

AMENDMENT TO THE
HUMBOLDT NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANGEMENT PLAN

AMENDMENT #9

WHITE PINE AND GRANT-QUINN OIL AND GAS
LEASING AVAILABILITY ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest has conducted an environmental analysis regarding oil and gas leasing on National Forest System lands within the White Pine and Grant-Quinn Divisions of the Ely Ranger District. This environmental analysis is documented in the *White Pine and Grant-Quinn Oil and Gas Leasing Project Final Environmental Impact Statement*.

Edward Monnig, Forest Supervisor, signed the Record of Decision (ROD) on August 28, 2007 which specified the lands in the White Pine and Grant-Quinn Divisions that are available for oil and gas leases and the conditions controlling those leases. The decision makes available 255,603 acres of National Forest System lands in the Project Area for oil and gas leasing Table 1 below shows the lands available with conditions for leasing. ROD Figures 1 through 5 from the ROD are made a part of this amendment.

This decision does not authorize specific lease activities in specific areas. A separate analysis compliant with the National Environmental Policy Act and a separate decision will be necessary to authorize those activities.

TABLE 1: Available and Non-Available Lands

Availability and Level of Protection	White Pine Division	Grant-Quinn Division	Project Area Total
Available Lands with Standard Lease Terms	7,837	683	8,520
Available Lands with Standard Lease Terms and Timing Restriction	2,239	0	2,239
Available Lands with Controlled Surface Use Stipulation	101,284	56,729	158,013
Available Lands with Controlled Surface Use Stipulation and Timing Restriction	39,550	0	39,550
Available Lands with No Surface Occupancy Stipulation	19,228	18,327	37,555
Available Lands with No Surface Occupancy Stipulation and Timing Restriction	9,726	0	9,726
Quinn IRA - Not Available due to No Lease	0	62,474	62,474
Wilderness Not Available (Excluding BLM Additions) ¹	164,220	78,704	242,924
Private Lands Not Available	3,799	510	4,309
Road Corridors Not Available due to No Lease	2,817	1,801	4,618
2006 BLM Acquired Lands - Excluding BLM Additional Wilderness	2,994	0	2,994
Wilderness on BLM additions	2,811	0	2,811
Total	356,505	219,228	575,733

¹ The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act added BLM Lands in the White Pine Range to the National Forest System. Some of these lands are designated as wilderness and some are designated as non-wilderness (2,994 acres.) These lands are outside of the Project Area and are not part of my decision.

The following are the changes made to the Forest plan:

WHITE PINE MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION

On page IV-180 the following direction will be added to the management prescription for minerals:

All non-Wilderness lands within this management area are available for oil and gas leasing based upon the Record of Decision signed August 28, 2007. Requests and applications for leasing will be carried out in an expeditious manner. All leases issues would be consistent with the Standard Lease Terms and Lease Stipulations listed in Appendix A of Amendment #9.

QUINN MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION

On page IV-187 the following direction will be added to the management prescription for minerals:

The Quinn Inventoried Roadless Area has been administratively withdrawn from oil and gas leasing by the Forest Supervisor. All other areas of this management area are available for oil and gas leasing based upon the Record of Decision signed August 28, 2007. Requests and applications for leasing will be carried out in an expeditious manner. All leases issues would be consistent with the Standard Lease Terms and Lease Stipulations listed in Appendix A of Amendment #9.

Appendix A to Amendment #9

Standard Lease Terms

Standard Lease Terms will apply on all lands available for leasing with surface occupancy. These terms allow delaying operations for up to sixty days or moving activities up to 200 meters for resource protection. Under Standard Lease Terms, all operations are conducted in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Standard Lease Terms applies to the following resources:

- Heritage Resource Properties
- Visual Quality Objectives of Modification and Maximum Modification
- Roaded Natural/Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreational Opportunity Spectrum areas
- Slopes less than 10% and slopes between 10–25%
- State of Nevada Listed Species habitats
- Threatened and Endangered Species habitats
- Neo-Tropical Migratory Bird habitat
- Elk Calving Areas
- Pygmy Rabbit Burrow sites

This list is not all-inclusive and Standard Lease Terms apply to other resources and situations as warranted on the leasehold.

Lease Stipulations – Final Decision

These Lease Stipulations for Modified Alternative 3 will be included in all leases.

Wildlife Resources

Greater Sage-Grouse - Leks

- **Stipulation:** No Surface Occupancy - 3 km radius buffer around leks
- **Objective:** To preclude disturbance to all leks
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** A modification of the Stipulation/Lease Restriction may be granted if field studies show that a lek is not active (has not been used in the last 5 years); the SLT would then apply

Greater Sage-Grouse – Nesting/Early Brood Rearing Habitat

- **Stipulation:** Timing Limitation: March 15 to July 15

- **Objective:** To protect occupied or potential habitat for nesting and early brood-rearing
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** A modification of the Stipulation/Lease Restriction may be granted if new habitat studies or surveys show that a portion of the area does not contain nesting/early brood rearing habitat or the habitat is not occupied; the SLT would then apply

Greater Sage-Grouse – Summer Habitat

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To require that activities be located and/or designed to avoid or minimize the potential for adverse effects to sage grouse summer habitat and to ensure that the viability of sage grouse is not adversely affected
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** A modification of the stipulation may be granted if new habitat studies or surveys show that a portion of the area does not contain summer habitat or the habitat is not occupied; the SLT would then apply

Raptors - Nesting Buffers of 800 meters radius around nest

- **Stipulation:** Timing Limitation - March 1 to August 15
- **Objective:** To preclude the commencement of activities within the nest stand which could cause increased stress and or displacement during the critical nesting/fledging period
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** Oil and gas activity can occur during periods when the nests are not occupied. If oil and gas activity is occurring and ongoing and nest becomes occupied, then oil and gas activity may continue
- **Modification:** Depending on species and their sensitivity to activity, controlled surface use may be allowed

Elk Winter Range

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To require that activities be located and/or designed to avoid or minimize the potential for loss of habitat, increased stress and/or displacement of animals within the winter range.
- **Waiver:** None

- **Exception:** An exception may be granted if it can be demonstrated that reclamation will improve habitat in the long term; the Standard Lease Terms (SLT) would then apply
- **Modification:** A modification may be granted if specific study shows no elk winter range in the Project Area; the SLT would then apply

Bighorn Sheep

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To require that activities be located and/or designed to avoid or minimize the potential for loss of habitat, increased stress and/or displacement of bighorn sheep
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** An exception may be granted if it can be demonstrated that reclamation will improve habitat in the long range; the SLT would then apply
- **Modification:** A modification of the Stipulation/Lease Restriction may be granted if site-specific inventory shows no critical bighorn sheep range in the Project Area; the SLT would then apply

Mule Deer Winter Range

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To require that activities be located and/or designed to avoid or minimize the potential for loss of habitat, increased stress and/or displacement of animals within the winter range
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** An exception may be granted if it can be demonstrated that reclamation will improve habitat in the long range; the SLT would then apply
- **Modification:** A modification of the Stipulation/Lease Restriction may be granted if site-specific inventory shows no mule deer winter range in the Project Area; the SLT would then apply

Vegetation Communities

Mountain Mahogany

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To limit construction within mountain mahogany, where it serves as wildlife forage and winter range, by designing facilities and developments to minimize habitat loss
- **Waiver:** None

- **Exception:** An exception may be granted if reclamation will improve habitat in the long term; the SLT would then apply
- **Modification:** A modification of the Stipulation/Lease Restriction may be granted if site-specific inventory shows no wildlife forage or winter range in the Project Area; the SLT would then apply

Riparian Aspen

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To limit construction activities within aspen stands by designing facilities and developments to minimize habitat loss
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** If site-specific inventory shows no aspen stands in the Project Area, the SLT would then apply

Great Basin Sub-Alpine (All except Bristlecone Pine)

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To limit construction of well sites and facilities within this limited plant community
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** If site-specific inventory shows no Great Basin sub-alpine stands in the Project Area, the SLT would then apply

Bristlecone Pine

- **Stipulation:** No Surface Occupancy
- **Objective:** To preclude construction within bristlecone pine stands
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** If site-specific inventory shows no bristlecone pine stands in the Project Area, the SLT would then apply

Rare Plants - R4 Sensitive Plants (Occupied Habitat)

- **Stipulation:** No Surface Occupancy
- **Objective:** To protect sensitive plant species
- **Waiver:** None

- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** A modification to the stipulation may be granted if site-specific studies indicate that impacts would not lead to a substantial loss of the habitat

SOILS AND GEOLOGY

Erosion Hazard

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use: slopes 25–40% and No Surface Occupancy: slopes greater than 40%
- **Objective:** To preclude construction of well sites and related facilities on slopes over 40%, which would involve relative risk of failure for large cut and fill slopes, which would be difficult to rehabilitate. The objective for the Controlled Surface Use Stipulation requires facilities such as well sites to be located to minimize construction on slopes and or to be designed to minimize large cut and fill slopes that are difficult to rehabilitate
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** A modification to No Surface Occupancy Stipulation/Lease Restriction may be granted if a site specific review of a proposed well site or facility shows that conditions for construction on slopes greater than 40% can be completed without risk of failure

WATER QUALITY

Riparian Buffers - All streams (+100-yr flood plain, springs, ponds, and riparian)

- **Stipulation:** No Surface Occupancy - 30 meter buffer on perennial streams, springs, ponds, and wet meadows and 15 meter buffer on seasonal or subsurface streams
- **Objective:** To preclude new surface-disturbing activities within critical riparian and aquatic habitats and 100-year flood plains
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** Road crossings may be permitted if no other alternative for placement of the transportation corridor exists
- **Modification:** A modification may be granted for construction of well sites and facilities if a site specific inspection demonstrates that aquatic and riparian habitat do not exist on the specific site and/or activities will not occur within the 100-year flood plain for all streams types, including ephemeral and subsurface flow.

Other Resources

All inventoried Roadless Areas, except Quinn IRA which has been withdrawn from Leasing Availability

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** Road construction and reconstruction would not be allowed in accordance with 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR)
- **Waiver:** A waiver would be granted if the RACR is eliminated
- **Exception:** The RACR allows for only one exception, public health and safety, which is unlikely to occur
- **Modification:** A modification would be granted if the constraints of the RACR were changed to allow road construction or reconstruction under specified circumstances. A modification would adopt the related Controlled Surface Use wording specified in alternative 3 of the FEIS for all other IRAs

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum - Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Areas

- **Stipulation:** Controlled Surface Use
- **Objective:** To limit the effect of disturbance by requiring that activities be located, designed, and reclaimed in a manner that maintains the semi-primitive non-motorized character of the land
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** Allow limited development that have a minor effect to the semi-primitive non-motorized setting after site-specific review

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum - Primitive Non-Motorized Areas Within Wilhoites IRA

- **Stipulation:** No Surface Occupancy
- **Objective:** To preclude surface occupancy and new surface disturbing activities within the primitive setting area.
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** Allow limited development that would have a minor effect to the primitive setting after site specific review

Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs)

- **Stipulation :** 1) No Surface Occupancy in areas of Retention and 2) Controlled Surface Use in areas of Partial Retention

- **Objective:** 1) No Surface Occupancy: To protect the high quality scenic resources present on Forest lands; and 2) Controlled Surface Use: To protect the scenic quality of forest lands by requiring proposed activities to be located and designed to meet the partial retention objectives within 3 years from project completion
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** Allow limited development that have a minor effect to high quality scenic resources after site-specific review

Administrative & Recreation Sites

- **Stipulation:** No Surface Occupancy
- **Objective:** Preclude development within administrative and recreation sites
- **Waiver:** None
- **Exception:** None
- **Modification:** None

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