sale, including minimum bids, royalty rates, and rentals.

The proposed Notice of Sale for proposed Sale 171 may be obtained by written request to the Public Information Unit, Gulf of Mexico Region, Minerals Management Service, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, or by telephone at (504) 736-2529.

The final Notice of Sale will be published in the **Federal Register** at least 30 days prior to the date of bid opening. Bid opening is currently scheduled for August 1998.

Dated: April 20, 1998.

**Cynthia Quarterman,**  
*Director, Minerals Management Service.*  
[FR Doc. 98-11019 Filed 4-24-98; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 4310-MR-M

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **Buffalo National River, Arkansas; Concession Contract Negotiations**

**SUMMARY:** Public notice is hereby given that the National Park Service proposes to award a concession contract authorizing the continued overnight accommodations, food service facilities and vending machine services for the public at Buffalo National River for a period of five (5) years from January 1, 1999, through December 31, 2003.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 26, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested parties should contact National Park Service, Buffalo National River, P.O. Box 1173, Harrison, Arkansas 72602-1173, or phone (870) 741-5443 to obtain a copy of the prospectus describing the requirements of the proposed contract.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This contract renewal has been determined to be categorically excluded from the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act and no environmental document will be prepared.

The existing concessioner has performed its obligations to the satisfaction of the Secretary under an existing contract which will expire by limitation of time on December 31, 1998, and therefore pursuant to the provisions of Section 5 of the Act of October 9, 1965 (79 Stat. 969; 16 U.S.C. 20, *et seq.*), is entitled to be given preference in the renewal of the contract and in the negotiation of a new proposed contract, providing that the existing concessioner submits a responsive offer (a timely offer which meets the terms and conditions of the Prospectus). This means that the contract will be awarded to the party submitting the best offer, provided that if the best offer was not submitted by the existing concessioner, then the existing concessioner will be afforded the opportunity to match the best offer. If the existing concessioner agrees to match the best offer, then the contract will be awarded to the existing concessioner. If the existing concessioner does not submit a responsive offer, the right of preference in renewal shall be considered to have been waived, and the contract will then be awarded to the party that has submitted the best responsive offer.

The Secretary of the Interior will consider and evaluate all proposals received as a result of this notice. Any proposal, including that of the existing concessioner, must be received by the

Superintendent of Buffalo National River no later than 4:30 p.m. CST (Central Standard Time) on July 6, 1998. For further information, please contact George Frederick, Chief, Concessions Management at Midwest Regional Office, 1709 Jackson, Omaha, NE 68102 or phone 402-221-3612.

Dated: April 20, 1998.

**Catherine Damon,**

*Acting Regional Director, Midwest Region.*

[FR Doc. 98-11083 Filed 4-24-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **General Management Plan, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Capitol Reef National Park, UT**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

**ACTION:** Availability of draft environmental impact statement and general management plan for Capitol Reef National Park.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Park Service (NPS) announces the availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and General Management Plan (DEIS/GMP) for Capitol Reef National Park, Utah.

**DATES:** The DEIS/GMP will remain available for public review through July 1, 1998. If any public meetings are held concerning the DEIS/GMP, they will be announced at a later date.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the DEIS/GMP should be sent to the Superintendent, Capitol Reef National Park, HC 70 Box 15, Torrey, UT 84775. Public reading copies of the DEIS/GMP will be available for review at the following locations:

Office of the Superintendent, Capitol Reef National Park, Telephone: (435) 425-3791 x101.

Planning and Environmental Quality, Intermountain Support Office—Denver, National Park Service, 12795 W. Alameda Parkway, Lakewood, CO 80228, Telephone: (303) 969-2851.

Office of Public Affairs, National Park Service, Department of Interior, 8th and C Streets NW., Washington, DC 20240, Telephone: (202) 208-6843.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The DEIS/GMP analyzes four alternatives to future direction of park resources management, to adaptive use of the Sleeping Rainbow Ranch, to interpretation of the Fruita Rural Historic District, and to amount of

visitor services. Alternative A (preferred) is designed to protect and preserve exceptional resources, the quality of visitor experience, and the wilderness characteristics of certain portions of the park. Alternative B focuses on removing many existing developments to restore and enhance natural and historic resources and the wilderness qualities of the park. Alternative C continues actions identified in the 1982 General Management Plan which emphasizes visitor services and facilities, including development in some backcountry areas. Alternative D, the No Action Plan, would maintain visitor services and resource protection at current limited levels throughout the life of the plan.

The DEIS/GMP in particular evaluates the environmental consequences of the proposed action and the other alternatives on vegetation and wildlife, endangered species, scenic values, archeological and historic resources, visitor services, and economy of adjacent communities.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Contact Superintendent, Capitol Reef National Park, at the above address and telephone number.

Dated: April 8, 1998.

**John E. Cook,**

*Director, Intermountain Region, National Park Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-11082 Filed 4-24-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **Notice of Availability of Plan of Operations and Environmental Assessment for Proposed Three Dimensional Seismic Testing at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, Barataria Preserve Unit, Louisiana**

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given in accordance with § 9.52(b) of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations that the National Park Service has received from Burlington Resources a Plan of Operations for the Couba Island 3-D Seismic Prospect encompassing a portion of the Barataria Preserve Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, located within Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.

The Plan of Operations and Environmental Assessment are available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days from the publication date of this notice in the office of the Superintendent, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, 365 Canal

Street, Suite 2400, New Orleans, Louisiana and will be sent upon written request.

**DATES:** This seismic operation is anticipated to take place during the months of April, May, or June and will last approximately six weeks within the park.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Superintendent, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, 365 Canal Street, Suite 2400, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130, Telephone: (504) 589-3882.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In compliance with 36 CFR Part 9B "Non-federal Oil and Gas Rights," Burlington Resources Corporation is proposing to conduct a three dimensional seismic survey encompassing approximately 50 square miles in Jefferson and St. Charles Parishes, Louisiana. A portion of this proposed survey occupies an area of 5,760 acres within the Barataria Preserve Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. A Plan of Operation and Environmental Assessment has been prepared cooperatively by Burlington Resources and the National Park Service. This documents the actions required to accomplish the three dimensional seismic survey while avoiding and minimizing adverse environmental impact to park resources.

Dated: March 10, 1998.

**Danielle Brown,**

*Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region.*

[FR Doc. 98-11084 Filed 4-24-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-M

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **Cape Cod National Seashore, South Wellfleet, MA, Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission; Notice of Meeting**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463, 86 Stat. 770, 5 U.S.C. App 1, section 10), that a meeting of the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission will be held on Friday, May 15, 1998.

The Commission was reestablished pursuant to Public Law 99-349, Amendment 24. The purpose of the Commission is to consult with the Secretary of the Interior, or his designee, with respect to matters relating to the development of the Cape Cod National Seashore, and with respect to carrying out the provisions of sections 4 and 5 of the Act establishing the Seashore.

The Commission members will meet at 9:30 a.m. at Headquarters, Marconi Station,