Proposed Forest Plan Amendment Number 4
Custer National Forest
Billings, Montana

Oil and Gas Leasing of Grizzly Bear Habitat, Management Situation I

On page 17 of the Forest Plan, Wildlife Management Standards item 4) states: "**Grizzly Bear Management Situation I areas will not be leased for oil and gas and will be considered for mineral withdrawal.**" The only area in Grizzly Bear Management Situation I outside of the Wilderness is in Management Area C. On page 50 of the Management Plan the direction under 2. Wildlife and Fish, item h. states: "All activities proposed within Management Situation I for grizzly bear (Slough Creek) will be consistent with direction presented in the publication (Guidelines for Management Involving Grizzly Bears in the Greater Yellowstone Area). Grizzly Bear Management Situation I areas are not to be leased for oil and gas." The Record of Decision (ROD) signed by the Regional Forester on June 10, 1987 did not make the decision to lease or not lease. The ROD identified areas that were considered available or not available for further leasing consideration but the decision to lease or not will be made after site-specific analysis is completed. The recently released Oil and Gas Regulations, 36 CFR 228, subpart E, March 21, 1990, Federal Register, discusses the requirements for determining lands administratively available for leasing (Section 228.102). The determination of administratively available land can be made in conjunction with the site-specific analysis necessary to support a decision to lease or not lease.

The direction on page 17 and 50 of the Management Plan is not correct as written because the site-specific analysis necessary to support a decision to lease, not lease, or withdrawal was not included in the Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement. Because of the recently released Oil and Gas Regulations, the above wording is hereby changed to the following:

Decisions related to requests for leasing in Management Situation I areas will be based on a site-specific analysis considering the "Guidelines for Management Involving Grizzly Bears in the Greater Yellowstone Area" and in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

This amendment does not change any decision made in the Forest Plan or Record of Decision. It is designed to clarify the intent and incorporate current direction. Adoption of this amendment will not significantly change the forest wide environmental impacts disclosed in the Custer National Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement. This amendment is categorically excluded from further documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment (FSM 1950 Interim Directive No. 16 and FSH 1909.15 Interim Directive No. 2).