

Dated: May 4, 2004.

Bernard C. Fagan,

Deputy Chief, Office of Policy, National Park Service.

[FR Doc. 04-11169 Filed 5-17-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4312-52-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

AGENCY: National Park Service, DOI.

ACTION: Notice of availability, and request for comments.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to § 9.52(b) of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the National Park Service (NPS) announces the availability of a Plan of Operations to continue operating two natural gas wells by SNW Operating Company within Lake Meredith National Recreation Area. An Environmental Assessment is also available.

DATES: The NPS will accept comments from the public on the documents for 30 days after publication of this notice.

ADDRESSES: The documents are available for review in the Office of the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, 419 E. Broadway, Fritch, Texas. Copies are available, for a duplication fee, from the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, P.O. Box 1460, Fritch, Texas 79306-1460.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Eubank, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, telephone: 806-865-3874, extension 35.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: If you wish to comment, you may submit comments by mailing them to the post office address provided above, or you may hand-deliver comments to the park at the street address provided above. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of responders, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the decision-making record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the decision-making record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves

as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

Dated: April 21, 2004.

Karren C. Brown,
Superintendent.

[FR Doc. 04-11164 Filed 5-17-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4312-KE-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

General Management Plan, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Navajo National Monument, AZ

AGENCY: National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a Record of Decision on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plan, Navajo National Monument.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to § 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Pub. L. 91-190, 83 Stat. 852, 853, codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C), the National Park Service announces the availability of the Record of Decision for the General Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement for Navajo National Monument, Arizona. On March 11, 2004, the Director, Intermountain Region approved the Record of Decision for the project. As soon as practicable, the National Park Service will begin to implement the Preferred Alternative contained in the FEIS issued on October 22, 2003. The following course of action will occur under the preferred alternative:

The National Park Service would continue to manage the existing land base and in addition would share common goals with American Indian tribes and others to protect resources and promote visitor understanding of the entire region. The NPS would look beyond the boundary for accomplishing joint purposes through cooperation and partnerships. Opportunities for more innovative and diverse programs, education and outreach, science and research, cross training, and broader resource management would be greatly enhanced by a collaborative regional effort. This course of action and two alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements. The full range of foreseeable environmental consequences was addressed, and appropriate mitigating measures were identified.

The Record of Decision includes a statement of the decisions made,

synopses of other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, a description of the environmentally preferred alternative, a finding on impairment of park resources and values, a listing of measures to minimize environmental harm, and an overview of public involvement in the decision-making process.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The office of the Superintendent, Roger Moder, Navajo National Monument, HC 71, Box 3, Tonalea, Arizona 86044-9704. Phone: (928) 672-2700 or e-mail the park at the park Web site "contact us" section at: <http://www.nps.gov/nava/pphtml/contact.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Copies of the Record of Decision may be obtained from the contacts above or online at: <http://www.nps.gov/planning/nava>.

Dated: March 11, 2004.

Stephen P. Martin,

Director, Intermountain Region, National Park Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Draft General Management Plan; Middle and South Forks Kings River Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan; North Fork Kern River Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan; Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks; Tulare and Fresno Counties, CA; Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: Pursuant to § 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Pub. L. 91-190, as amended), and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR part 1500-1508), the National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior, has prepared a Draft General Management Plan (GMP) and Comprehensive River Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Middle and South Forks Kings River and the North Fork Kern River and for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks located in California. The purpose and need for the plan is to establish a park vision for the next 15-20 years, provide direction for the management of wild and scenic rivers, replace an outdated master plan, guide management of cultural resources, address unresolved issues in specific areas, resolve special use permit cabin issues for the Mineral King area; and address the changing context of the parks within the regional ecosystem.

This document describes and analyzes five alternatives which respond to both NPS planning requirements and to the issues identified during the public scoping process.

The No-Action alternative would continue current management direction, and it is the baseline for comparing the other alternatives (it was originally Alternative B when the alternatives were first presented to the public in the winter of 2000). The Preferred Alternative would accommodate sustainable growth and visitor enjoyment, protect ecosystem diversity, and preserve basic character while adapting to changing user groups (this is also identified in the EIS as "environmentally preferred"). Alternative A would emphasize natural ecosystems and biodiversity, with reduced use and development; Alternative C would preserve the parks' traditional character and retain the feel of yesteryear, with guided growth; and Alternative D would preserve the basic character and adapt to changing user groups. This document also includes a comprehensive river management plan for the portions of the Middle and South Forks of the Kings River and the North Fork of the Kern River, which have been designated by Congress as components of the national wild and scenic rivers system. The purpose of the river management plan is to provide direction and overall guidance on the management of lands and uses within the river corridors. The environmental consequences of all the alternatives, and mitigation strategies, are identified and analyzed in the EIS.

Scoping: Nine scoping meetings were held, seven planning newsletters issued; alternatives planning workshops were held in seven cities; and the resulting mailing list consists of over 3700 entries. The park has held regular communication with the cooperating association and concessioners authorized to operate in the parks. Meetings and contacts have occurred with special use permittees (Southern California Edison, Mineral King District Association, and the Boy Scouts of America); private landowners (Wilsonia District Association, Silver City, Oriole Lake); and other stakeholders (Backcountry Horsemen, High Sierra Hikers, Friends of the River, National Parks Conservation Association, Sierra Club, The National Park Foundation, Three Rivers community, Clean Air groups, Mineral King Advocates, Mineral King Preservation Society, Tulare Country Historical Society, California Department of Transportation, Tulare County, Fresno County, Save-the-Redwoods League,

local and regional business groups, educational institutions and the Sequoia Federal managers group).

Accompanying the project introduction in Newsletter 1—summer 1997/reprinted winter 1998, public meetings were held in six locations in the parks during the summer of 1997; and in Three Rivers, Visalia and Fresno/Clovis in the winter of 1998. Comments and ideas were recorded from all meetings. Newsletter 2—June 1998 summarized public scoping, desired visions for the park, issues, type of decisions to be made, and provided background information about the Mineral King area. Newsletter 3—March 1999, described a transportation study conducted in 1997–98 and a 1998 visitor satisfaction survey. It also summarized the finding of a 1998 study to determine the eligibility of Mineral King Road corridor for the National Register of Historic Places as a cultural landscape. Newsletter 4—spring 1999, a 24-page workbook with maps to prepare for alternatives workshops, consisted of issue discussion and asked tradeoff questions; a total of 745 responses were received. Alternatives workshops to ensure that public ideas were incorporated into the range of alternatives to be assessed were attended by about five hundred people. These April 1999 workshops were held in San Francisco, Sacramento, Bishop, Los Angeles, Three Rivers, Visalia and Fresno/Clovis. In the summer of 1999 fourteen Native American tribal governments or entities were consulted. Ideas from scoping, public workshops and consultations guided the development of the range of alternatives, and suggested wording was used for alternative titles and descriptions. Newsletter 5—winter 2000, described a range of four alternatives that would be assessed in the draft environmental impact statement; included a pullout of alternatives maps; and presented draft parkwide zoning prescriptions. Newsletter 6—December 2000, an update, described establishment of Giant Sequoia National Monument; announced the eligibility of the Mineral King Road Cultural Landscape District; announced inclusion of the Wild and Scenic River Plan into the GMP process; announced that the plan would be delayed until a new superintendent was in place; and answered public questions about wilderness designation, and stated that a summary would be sent to people on the mailing list. Newsletter 7—spring 2002 was a brief update announcing the new Superintendent and the addition of the 1540-acre

Dillonwood Grove of giant sequoias to the park; asked about document format; and described the process known as "choosing by advantages" that was used to develop a preferred alternative. The process combined elements of all the alternatives to maximize benefits to the parks and cost-effectiveness. Newsletter 7, by asking what document format (CDs or printed copy) was desired, revised the Newsletter 6 approach that would send a printed summary to everyone. The newsletter stated if NPS was not notified a CD would be sent; approximately one hundred people specifically requested CDs and less than fifty requested printed copies.

Proposed Plan and Alternatives: The draft EIS/GMP/Comprehensive River Management Plan includes four action alternatives and a no-action alternative which continues current management. The Comprehensive River Management Plan and approved plans would be common to every alternative.

The No-Action Alternative (Continue Current Management): The parks are managed as they are now in accordance with approved plans (such as development concept plans, and the 1996 Giant Forest Interim Management Plan); negative resource impacts and visitor demands are responded to by relocating development, reducing some uses, or confining new developed areas. Visitor uses are reassessed and revised as new information about natural and cultural resource impacts and visitor needs emerges. Current facilities are inadequate for park needs and visitor use levels, and crowding is common in some areas.

The Preferred Alternative: The parks' appeal is broadened to be more relevant to diverse user groups. Increased day use is accommodated, and overnight visitation is retained. The integrity of park resources is paramount. Stronger educational and outreach programs provide enjoyment and instill park conservation values. The basic character of park activities and the rustic architecture of facilities are retained so that the parks remain strikingly different from surrounding areas. Park administrative facilities are redesigned and may be relocated outside the parks. Park facilities accommodate sustainable growth. Stock use continues with appropriate management and monitoring.

Alternative A: Emphasize Natural Ecosystems and Biodiversity; Reduce Use and Development: The parks are natural resource preserves; they are primarily valued because they contain publicly owned resources that will be conserved for the future. Levels of use are lower than at present, and visitor

experiences are more directly connected to natural resources and provide more solitude. The parks strongly contrast with surrounding lands that are under increasing pressure for use and development. Park managers aggressively cooperate with the managers of surrounding lands to enhance range-wide biodiversity.

Alternative B: Preserve Traditional Character and Retain the Feel of Yesteryear; Guide Growth: The parks present a traditional park character and a feeling of yesteryear, where experiences are more reminiscent of how visitors used the parks in the past. This is conveyed through rustic architecture and lower impact recreational activities (such as sightseeing and hiking) that were popular from the 1920s to the 1960s, and providing an experience that is strikingly different from that in an urban setting. Redesigned developed areas accommodate limited growth; overnight stays are encouraged. Negative impacts on natural resources are controlled, so as to maintain or improve resource conditions.

Alternative C: Preserve Basic Character and Adapt to Changing User Groups; Guide Growth: The parks preserve some of their traditional character and rustic architecture, but diverse new user groups and uses are encouraged. Day use is more common. Facilities are expanded to meet users' needs, while frequent interpretive programs are offered to educate, entertain, and instill a sense of park conservation values. Negative impacts on natural resources are controlled or mitigated, so as to maintain or improve resource conditions.

Public Review and Comment: The draft EIS/GMP is now available for public review. Requests for the document (by those not presently on the mailing list) should be addressed to: GMP, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, 47050 Generals Hwy., Three Rivers, CA 93271-9651, by telephone at (559) 565-3101, or by e-mail at seki_superintendent@nps.gov. The document may also be reviewed at park area libraries, or obtained electronically via the "Management Docs" link from the parks' Web site <http://www.nps.gov/seki> or at the NPS planning Web site <http://planning.den.nps.gov/>, selecting plans, and choosing "What's New" under the listing for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Printed copies and CDs will be sent to agencies and organizations listed as recipients in the Consultation and Coordination section of the document.

Persons and organizations wishing to comment on the proposed General Management Plan must do so by writing to: GMP team leader Susan Spain, NPS Denver Service Center, 12795 W Alameda Parkway, Denver, CO 80225-0287 (or via e-mail to susan_spain@nps.gov); or GMP Coordinator David Graber, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, 47050 Generals Highway, Three Rivers, CA 93271-9651 (or via e-mail to david_graber@nps.gov). In addition, the parks will conduct public meetings to facilitate review and comment on the draft EIS/GMP; these will be held during the comment period both in the parks, as well as in the following locations: Three Rivers, Visalia, Fresno/Clovis, Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Bishop. Confirmed details on meeting locations, dates and times will be posted on the parks' Web site; updates can also be obtained by telephone at (559) 565-3101.

All comments must be postmarked or transmitted not later than 90 days following the date EPA's notice of filing is published in the **Federal Register**—immediately upon determination of the actual date it will be announced via local and regional news media and posted on the parks' Web site. All comments will become part of the public record. If individuals submitting comments request that their name or address be withheld from public disclosure, the request will be honored to the extent permitted by law. Such requests must be stated prominently at the beginning of the comments. There also may be circumstances wherein the NPS will elect to withhold a respondent's identity as permitted by law. As always, the NPS will make available for public inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations; anonymous comments will not be considered.

Decision: Following the review period for the draft EIS/GMP, all signed comments received will be considered in preparing the final EIS/GMP/Comprehensive River Management Plan. The final document is anticipated to be completed by mid-2005. Its availability will be similarly announced in the **Federal Register**. As this is a delegated EIS, the official responsible for the final decision is the Regional Director of the NPS Pacific West Region; subsequently the official responsible for implementation will be the Superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

Dated: April 26, 2004.

Jonathan B. Jarvis,

Regional Director, Pacific West Region.

[FR Doc. 04-11166 Filed 5-17-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

General Management Plan, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki National Monuments, AZ

AGENCY: National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a Record of Decision on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plans for Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki National Monuments.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Pub. L. 91-190, 83 Stat. 852, 853, codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C), the National Park Service announces the availability of the Record of Decision for the General Management Plan, Sunset Crater Volcano and Wupatki National Monuments, Arizona. On March 3, 2004, the Director, Intermountain Region approved the Record of Decision for the project. As soon as practicable, the National Park Service will begin to implement the Preferred Alternative contained in the FEIS issued on February 16, 2003. The preferred alternative and other alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements. The full range of foreseeable environmental consequences was assessed, and appropriate mitigating measures were identified.

The Record of Decision includes a statement of the decision made, synopses of other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, a description of the environmentally preferable alternative, a finding on impairment of park resources and values, a listing of measures to minimize environmental harm, and an overview of public involvement in the decision-making process.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Todd Metzger, Acting Superintendent, Flagstaff Area Monuments, 6400 N. Highway 89, Flagstaff, Arizona, 86004 (928) 526-1157.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Copies of the Record of Decision may be obtained from the contact listed above.