

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Coeur d'Alene Field Office
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SCOPING/INFORMATION PACKAGE

**City of Coeur d'Alene BLM Corridor R&PP Lease and Conveyance
DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2016-0005-EA**

August 23, 2016

Introduction

This information package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to lease and convey a 29-acre parcel of public land (see attached map) to the City of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho under the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act. The City plans to use this parcel for development of park and recreational facilities. In order to lease and convey the land, the BLM also proposes to amend the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan (RMP) to specify that this parcel is available for lease and disposal under the R&PP Act. Federal actions such as this one must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences.

The purpose of this report is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with the NEPA review of the proposal. Analysis of the proposal is ongoing, and will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA). Comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action and to identify alternatives to the proposed action that meet the purpose of and need for the project.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will also use this public participation opportunity under the NEPA to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 U.S.C. § 306108) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources within the area potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA.

The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175 and other policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action that the BLM is evaluating, are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate in the development of the environmental analysis as a cooperating agency.

Background

In 2011, the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad terminated their right-of-way on approximately 29 acres of public land that is within the city limits of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Subsequently the City of Coeur d'Alene submitted an application for lease and conveyance of this parcel (the BLM Corridor) under the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act. In order for a parcel to be considered for lease or conveyance under the R&PP Act, the applicable RMP must specify that the parcel is available and suitable for such consideration, and specify that disposal under the R&PP Act would serve the national interest. The applicable RMP in this case is the Coeur d'Alene RMP, which was approved in 2007. Since the subject parcel was still under the railroad ROW when the RMP was developed, the plan did not include the required management direction for this parcel.

To support their application, the City prepared a plan for the development of park and recreational facilities on the BLM Corridor and the adjacent Four Corners area. The City developed this Four Corners/BLM Corridor Master Plan (attached) through a collaborative process with extensive public involvement. While the BLM will consider the City's plan in our analysis of the proposed action, the BLM will not propose changes to the plan, except to identify a need to avoid or mitigate environmental impacts.

Purpose and Need for Action

The R&PP Act authorizes the BLM to lease and convey public lands for recreation or public purposes, to State and local governments. Upon receipt of an application for an R&PP lease or conveyance, such as the one submitted by the City of Coeur d'Alene, the BLM must evaluate it to determine if it is valid and complete, and if the lease or conveyance would be in the public interest. In addition, 43 CFR 2740.0-2 states that the "objective [of the R&PP conveyance regulations] is to meet the needs of certain State and local governmental agencies and other qualified organizations for public lands required for recreational and public purposes." The City has outlined their need in the Four Corners/BLM Corridor Master Plan.

In addition, in accordance with the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA) as Amended and 43 CFR 2710.0-3(a), a proposal for land conveyance must be in conformance with conveyance criteria and other management direction outlined in the applicable RMP. In this case, as described in the Background Section above, the Coeur d'Alene RMP did not address the application of the criteria to this parcel or determine suitability for conveyance. When conformance of a proposal with the RMP is unclear and further consideration is warranted, it is BLM policy to consider an amendment to the RMP.

Hence, the purpose of the proposed action is to meet the needs of the City of Coeur d'Alene, as specified in their application and the Four Corners/BLM Corridor Master Plan for public lands required for recreational and public purposes in accordance with the R&PP Act and FLPMA.

Preliminary Issues and Planning Criteria

The BLM has identified the following preliminary issues for analysis in the environmental assessment:

1. Would the proposed action adversely affect cultural or historic resources?

2. Would the proposed action adversely affect special status plants, important plant communities, or pollinators?
3. Would the proposed action adversely affect wildlife habitat?
4. Would the proposed action adversely affect federally listed threatened or endangered fish or aquatic species or their designated critical habitat?
5. How would the proposed action affect the visual landscape?
6. Would the proposed action adversely affect water quality?
7. Would the proposed action result in the spread of noxious weeds or invasive species?
8. How would the proposed action affect recreational opportunities?

In addition, the BLM has identified the following preliminary planning criteria to define the scope for the proposal to amend the RMP:

1. The plan amendment will be completed in compliance with FLPMA, NEPA, and all other relevant Federal laws, Executive orders, and management policies of the BLM.
2. Existing planning decisions will remain unchanged unless specifically proposed to be changed.
3. The plan amendment will recognize valid existing rights.
4. Native American tribal consultations will be conducted in accordance with policy, and tribal concerns will be given due consideration. The planning process will include the consideration of any impacts on Indian trust assets.

Proposed Action and Preliminary Alternatives

1. **Proposed Action:** The BLM proposes to issue an R&PP lease to the City of Coeur d'Alene for a period of 10 years to allow them to develop and use park and recreational facilities described in the Four Corners/BLM Corridor Master Plan (attached). After publication of the master plan, the City made minor changes to the proposal for the Four Corners area which are depicted in the attached conceptual diagram labeled Re-Organize the Four Corner Uses. Before or upon expiration of the lease, the BLM would proceed to convey ownership of the parcel to the City in accordance with provisions of the R&PP Act. The mineral estate would remain in federal ownership. In addition, the BLM proposes to amend the Coeur d'Alene RMP to specify that the BLM Corridor parcel meets the conveyance criteria and is therefore suitable for the proposed conveyance.
2. **No Action:** The BLM would deny the City's application for lease and conveyance. None of the development on the BLM Corridor proposed in the Four Corners/BLM Corridor Master Plan would occur. The BLM would not amend the Coeur d'Alene RMP.

Public Input Needed

Comments are specifically requested on the proposed action, preliminary issues, and planning criteria. The RMP amendment process was initiated by the publication of a notice in the Federal

Register on August 23, 2016. Publication of this notice initiated the 30-day public scoping comment period. As specified in the Federal Register Notice, comments submitted for this proposal would be most helpful if they are received by **September 23, 2016** and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. The BLM will not reject public feedback outside established public involvement timeframes; however, these comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner and may only be assessed to determine if they identify concerns that would substantially alter the assumptions, proposal, design, or analysis presented in the EA. Email comments to **BLM_ID_CDA_RPP@blm.gov**, or you may submit them via postal mail to the address in the letterhead. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The primary contact for this project is Janna Paronto, Realty Specialist, (208) 769-5037.

Attachments

1. Vicinity Map of the Project Area
2. Conceptual Diagram: City of Coeur d'Alene Master Plan for BLM Corridor
3. City of Coeur d'Alene Four Corners/BLM Corridor Master Plan
4. Conceptual Diagram: Re-Organize the Four Corner Uses