

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION, UNITED STATES AND MEXICO**United States Section Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project, Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties, TX**

AGENCY: United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) proposes to gather information necessary for the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) which will address the impacts of maintenance activities by the USIBWC of the existing Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project (LRGFCP). The project is located in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy counties, Texas. A public scoping meeting regarding this proposal will also be held. This notice is being provided as required by the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) and the USIBWC's Operational Procedures for Implementing Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, published in the **Federal Register** September 2, 1981 (46 FR 44083-44094) to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS.

DATES: The USIBWC will conduct a public scoping meeting at the Weslaco Public Library Auditorium, 525 South Kansas, Weslaco, Texas on September 10, 1998, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. CDT. Full public participation by interested federal, state, and local agencies as well as other interested organizations and the general public is encouraged during the scoping process which will end 60 days from the date of this notice. Public comments on the scope of the EIS, reasonable alternatives that should be considered, anticipated environmental problems, and actions that might be taken to address them are requested.

ADDRESSES: Comments will be accepted for 60-days following the date of this notice by Mr. Douglas Echlin, Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Management Division, USIBWC, 4171 North Mesa Street, C-310, El Paso, Texas 79902. Telephone: 915/832-4150, extension 2, Facsimile:

915/832-4190. E-mail: dougechlin@ibwc.state.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The USIBWC proposes to gather information necessary for the preparation of an EIS to be used to determine specific options to the maintenance of the existing Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project (LRGFCP) that could be implemented to minimize, consistent with the law and international agreements, the impact of the maintenance of the flood control project on ecological and environmental resources in the "Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas."

The EIS will discuss separately, among other laws and regulations, the requirements of international agreements with Mexico regarding the operations and maintenance of the project, the Endangered Species Act, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Land Protection Plan. It will also present an analysis of the impacts of various alternative maintenance practices, including existing ones, as affected by changes in land use practices in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The Governments of the United States and Mexico pursuant to an agreement reached in 1932, developed through the Commission a coordinated plan for an international project for protection of the Lower Rio Grande Valley in both countries against flooding of the river.

The United States portion of the project is operated to divert and convey excess floodwaters from the Rio Grande to the Gulf of Mexico through the river and interior floodways. Two diversion dams, Anzalduas and Retamal, are operated jointly by the United States and Mexico for flood control, with Anzalduas Dam also operated to divert water as required by the Treaty of February 3, 1944, "Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande" (TS 994; 59 Stat. 1219). Flood operations of the project also involve very close coordination of the United States and Mexican sections of the Commission in the operation of two upstream reservoirs (Amistad and Falcon) to control flood waters reaching the project area. The two Sections work closely on the division of excess flood waters diverted into each country. Normal operations of the project include the daily operation of Anzalduas Dam for division of waters between the two countries and inspection of the entire project to ensure flood readiness. Operations of the LRGFCP fall within the realm of the international agreements governing the project and are therefore not a subject of the EIS. The USIBWC does not have unilateral

control of flood operations of the LRGFCP and thus cannot make commitments regarding such operations, which are international and controlled by the IBWC.

Maintenance activities are divided into the following general categories: levees, interior floodways, river channel, and diversion dams. The United States portion of the project includes the following features for protection of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas: (a) Rio Grande Floodway from Penitas to the Gulf of Mexico; (b) Anzalduas Diversion Dam on the Rio Grande south of Mission; (c) Retamal Diversion Dam on the Rio Grande south of Donna; (d) interior floodways, including Banker, Main, North, and Arroyo Colorado; (e) an earth weir in the North Floodway; (f) 270 miles of river and interior floodway levees; (g) 64 miles of pilot channels within the interior floodways; (h) approximately 600 drain and irrigation structures crossing the levees; and (i) 16 bridges including seven multiple box structures crossing the pilot channel in the off-river floodway system.

Activities by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to preserve and protect what has come to be known as "The Wildlife Corridor," and joint IBWC studies of hydraulic capabilities of the flood control project have necessitated a reevaluation of USIBWC maintenance practices.

The EIS will consider a range of alternatives based on the issues and concerns associated with the project and as expressed by federal, state and local agencies, organizations, and individuals during the public scoping process. These alternatives include, continuing the maintenance under IBWC Minutes No. 212 and No. 238 (the No Action Alternative). Other alternatives may consist of modifications or changes in the various elements of current maintenance practices such as: (a) Modification of certain maintenance practices where hydraulic studies have shown project facilities are adequate to allow for establishment of wildlife corridor vegetation along the river and in the interior floodways; (b) raising of levees where needed to protect areas from flooding yet allow for establishment of wildlife corridor vegetation; and (c) relocation of levees in designated areas along the Rio Grande.

The EIS will identify, describe, and evaluate the existing environmental, cultural, sociological and economical, and recreational resources; explain the flood protection project; describe current practice toward establishment of wildlife corridors throughout the valley

to connect key wildlife areas with the river and other wildlife areas; and evaluate the impacts associated with the alternatives under consideration. Significant issues which have been identified to be addressed in the EIS include but are not limited to affects on: (a) Fish and wildlife; (b) terrestrial habitat; (c) endangered species; (d) aquatic habitats; (e) cultural resources; and (f) water quality.

Coordination has been ongoing and will continue with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to insure compliance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Cultural resources reconnaissance for the project area will be coordinated with the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of NEPA, CEQ Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), other appropriate federal regulations, and the USIBWC procedures for compliance with those regulations. Copies of the EIS will be transmitted to federal and state agencies and other interested parties for comments and will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with 40 CFR parts 1500–1508 and USIBWC procedures.

The USIBWC anticipates the Draft EIS will be made available to the public by November, 1999.

Dated: August 20, 1998.

William A. Wilcox, Jr.,

Legal Advisor.

[FR Doc. 98–22863 Filed 8–25–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–13–P

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

[Notice (98–110)]

Notice of Prospective Patent License

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

ACTION: Notice of prospective patent license.

SUMMARY: NASA hereby gives notice that Chancepts, LTD., L.L.C., of Charlotte, NC, has applied for a partially exclusive license to practice the invention described and claimed in U.S. Patent No. 5,423,400, entitled, "Mechanical Energy Absorber," which is assigned to the United States of America as represented by the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Written objections to the prospective

grant of a license should be sent to Johnson Space Center.

DATE: Responses to this notice must be received by October 26, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James M. Cate, Patent Attorney, Johnson Space Center, Mail Code HA, Houston, TX 77058–3696; telephone (281) 483–1001.

Dated: August 19, 1998.

Edward A. Frankle,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 98–22828 Filed 8–25–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7510–01–P

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

[Notice (98–112)]

Notice of Prospective Patent License

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

ACTION: Notice of prospective patent license.

SUMMARY: NASA hereby gives notice that Modern School Supplies, Inc. of Bloomfield, Connecticut, has applied for an exclusive license to practice the invention disclosed in NASA Case No. ARC 15007–1LE, entitled "Mars VE The Virtual Exploration Mission CD-ROM," for which a U.S. Provisional Patent Application was filed and assigned to the United States of America as represented by the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Written objections to the prospective grant of a license should be sent to NASA Ames Research Center.

DATE: Responses to this notice must be received by October 26, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathleen Dal Bon, Patent Counsel, NASA Ames Research Center, Mail Stop 202A–3, Moffett Field, CA 94035–1000, telephone (650) 604–5104.

Dated: August 19, 1998.

Edward A. Frankle,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 98–22830 Filed 8–25–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7510–01–P

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

[Notice (98–111)]

Notice of Prospective Patent License

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

ACTION: Notice of prospective patent license.

SUMMARY: NASA hereby gives notice the SOFTKAT, Incorporated, of Petaluma, California, has applied for an exclusive license to practice the invention disclosed in NASA Case No. ARC 15007–1LE, entitled "Mars VE The Virtual Exploration Mission CD-ROM," for which a U.S. Provisional Patent Application was filed and assigned to the United States of America as represented by the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Written objections to the prospective grant of a license should be sent to NASA Ames Research Center.

DATE: Responses to this notice must be received by October 26, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathleen Dal Bon, Patent Counsel, NASA Ames Research Center, Mail Stop 202A–3, Moffett Field, CA 94035–1000, telephone (650) 604–5104.

Dated: August 19, 1998.

Edward A. Frankle,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 98–22829 Filed 8–25–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7510–01–P

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

International Watch; Technology Watch; Notice of Meeting

TYPE: Advisory Committee Conference Calls.

AGENCY: National Council on Disability (NCD).

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the schedule of forthcoming conference calls for NCD's advisory committees—International Watch and Technology Watch. Notice of this meeting is required under Section 10(a)(1)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92–463).

INTERNATIONAL WATCH: The purpose of NCD's International Watch is to share information on international disability issues and to advise NCD's International Committee on developing policy proposals that will advocate for a foreign policy that is consistent with the values and goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

DATES: September 16, 1998, 12:00 noon–1:00 p.m. EDT.

FOR INTERNATIONAL WATCH INFORMATION, CONTACT: Mark S. Quigley, Public Affairs Specialist; National Council on Disability, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, D.C. 20004–1107; 202–272–2008 (Voice), 202–272–2074 (TTY), 202–272–2022 (Fax), mquigleyncd.gov (e-mail).

TECHNOLOGY WATCH: NCD's Technology Watch (Tech Watch) is community-