

from the Thaw Charitable Trust, the 4,224-acre Wind River Ranch in Mora County, New Mexico.

**ADDRESSES:** A map depicting the approved boundary and other information regarding the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area are available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/Plan/planindex.html>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Steve Kettler, Land Protection Planner, by U.S. mail at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Planning, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103–1306, or by email at [steve\\_kettler@fws.gov](mailto:steve_kettler@fws.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Service has established the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge in Mora County, New Mexico, and the Rio Mora Conservation Area, including portions of Colfax, Mora, and San Miguel Counties, New Mexico. The Service may pursue protection and management of wildlife resources in the conservation area through purchase of perpetual conservation easements or fee title purchase from willing sellers, or through cooperative management agreements and partnerships. These actions will contribute to maintaining the biological integrity and sustainable human uses of the area, maintaining both rare and common species, and supporting the ecological function and resiliency within the larger landscape.

The goal for the project is to protect and restore habitat in support of species recovery plans, State and regional conservation plans, and major bird conservation plans, and to maintain native species and sustainable ecosystems. The maximum long-term potential for fee and easement acquisition would be 300,000 acres within the approximately 952,000-acre Mora River watershed, which forms the boundary of the conservation area.

Within the conservation area, the Service is authorized to accept donations of land or may purchase property using the acquisition authority of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a–j); the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 (16 U.S.C. 715–715d, 715e, 715f–r); the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*); the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 460k–460k–4); and the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd(b)(3)). The principal Federal funding sources to acquire property are the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460l–4–460l–11; funds received from this act are derived primarily from oil and gas leases on the outer

continental shelf, motorboat fuel tax revenues, and sale of surplus Federal property) and the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of 1934 (16 U.S.C. 718–718h); funds for this act are derived from the sale of federal duck stamps. There could be additional funds to acquire lands, waters, or interest therein for fish and wildlife conservation purposes through other congressional appropriations, donations, or grants from nonprofit organizations and other sources.

The Service has involved the public, agencies, partners, and legislators throughout the planning process for the refuge and conservation area. In July 2011, the Service initiated public involvement and announced public scoping meetings to be held to describe the proposed project and solicit feedback. Two public scoping meetings were held in the local area: the first in Mora, New Mexico, on July 25, 2011, and the second in Las Vegas, New Mexico, on July 26, 2011. Comments were accepted during the public scoping period from July 25, 2011, to September 19, 2011.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Service prepared an environmental assessment that evaluated three alternatives and their potential impacts on the project area. The draft environmental assessment and a draft land protection plan were made available for a public review and comment period (March 30 through May 1, 2012). Two hearings were held during this period to offer the public additional opportunities to provide input on the proposed actions and the draft documents. The first hearing was held in Mora, New Mexico, on April 12th, and the second, in Las Vegas, New Mexico, on April 13th, 2012. Over 84 landowners, citizens, and elected officials (or their representatives) attended the 2 hearings, and 8 individuals gave public comment. Afterwards the Service received an additional eight comments in written hardcopy, and via email or phone. Comments received at the hearings and by other means throughout the comment period were reviewed, added to the administrative record, and, if substantial, addressed in the environmental assessment or land protection plan.

Based on the documentation contained in the environmental assessment, a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on June 13, 2012, for the establishment of the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. The Service established the Rio Mora National

Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area on September 27, 2012, by acquiring the 4,224-acre Wind River Ranch in Mora County, New Mexico.

Dated: December 12, 2012.

**Benjamin N. Tuggle,**

*Regional Director, Southwest Region, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R2–R–2013–N264: FF02R06000–FXRS1265022LPP–134]

### Establishment of the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, Bernalillo County, New Mexico

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has established the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Service established the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge on September 21, 2012, with a purchase of 389 acres in Bernalillo County, New Mexico. This action completes the first of two acquisition phases, which will ultimately provide 570 acres of protected lands for public access, recreation, and environmental education.

**ADDRESSES:** A map depicting the approved boundary and other information regarding the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge are available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/Plan/planindex.html>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Steve Kettler, Land Protection Planner, by U.S. mail at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Planning, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103–1306, or by email at [steve\\_kettler@fws.gov](mailto:steve_kettler@fws.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On September 21, 2012, the Service purchased 389 acres of former farm land in Albuquerque's South Valley. Acquisition of these lands formally established the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in Bernalillo County, New Mexico. As an urban National Wildlife Refuge, a distinction shared by only a handful of refuges nationwide and the first for the southwestern United States, this refuge will provide

easy access and key outdoor recreation opportunities to more than 150,000 students and nearly two-thirds of the entire State population and will become a new stop on the nationally recognized Paseo del Bosque recreation trail. This refuge strongly emphasizes recreation and outdoor education for urban youth. It also serves as a gateway to other outdoor venues in the area, as well as to other refuges within the State. The project is the result of close cooperation with Bernalillo County, the Trust for Public Lands, and many other partners, as well as extensive public involvement.

The Service acquired the property using the acquisition authority of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a-j) and the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4). The federal funding source to acquire the property is the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460l-4-460l-11). Funds received from this act are derived primarily from oil and gas leases on the outer continental shelf, motorboat fuel tax revenues, and sale of surplus federal property. There could be additional funds to acquire lands, waters, or interest therein for fish and wildlife conservation purposes through other congressional appropriations, donations, or grants from non-profit organizations and other sources.

The Service has involved the public, agencies, partners, and legislators throughout the planning process for the refuge. In January of 2011, the Service initiated public involvement and announced public scoping meetings to be held to describe the proposed project and solicit feedback. Three public meetings were held in the Albuquerque metropolitan area (on February 7, 9, and 12, 2011) during the initial scoping process to identify issues to be analyzed for the proposed project.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Service prepared an environmental assessment that evaluated two alternatives and their potential impacts on the project area. The draft environmental assessment and land protection plan documents were made available for a 30-day public comment period beginning on July 15, 2011. Two public meetings were held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on July 27 and 28, 2011, where comments were recorded by a court reporter. Over 70 people attended the meetings, and the Service received a total of 80 comments during the public comment period. Comments received at the meetings and by other means throughout the comment period were reviewed, added to the administrative record, and, if

substantial, addressed in the environmental assessment or land protection plan.

Based on the documentation contained in the environmental assessment, a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on September 23, 2011, for the establishment the Middle Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge. In September, 2012, that name was officially changed to Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge. The Service established the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge on September 21, 2012, with a purchase of 389 acres in Bernalillo County, New Mexico.

Dated: December 3, 2012.

**Benjamin N. Tuggle,**

*Regional Director, Southwest Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[LLNML0000 L16100000.DP0000]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare an Amendment to the Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Associated Environmental Assessment for Possible Disposal of Public Land in Doña Ana County, Las Cruces, New Mexico

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Cruces District Office, New Mexico, intends to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment with an associated Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the possible disposal by direct sale at fair market value of 339.89 acres of BLM-administered public land in Doña Ana County in southwestern New Mexico.

**DATES:** This notice initiates the 30-day public scoping period to identify relevant issues. The scoping period will also be announced through local news media and on the BLM Web site ([http://www.blm.gov/nm/las\\_cruces](http://www.blm.gov/nm/las_cruces)). The BLM will accept scoping comments for 30 days from the date of the publication of this notice.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *Email:*

*blm\_nm\_lcdo\_comments@blm.gov.*

- *Fax:* 575-525-4412, Attention: Kendrah Penn.

- *Mail or personal delivery:* Kendrah Penn, RMPA/EA Team Leader, BLM Las Cruces District Office, 1800 Marquess Street, Las Cruces, NM 88005.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Las Cruces District Office at the above address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kendrah Penn, Realty Specialist, at the above address, by telephone at 575-525-4382, or by email at *kpenn@blm.gov*. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Village of Hatch, New Mexico, has proposed to acquire 339.89 acres of BLM-administered land located adjacent to its industrial park. The land would be used as part of the industrial park and would give the Village of Hatch the ability to enhance its economic opportunities and provide for community expansion.

This document provides notice that the BLM Las Cruces District Office, Las Cruces, New Mexico, intends to prepare an RMP Amendment with an associated EA for the Mimbres Planning Area and announces the beginning of the scoping process and seeks public input on issues and planning criteria.

The BLM is currently considering disposal of public land in Doña Ana County, New Mexico. The public land proposed for disposal is currently identified for retention in Federal ownership in the 1993 Mimbres RMP. Therefore, the RMP must be amended to identify the public land as suitable for exchange and/or sale. The RMP Amendment will allow for direct sale of the land if all the criteria outlined by FLPMA is met and that is the alternative chosen by the BLM New Mexico State Director. The public land is a portion of and within the following area:

#### New Mexico Principal Meridian, New Mexico

T. 19 S., R. 4 W.,

Sec. 28, lots 1 to 3, lots 6 to 8, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ .

The area described contains 339.89 acres. Any area described as a half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )