



Project Scoping

July 24, 2006

Proposal to Conduct the Sour Lake 3-D Seismic Survey in the Lance Rosier and Little Pine Island-Pine Island Bayou Corridor Units Big Thicket National Preserve Hardin County, Texas

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. subsection 9.52(a), the Superintendent of Big Thicket National Preserve (Preserve) gives notice that Cimarex Energy Co. (Cimarex) has submitted a draft Plan of Operations to conduct a “cable-only” three-dimensional (3-D) seismic survey within the Lance Rosier and Little Pine Island-Pine Island Bayou Corridor Units (Units) of the Preserve. The proposed operations area is shown on the reverse of this brochure. Upon determining the Plan of Operations substantially complete, the Superintendent will publish a notice of availability of the Plan of Operations and associated environmental impact analysis document in the *Federal Register* for a 30-day public review period.

Cimarex’s proposed operations within the Units are part of the 43-square mile Sour Lake 3-D seismic survey. Approximately 3 square miles of the survey would overlap the Preserve. The proposed data collection would be accomplished using acoustic reflection methodology, where sources of vibration would be created and the resulting energy wave recorded at various points along a grid to develop an image of the subsurface in three dimensions. The vibrations would be created by the detonation of explosive charges loaded into a single hole drilled at each source point.

Cimarex proposes to use “cable-only” methodology within the Preserve. This means that no shot holes would be drilled and no explosive charges would be detonated inside the Units. Operations in the Units would begin with the surveying of locations for receiver placement. Recording operations would follow. This phase of the operation consists of the layout of cables, geophones and batteries to record vibrations produced outside the Preserve, and the removal of this equipment. Recording operations would be supported by helicopter. No off-road vehicle use would be permitted in the Unit. A minimal amount of vegetation would be trimmed to permit passage by foot down the receiver lines.

At this time, the Preserve is announcing a 30-day public scoping period to solicit public comments on this proposal prior to completing environmental impact analysis. As the Superintendent of Big Thicket National Preserve, I invite you to participate in this scoping process.

Sincerely,

Todd Brindle

Overview of the Process

Project milestones include:

- Public scoping period (closes August 23, 2006)
- Preparation of environmental impact analysis document
- Public review of Plan of Operations and environmental impact analysis document
- Analysis of public comment
- Preparation of decision document (if applicable)
- Announcement of decision on Cimarex’s proposal

What does the scoping period mean? Scoping is done in the initial phase of a project to seek input from a variety of sources. The input is used to identify issues, areas requiring additional study, and topics that will be analyzed in the environmental impact analysis process. This is an opportunity for you to provide us with your suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding this oil and gas proposal at Big Thicket National Preserve.

Is scoping my only opportunity to comment on the project? No, once the Plan of Operations is determined to be substantially complete and the environmental impact analysis document is developed, the documents will be made available for public review for a 30-day period.

Alternatives

The preliminary range of alternatives, including the proposed action, to be evaluated in the environmental impact analysis document are:

1. No action (the seismic survey would not be conducted within the Preserve)
2. Cimarex’s proposal
3. Conduct the survey within the Preserve utilizing seismic sources
4. Acquire the mineral rights that are part of the proposal

Resources and Concerns

Initial internal project scoping identified the following resources and other concerns for consideration in the environmental impact analysis document.

Air quality	Cultural resources
Geology and soils	Lightscape
Water resources	Visitor use/experience
Floodplains/wetlands	Natural soundscape
Vegetation	Adjacent landowners
Fish and wildlife	Socioeconomics
Species of management concern	

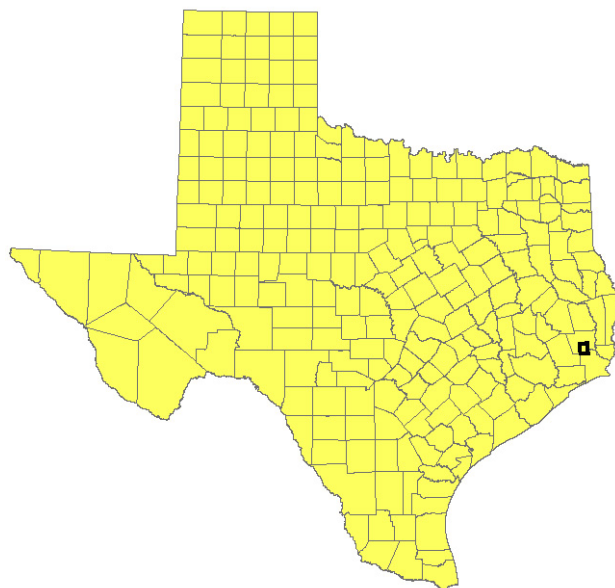
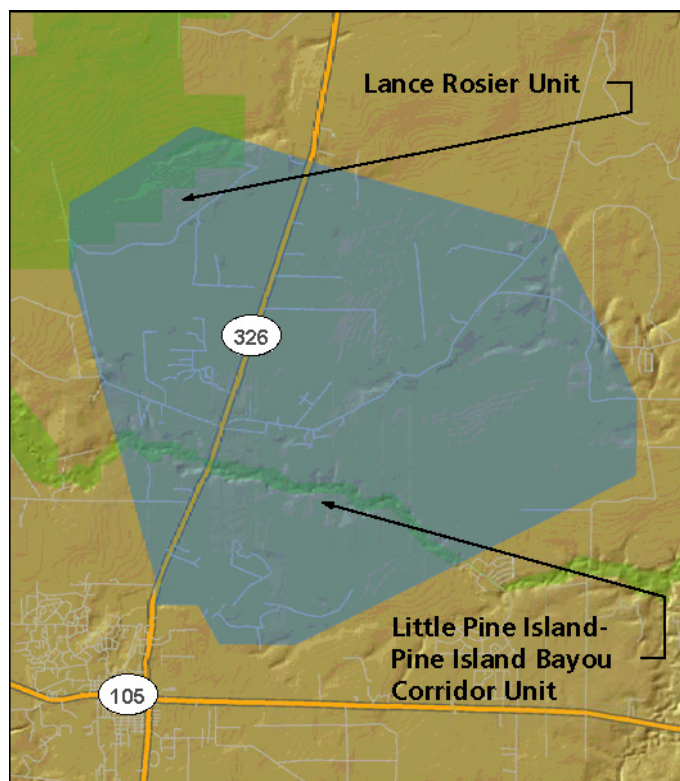
Please let us know by August 23, 2006:

1. Do you have any ideas to share about issues/concerns, or are there any issues/concerns about the project that you think we should consider?
2. Are there any other alternatives that you think should be considered?
3. Do you have other comments and suggestions for us to consider in the environmental impact analysis document?

If you wish to comment on the scoping brochure or on any other issues associated with the project, you may submit your comments in the following ways:

- This scoping brochure will be posted to the NPS's Planning Environment and Public Comment System or PEPC. You may access the system and comment at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.
- You may submit written comments to:
Superintendent
Big Thicket National Preserve
Attn: Dusty Pate
6044 FM 420
Kountze, TX 77625
- Finally, you may hand deliver comments to Big Thicket National Preserve.

If you wish to be added to the park's mailing list for this and other announcements, please be sure to indicate that in your response.



Legend

- Cimarron Lake 3-D Project Area
- Big Thicket National Preserve Boundaries



0 1 2 3 Miles