

Refuge; and (14) Group All-Terrain Vehicle Ride on Northwest Fork Road All-Terrain Vehicle Trail.

Alternatives: We developed four alternatives for management of the refuge and chose Alternative 2 as the proposed action. We believe this alternative will be the most effective one to contribute to the purposes for which the refuge was established and to the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Alternative 1, also called the "No Action" alternative, is the baseline or status quo of refuge programs and is usually a continuation of current planning objectives and management strategies. The refuge currently manages its impoundments very intensively by controlling water levels and vegetation to create optimum habitat for migrating waterfowl. It also manages pine forests and marshes with prescribed fire. Waterfowl are surveyed on a routine basis. The refuge has a visitor center, which includes an auditorium and indoor and outdoor classrooms, but depends on volunteers and cooperating agency personnel to staff and maintain the center. With regard to public use, each of the six priority public uses (e.g., hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation) is encouraged. The staff conducts a limited number of environmental education and interpretation programs.

When the planning process started, there were 7.5 full-time employees stationed at Pocosin Lakes Refuge dedicated to refuge management (two of those positions have been lost recently) and 7.5 full-time employees dedicated to fire management.

Alternative 2, the proposed action, would allow for moderate program increases to address refuge priorities. The refuge would manage its impoundments very intensively by controlling water levels and vegetation to create optimum habitat for migrating waterfowl. It would also manage pine forests and marshes with prescribed fire and would manage the vegetative composition of habitats in selected areas. Waterfowl would be surveyed on a routine basis. The staff would develop inventory plans for all species and implement them in selected habitats. The staff would develop and implement a black bear management plan. The staff would maintain the visitor center with volunteers and cooperating agency personnel supplementing refuge personnel.

There would be 17.5 staff members dedicated to refuge management and 7.5 staff members dedicated to fire

management. The volunteer program would be expanded to recruit volunteers to contribute 4,000 hours of service.

The six priority public uses would be allowed and the staff would conduct environmental education and interpretation programs to meet local needs.

Alternative 3 would allow for substantial program increases. The refuge would manage its impoundments very intensively by controlling water levels and vegetation to create optimum habitat for migrating waterfowl. It would also manage pine forests and marshes with prescribed fire and would manage the vegetative composition of habitats on the entire refuge. Waterfowl would be surveyed on a routine basis. The staff would develop inventory plans for all species and implement them over the entire refuge. The staff would develop and implement a black bear management plan. The staff would maintain the visitor center with volunteers and cooperating agency personnel supplementing refuge personnel.

There would be 25 staff members stationed at Pocosin Lakes Refuge dedicated to refuge management and 7 staff members dedicated to fire management. The refuge would conduct forest management and hydrology restoration by contract. The volunteer program would be expanded to recruit volunteers to contribute 10,000 hours of service.

The six priority public uses would be allowed and the staff would conduct environmental education and interpretation programs to meet local needs and expand outreach to the communities.

Alternative 4 would maintain the refuge in caretaker status. The refuge would manage its impoundments very intensively by controlling water levels and vegetation to create optimum habitat for migrating waterfowl. It would manage pine forests and marshes with prescribed fire. Waterfowl would be surveyed on a routine basis. Cooperating agency personnel and volunteers would staff and maintain the visitor center.

There would be 4.5 staff members stationed at Pocosin Lakes Refuge dedicated to refuge management and 7.5 staff members dedicated to fire management.

The six priority public uses would be allowed; however, the staff would not conduct any environmental education and interpretation programs.

Authority: This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105-57.

Dated: May 25, 2007.

Cynthia K. Dohner,

Acting Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Habitat Conservation Plan for the Kern County Valley Floor, Kern County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), advises the public that we intend to gather information necessary to prepare, in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Energy Commission, the California Department of Conservation Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources, and the County of Kern, a joint Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/ EIS) on the Kern County Valley Floor Habitat Conservation Plan (VFHCP) Project. The VFHCP is being prepared under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The County of Kern intends to apply for a 30-year incidental take permit from the Service. The permit is needed to authorize the incidental take of threatened and endangered species that could occur as a result of public and private development.

The Service provides this notice to (1) Describe the proposed action and possible alternatives; (2) advise other Federal and State agencies, affected Tribes, and the public of our intent to prepare an EIR/EIS; (3) announce the initiation of a public scoping period; and (4) obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to be included in the EIR/EIS.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before August 13, 2007. The public meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 25, 2007, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held at the following location: Wednesday, July 25, 2007, at the First Floor Public Meeting Room, Kern County Public Services Building, 2700 M Street, Bakersfield, California 93301. Written comments submitted to Lori Rinek, Chief, Conservation Planning and

Recovery Division, Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, 2800 Cottage Way, W-2605, Sacramento, CA 95825. Comments may also be sent by facsimile to 916-414-6713.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lori Rinek, Chief, Conservation Planning and Recovery Division, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, at 916-414-6600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Reasonable Accommodation

Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the public meeting should contact Lori Rinek at 916-414-6600 as soon as possible. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please call no later than one week before the public meeting. Information regarding this proposed action is available in alternative formats upon request.

Background

Section 9 of the Act and Federal regulations prohibit the "take" of wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened (16 U.S.C. 1538). The Act defines the term "take" as: to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect listed species, or to attempt to engage in such conduct (16 U.S.C. 1532). Harm includes significant habitat modification or degradation that actually kills or injures listed wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, and sheltering [50 CFR 17.3(c)]. Pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act, the Service may issue permits to authorize "incidental take" of listed species. "Incidental Take" is defined by the Act as take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful activity. Regulations governing permits for threatened species and endangered species, respectively, are at 50 CFR 17.32 and 50 CFR 17.22.

Take of listed plant species is not prohibited under the Act and cannot be authorized under a section 10 permit. We propose to include plant species on the permit in recognition of the conservation benefits provided to them under a habitat conservation plan. All species included on an incidental take permit would receive assurances under the Service's "No Surprises" regulation [50 CFR 17.22(b)(5) and 17.32(b)(5)].

Species proposed for coverage in the HCP are species that are currently listed as federally threatened or endangered or have the potential to become listed during the life of this HCP and have some likelihood to occur within the project area. Should any of these

unlisted covered wildlife species become listed under the Act during the term of the permit, take authorization for those species would become effective upon listing. There are 14 plant species and 11 animal species covered by the HCP which are known to occur within the area. Species may be added or deleted during the course of the development of the VFHCP based on further analysis, new information, agency consultation, and public comment. Currently the following listed plant and animal species are included in the plan: California jewelflower (*Caulanthus californicus*), Kern mallow (*Eremalche kernensis*), San Joaquin woolly-threads (*Monolopia congdonii*), Bakersfield cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *treleasei*), San Joaquin adobe sunburst (*Pseudobahia peirsonii*), blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia sila*), Buena Vista Lake shrew (*Sorex ornatus relictus*), Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides nitratooides*), giant kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ingens*), and San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*). Unlisted species proposed as covered species are the following: Heartscale (*Atriplex cordulata*), Bakersfield smallscale (*Atriplex tularensis*), Lost Hills crownscale (*Atriplex vallicola*), Slough thistle (*Crisium crassicaule*), Vasek's clarkia (*Clarkia tembloriensis ssp. Calientensis*), recurved larkspur (*Delphinium recurvatum*), Hoover's eriastrum (*Eriastrum hooveri*), striped adobe-lily (*Fritillaria striata*), Comanche Point layia (*Layia leucopappa*), California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum frontale*), San Joaquin whipsnake (*Masticophis flagellum ruddocki*), LeConte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*), short-nosed kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides brevinasus*), and American badger (*Taxidea taxus*).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was prepared in 1989 between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and Game, California Energy Commission, and the California Department of Conservation Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources to establish the Kern County Valley Floor Habitat Conservation Plan. The proposed VFHCP utilizes a conservation strategy that would provide for preservation of the best remaining natural lands while still allowing economic growth to occur in the area. The VFHCP area consists of approximately 3,110 square miles within Kern County. The boundaries are Kings and Tulare Counties to the north,

up to an approximate 2,000-foot elevation contour to the south and east, and San Luis Obispo County to the west. The VFHCP area would be divided into three habitat zone categories of red, green, and white based on habitat value. Red Zones contain the highest valued conservation habitat and represent the best contiguous blocks of undisturbed or lightly disturbed habitat. Green Zones are second highest in priority classification and contain some disturbance and are important for movement of species among the Red Zones. The White Zones contain the least amount of valuable habitat and least priority for conservation.

The VFHCP would result in take authorization for otherwise lawful actions, such as public and private development that may incidentally take or harm animal species or their habitats within the VFHCP area, in exchange for the assembly and management of a coordinated VFHCP area. Specifically these activities would include oil and gas development and maintenance projects, urban development and infrastructure, and development and maintenance of water delivery projects. The VFHCP would develop a program of take avoidance, minimization and mitigation, with an emphasis on preservation of the best remaining natural lands that will support viable populations and the continued existence of state and federally listed threatened or endangered species and California Species of Special Concern. The VFHCP creates a framework for complying with State and Federal listed threatened or endangered species regulations for specified species while accommodating future growth in the VFHCP area. The framework established by the VFHCP will allow for the assembly of contiguous parcels of habitat to provide viable habitat blocks and assist in the conservation of species.

Environmental Impact Statement/ Report

The EIR/EIS will consider the proposed action (i.e., the issuance of a section 10(a)(1)(B) permit under the Act), no action (no project/no section 10 permit), and a reasonable range of alternatives. A detailed description of the proposed action and alternatives will be included in the EIR/EIS. The alternatives to be considered for analysis in the EIR/EIS may include: modified lists of covered species, land coverage areas, and intensity of future development. The EIR/EIS will also identify potentially significant impacts on biological resources, land use, air quality, water quality, water resources, economics, and other environmental

resource issues that could occur directly or indirectly with implementation of the proposed action and alternatives. Different strategies for avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impacts of incidental take may also be considered.

Environmental review of the EIR/EIS will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et. seq.*), its implementing regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), other applicable regulations, and Service procedures for compliance with those regulations. This notice is being furnished in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22 to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIR/EIS. The primary purpose of the scoping process is to identify important issues raised by the public related to the proposed action. Written comments from interested parties are invited to ensure that the full range of issues related to the permit application is identified. Comments will only be accepted in written form. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

Our practice is to make comments, including names, home addresses, home phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their names and/or home addresses, etc., but if you wish us to consider withholding this information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. In addition, you must present a rationale for withholding this information. This rationale must demonstrate that disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy. Unsupported assertions will not meet this burden. In the absence of exceptional, documentable circumstances, this information will be released. We will always make submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

Dated: July 6, 2007.

Ken McDermond,

Deputy Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office, Sacramento, California.
[FR Doc. E7–13528 Filed 7–11–07; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY–920–1310–01; WYW150434]

Notice of Proposed Reinstatement of Terminated Oil and Gas Lease

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of proposed reinstatement of terminated oil and gas lease.

SUMMARY: Under the provisions of 30 U.S.C. 188(d) and (e), and 43 CFR 3108.2–3(a) and (b)(1), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received a petition for reinstatement from BP America Production Company of oil and gas lease WYW150434 for lands in Sweetwater County, Wyoming. The petition was filed on time and was accompanied by all the rentals due since the date the lease terminated under the law.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bureau of Land Management, Pamela J. Lewis, Chief, Fluid Minerals Adjudication, at (307) 775–6176.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The lessee has agreed to the amended lease terms for rentals and royalties at rates of \$10 per acre or fraction thereof, per year and 16–2/3 percent, respectively. The lessee has paid the required \$500 administrative fee and \$163 to reimburse the Department for the cost of this **Federal Register** notice. The lessee has met all the requirements for reinstatement of the lease as set out in Section 31(d) and (e) of the Mineral Lands Leasing Act of 1920 (30 U.S.C. 188), and the Bureau of Land Management is proposing to reinstate lease WYW150434 effective June 1, 2006, under the original terms and conditions of the lease and the increased rental and royalty rates cited above. BLM has not issued a valid lease affecting the lands.

Julie L. Weaver,

Acting Chief, Branch of Fluid Minerals Adjudication.

[FR Doc. E7–13525 Filed 7–11–07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NM–952–07–1420–BJ]

Notice of Filing of Plats of Survey; New Mexico

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The plats of survey described below are scheduled to be officially filed in the New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, New Mexico, (30) thirty calendar days from the date of this publication.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

New Mexico Principal Meridian, New Mexico

The plat representing the dependent resurvey and survey for Townships 9 and 10 North, Range 4 East, accepted June 20, 2007, for Group 1062 New Mexico.

If a protest against a survey, as shown on any of the above plats is received prior to the date of official filing, the filing will be stayed pending consideration of the protest. A plat will not be officially filed until the day after all protests have been dismissed.

A person or party who wishes to protest against this survey must file a written protest with the New Mexico State Director, Bureau of Land Management, stating that they wish to protest.

A statement of reasons for a protest may be filed with the notice of protest to the State Director, or the statement of reasons must be filed with the State Director within thirty days after the protest is filed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: This plat will be available for inspection in the New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management, and P.O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502–0115. Copies may be obtained from this office upon payment of \$1.10 per sheet.

Dated: July 6, 2007.

Robert A. Casias,

Chief Cadastral Surveyor, New Mexico.

[FR Doc. 07–3385 Filed 7–11–07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–FB–M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Availability of Funding for Acquisition of Civil War Battlefield Land

AGENCY: National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Availability of Funding for Acquisition of Civil War Battlefield Land.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) announces the availability of funds to assist States and local communities in acquiring for permanent protection lands, or interests in lands, at significant Civil War battlefield sites.