

interim management guidelines until the RMPA is completed and a Record of Decision is signed.

Preparation of a RMPA for the Carlsbad and Roswell Field Offices is necessary to respond to changing resource conditions and respond to new issues in the context of habitat management for special status species on public lands in the planning area administered by the Field Offices. The RMPA will establish new land-use planning decisions to address issues identified through public scoping and, where appropriate, will incorporate decisions from the existing RMPs.

The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and National interests. The public scoping process will help identify planning issues and provide for public comment on the proposed planning criteria. BLM has identified the following preliminary issues:

- Integrating wildlife habitat management with livestock grazing management.
- Minimizing surface disturbance associated with energy development.
- Utilizing existing rights-of-way corridors for energy distribution;
- Developing route designations to manage access, travel, and off-highway vehicles to protect wildlife habitat.
- Proposing land tenure and ownership adjustments for greater management efficiency;
- Regional coordination with state and local agencies for more effective management in the planning area.
- These preliminary issues are not final and may be refined or additional issues may be added through public participation.

BLM has also identified some preliminary planning criteria to guide development of the plan, to avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis, and to ensure the plan is tailored to the issues. These criteria may be modified or other criteria identified during the public-scoping process. The public is invited to comment on the following preliminary planning criteria:

- Actions must comply with laws, regulations, executive orders, and BLM Manuals (*i.e.*, supplemental program guidance).
- Actions must be reasonable and achievable and allow for flexibility where appropriate (*i.e.*, adaptive management will be incorporated into the RMPA).
- The Economic Profile System (EPS) developed by the Sonoran Institute will be used as a community involvement strategy and a source of demographic

and economic data for the planning process. EPS will provide a foundation of current social and economic conditions in the Planning Area. Following this, as planning alternatives are developed, a social and economic analysis and environmental justice assessment will be conducted to determine the effect that each alternative will have on users and the diverse population in the Planning Area. The analysis will consider the short- and long-term social and economic benefits associated with possible alternatives. The lifestyles, issues, and needs of area residents will be taken into consideration. Other important factors to be considered will be the needs and long-term plans of local city, county, and Tribal governments. Short-term consequences will be weighed against long-term benefits as necessary. The impacts on both the general population and affected subgroups within the planning area will be determined.

- Actions will be considered using an interdisciplinary approach.
- The Roswell/Carlsbad RMPA planning team will work cooperatively with county and municipal governments, other Federal, State and local agencies, and interested groups and individuals. A process of collaborative public involvement and participation will be carried out throughout this process.
- The RMPA will change or modify the guidance upon which the Field Offices will manage public lands within the planning area.
- The planning process will include an EIS that complies with National Environmental Policy Act standards.
- The RMPA will protect and enhance the biodiversity of the planning area, while allowing the public the opportunity for access to public lands in a productive and meaningful way.
- The RMPA will recognize valid existing rights related to the use of public lands. The RMPA will define the process that BLM will use to address applications or notices filed after the completion of the RMPA on existing land-use authorizations.
- The RMPA process will involve Native American Tribal governments and will provide strategies for protection of cultural resources and traditional cultural properties on public lands.
- Decisions in the RMPA will strive to be compatible with existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, and Federal Governments and agencies, as long as the decisions are in conformance with BLM-management policies.

- The RMPA will comply with all legal mandates of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Administrative Procedures Act, and the BLM planning regulations in 43 CFR part 1600.

The collaborative process will allow the public, Tribes, State and Federal agencies, local elected officials, and BLM specialists to participate in identifying issues and developing and analyzing alternatives. BLM has asked the New Mexico State Land Office; the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish; and Chaves, Eddy, Lea, and Roosevelt Counties to serve as cooperating agencies during the planning process.

Dated: September 28, 2004.

Jesse J. Juen,

Acting New Mexico State Director.

[FR Doc. 04-25617 Filed 11-17-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-GG-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-100-1610-DO]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Little Snake Field Office

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management; Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: This document provides notice that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to prepare an Resource Management Plan (RMP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Little Snake Field Office. The planning area is located in Northwest Colorado in Moffat, Routt, and Rio Blanco Counties. The plan will provide a framework to guide subsequent management decisions on approximately 1.3 million acres of BLM-administered public lands and 1.1 million acres of subsurface mineral estate administered by the BLM. Preparation of this RMP and EIS will conform with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal Regulations, and BLM management policies. The BLM will work collaboratively with a broad range of interested parties to identify management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process. Comments on the scope of the plan, including issues or concerns that should be considered, should be submitted in writing to the address listed below and will be accepted throughout the creation of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. All public meetings will be announced through the local news media, newsletters, and the BLM Web site at <http://www.co.blm.gov/lspa/rmp>.

ADDRESSES: Please mail written comments to the BLM, Little Snake Field Office, 455 Emerson St., Craig, Colorado, 81625 or fax to (970) 826-5002. Comments should be sent to the above address or may be sent by electronic mail (e-mail) to colsrmp@blm.gov. Comments submitted during this planning process, including names and street addresses of respondents will be available for public review at the Little Snake Field Office during regular business hours 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and address from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information or to have your name added to the Little Snake RMP Mailing List, contact Jeremy Casterson at the Little Snake Field Office (see address above), telephone (970) 826-5071.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document provides notice that the Little Snake Field Office will revise its current RMP. The RMP to be prepared for the public lands administered by the Little Snake Field Office will identify goals, objectives, standards and guidelines for management of a variety of resources and values. The RMP will demonstrate active engagement of the community in a collaborative planning effort. The plan will specify actions, constraints, and general management practices necessary to achieve desired conditions. The scope of the RMP will be comprehensive. Certain existing standards and guidelines and other BLM plans will be incorporated into the RMP, such as the Colorado Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines, and

the Uniform Format for Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations. This notice provides the public an opportunity to suggest issues, concerns, needs, and resource use, development and protection opportunities for consideration in preparation of the plan. A number of decisions related to various resource values and programs will be made as a result of this planning effort. The major issues identified to date include (1) Management of upland vegetation; (2) management of riparian areas and water quality concerns; (3) energy and mineral development; (4) special management areas; (5) recreation management; (6) travel management; (7) cultural resources and paleontology and Native American concerns; (8) management of wildlife, including conservation and recovery of special status species; (9) socio-economic values; and (10) land and realty issues.

In addition to the major issues, a number of management questions and concerns will be addressed in the plan. Issues and management concerns may be identified by interested parties during the scoping phase. After gathering public comments on what issues the plan should address, the suggested issues will be placed in one of three categories:

- (1) Issues to be resolved in the plan;
- (2) Issues resolved through policy or administrative action; or
- (3) Issues beyond the scope of the plan.

BLM will provide feedback to the public on the final issues to be addressed in the plan. An interdisciplinary approach will be used to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. Disciplines involved in the planning process will include specialists with expertise in rangeland management, minerals and geology, outdoor recreation, archaeology, wildlife, lands and realty, hydrology, soils, sociology and economics.

The following planning criteria have been proposed to guide the development of the plan, to avoid unnecessary data collection and analyses, and to ensure the plan is tailored to the issues. Other criteria may be identified during the public scoping process. After gathering comments on planning criteria, BLM will finalize the criteria and provide feedback to the public on the criteria to be used throughout the planning process.

- The plans will be completed in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State and Federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with Federal laws and regulations. The plan will recognize valid existing rights.

- Complete the planning work on time and on budget. Focus the collaborative effort so that the collaborators can see that they make a difference, within a timeframe that is reasonable and achievable.
- Recognize the specific niche that federal lands provide both to the nation and to the surrounding community. A successful plan will be one that is responsive to both national needs and community needs.
- Public participation will be encouraged throughout the process as per the attached Public Participation Plan. Collaborate and build relationships with tribes, state and local governments, federal agencies, local stakeholders and others in the community of interest of the plan as normal business. Collaborators are regularly informed and offered timely and meaningful opportunities to participate in the planning process.
- Road and trail access (and OHV management) guidance will be incorporated into the plan to ensure public and resource needs are met.
- The Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) inventory results will be integrated into land use planning and energy use authorizations. Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management practices and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities;
- For all stipulations developed in new land use plans and to further improve consistency and understanding of lease stipulations, State and Field offices will use the Uniform Format for Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations prepared by the Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinating Committee in March 1989. Lease stipulations will be reviewed for consistency with neighboring field offices and States, and where there are discrepancies, efforts will be undertaken to try and get consistency.
- The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan. A socio-economic assessment of the planning area will be prepared to identify, analyze and review the social and economic considerations of the plans.
- The plan will incorporate the Colorado Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines. It will lay out a strategy for ensuring that proper grazing

practices are followed. Grazing will be managed to maintain or improve the health of the public lands by incorporating conditions to enhance resource conditions into permitted operations.

- Contain an adaptive framework that incorporates regular monitoring and evaluation to adjust management within the direction of the existing plan. Included in the range of potential actions for each adaptive management decision, a "fallback" decision will be prepared, which would be expected to achieve the outcome. The plan will have realistic desired conditions and achievable objectives consistent with likely budgets and the design criteria.

- Lands with wilderness characteristics may be managed to protect and/or preserve some or all of those characteristics. This may include protecting certain lands in their natural condition and/or providing opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

- Identify existing and potential corridors (potential corridors include existing ROW routes that can be considered for additional facilities and thus be considered a corridor if not already so designated); Identify existing and potential ROW development sites such as energy development areas (e.g., wind energy sites) and communication sites; Describe likely development of potential corridors and other ROW sites as a basis for impact assessment.

- The BLM will work cooperatively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national interests. A local citizen-based stewardship group, the Northwest Colorado Stewardship (NWCOS), will engage with the BLM in the RMP revision. NWCOS is an independent community-centered stewardship group that will focus its efforts on a community assessment, developing a community vision for the landscape, and a community alternative.

Dated: September 24, 2004.

John E. Husband,

Field Manager.

[FR Doc. 04-25618 Filed 11-17-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Reclamation

California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee Public Meeting

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee will meet jointly with the California Bay-Delta Authority on December 8 and 9, 2004. The agenda for the joint meeting will include reports from the Lead Scientist and the Independent Science Board; a presentation on climate change by Dr. Dettinger and Francis Chung; an update on the California Water Plan, the Delta Improvements Package, and the Operations Criteria and Plan for the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project; and discussion and a possible recommendation on the 10-Year Finance Plan and the Annual Statement of Progress and Future Priorities for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program with State and Federal agency representatives.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 8, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Thursday, December 9, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. If reasonable accommodation is needed due to a disability, please contact Pauline Nevins at (916) 455-5511 or TDD (800) 735-2929 at least 1 week prior to the meeting.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in the Grand Ballroom, 1230 J Street, Sacramento, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Heidi Rooks, California Bay-Delta Authority, at (916) 445-5511, or Diane Buzzard, Bureau of Reclamation, at (916) 798-5022.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee was established to provide recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, other participating Federal agencies, the Governor of the State of California, and the California Bay-Delta Authority on implementation of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The Committee makes recommendations on annual priorities, integration of the eleven Program elements, and overall balancing of the four Program objectives of ecosystem restoration, water quality, levee system integrity, and water supply reliability. The Program is a consortium of State and Federal agencies with the mission to develop and implement a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the San Francisco/Sacramento and San Joaquin Bay Delta.

Committee and meeting materials will be available on the California Bay-Delta Authority Web site at <http://calwater.ca.gov> and at the meeting. This

meeting is open to the public. Oral comments will be accepted from members of the public at the meeting and will be limited to 3-5 minutes.

(Authority: The Committee was established pursuant to the Department of the Interior's authority to implement the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*, the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, and the Reclamation Act of 1902, 43 U.S.C. 371 *et seq.*, and the acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto, all collectively referred to as the Federal Reclamation laws, and in particular, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, Pub. L. 102-575.)

Dated: November 3, 2004.

Allan Oto,

Special Projects Officer, Mid-Pacific Region.

[FR Doc. 04-25666 Filed 11-17-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Notice of Lodging of Consent Decree Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980

Notice is hereby given that on November 5, 2004 a proposed Consent Decree in *United States v. the Atlantic Richfield Company*, an action under Sections 107 and 113 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 ("CERCLA") as amended, 42 U.S.C. 9607 and 9613, was lodged with the United States District Court for the District of Utah, Case No. 2:04CV01028 BSJ.

In this action, the United States sought the recovery of costs incurred and to be incurred by the United States in response to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances at and from the Eureka Mills NPL Site located in Eureka, Utah (the "Site"). The United States alleged that the Atlantic Richfield Company was liable under CERCLA Section 107(a)(1) and (2), 42 U.S.C. 9607(a)(1) and (2), as a past owner and operator of a portion of the Site at the time of disposal and as a present owner of a portion of the Site upon which hazardous substances have been released, for those response costs set forth in CERCLA Section 107(a)(4)(A)-(D), 42 U.S.C. 9607(a)(4)(A)-(D).

The settlement between the United States and the Atlantic Richfield Company provides that the Atlantic Richfield Company will implement the remedy for the Site selected by the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") on those portions of the Site on which the United States has alleged that