



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Oklahoma Field Office
7906 E. 33rd Street, Suite 101
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74145
www.blm.gov/nm



In Reply Refer To:
1610

March 14, 2014

Judge Keith Self
Collin County Court
2300 Bloomdale Rd Ste 4192
McKinney, TX 75071-8517

Dear Judge Self:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Oklahoma Field Office, in conjunction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains Regional Offices, has begun an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project to analyze lands and minerals under the jurisdiction of both agencies in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. The BLM portion of the EIS will result in the revision of the 3 current Resource Management Plans within the Oklahoma Field Office's jurisdiction.

In the spirit of government to government consultation and cooperation, Oklahoma Field Office (OFO), working as project lead, is inviting the Collin County Commissioners to become a Cooperating Agency for the duration of the RMP/EIS process. The Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) allow federal agencies (as lead agencies) to invite tribal, state, and local governments, as well as other federal agencies, to serve as Cooperating Agencies in the preparation of environmental impact statements. Cooperating Agency status provides the opportunity for us to work together and to enhance the BLM's planning efforts.

Local and tribal governments, other agencies, and the public have participation opportunities such as attending public meetings, and reviewing and commenting on plan documents. Being a Cooperating Agency provides the opportunity for interested agencies to take on additional roles and responsibilities beyond basic participation opportunities. Cooperating Agencies do have obligations to contribute staff to the RMP/EIS team, assist with analysis for which they have particular expertise, and fund their own participation.

In general, you will be expected to provide a person to attend meetings to accomplish the tasks, as well as to accommodate other time involvement. I anticipate about six Cooperating Agency meetings over the first twelve to fifteen months of the planning process, with an additional three to four meetings over the following year. There will also be a time requirement to review documents.

To help you in your decision to accept or deny this invitation, please consult sections V, VI, and VII of the enclosed draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as well as specific information about Cooperating Agency relationships at the following website:
http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/nepa/cooperating_agencies.html.

If you choose to become a Cooperating Agency, you will work closely with BLM and other agencies throughout the RMP/EIS process. While Cooperating Agency status does not eliminate your rights to protest or appeal the EIS Record of Decision, my expectation is that you would have had sufficient opportunity to work with BLM and others so that a protest or appeal would not be necessary.

If the Collin County Commissioners is interested in becoming a Cooperating Agency please notify Laurence Levesque, of my staff, by April 14, 2014 at (918) 621-4136 or llevsque@blm.gov. We will need to sign a MOU that describes the roles and responsibilities of the BLM and the Collin County Commissioners. Enclosed is a sample MOU (draft) that has been developed for the planning process. Laurence Levesque, the Project Lead, will need a point of contact to finalize the MOU and the name of the person who will represent the Collin County Commissioners for the planning process.

We request that agencies declining to accept Cooperating Agency status also respond to this invitation. Should you choose not to become a Cooperating Agency, be assured that we will still provide the Collin County Commissioners with ample opportunity to participate in the planning process.

If you have questions regarding cooperating agency status or want more information concerning opportunities available for your agency to participate in the land use planning process, do not hesitate to call Laurence Levesque, the Project Lead, at (918) 621-4136.

Thank you for your interest in the planning process and administration of your public lands. We look forward to working with the Collin County Commissioners as we proceed with this land use planning effort.

Sincerely,



Stephen G. Tryon
Field Office Manager

Enclosure
1 – Draft MOU