

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## Bureau of Land Management

[UT-030-1610]

**Call for Information on the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Management Plan Regarding Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and Wild & Scenic Rivers (W&SR)**

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

**ACTION:** The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) invites the public to nominate potential ACECs and river segments for W&SR consideration for inclusion into the GSENM planning process.

**SUMMARY:** This notice is to advise the public that the Bureau of Land Management is seeking additional public input regarding those potential areas considered for either ACEC and/or W&SR study and evaluation, as well as to seek additional public input on those areas that have already been nominated.

**DATES:** The comment period for the preliminary ACEC nominations or additional nominations will commence with publication of this notice. Comments must be submitted on or before March 19, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Pete Wilkins, Planning Chief—Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, 337 S. Main, Suite 010, Cedar City, UT 84720 Tel:435-865-5161, Fax:435-865-5170, e-mail: p1wilkin@ut.blm.gov.

Detailed information regarding those areas that have already been nominated is available at the above address. Comments on these potential designations should be sent to the address listed above.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** As part of the land use planning process, the Federal Land Management Policy Act mandates that the Bureau of Land Management "give priority to the designation and protection of ACECs in the developing and revising land use plans." As part of the GSENM planning effort, the Bureau of Land Management will determine what areas, if any, should be designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. To be considered as a potential ACEC, and analyzed in a management plan alternative, an area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance as established and defined in 43 CFR 1610.7-2, *Designations of areas of critical environmental concern*. An area meets the "relevance" criteria if it contains one of more of the following:

(1) Significant historic, cultural, or scenic values, (2) a fish and wildlife resource (including sensitive species, relative habitat or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity), (3) natural processes or systems (including rare, endemic, relict plants or communities, and riparian areas), and (4) natural hazards such as severe avalanche, flooding, seismic activity, etc.

The "importance" criteria are used to insure that a specific resource or value, process or hazard has substantial significance and value. Importance can be characterized as follows: (1) Being more than locally significant, having special worth, (2) has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, unique, endangered or threatened, meaningful or distinctive, (3) has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priorities or to carry out the mandates of the Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLPMA), and (4) has qualities which warrant concern to satisfy public/management concerns regarding public welfare and safety.

As a result of a previous planning effort for the Kanab/Escalante Resource Management Plan, several nominations have already been recorded. These nominations have been reviewed and are proposed to be brought forth into the draft GSENM Management Plan/Draft EIS. Potential "relevance" and "importance" values, and potential issues, associated with the nominated areas are as follows:

(1) No Man's Mesa Research Natural Area—Located in the center of Township 3 West, Range 40 South, east of Park Wash; 1,335 acres; relict plant communities.

(2) Paria-Hackberry Unit—Located north of Highway 89 east of Kanab, Utah and south of Henrieville on Highway 12; 158,000 acres; Grand Staircase geologic formations, Sheep Creek, Hackberry Canyon, Cottonwood Creek, relict plant community of pinyon-juniper and sagebrush-grass park vegetation on No Man's Mesa, cultural resources, Old Pahrea townsites.\*

(3) Bryce Adjacent Units—Located below Bryce Canyon's cliffs, form part of the scenic foreground of views from the national park; 25,500 acres (East of Bryce—900 acres, Square and Willis Creeks—22,300 acres, Box Canyon—2,300 acres); Navajo Sandstone in Bull Valley Gorge, badlands' appearance, views outstanding, plant communities (Kodachrome Bladderpod, T&E species and a member of the Evening Primrose family), and black bear use for travel between the high plateau of Bryce to the warmer Paria River country below.\*

(4) The Blues Unit—Located northeast of Bryce Canyon National Park and north of Highway 12; 18,700 acres; Cretaceous shale badlands in a "critical" erosion condition which contrasts with the pink cliff of Powell Point above, scenic attraction to travelers of Highway 12, significant vista from Bryce Canyon National Park, possible area for the rare aster (*Xylorhiza confertifolia*), diverse habitat conditions, known paleontological resources, and panoramic views.\*

(5) Mud Spring Canyon Unit—Located between the Grand Staircase and Kaiparowits Plateau from Canaan Peak to the northern section of the Cockscomb; 55,100 acres; badlands of blue shale, spectacular cockscomb, transitional vegetation with pinyon-juniper forest grading into desert shrubs at lower elevations, Dry Valley relict plant community, among big game habitat.\*

(6) The Cockscomb Unit—Located north of Highway 89 and southwest of the Cottonwood Wash road; 10,300 acres; Upthrust ridge of The Cockscomb, the milkvetch (*Astragalus ampullarius*, candidate for T&E list) may occur, varied wildlife habitat, critical antelope fawning areas, Hattie Green Mine.\*

(7) Wahweap-Paradise Canyon Unit—Begins 10 miles south of the town of Escalante and continues across Paradise Bench to the Wahweap Creek Drainage northwest of Lake Powell; 228,000 acres; long, winding canyons, far-ranging vistas and remote hiking, fossils in the Wahweap Formation, Four Mile Bench Old Tree Area (1,400-year-old pinyon and juniper trees), diverse wildlife habitat, numerous archaeology sites.\*

(8) Nipple Bench Unit—Abuts Glen Canyon National Recreation Area just north and east of Big Water, Nipple Canyon forms the western boundary; 31,600 acres; scenic views overlooking Lake Powell, pedestals of mud and silt capped by isolated rocks, Evening Primrose (*Camissonia atwoodii*, T&E candidate), archaeology, paleontology.\*

(9) Warm Creek Unit—Located in the heart of the Kaiparowits Plateau and surrounded by the Wahweap-Paradise Canyon, Squaw Canyon, and Nipple Bench units; 21,000 acres; benches and canyon rims offer views across the southern edge of the Plateau into Glen Canyon National Recreation area, fossil vertebrates and plants in the Wahweap Formation, springs, archaeology, opportunities for solitude.\*

(10) Squaw Canyon Unit—Located west of Burning Hills and east of Warm Creek; 11,200 acres; Dramatic vistas of isolated rock pillars, barren cliffs, and fluted canyon cliffs, the most scenic

vistas on the Kaiparowits Plateau, populations of Kodachrome Bladderpod (T&E) and evening primrose (*Camissonia exilis*, candidate T&E), high archaeological site densities.\*

(11) Burning Hills Unit—Located in the core of the Kaiparowits Plateau between the Wahweap-Paradise Canyon and Fiftymile Mountain units; 68,400 acres; Last Chance Creek (a twenty mile long canyon) offers solitude with a few watering places, natural underground coal fires, 15–20 foot tall mountain mahogany, the presence of two sensitive plant species (*Cymopterus higgsii* on Smoky Mountain and *Penstemon atwoodii* in the north end of Dry Wash), the sensitive Lewis's woodpecker and western and mountain bluebird, archaeology.\*

(12) Fiftymile Mountain Unit—Includes 42 miles of the Straight Cliffs; 173,900 acres; spectacular viewpoints, sensitive species Atwood's beardtongue (*Penstemon atwoodii*), diverse wildlife (about 190 species), archaeology with a tremendous potential to provide information on local Fremont and Anasazi cultures, virtually unblemished area, solitude.\*

(13) Fiftymile Bench and Cave Point Units—Located at the foot of the southern Straight Cliffs and above the lower Escalante Canyons; 11,100 acres in Fiftymile Bench Unit and 4,800 acres in Cave Point Unit; a 1000 foot-high cliff line of the Summerville, Morrison, and Dakota formations and the Tropic Shale on the Fiftymile Bench, transition zone for wildlife, vistas of the Escalante Canyons.\*

(14) Scorpion Unit—Located 25 miles southeast of Escalante and borders the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA); 38,100 acres; nearly 60 miles of sinuous canyons carved into the Mesozoic rocks of the Glen Canyon Group, concentrations of deep slot canyons, diverse wildlife habitat (about 242 species), archaeology.\*

(15) Horse Spring Canyon Unit—Located southwest of Escalante, west of Alvey Wash, and east of the Dixie National Forest; 27,900 acres; Mitchell, Willow Spring, and Horse Spring Canyons and tributaries cutting through alternating strata of the Straight Cliffs Formation, Atwood's beardtongue and the Sweetvetch (*Hedysarum boreale*, candidate T&E), Horizon Arch, archaeology (rock art, granaries), and petrified wood and other fossils.\*

(16) North Escalante Canyons Unit—144,000 acres including Little Egypt unit and Little Death Hollow; significant geological formations, miles of narrow, winding side Canyons, arches, natural bridges, alcoves, slickrock, scenic panoramas, diverse plant and animal

life, riparian areas, bald eagle and peregrine falcon, golden eagle, Lewis's woodpecker, and western and mountain bluebirds, archeology (high concentration of rock art sites).\*

(17) Carcass Canyon Unit—Located just south of the town of Escalante and west of the Hole-in-the-Rock Road; 72,600 acres; northernmost part of the Straight Cliffs featuring the 2000-foot-high Escalante Rim, nearly 50 miles of deeply entrenched canyons (some more than 700 feet deep), Atwood's beardtongue, eight raptor species, archaeology sites, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.\*

(18) Phipps-Death Hollow Unit—Located north and east of the town of Escalante; 43,500 acres; expanses of slickrock and deep canyons in the Navajo Sandstone, 40 miles of perennial streams, hanging gardens, relict plant community, Atwood's Beardtongue (*Penstemon atwoodii*), winter range for mule deer and elk, also has mountain lions, golden eagles, American Kestrels, Lewis's woodpeckers, and western and mountain bluebirds, rainbow and brown trout in creeks, archaeology and history (Boulder Mail Trail).\*

(19) Steep Creek Unit—Beginning about two miles east of the town of Boulder, extending north from the Burr Trail to the forested slopes of Boulder Mountain and east to the cliffs of Capitol Reef National Park; 43,400 acres including 31,500 acres in Steep Creek and 2,900 acres around The Lampstand; spectacular Circle Cliffs, petrified wood, perennial streams flowing down from Boulder Mountain into entrenched canyons in the Navajo and Windgate sandstone, year-round flows of clear cold water, five springs, riparian habitat, critical deer and elk winter range, rainbow and brown trout, variety of waterfowl, archaeology.\*

(20) Studhorse Peaks Unit—Located in the center of the scenic Circle Cliffs, just south of the Burr Trail; 19,500 acres; primarily red Moenkopi Formation, Studhorse Peaks (a series of flat-topped buttes) are capped by light-colored Shinarump Conglomerate, White Canyon cuts through the Kiabab Limestone to the Coconino Sandstone (Permian), top of the peaks have pockets of Gamble oak in protected sand hollows, critical elk calving habitat.\*

(21) Colt Mesa Unit—Located west of Capitol Reef National Park and north of Glen Canyon NRA with Moody Canyon Road on the west side; 23,500 acres; outstanding vistas, spectacular monocline of the Waterpocket Fold tops out at Deer point in the southeast corner of the unit, northwest four-fifths of the unit is mostly red-brown ledges and slopes of the Moenkopi Formation,

inner gorge of Moody Canyon is Kaibab Limestone and Coconino Sandstone, plant species Jones cycladenia (*Cycladenia humilis jonesii*) may be found in southern half, raptors including peregrine use area, bighorn sheep habitat.\*

(22) Several Access Routes were nominated for "Scenic ACEC's":

US-89, U-12, U-9, U-143, Cottonwood Wash Road from U-12 to US-89, the road to Old Pahreah Townsite from US-89, the Burr Trail from Boulder to Capitol Reef National Park, and the Hole in the Rock Trail from U-12 to the Glen Canyon NRA boundary.\*\*

\* Submitted by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, January 14, 1994.

\*\* Submitted by Owen Severance, December 22, 1993.

In addition to the above nominations, the BLM is requesting additional public input for other nominations that the public may see as being worthy as an ACEC. All such nominations will receive a preliminary evaluation by an interdisciplinary team to determine if the area meets the "relevance" and "importance" criteria. Nominations should include descriptive materials, detailed maps and evidence supporting the "relevance" and "importance" of the resource.

### Wild and Scenic Rivers

Additionally, public nominations are also being sought for those rivers which may be eligible for inclusion into the National Wild & Scenic River System. In order to be considered, the body of water must be free flowing and contain outstandingly remarkable values. A river segment can be determined free flowing if it is a flowing body of water, estuary, or section, portion, or tributary thereof including, rivers, streams, creeks, runs, kills, rills, and small lakes. The river can be any size and must be existing or flowing in natural conditions without major modification. All nominations should be accompanied by detailed maps, descriptions of the river segment, and river related values.

Those values determined to be outstandingly remarkable are: scenic, recreational, geologic, fish, wildlife, cultural, historic, hydrologic, ecologic/biologic diversity, paleontologic, botanic, or scientific study opportunities. Rivers are also tentatively classified as wild, scenic or recreational.

The following are nominations that we have received from the public to date:

*Escalante River Basin:* Escalante River, 18 miles from Escalante to Hwy

12—Wild; 64 miles from Highway 12 to Lake Powell—Wild; Boulder Creek, 8 miles of East Boulder Creek from Elbow Lake to T32S, R4E, Sec. 3—Wild; 5 miles to confluence with West Fork—Scenic; 2 miles of West Fork Boulder Creek from T31S, R4E, Sec. 31 to T32S, R4E, Sec. 8—Wild; 1 mile to T32S, R4E, Sec. 17—Scenic; 2 miles to confluence with East Fork—Wild; 3 miles of Boulder Creek from confluence of East and West Forks to T33S, R4E, Sec. 3—Scenic; 4 miles to T33S, R4E, Sec. 23—Wild; 5 miles to T34S, R4E, Sec. 12—Recreational; 12 miles to confluence with Escalante—Wild; East Fork Deer Creek, 9 miles from Hwy 12 to T33S, R5E, Sec. 29—Wild; 5 miles to Burr Trail—Scenic; 6 miles to confluence with Boulder Creek—Wild; Sand Creek, 24 miles from T33S, R4E, Sec. 31 to confluence with Escalante River—Wild; Twenty-five Mile Wash, 6 miles from Hole-in-the-Rock-Road to T37S, R5E, Sec. 25—Wild; 14 miles to Escalante River confluence—Wild; Calf Creek, 7 miles from T34S, R4E, Sec. 9 to Calf Creek campground—Wild; 1 mile to Escalante River confluence—Recreational; The Gulch, 13 miles of The Gulch from confluence of Stair Canyon and the Gulch to Burr Trail—Wild; 12 miles to confluence with Escalante River—Wild; Steep Creek, 11 miles of Steep Creek from T32S, R5E, Sec. 26 to confluence with The Gulch—Wild; Coyote Gulch, 19 miles from springs at T39S, R7E, Sec. 16 to Escalante River confluence—Wild; Moody Creek, 3 miles from T36S, R8E, Sec. 5 to Glen Canyon NRA boundary—Wild; 4 miles to T36S, R8E, Sec. 31—Scenic; 6 miles to confluence with Escalante River—Wild; Harris Wash, 11 miles from T36S, R4E, Sec. 15 to T36S, R5E, Sec. 34—Wild; 12 miles to confluence Escalante River—Scenic; Death Hollow, 19 miles of Death Hollow from T33S, R3E, Sec. 6 to Mamie Creek confluence—Wild; Mamie Creek, 12 miles Mamie Creek from T34S, R3E, Sec. 17 to Escalante River confluence—Wild;

*Lower Colorado River Basin* Last Chance Creek, 17 miles from T40S, R3E, Sec. 24 to road crossing at T42S, R5E, Sec. 4—Wild; 2 miles to Last Chance Bay—Wild; Warm Creek, 4 miles of Wessens Canyon from T40S, R3E, Sec. 19 to T41S, R3E, Sec. 5—Wild; 10 miles to confluence with John Henry Canyon—Wild; 12 miles to Warm Creek Bay—Recreational; 6 miles of Tibbet Canyon from T41S, R3E, Sec. 32 to Warm Creek—Recreational; 6 miles of Smokey Hollow from T41S, R4E, Sec. 7 to Warm Creek—Recreational; Wahweap Creek, 28 miles from T39S, R1E, Sec. 28 to T42S, R2E, Sec. 33—Wild; Paria River,

21 miles from T38S, R2W, Sec. 6 to Old Paria Townsite—Wild; 2 miles to confluence with Cottonwood Creek—Wild; 12 miles to Paria Campground—Recreational; 6 miles to Arizona border—Wild; Hackberry Creek, 17 miles from T38S, R1W, Sec. 29 to Cottonwood Creek—Wild; Bull Valley Gorge, 4 miles from T38S, R4W, Sec. 25 to T38S, R3W, Sec. 27—Wild; 6 miles to Sheep Creek—Wild; Cottonwood Creek, 18 miles from T39S, R1W, Sec. 12 to Paria River—Scenic.

The information provided with additional nominations will be carefully considered. Preliminary findings of river eligibility and tentative classification will be made available for public review and comment. Only then will the determination be made as to which rivers will be considered further in the GSENM plan.

**G. William Lamb,**

*Utah State Director.*

[FR Doc. 98-3826 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-DQ-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[CA-360-1020-00]

#### Notice of Resource Advisory Council; Meeting and Comment Period Extension

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Northwest California Resource Advisory Council Ukiah, California.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting and comment period extension.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committees Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Pub. L. 94-579), the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Northwest California Resource Advisory Council will meet Thursday and Friday, March 12 and 13, 1998, at the BLM's Clear Lake Field Office, 2550 North State Street, Ukiah. This meeting was originally scheduled for Thursday and Friday, Feb. 5 and 6, 1998, but was postponed due to bad weather and unsafe travel conditions. Additionally, the BLM is extending until April 3, 1998, the public comment period on a proposal to close Black Sands Beach to motor vehicle access. (62 FR 36301, July 7, 1998). The comment period had been scheduled to close on March 12, 1998. Comments on the proposal should be mailed or hand carried to the BLM's Arcata Field Office, 1695 Heindon Rd., Arcata, CA 95521.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The meeting begins at 10 a.m. March 12.

Agenda items include discussion of a proposal to close Black Sands Beach to motor vehicle access, the status of an environmental impact statement on Healthy Rangeland Standards and Guidelines, discussion of recreation user fees, the status of planning in the Sacramento River Bend Area of Critical Environmental Concern, reports on the status of the plan amendment for South Cow Mountain, and reports from the managers of BLM's Arcata, Clear Lake and Redding field offices. Public comments will be taken at 1 p.m. Depending on the number of persons wishing to speak, a time limit could be established. On Friday, the council will convene at 7:30 a.m. at the Clear Lake Field Office and depart immediately for a field tour in the Cache Creek area. Members of the public are welcome, but they must provide their own transportation.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joseph J. Fontana, Public Affairs Officer, at (530) 257-5381.

**Joseph J. Fontana,**

*Public Affairs Officer.*

[FR Doc. 98-3694 Filed 2-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-40-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[AZ-910-0777-61-241A]

#### State of Arizona Resource Advisory Council Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Arizona Resource Advisory Council Meeting; notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces a tour and meeting of the Arizona Resource Advisory Council to be held March 18-19, 1998, Page, Arizona. On March 18, the RAC will visit "signature Rock" to gain a historical prospective of the area. The tour also includes stops on the Vermillion Cliffs Highways initiative and comparative site visits to areas that do and do not meet Arizona's standards for rangeland health. The tour will depart from the Page Arizona Courtyard of Marriott at 8:00 a.m. and will conclude at 5:00 p.m. The Marriott Hotel is located at 600 Clubhouse Drive, Page, Arizona. On March 19, the RAC will conduct a one-day business meeting at the Marriott Hotel starting at 8:00 a.m. until approximately 2:00 p.m. Agenda items to be covered at the meeting include: Review of previous meeting minutes; BLM State Director's Update on legislation, regulations and other statewide issues; Report on the