

conditions, and management activities throughout the backcountry of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. A no-action alternative also will be evaluated.

The NPS requests written and verbal comments about the scope of the planning process (e.g., issues and concerns, alternatives, potential environmental impacts), from federal and state agencies, local government, Native tribes, private organizations, backcountry users, and the general public. Further information on this planning process will be available through public scoping meetings, press releases, web sites, and newsletters. Joint public scoping meetings on the plans/EISs for The Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve will be held in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau, Alaska, as well as in Seattle, Washington. Additional scoping meeting will be held in communities near the respective parks. The public will be notified in the future of the specific dates, times, and locations of the scoping meeting.

The Gates of the Arctic draft plan/EIS is anticipated to be available for public review in the spring of 2004. Public meetings will be scheduled during the 60-day comment period after release of the draft plan/EIS.

Interested groups, organizations, individuals, and government agencies are invited to comment on the plan. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the administrative record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which would withhold from the administrative 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 not, however, consider anonymous comments. 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.

The plan/EIS is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4331 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR part 1500.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David D. Mills, Superintendent, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, 201 First Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. Telephone (907) 457-5752.

Dated: August 22, 2002.

Ralph H. Tingey,

Acting Regional Director, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 02-24050 Filed 9-20-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the Backcountry Management Plan and General Management Plan Amendment for Glacier Bay National Park

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Backcountry management plan, General Management Plan Amendment, and Environmental Impact Statement, Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) is amending the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve General Management Plan with a Backcountry Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS). Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve was expanded by the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). With passage of ANILCA, Congress designated nearly 2.7 million acres of wilderness within the park and set forth special provisions for management in recognition of the unique situations and traditional lifeways in Alaska.

The purpose of the plan/EIS is to formulate a comprehensive plan that will provide management direction during the next 15-20 years for the backcountry of Glacier Bay National Park. The backcountry consists of all designated wilderness lands and waters within the park except the Alsek River watershed, which is managed cooperatively with British Columbia Parks, Parks Canada, and the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources. The plan/EIS also will cover a non-wilderness island in Blue Mouse Cove and Cenotaph Island in Lituya Bay. Glacier Bay National Preserve, the Bartlett Cove area, and tracts in private ownership are excluded.

Glacier Bay National Park is one of four national park units in Alaska to initiate a backcountry management planning process and GMP amendment. This notice of intent is being published simultaneously with notices to prepare plans/EISs for Wrangell-St. Elias

National Park and Preserve and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. A plan/EIS for Denali National Park and Preserve is underway (64 FR 49503, September 13, 1999).

The Glacier Bay National Park plan/EIS is being prepared in response to the increasing level and diversity of activities in the park, resource management and protection needs, and requests for activities and facilities not anticipated or addressed in the 1984 General Management Plan or the 1989 Wilderness Visitor Use Management Plan. Specific topics to be addressed in the plan/EIS include, but are not limited to: backcountry hiking, mountaineering, aviation, non-motorized boating (such as kayaking), commercial services, administrative and scientific/research activities, and the various facilities related to these activities. Motorized vessels in Glacier Bay proper, Dundas Bay, and Taylor Bay will be addressed under the Vessel Quota and Operating Plan/EIS currently under development (67 FR 8313, February 22, 2002).

The proposed action and other action alternatives will assess variations in the types and levels of backcountry activities and facilities. Toward this end, prescriptive management zones will be described and allocated to park land to provide a spectrum of visitor experience opportunities, resource conditions, and management activities throughout the backcountry of Glacier Bay National Park. A no-action alternative also will be evaluated.

The NPS requests written and verbal comments about the scope of the planning process (e.g., issues and concerns, alternatives, potential environmental impacts), from federal and state agencies, local government, Native tribes, private organizations, backcountry users, and the general public. Further information on this planning process will be available through public scoping meetings, press releases, web sites, and newsletters. Joint public scoping meetings on the plans/EIS for Glacier Bay National Park, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve will be held in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau, Alaska, as well as in Seattle, Washington. Additional scoping meetings will be held in communities near the respective parks. The public will be notified in the future of the specific dates, times, and locations of the scoping meetings.

The Glacier Bay draft plan/EIS is anticipated to be available for public review in the fall of 2004. Public meetings will be scheduled during the 60-day comment period after release of

the draft plan/EIS. Interested groups, organizations, individuals, and government agencies are invited to comment on the plan. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the administrative record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the administrative 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 not, however, consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organization or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

The plan/EIS is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4331 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR part 1500.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tomie Lee, Superintendent, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, P.O. Box 140, Gustavus, Alaska 99826. Telephone (907) 697-2232.

Dated: August 22, 2002.

Ralph H. Tingey,

Acting Regional Director, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 02-24051 Filed 9-20-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Giacomini Wetlands Restoration Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, California; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: The National Park Service, in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), is undertaking a conservation planning and environmental impact analysis process for a proposed wetlands restoration project at the former Giacomini Ranch in Marin County, California. The area of proposed restoration is located within the boundary of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; this portion of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area is administered by Point Reyes

National Seashore. Notice is hereby given that a public scoping process has been initiated with the purpose of eliciting public comment regarding the spectrum of issues and concerns (including suitable range of alternatives, the nature and extent of potential environmental impacts, appropriate mitigation strategies, and ecological benefits) that should be addressed in drafting the forthcoming environmental document.

Background

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) is a unit of the National Park System located in the San Francisco Bay Area, in central California. Congress established GGNRA "in order to preserve for public use and enjoyment certain areas of Marin and San Francisco Counties, California, possessing outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values, and in order to provide for the maintenance of needed recreational open space necessary to urban environment and planning * * * (Public Law 92-589)." Point Reyes National Seashore, a nearby unit of the National Park System, is wholly located in Marin County, California. It was established by Congress "to save and preserve, for the purpose of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped" (Public Law 87-657). By prior management agreement, Point Reyes National Seashore administers the north district of GGNRA within Marin County.

In certain instances, the National Park Service (NPS) has expanded upon the concept of "preservation" to incorporate restoration, as well as conservation. In its 2001 Management Policies, the NPS emphasized that it will "* * * strive to achieve a longer term goal of net gain of wetlands across the national park system through restoration of previously degraded or destroyed wetlands (§ 4.6.5)." Furthermore, the new Policies encourage units of the National Park System to "* * * protect, preserve, and restore the natural resources and functions of floodplains (§ 4.6.4)."

In keeping with these resource conservation policies, the NPS proposes to restore wetlands at a 563-acre historic coastal salt marsh site formerly known as the Giacomini Ranch in Tomales Bay. Tomales Bay is a 12-mile-long coastal bay that borders Point Reyes National Seashore to the north. This area of coastal salt marsh was diked in 1946, and these lands had been utilized by the Waldo Giacomini family as a dairy since then. In 2000, the NPS purchased the Giacomini property using a combination

of federal and state funds. State funding was provided by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), which was under obligation to the California Coastal Commission to mitigate for impacts resulting from road repairs on Highway 1 in Marin County conducted in the early 1990s. The California Coastal Commission permitted Caltrans to mitigate for the road repair impacts through transfer of funds to the NPS to purchase, restore, and manage a wetland site at the Giacomini Ranch.

The NPS believes that the potential value of restoring the Giacomini Ranch would be important not only for these national park lands and resources, but to the Tomales Bay watershed ecosystem as a whole. By some accounts, the state of California has suffered the loss of more than 95 percent of its coastal wetlands. The percentage of loss is not quite as high in Tomales Bay, but a large percentage of the coastal wetlands once present were lost when this deltaic land at the head of the bay was reclaimed for agricultural purposes. Coastal wetlands provide essential ecosystem functions benefiting both humans and wildlife through floodwater storage, food production, and filtration of nutrients and sediments. Increasing the acreage of coastal wetlands could increase wetland functions and result in improved environmental conditions for both humans and wildlife in the Tomales Bay watershed. The San Francisco District of the Regional Water Quality Control Board has determined that Tomales Bay is impaired by sediment, nutrients, fecal coliform, and mercury (pursuant to § 303(d) of the Clean Water Act). This condition jeopardizes not only the bay's well-known oyster fisheries, but the wildlife species that use Tomales Bay for breeding or foraging habitat such as Pacific harbor seals, seal lions, gray whales, California brown pelican, and Pacific herring.

Alternatives and Environmental Issues

Point Reyes National Seashore is in the initial stages of the conservation planning process for this initiative, and the park desires public input on a suitable range of alternatives. It is anticipated that methods for restoring the Giacomini wetlands area would likely involve some type of geomorphic-topographic alterations aimed at recovering natural hydrologic and ecological processes. These potential alterations could change the current hydrologic regime within the proposed project area, leading either to muted tidal action, full tidal action, and/or natural creek action (*i.e.*, allowing