

conservation agreements. The purpose of the agreements is to unify management regimes, regulate take, enhance conservation of polar bears and their habitat, and provide for non-consumptive uses such as eco-tourism, as well as consumptive uses.

The selected alternative (Alternative 3) of the Final EA describes a bilateral management scenario where a governmental-to-government agreement establishes the guiding framework and ultimate oversight role for an Alaska-Chukotka Native-to-Native agreement. A harvest system would be established by an international joint commission composed of one Federal and one Native representative from each country. Harvest levels would be binding. Joint research and management, population and harvest monitoring, enforcement, habitat conservation, and conservation education would be the primary elements of the agreement. Alternative 3 is the preferred alternative because it provides the basis for a comprehensive and coordinated conservation program. The agreement would provide guidance for Russian and American governments and Native entities to manage the shared population stock and it would support Russian efforts to curb threats to polar bears associated with illegal unquantified hunting and lack of enforcement. A government-to-government bilateral agreement would also ensure closer coordination and involvement in management decisions by the primary users, namely the Native people of Alaska and Chukotka.

In response to comments and testimony received from the public, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revised the draft EA, and now issues the Final EA for the proposed action. The comment period on the draft EA was open for 60 days from July 19, 1996, to September 17, 1996. During this period the Service received written comments from seven organizations, and one individual. In addition, public hearings were conducted in Anchorage, Alaska, on August 14, 1996, and in Washington, D.C., on August 21, 1996. Transcripts of the proceedings from the public hearings are on file at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Regional Office. The Service also conducted community meetings in Wales, Shishmaref, Gambell, Savoonga, Barrow, and Wainwright during the period of August 26 to September 6, 1996. Additionally, the Service received comments from three governmental organizations at the conclusion of the comment period. Copies of all written comments are on file at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office.

Overall many of the public comments endorsed the need for a bilateral treaty between the U.S. and Russia. There were no comments supporting Alternative 1, the status quo, and several which opposed its continuation. Generally public support for a coordinated U.S./Russia bilateral agreement was contingent upon the Service, and ultimately the agreement, addressing a number of issues. The Service has evaluated these issues and provides a description of them with a corresponding response in Section VI of the Final EA. Public comments that provided clarity have been incorporated into the text of the Final EA.

The Service requests interested persons to submit comments, information, and suggestions concerning these actions. The Final EA will be available during a 30-day comment period which ends on April 21, 1997. Copies of the Final EA have been sent to individuals or organizations which commented or attended meetings to entertain comment on the draft EA. Copies are available upon request at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management Office, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

DATES: Written comments on the Environmental Assessment should be received on or before April 21, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be submitted to: Supervisor, Marine Mammals Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. Comments may also be hand delivered to the same address or sent by FAX (907) 786-3816.

Comments and materials received in response to this action will be available for public inspection at this address during normal working hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Scott Schliebe at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, (800) 362-5148 or (907) 786-3812.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Discussions regarding development of a unified management approach between Russia and the United States were initiated in Sochi, Russia in October 1988, at the IUCN Polar Bear Specialists Group Meeting. Further talks occurred in May 1990, and correspondence supporting the development of a bilateral agreement followed. Between 1992 and 1995, protocols of agreement were developed between the natural resource agencies of

the respective countries and the Native users of Alaska and Chukotka. During this period numerous discussions between the Service and Native representatives occurred and general consensus was reached to develop a government-to-government conservation agreement and a companion Native-to-Native agreement. These agreements would be consistent with the terms of the 1973 Agreement and include the principles of population sustainability, support for research and the collection of biological information and local knowledge, habitat conservation, and conservation education. In April 1994, the "Protocol of Intentions between the Indigenous Peoples of Chukotka and Alaska on the Conservation, Protection, Management, and Study of the Bering and Chukchi Sea Shared Polar Bear Population" was signed. In the United States a working group consisting of representatives of the Service, Department of State, Department of the Interior, the Marine Mammal Commission, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, North Slope Borough, Alaska Nanuq Commission, and the Audubon Society has met several times to discuss the principles for a conservation agreement. The need for public input and review led to the development of the draft EA in June 1996. Responses to comments received during the 60 day comment period ending September 17, 1996 were either incorporated into the text or included in Section VI. The Service will consider submitting a request to the Department of State to enter into formal negotiations with Russia, following publication of the Notice of Availability of the Final EA.

Dated: March 12, 1997.

Robyn Thorson,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 97-7149 Filed 3-20-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

Bureau of Land Management

[NM-060-07-1310-00 (0004)]

Carlsbad Resource Area; New Mexico

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Change of mailing address.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the new mailing address of the Bureau of Land Management, Carlsbad Resource Area Office, Carlsbad, New Mexico.

DATE: April 24, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Howard Parman, Public Affairs Officer, Bureau of Land Management, 2909 West

2nd Street, Roswell, NM 88201, (505) 627-0212.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office, Roswell District Office, Carlsbad Resource Area Office is changing its mailing address effective April 24, 1997. The new mailing address will be: Bureau of Land Management, Carlsbad Resource Area, 620 E. Greene Street, P.O. Box 1778, Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221-1778.

Dated: March 12, 1997.

Edwin L. Roberson,
District Manager.

[FR Doc. 97-7153 Filed 3-20-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-YA-M

[CO-930-1430-01; COC-60316]

Proposed Withdrawal; Opportunity for Public Meeting; Colorado

March 12, 1997.

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management proposes to withdraw approximately 1,440 acres of public land to protect endangered species and riparian areas. This notice closes this land to operation of the public land laws including location and entry under the mining laws for up to two years. The land has been and remains open to mineral leasing.

DATES: Comments on this proposed withdrawal or requests for public meeting must be received on or before June 19, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments and requests for a meeting should be sent to the Colorado State Director, BLM, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7076.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Doris E. Chelius, 303-239-3706.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 4, 1997, a petition was approved allowing the Bureau of Land Management to file an application to withdraw the following described public land from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general land laws, including the mining laws, subject to valid existing rights:

Unaweep Seep/West Creek Area

T. 14 S., R. 103 W., 6th P.M.

Sec. 32, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 33, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ and
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

T. 15 S., R. 103 W., 6th P.M.

Sec. 2, Lot 5 and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 3, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$,
E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 5, Lot 1, E $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 2, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{2}$ SE,
E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and
SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 8, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 9, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$,
NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$,
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and
SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 10, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$,
N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 15, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 16, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and
E $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 21, E $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 1 (excepting therefrom that
portion within Mineral Survey (MS)
3257, Patent No. 14317), E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 22, W $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 1 (excepting therefrom
that portion within MS 3257, Patent No.
14317), and W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described contains
approximately 1,440 acres in Mesa County.

For a period of 90 days from the date of publication of this notice, all parties who wish to submit comments, suggestions, or objections in connection with this proposed action, or to request a public meeting, may present their views in writing to the Colorado State Director. If the authorized officer determines that a meeting should be held, the meeting will be scheduled and conducted in accordance with 43 CFR 2310.3-1(c)(2).

This application will be processed in accordance with the regulations set forth in 43 CFR Part 2310.

For a period of two years from the date of publication in the **Federal Register**, this land will be segregated from the mining laws as specified above unless the application is denied or cancelled or the withdrawal is approved prior to that date. During this period the Bureau of Land Management will continue to manage this land.

Jenny L. Saunders,

Realty Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-7151 Filed 3-20-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-JB-P

[CO-930-1430-01; COC-57598]

Amendment to Proposed Withdrawal; Opportunity for Public Meeting; Colorado

March 12, 1997.

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service has amended their withdrawal application for the Nederland Work Center to include an additional 12.32 acres. This amendment will segregate the land described below from location and entry under the mining laws for up to two years, it will not affect the segregation of the land in the original application.

DATES: Comments on this proposed withdrawal or requests for public meeting must be received on or before June 19, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments and requests for public meeting should be sent to the Colorado State Director, BLM, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7076.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Doris E. Chelius, 303-239-3706.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 4, 1997, the Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, filed an application to amend their original application (See 59 FR 55850) to include an additional 12.32 acres of National Forest System land. This amendment will close the following described land to location and entry under United States mining laws (30 U.S.C. Ch 2) for up to 2 years:

Roosevelt National Forest

T. 1 S, R. 72 W.,
Sec. 7, lot 33.

The area described contains approximately 12.32 acres of National Forest System land in Boulder County.

The purpose of this withdrawal is to provide protection for capitol investments at a proposed Forest Service Work Center.

For a period of 90 days from the date of publication of this notice, all parties who wish to submit comments, suggestions, or objections in connection with this proposed withdrawal, or to request a public meeting, may present their views in writing to the Colorado State Director. If the authorized officer determines that a meeting should be held, the meeting will be scheduled and conducted in accordance with 43 CFR 2310.3-1(c)(2).

This application will be processed in accordance with regulations set forth in 43 CFR Part 2310.