Canyon, AZ 86023, or by telephone at (928) 638–7759.

Authority: The authority for publishing this notice is contained in 40 CFR 1506.6.

The responsible official for this Notice of Intent is the Regional Director, Intermountain Region, NPS, 12795 West Alameda Parkway, Lakewood, Colorado 80228.

Dated: February 4, 2014.

Sue E. Masica,

Regional Director, Intermountain Region.

[FR Doc. 2014–07349 Filed 4–3–14; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

[MMAA104000]

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Gulf of Mexico (GOM), Oil and Gas Lease Sales, Western Planning Area (WPA) Lease Sales 246 and 248

AGENCY: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and an Announcement of Scoping Meetings and Comment Period for Proposed Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Western Planning Area Lease Sales 246 and 248.

SUMMARY: Consistent with the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) (NEPA), BOEM is announcing its intent to prepare a Supplemental EIS for proposed Western Planning Area (WPA) Lease Sales 246 and 248 in the Gulf of Mexico (WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS). The WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS will update the environmental and socioeconomic analyses in the *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2012–2017; Western Planning Area Lease Sales 229, 233, 238, 246, and 248; Central Planning Area Lease Sales 227, 231, 235, 241, and 247, Final Environmental Impact Statement* (OCS EIS/EA BOEM 2012–019) (2012–2017 WPA/CPA Multisale EIS), *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2013–2014; Western Planning Area Lease Sale 233; Central Planning Area Lease Sale 231, Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (OCS EIS/EA BOEM 2013–0118) (WPA 233/CPA 231 Supplemental EIS), and *Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sales: 2014–2016; Western Planning Area Lease Sales 238, 246, and 248, Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (OCS EIS/EA BOEM 2014–009) (WPA 238/246/248 Supplemental EIS). The 2012–2017 WPA/CPA Multisale EIS was completed in July 2012. The WPA 233/CPA 231 Supplemental EIS was completed in April 2013. The WPA 238/246/248 Supplemental EIS was completed in March 2014.

The WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS will supplement the NEPA documents cited above for WPA lease sales in order to consider new circumstances and information arising from, among other things, the *Deepwater Horizon* explosion, oil spill, and response. The WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS analysis will focus on updating the baseline conditions and potential environmental effects of oil and natural gas leasing, exploration, development, and production in the WPA.

The WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS analysis will also focus on the potential environmental effects of oil and natural gas leasing, exploration, development, and production in the WPA identified through the Area Identification procedure as the proposed lease sale area. In addition to the no action alternative (i.e., canceling a proposed lease sale), other alternatives may be considered for the proposed WPA lease sales, such as deferring certain areas from the proposed lease sale area.

DATES: Comments should be submitted by May 5, 2014 to the address specified in **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information on the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS, the submission of comments, or BOEM's policies associated with this notice, please contact Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief, Environmental Assessment Section, Office of Environment (GM 623E), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70123–2394, telephone (504) 736–3233.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 27, 2012, the Secretary of the Interior approved the OCS Oil & Gas Leasing Program: 2012–2017 (2012–2017 Five-Year Program). This Supplemental EIS will consider the two remaining WPA sales for this 2012–2017 Five-Year Program. Proposed WPA Lease Sales 246 and 248 are tentatively scheduled to be held in 2015 and 2016, respectively. The proposed WPA lease sale area encompasses virtually all of the WPA's 28.58 million acres, with the exception of whole and partial blocks within the boundary of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

This **Federal Register** notice is not an announcement to hold a proposed lease sale, but it is a continuation of information gathering and is published early in the environmental review process, in furtherance of the goals of NEPA. The comments received during the scoping comment period will help form the content of the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS and will be summarized in presale documentation prepared during the decision making process for proposed WPA Lease Sale 246. If, after completion of the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS, the Secretary of the Interior decides to hold a lease sale, then the lease sale area identified in the final Notice of Sale may exclude or defer certain lease blocks from the area offered. However, for purposes of the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS and to adequately assess the potential impacts of an areawide lease sale, BOEM is assuming that all unleased blocks may be offered in proposed WPA Lease Sales 246 and 248.

In order to ensure a greater level of transparency during the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) stages and tiered NEPA processes of the Five-Year Program, BOEM established an alternative and mitigation tracking table, which is designed to track the receipt and treatment of alternative and mitigation suggestions. Section 4.3.2 of the *Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program: 2012–2017; Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (the Five-Year Program EIS) (*http://www.boem.gov/5-Year/2012-2017/PEIS.aspx*) presented a list of deferral and alternative requests that were received during the development of the Five-Year Program EIS, but were determined to be more appropriately considered at subsequent OCSLA and NEPA stages. The 2012–2017 WPA/CPA Multisale EIS addressed these deferral and alternative requests, but they were ultimately deemed inappropriate for further analysis as separate alternatives or deferrals from those already included and considered in the 2012–2017 WPA/CPA Multisale EIS. In this and future NEPA analyses, BOEM will continue to evaluate whether these or other deferral or alternative requests warrant additional consideration as appropriate. (Please refer to Chapter 2.2.1.2 of the 2012–2017 WPA/CPA Multisale EIS for a complete discussion; *http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Environmental-Assessment/NEPA/BOEM-2012-019_v1.aspx.*) A key principle at each stage in the NEPA process is to identify how the recommendations for deferral and mitigation requests are being addressed and whether new information or

circumstances favor new or different analytical approaches in response to these requests.

Additionally, BOEM has created a tailored map of the potentially affected area through the Multipurpose Marine Cadastre (MMC) Web site (*http://boem.gov/Oil-and-Gas-Energy-Program/Leasing/Five-Year-Program/Lease-Sale-Schedule/Interactive-Maps.aspx*). The MMC is an integrated marine information system that provides a comprehensive look at geospatial data and ongoing activities and studies occurring in the area being considered. This Web site provides the ability to view multiple data layers of existing geospatial data.

Scoping Process: This NOI also serves to announce the scoping process for identifying issues for the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS. Throughout the scoping process, Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and the general public have the opportunity to help BOEM determine significant resources and issues, impacting factors, reasonable alternatives, and potential mitigating measures to be analyzed in the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS, and to provide additional information. BOEM will also use the NEPA commenting process to initiate the section 106 consultation process of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3).

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, BOEM will hold public scoping meetings in Texas and Louisiana on the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS. The purpose of these meetings is to solicit comments on the scope of the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS. BOEM's scoping meetings will be held at the following places and times:

- Corpus Christi, Texas: Tuesday, April 22, 2014, Springhill Suites, 4331 South Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411, one meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. CDT; and,
- New Orleans, Louisiana: Thursday, April 24, 2014, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123, one meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. CDT.

Cooperating Agency: BOEM invites other Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments to consider becoming cooperating agencies in the preparation of the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS. We invite qualified government entities to inquire about cooperating agency status for the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS. Following the guidelines from the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), qualified agencies and governments are those with ''jurisdiction by law or special expertise.'' Potential cooperating agencies should consider their authority and capacity to assume the responsibilities of a cooperating agency and should remember that an agency's role in the environmental analysis neither enlarges nor diminishes the final decision making authority of any other agency involved in the NEPA process. Upon request, BOEM will provide potential cooperating agencies with a written summary of ground rules for cooperating agencies, including time schedules and critical action dates, milestones, responsibilities, scope and detail of cooperating agencies' contributions, and availability of predecisional information. BOEM anticipates this summary will form the basis for a Memorandum of Agreement between BOEM and any cooperating agency. Agencies should also consider the ''Factors for Determining Cooperating Agency Status'' in Attachment 1 to CEQ's January 30, 2002, Memorandum for the Heads of Federal Agencies: *Cooperating Agencies in Implementing the Procedural Requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.* These documents are available at the following location on the Internet: *http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/nepapub/nepa_documents/RedDont/G-CEQ-CoopAgenciesImplem.pdf*.

BOEM, as the lead agency, will not provide financial assistance to cooperating agencies. Even if an organization is not a cooperating agency, opportunities will exist to provide information and comments to BOEM during the normal public input stages of the NEPA/EIS process. For further information about cooperating agencies, please contact Mr. Gary D. Goeke at (504) 736–3233.

Comments: All interested parties, including Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, and other organizations and members of the public, may submit written comments on the scope of the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS, significant issues that should be addressed, alternatives that should be considered, potential mitigating measures, and the types of oil and gas activities of interest in the proposed WPA lease sale area.

Written scoping comments may be submitted in one of the following ways:

1. In an envelope labeled ''Scoping Comments for the WPA 246/248 Supplemental EIS'' and mailed (or hand delivered) to Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief, Environmental Assessment Section, Office of Environment (GM 623E), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123–2394;

2. Through the regulations.gov web portal: Navigate to *http://www.regulations.gov* and search for ''Oil and Gas Lease Sales: Gulf of Mexico, Outer Continental Shelf; Western Planning Area Lease Sales 246 and 248.'' (**Note:** It is important to include the quotation marks in your search terms.) Click on the ''Comment Now!'' button to the right of the document link. Enter your information and comment, then click ''Submit''; or

3. BOEM's email address: *wpa246@boem.gov.*

Petitions, although accepted, do not generally provide useful information to assist in the development of alternatives, resources, and issues to be analyzed, or impacting factors. BOEM does not consider anonymous comments; please include your name and address as part of your submittal. BOEM makes all comments, including the names and addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that BOEM withhold their names and/or addresses from the public record; however, BOEM cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. If you wish your name and/or address to be withheld, you must state your preference prominently at the beginning of your comment. All submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Authority: This NOI is published pursuant to the regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) implementing the provisions of NEPA.

Dated: March 28, 2014.

Tommy P. Beaudreau,

Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

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