

**DECISION RECORD/
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED BACA LAND SALE PARCELS**

BLM/EK/PL-2003/034

Serial Nos. N-77169, N-77170, N-77171, N-77173, N-77176 and N-77177

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based on the analysis of Environmental Assessment, BLM/EK/PL-2003/034, I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment, and therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

DECISION:

It is my decision to continue with the Baca Land Sale by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as described in the proposed action of BLM/EK/PL-2003/034. I have determined that the public interest will be well served by the sale, and that the sale is in conformance with the approved land use plan.

The sale involves offering for sale 808.56 acres of federal land administered by the BLM. The parcels range in size from 40 acres to 250 acres. The legal descriptions, exceptions and encumbrances for the federal lands are found in Exhibit A.

RATIONALE:

Public Interest Determination:

Pursuant to Section 203(a) (1) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), A tract of the public lands may be sold under this Act where, as a result of land use planning required under section 202 of this Act, the Secretary determines that the sale of such tract meets the following disposal criteria: such tract because of its location or other characteristics is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public lands, and is not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency. The sale, if completed, would meet the provisions of FLPMA 203. The land is being sold under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act also known as the "Baca" Bill. This bill established a funding mechanism to pay BLM's administrative costs.

The completion of the Baca Land Sale will well serve important public objectives. The land sale would result in offering 808.56 acres of public lands for sale. If the lands are sold, it will consolidate ownership and enable the management of the lands to be more effective and efficient. Most of the public lands being disposed of are isolated parcels. The selected public land parcels, when sold, will consolidate the private land ownership in the area. The future use of the land once in private ownership should be similar to the current use, livestock grazing or possibly development in certain areas. The public lands are not needed for any specific federal program and their expected use will not conflict with the established management objectives of the remaining federal lands.

An Environmental Site Assessment was conducted for the federal lands to assess the sites for recognized environmental conditions. There were no signs of any recognized environmental concerns, including petroleum or chemical spills on the subject lands. No drums, stained soils, or other indications of hazardous wastes or petroleum products were noted on the lands during the field inspection with the exception of parcel 03-06, where sewage may have been dumped within ½ mile of the site. There was no evidence of stained soil or stressed vegetation, however, any time there is extensive disturbance such as in the areas of the gravel pits or the existence of dirt roads, the possibility exists that hazardous materials could have been dumped. Several of the parcels have assorted kinds of solid waste; generally rusted metal, wood and broken glass.

The Mineral Potential Report for the Proposed Baca Land Sale (McFarlane, 2003) describes the mineral potential of the federal lands as:

Locatable Minerals (gold, base metals, barite): low to moderate potential

Leasable Minerals (oil, gas, geothermal): low to moderate potential

Salable Minerals (sand & gravel): moderate to high potential

All mineral rights will be reserved to the United States and will not be conveyed into private ownership.

Conformance with Land Use Plan:

The proposed action is in conformance with the March of 1987 Record of Decision for the Elko Resource Management Plan (RMP). The sale implements decisions to meet the management objectives in the Plan, which identify the need to increase the effectiveness of management in areas with checkerboard lands by consolidating land ownership and to make lands available for sale that are difficult and uneconomic to manage. The proposed action is consistent with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and plans to the maximum extent possible.

Implementation Period:

The decision to complete the Baca Land Sales will be implemented following completion of a 45-day comment period, which begins upon publication of a Notice of Realty Action, and any subsequent resolution of protest, which may be made on the decision.

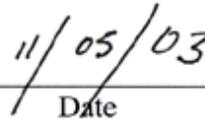
Mitigation Measures:

None.

Approval:



Helen Hankins
Elko Field Manager



Date