

multiple sexually reproducing populations of Raven's manzanita in association with its historically associated species of local serpentine outcrops.

The objectives of this recovery plan are to delist San Francisco lessingia and to downlist Raven's manzanita through implementation of a variety of recovery measures including: (1) Protection and restoration of a series of ecological reserves (often with mixed recreational and conservation park land uses); (2) promotion of population increases of San Francisco lessingia and Raven's manzanita within these sites, and reintroduction of them to restored sites; (3) management of protected sites, especially the extensive eradication or suppression of invasive dominant non-native vegetation; (4) research; and (5) public participation, outreach, and information.

Authority: The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: August 8, 2003.

Steve Thompson,

Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office, Region 1, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 03-25238 Filed 10-3-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians

Working Group on Land Consolidation Program

AGENCIES: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior; Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: On April 22, 2003, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) in the Department of the Interior filed a **Federal Register** notice (68 FR 19845) calling for nominations of Tribal officials to participate in a working group to address the rapidly increasing fractionation of ownership of Indian land. This fractionation is due to the system of allotments established by the General Allotment Act of 1887. The President's fiscal year (FY) 2004 Budget incorporates a request for a significant increase for the Indian Land Consolidation program aimed at reducing the number of individual owners in parcels of Indian lands allotted to individuals. The Department has been actively working with tribal

groups on the issue and will therefore not be convening a new working group.

DATES: Effective on the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

ATTN: Terry Virden, Deputy Commissioner for Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Room 4160, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240, or ATTN: Donna Erwin, Acting Special Trustee, Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Room 5140, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The allotment of Indian lands—dividing tribal lands into small parcels and allocating those parcels to individual Indians—became federal policy in 1887 with the enactment of the General Allotment Act. By the 1930s, however, it was widely accepted that the policy was a failure and, in 1934 it was ended with passage of the first Indian Reorganization Act. Interests in these allotted lands started to “fractionate” as interests divided among the heirs of the original allottees, expanding rapidly with every generation.

Today, there are approximately four million owner interests in the 10 million acres of individually-owned trust lands, and these four million interests could expand to 11 million interests by 2030. Moreover, there are an estimated 1.4 million fractional interests of 2 percent or less involving 58,000 tracks of individually-owned trust and restricted lands. There are not single pieces of property with ownership interests that are less than 0.000002 percent of the whole interest.

Addressing this issue is critical to improving the management of trust assets. The Department of the Interior, the Department in which the BIA and OST are located, is bound by its trust obligations to maintain ownership records, and in some cases to collect and distribute income for each Indian owner's interest, regardless of size. Reduction of fractional interests will increase the likelihood of more productive economic use of the land, reduce record keeping and large numbers of small dollar financial transactions, and decrease the number of interests subject to probate.

Starting in 2004, the BIA will oversee the National Indian Land Consolidation Program. The Department has established an internal working group that has actively met with tribal organizations, such as the Indian Land Working Group and the National Congress of American Indians, to discuss fractionation, the problems associated with fractionation, and

possible solutions to problems. Since the Department is actively working with tribal organizations, the Department will not be convening another fractionation working group.

Dated: September 10, 2003.

Aurene M. Martin,

Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

[FR Doc. 03-25232 Filed 10-03-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-02-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians

Working Group on the “As-Is” “To-Be” Process and Trust Improvement Efforts

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs and Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: On April 22, 2003, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) in the Department of the Interior filed a **Federal Register** notice (68 FR 19846) calling for nominations of Tribal officials to participate in a working group to discuss the “As-Is” “To-Be” processes and provide input and comments on potential alternatives on how the trust process should be improved and administered. Because mechanisms are now in place for soliciting input from Tribes on the “To-Be” processes, the Department will not be convening a new working group.

DATES: Effective on the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

ATTN: Terry Virden, Deputy Commissioner for Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Room 4160, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240; or ATTN: Donna Erwin, Acting Special Trustee, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, Room 5140, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Electronic Data Systems Corporation, in its January 2002 Trust Reform Report, recommended that the Department develop an accurate, current state model to include business processes, internal controls, and associated information technology. The Department worked extensively on documenting the “As-Is” business processes currently employed in managing Indian trust assets. Through this “As-Is” business process,

the Department established a comprehensive understanding of current trust business operations, identified needs and opportunities for improvement, and was able to understand the variances among geographic regions, and their causes.

The development of the initial "To-Be" model takes into consideration those recommendations and lessons learned from the "As-Is" process. The Department is in the process of comparing these processes to the initial "To Be" model processes to determine how existing processes can be improved. Finally, the Department will integrate the final "To-Be" model processes with universal support and operational functions, and these reengineered business processes will be documented with appropriate policies, procedures, guidelines and handbooks.

The Department has identified a reengineering core team for the purpose of engaging appropriate Interior bureaus, agencies and offices, and Tribes in the reengineering effort at different levels. The Department recognizes that Tribal assistance is critical to the identification of trust business process alternatives and opportunities for improvement. The core team is divided into a technical group (Tier 1) and a review and validation group (Tier 2). Because the activities of these core teams will involve consultations with tribes and tribal organizations, the Department will not be convening a new working group.

Dated: September 10, 2003.

Aurene M. Martin,
*Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary—
Indian Affairs.*

Ross O. Swimmer,
Special Trustee.

[FR Doc. 03-25231 Filed 10-3-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-3-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Mohawk Mountain Resort and Casino, Sullivan County, NY

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs,
Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, with the cooperation of the St. Regis Band of Mohawk Indians, intends to gather the information necessary for preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

for the proposed Mohawk Mountain Resort and Casino, Town of Thompson, Sullivan County, New York. The purpose of the proposed action is to help meet the economic development needs of the tribe. This notice also announces a public scoping meeting to identify potential issues and content for inclusion in the EIS.

DATES: Written comments on the scope and implementation of this proposal must arrive by October 15, 2003. The public scoping meeting will be held on October 8, 2003, at 7 p.m.

The draft EIS is expected to be completed by November 1, 2003, and to be available for public review and comment for a period of 45 days from the date the Notice of Availability of the draft EIS is published in the **Federal Register**. The final EIS is expected to be completed by January 15, 2004, and to be available to the public for a period of 30 days from the date the Notice of Availability of the final EIS is published in the **Federal Register**. The Record of Decision on the proposed action will be issued on or about March 1, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may mail, hand carry or telefax written comments to Mr. Franklin Keel, Regional Director, Eastern Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214, Telefax (615) 467-1701.

The public scoping meeting will be held at the Sullivan County Government Center, Legislative Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, 100 North Street, Monticello, New York 12701.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Kardatzke, (615) 467-1675.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) proposes to take 66 acres of land into trust on behalf of the St. Regis Band of Mohawk Indians (Tribe), on which the Tribe, through a development agreement with Park Place Entertainment Corporation, proposes to build a resort and casino complex to be called the Mohawk Mountain Resort and Casino. The property is located along the east side of Anawana Lake Road (C.R. 103) in the Town of Thompson, Sullivan County, New York, approximately 3 miles north of the Village of Monticello. The project design contemplates a 750 room hotel and 450,000 square foot casino and support area, a 2,000 seat theater and several restaurants spread across the 66 acres to be taken into trust, with a 5,040 stall parking garage on an adjacent 141 acre parcel.

The Tribe prepared and submitted to the BIA an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the proposed action in December 2002. Upon consideration of

the EA, and of project changes made after the EA was prepared, the BIA found that an EIS would be required for the proposed action. The EA will, however, serve as a part of the scoping process for the EIS. In addition, the project is undergoing review pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, which has included public hearings held by the Town of Thompson to receive public comments on the EA. The comments from these hearings will also serve as a part of the scoping process for the EIS.

Issues identified to date to be addressed in the EIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Traffic**—concerns that traffic jams may result from the project and that emergency services may be compromised.
- **Noise**—concerns that sounds from the resort and casino will travel offsite and adversely affect nearby residences, wildlife and/or livestock.
- **Water Supply/Water Quality**—concerns that the project will have an adequate water supply and will not adversely affect water quality in Anawana Lake or its tributaries.
- **Wetlands**—the minimization and/or avoidance of wetland impacts.
- **Wildlife**—concerns regarding the project's impact on fish and wildlife and their habitats, including threatened and endangered species.
- **Sewage Disposal**—concerns regarding the handling of sewage effluent.
- **Land Use/Community Character**—concerns regarding how the project might affect the character of surrounding lands and communities.
- **Socio-economics**—concerns regarding how the project might affect local business and property values.
- **Air Quality**—concerns regarding the additive air impacts of project-induced traffic.
- **Cumulative Effects**—concerns regarding the cumulative environmental impacts of the project when considered together with other reasonably foreseeable development projects in the region.
- **Alternatives to the preferred alternative.**

The range of issues and alternatives addressed in the EIS may be further expanded based on comments received in response to this notice, or to the scoping meeting announced in this notice.

Public Comment Availability

Comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the mailing address shown in the