

**The NewsRoom**

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**MMS to Conduct Environmental Review for Proposed Central and Western Gulf of Mexico Areas***Review Will Include Public Scoping Meetings*

**NEW ORLEANS** — The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) has begun the planning process to gather information and conduct an environmental review of the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (CPA) and the Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Area with the publication in the *Federal Register* of the Call for Information and Nominations/Notice of Intent (Call/NOI) to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

Public Scoping Meetings will be included in the planning process, and are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, October 9, 2007, Larose Civic Center, Larose Regional Park, Larose, Louisiana, 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 10, 2007, The Woods Auditorium in the Energy, Coast & Environment Building at the LSU Campus, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, October 11, 2007, Riverview Plaza Hotel, 64 South Water Street, Mobile, Alabama, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, October 11, 2007, Marriott Houston Intercontinental at George Bush Intercontinental, 18700 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Houston, TX, 1:00 p.m.

The Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 mandated that approximately 5.8 million acres, located in the southeastern part of the CPA, be offered for lease. Therefore, pending an environmental review on this acreage, which is known as the "181 South Area," MMS will be able to offer it for lease in March 2009 as part of the proposed Lease Sale 208.

"This is the standard initial step in the prelease process for a sale" explained acting regional director Lars Herbst. "What makes this exciting is the addition of the 181 South Area, which has never been leased before."

The Call/NOI will also serve as an information-gathering step to ensure that all interests and concerns regarding oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development resulting from the proposed sale are communicated to MMS.

The planning process will culminate in the preparation of a SEIS on oil and gas lease sales tentatively scheduled for 2009-2012 in the Western and Central Gulf of Mexico offshore the States of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Throughout the development process, comments from Federal, State, and local government agencies and other interested parties will be sought in order to aid MMS in determining the significant issues and alternatives for analysis. The focus will be on the potential

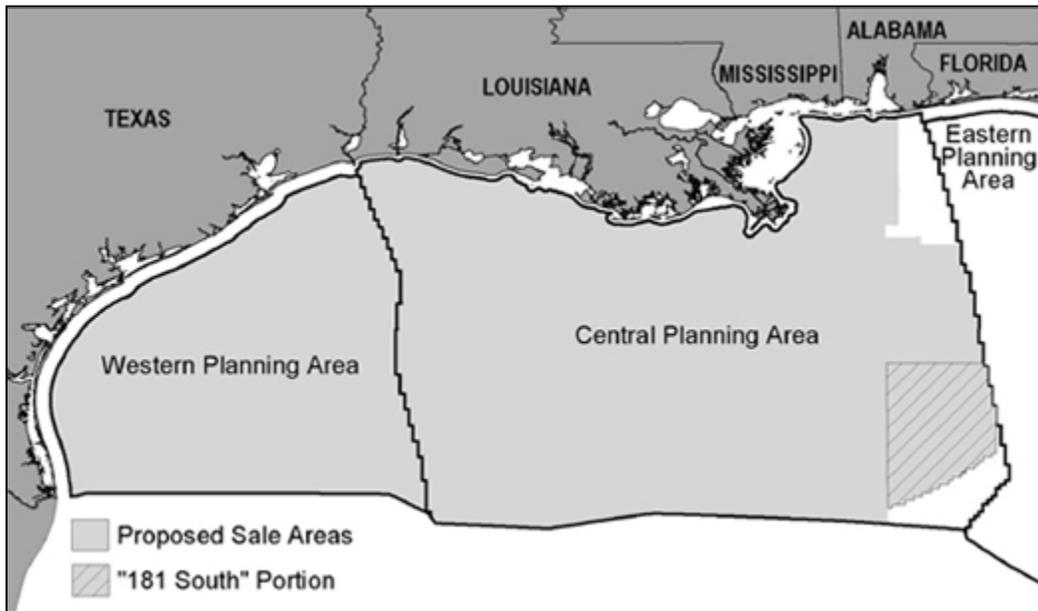
environmental effects of oil and natural gas leasing, exploration, and development, in this area.

As part of the preparation process for the environmental review, MMS will hold scoping meetings to solicit comments from the public for the tentatively scheduled 2009-2012 oil and gas leasing proposal in the Western and Central GOM. While the purpose of these meetings is to solicit comments on the scope of the SEIS, MMS will also solicit input on previous and current forecasting methods of exploration and development activity, pipeline landfalls, and onshore waste disposal sites associated with OCS lease sales.

Comments on the Call must be received no later than October 10, 2007. Comments on the NOI must be received no later than October 25, 2007. Details on submitting comments are published in the *Federal Register*.

Copies of the *Federal Register* notice are available at:

MMS Public Information Unit  
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard  
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394,  
or telephone 1-800-200-GULF, or via the MMS website at [www.boem.gov](http://www.boem.gov).



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