

# NEWS RELEASE

**USDA Forest Service  
Caribou-Targhee National Forest  
1405 Hollipark Drive  
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **CARIBOU-TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST TO CONSIDER OIL AND GAS LEASING**

**IDHAO FALLS, Idaho:** The Caribou-Targhee National Forest will be conducting an environmental analysis for oil and gas leasing on the Caribou administrative unit of the Forest and the Curlew National Grassland in southeast Idaho, with small areas in northern Utah and western Wyoming. Since the analysis will likely address controversial issues and alternatives and could involve significant effects, the analysis will be documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be participating as a cooperating agency on the project because the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, establishes the BLM as the agency responsible to issue and administer oil and gas leases on Federal lands.

Four public meetings are scheduled to describe the proposal and to provide an opportunity for public input. We invite you to attend any of these meetings:

- January 16: 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tribal Business Center, Pima Dr., Fort Hall, ID.
- January 16: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Westside Ranger District Office, 4350 Cliffs Dr., Pocatello, ID.
- January 18: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Soda Springs Ranger District Office, 410 E. Hooper Ave., Soda Springs, ID.
- January 18: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Montpelier Ranger District Office, 322 N. 4<sup>th</sup>, Montpelier, ID.

Written comments will be accepted at the public meetings. The Forest Service will work with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal government to address issues that could significantly or uniquely affect them. The project will be listed in the Caribou-Targhee NF Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions and this scoping letter will be sent to local tribal interests, interested agencies, organizations, media-contacts and the Forest-wide mailing list.

The intent of the applicable laws and regulations is to lease appropriate NFS lands and provide a reasonable opportunity to explore for, discover, and produce economic oil and gas reserves from available Federal lands, while meeting the requirements of environmental laws and protecting surface resources and interests not compatible with such activities.

The Forest Service and BLM propose to conduct the analysis and decide which NFS lands on the Caribou National Forest and Curlew National Grasslands will be made available for oil and gas leasing and under what terms and conditions (stipulations) these specific lands may be leased. As part of the analysis, the Forest Service will identify those areas that would be administratively available for leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard oil and gas lease form, and subject to constraints that would require the use of lease stipulations such as limiting surface use, timing restrictions, and/or prohibiting surface occupancy in accordance with the Caribou Land and Resource Management Plan (Caribou Plan, revised 2003) and the Curlew National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan (Curlew Plan, 2002).

To comply with the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, no road construction or reconstruction would be allowed in Inventoried Roadless Areas. Leasing will be considered in some Roadless areas with no surface occupancy stipulations.

The analysis will also: (1) identify alternatives to the proposed action; (2) project the type/amount of post-leasing activity that is reasonably foreseeable; and (3) analyze the reasonable foreseeable impacts of projected post-leasing activity [36 CFR 228.102(c)].

The Forest Service requests comments on the nature and scope of the environmental, social, and economic issues, and possible alternatives related to oil and gas leasing on the Caribou. To assist us in identifying and considering significant issues and concerns related to the proposed action, and to develop appropriate alternatives, your comments should be as specific as possible. Only comments which address relevant issues and concerns will be considered and formally addressed in an appendix to the EIS. To be most helpful, comments should be received by February 16, 2007. Comments received, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection.

Written comments should be sent to: Steve Robison, Oil and Gas Team Leader, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, 1405 Hollipark Dr., Idaho Falls, ID 83401. Electronic comments can be submitted in rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to [comments-intermtn-caribou-targhee@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-intermtn-caribou-targhee@fs.fed.us). Please include "Caribou Oil and Gas Leasing EIS" on the subject line.

For additional information about the project, contact: Lynn Ballard, Public Affairs Officer, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, 1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls, ID 83401; phone (208) 557-5765. For technical information contact: Steve Robison, Oil and Gas Team Leader, (208) 557-5799.