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Final Environmental Impact Statement for Oil-Gas Leasing and Roads Management

Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico



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Final Environmental Impact Statement for Oil-Gas Leasing and Roads Management

Santa Fe National Forest New Mexico

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Abstract: This environmental impact statement (EIS) discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from a proposed Santa Fe National Forest Plan amendment for oil and gas leasing, and one to make a separate project-level National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision on roads management within the Cuba Ranger District.

The EIS is separated into two parts. The first part evaluates oil and gas leasing availability and stipulations and the potential cumulative effects of reasonably foreseeable future oil and gas leasing and development within the San Juan Basin on the Santa Fe National Forest. The Proposed Action, which is the preferred alternative, would update the Forest Plan oil and gas leasing availability with specific stipulations where needed to protect wildlife and surface resources. The proposed stipulations describe specific direction regarding surface occupancy or use, their purpose, the location and/or conditions under which they apply, and exceptions.

The second part of this EIS addresses the underlying need for achieving a minimum road system on the Cuba Ranger District that is safe for public use, protects National Forest System lands and resources, and is cost efficient to maintain within anticipated budgets. The Proposed Action, which is the Preferred Alternative, considers closing an additional 332 miles and decommissioning 418 miles of roads in order to meet the Roads Policy and other resource management objectives. All roads on the Cuba Ranger District were considered, including the portion outside the oil and gas study area, as they form a connected and interrelated travel network that may be needed to access oil-gas leases.

