



File Code: 1950

Date: February 19, 2014

Dear Reader:

This letter is to inform you that the Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease Project Environmental Assessment (EA) has been completed and is now available for review and comment. Public comment is now being requested for 30 days. This letter provides a brief summary of the project, information on the official 30-day public comment period, and how to obtain a copy of the EA

Background Information

The project area (Figures 1 and 2) is located in the DNF, Bend-Ft. Rock Ranger District, Deschutes County, Oregon, approximately 25 air miles southeast of Bend, Oregon. The lease areas are located outside the boundary of the Newberry National Volcanic Monument (NNVM), with some areas adjacent to the Monument. The potential lease sites range in elevation from approximately 5,100 to 6,800 feet. The areas of proposed leases are largely covered by forest in various stages of regrowth from past timber harvest and accessed by several forest roads. Paulina Creek, eligible under the Wild and Scenic River Act, crosses through one of the proposed lease areas. There are no developed recreation areas within the lease areas.

The Deschutes National Forest (DNF) is responding to a request (March 6, 2008) from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to grant Consent to Lease of nominated parcels of land for geothermal mineral exploration and development. The DNF is the surface and subsurface management agency for the unleased parcels. The State Director of the BLM has the authority to issue energy leases but needs the consent from the Forest Service (DNF Forest Supervisor) on National Forest System (NFS) lands. If consent is given, the BLM will manage any surface and subsurface geothermal activity of the leases.

This project evaluates the suitability of BLM nominated parcels for potential geothermal leases, with stipulations. The Forest Service (FS) will determine if the lands should be leased with stipulations or withdrawn from further consideration for leasing. This project would authorize the BLM to conduct geothermal lease sales for nominated lands.

In a letter dated March 6, 2008, BLM requested that the FS consent to allowing leases on 29 parcels. The Consent to Lease project was first listed in the Fall 2009 issue of the *Schedule of Projects for the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Prineville District BLM*. The proposed action was presented to the public, Tribes and other agencies in a letter dated June 22, 2010.

Following the letter of June 22, 2010, the Forest Service reduced the scope of this EA from 29 parcels (20,156 acres) to 11 parcels (6,174 acres). The original scoping included parcels under lease and due to expire by the end of 2012. The soon to expire leases were all extended by the BLM at the request of the lessees and are no longer a part of this analysis.

Alternatives

The EA analyzes a No Action alternative and the proposed action (Alternative 2). The proposed action is to consent to BLM to offer for sale new geothermal leases, with stipulations, on FS managed lands. Approximately 6,174 acres in 11 parcels have been nominated by the BLM for leasing. Lease stipulations would be attached in order to protect resources. Lease stipulations, described in detail in Chapter 2, of the EA, could limit site surface occupancy or season of and/or specific location of use and provides information regarding each parcel, including the type of associated surface use.



Table 1: Description of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action); Includes Parcels to be Leased, Legal Location (Willamette Meridian), Management Description, and Acres

Parcel	Legal Location	LRMP Management Areas (MA) Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) Potential Wilderness Area (PWA)	Parcel Acres
T21S R12E			
1	Section 9	MAs: Scenic Views, General Forest; IRA; PWA	561
2	Section 20	MA: General Forest	645
3	Section 31	MAs: Old Growth, Scenic Views, General Forest; Eligible Wild & Scenic River	614
T22S R12E			
4	Sections 14 and 15	MAs: Old Growth, Scenic Views, General Forest; IRA; PWA	1,050
T22S R13E			
5	Section 2	MA: Scenic Views	351
6	Sections 3, 9, and 10	MAs: Old Growth, Scenic Views NNVM Special Management Area; PWA	997
7	Section 17	MAs: Old Growth, Scenic Views IRA, PWA	176
8	Section 18	MA: Scenic Views; IRA; PWA	16
9	Section 19	MAs: Scenic Views, General Forest; IRA; PWA	492
10	Section 30	MAs: Scenic Views, General Forest	633
11	Section 31	MA: General Forest	639
Total Acres)			6,174

Table 2: Description of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action); Includes Parcels to be Leased, Type of Lease, and Acres

Parcel	Acres			Parcel Acres
	Standard Lease (SL)	Conditional Surface Use (CSU)	No Surface Occupancy (NSO)	
1	205	210	146	561
2	640	3	2	645
3	0	0	614	614
4	301	169	580	1,050
5	0	247	104	351
6	0	0	997	997
7	0	123	53	176
8	0	6	10	16
9	78	384	30	491
10	622	11	0	633
11	592	0	47	639
Total Acres	2,438	1,153	2,583	6,174

The Consent to Lease has no direct impacts on any resource. Impacts associated with any lease activity would be attributed to any geothermal exploration and subsequent development. For the lands selected for leasing, the FS identifies any necessary stipulations that would be incorporated into any BLM lease that would guide subsequent surface and subsurface activities.

Reasonably foreseeable development (RFD) activities are addressed within this EA. Even though this Consent to Lease project has no effect, other than consenting to the BLM to offer the nominated parcels

for sale, Mitigation Measures (other than stipulations) are incorporated for the purpose of reducing or eliminating unwanted effects from any potential RFDs and to ensure that activities that may occur comply with standards and guidelines and best management practices.

How to Comment and Timeframe

The EA describes the activities and effects of the alternatives in detail. A legal notice for the EA and opportunity for comment will be published in the newspaper of record, *The Bulletin*. The 30-day comment period will begin on the date of publication of this notice. You will find the EA on the Forest Service Website at: http://data.ecosystem-management.org/nepaweb/project_list.php?forest=110601. If you prefer a hardcopy of the document, please contact David Frantz at (541) 383-4721.

Comments, including attachments, must be postmarked or delivered within 30 days of the publication of the Draft EA in *The Bulletin* in order to have standing to object. The publication date in *The Bulletin* is the exclusive means for calculating the time for comment. Those wishing to comment on this project should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Comments should be addressed to Kevin Larkin, District Ranger, Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District, 63095 Deschutes Market Road, Bend, OR, 97701. Comments can also be faxed to (541) 383-4700, sent electronically to comment-pacificnorthwest-deschutes-bend-ftrock@fs.fed.us, or hand delivered to 63095 Deschutes Market Road, Bend, Oregon between 7:45 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

For email submission, the comments must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, verification of identity will be required. Emails submitted to email addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. It is the responsibility of the commenter to confirm receipt of comments submitted by electronic mail. Please enter "Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease Project" into the subject line of your email

Anyone wishing to obtain additional information on the project or a copy of the EA should contact Bart Wills at (541) 383-5618 or David Frantz at (541) 383-4721.

Sincerely,


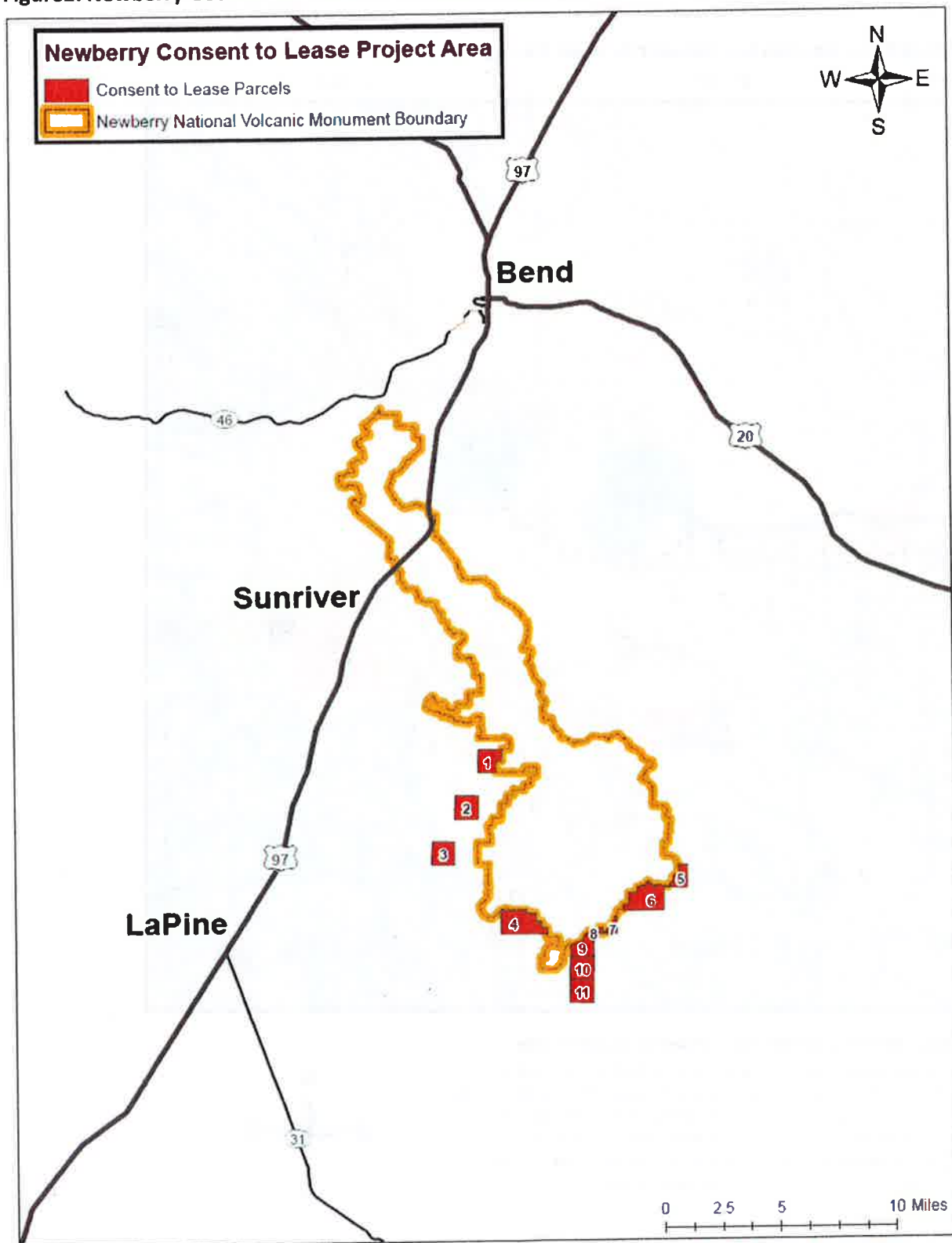
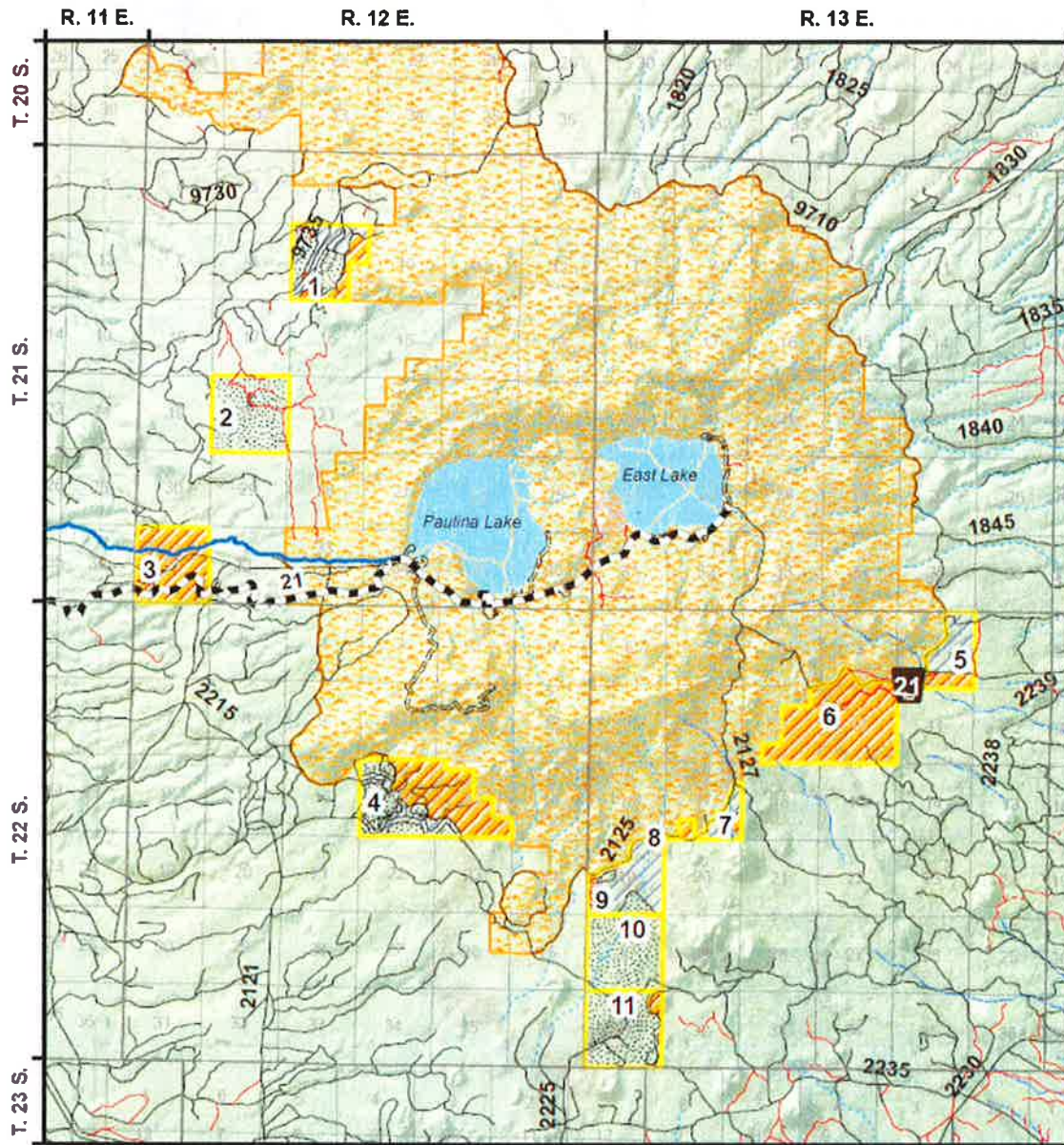

for KEVIN W. LARKIN
District Ranger

Figure1: Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease Project Vicinity Map with Nominated Parcels



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Figure 2: Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease Parcels



Legend - Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease Parcels

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Geothermal Lease Areas | 5 - HIGH DEGREE OF USER COMFORT |
| Controlled Surface Use | 4 - MODERATE DEGREE OF USER COMFORT |
| No Surface Occupancy | 3 - SUITABLE FOR PASSENGER CARS |
| Standard Lease | 2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES |
| Newberry Monument Boundary | 1 - BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE (CLOSED) |
| Section | DECOMMISSIONED |



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