

and cultural resource values would continue to decline because of the lack of human and financial resources for their management and protection.

Alternative B: Minimum Requirements, would be similar to Alternative C in terms of provisions for resource management and protection, but would provide fewer visitor services. The visitor service emphasis would continue to be focused on the lake and on safety and visitor protection, with only limited commitments to interpretation. The existing range of recreation uses, including the use of personal watercraft, would continue.

Alternative D: Expanded Recreation, retains the current management focus on active water-based recreation, and increases the capacity of the lake to accommodate use by adding a major new developed area near the mouth of Boulder Creek. Major new utility infrastructure would be required to support this development, and South Shore Drive would be widened, realigned, and paved to provide access. The existing spectrum of recreation uses on the lake, including use of personal watercraft, would be retained. However, a zoning plan would separate the reservoir into a low-speed zone, where personal watercraft use would be discouraged, and an unrestricted zone where all types of activities would be accommodated.

Background

The Draft EIS/GMP was released for a 75-day public review ending November 30, 1998. Altogether nine public meetings were held in local communities. Both the Draft and Final documents evaluate the same Proposed Action and Alternatives. The environmental consequences of the alternatives are fully documented in the Final EIS. No significant adverse impacts are foreseen from the three Action Alternatives, because the plans include provisions to avoid or mitigate potentially significant impacts. However, the No-Action Alternative would result in significant long-term impacts to natural and cultural resources due to insufficient management and protection.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Written comments or questions regarding the final general management plan and environmental impact statement should be directed to the Superintendent, Whiskeytown NRA, PO Box 188, Whiskeytown, California 96095. Copies may be requested by contacting the Superintendent at (530) 241-6584. The no-action period for the FEIS/GMP will extend for thirty days after the

Environmental Protection Agency's notification of the filing of the document is published in the **Federal Register**. Subsequently, the National Park Service will publish a notice of the Record of Decision in the **Federal Register**. The official responsible for the decision is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region; the official responsible for implementation is the Superintendent, Whiskeytown Unit.

Dated: September 1, 1999.

John J. Reynolds,

Regional Director, Pacific West Region.

[FR Doc. 99-23763 Filed 9-10-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Primary Restoration Plan for Santa Cruz Island, Channel Islands National Park, Santa Barbara County, California; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: Pursuant to § 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Pub. L. 91-190) and Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1508.22), the National Park Service intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for a Primary Restoration Plan that focused on removing non-native species from Santa Cruz Island, Channel Islands National Park, California. During the ensuing conservation planning-environmental analysis process, comprehensive management alternatives will be developed which will address recovery of the island's natural communities. Throughout the restoration planning process will be conducted in consultation with affected federal agencies, State and local governments, tribal groups, and interested organizations and individuals.

BACKGROUND: The National Park Service completed a General Management Plan (GMP) and Environmental Impact Statement for Channel Islands National Park in 1985. The park's Resources Management Plan was approved in 1994 (and last updated in 1998). Both documents set clear direction and priorities for responding to invasive species. This focused restoration planning effort is intended to expand and refine that management direction, with the focused objective of preparing a Primary Restoration Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (PRP/EIS) specific to Santa Cruz Island. The PRP/EIS will identify, analyze, and select the immediate, critical management actions necessary to

initiate recovery of the island's natural communities. Of special concern is the pressing need to address alternative methods for removal of feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*) and control of fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), an invasive alien plant species. Based upon scientific review, at this time it is anticipated that bringing management and control efforts to bear primarily upon these two species would facilitate the restoration of many other native ecosystem components. The fennel and feral pig initiatives will be implemented in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, Santa Cruz Island Preserve.

SCOPING: The NPS is hereby initiating the scoping phase with a request for comments and information from interested individuals, organizations, and agencies. Responses are encouraged, and may address current issues and concerns, relevant research, immediate management options, mitigation strategies, future direction for recovery efforts, and other factors relevant to a comprehensive restoration planning process. Written comments must be postmarked not later than November 30, 1999, and should be directed to the Superintendent, Channel Islands National Park, 1901 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura, CA 93001. In addition, public scoping sessions are scheduled for October 20 (Ventura) and October 27 (Santa Barbara). Details as to time and location will be announced via local and regional press releases, notices distributed to area libraries, and direct mailings.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Periodic information updates about various aspects of the restoration planning process will be distributed via direct mailings, the park's website (<http://www.nps.gov/chis/naturalresources/restoration.html>), and regional and local news media. To request placement on the PRP/EIS mailing list, interested parties may contact Mr. Steve Ortega, Restoration Biologist, at (805) 658-5784 or CHIS_Restoration@NPS.gov.

REVIEW AND DECISION PROCESS: The Draft PRP/EIS is anticipated to be available for public review and comment during winter-spring, 1999-2000. Availability of the Draft document for review and written comment will be announced by formal Notice in the **Federal Register**, through local and regional news media, the internet, and direct mailing. At this time it is anticipated that the Final PRP/EIS will be completed during October, 2000. Subsequently, notice of an approved Record of Decision would be published in the **Federal Register** not sooner than thirty (30) days after the Final document is distributed. This is

expected to occur by December, 2000. The official responsible for the decision is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region, National Park Service; the official responsible for implementation is the Superintendent, Channel Islands National Park.

Dated: August 31, 1999.

John J. Reynolds,

Regional Director, Pacific West Region.

[FR Doc. 99-23765 Filed 9-10-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to Amend the General Management Plan for the Backcountry of Denali National Park and Preserve

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement, Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an amendment to the general management plan, a backcountry management plan and an accompanying environmental impact statement (EIS) for Denali National Park and Preserve. The purpose of the management plan and EIS is to formulate a comprehensive plan for the backcountry, including designated wilderness, of Denali National Park and Preserve that will provide management direction over the next 15-20 years. This new management plan will amend the 1986 General Management Plan for the backcountry of Denali National Park and Preserve. The backcountry of Denali National Park and Preserve is defined to include all of the park except for those areas designated specifically for development in the entrance area and along the road corridor. Many issues to be addressed in the backcountry management plan would affect the entire park, including developed areas. The NPS has initiated this management plan and EIS to address the rapidly growing level and diversity of uses, resource management needs, and the anticipated demand for future uses not foreseen or addressed in the 1986 General Management Plan.

Primary issues that the management plan and EIS will address are types and levels of visitor use, the visitor experience, resource protection, subsistence use, facility development and maintenance, administration of the

backcountry management program, coordination with other land management agencies, research and other scientific uses, motorized uses including snowmachine and aircraft use, and fire management.

The proposed action in the management plan and EIS will include guidelines for the types and levels of a variety of backcountry uses and outline methods for resource protection. The proposal will allocate visitor use of the backcountry to prevent user conflicts and to continue providing for high quality visitor experiences and diverse opportunities. The proposed action will include zoning to provide for a spectrum of visitor opportunities ranging from motorized use areas to "quiet zones" where motorized uses would be prohibited. This will address visitor and management concerns about the existing conditions in which user conflicts occur.

Possible alternatives in the EIS will propose variations in the types and levels of backcountry uses. One alternative to the proposed action will be to provide for expanded uses similar to the level and types of uses in national parks in the lower 48. A second alternative will limit recreational and other backcountry uses so that Denali National Park and Preserve would be more comparable to other large national parks in Alaska with less visitor use. A no action alternative will also be included.

The NPS is seeking ideas on possible alternatives. The NPS will hold open house scoping sessions in fall 1999 in Fairbanks, the Denali National Park area, Talkeetna/Trapper Creek, and Anchorage. Specific dates, times, and locations of these scoping sessions will be announced in area newspapers. The NPS will continue to meet with other government agencies, organizations, and the public for information sharing.

The draft management plan/EIS is anticipated to be available for public review in late summer 2000. Public meetings will be scheduled in the Denali National Park/Healy area, the Talkeetna/Trapper Creek area, Fairbanks, and Anchorage, Alaska, after release of the draft management plan/EIS. The final EIS is expected to be released during summer 2001.

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. However, we will not 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 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:

Stephen P. Martin, Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve, PO Box 9, Denali Park, Alaska 99755. Telephone (907) 683-2294.

Dated: September 1, 1999.

John Quinley,

Acting Regional Director, Alaska.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Availability of Plan of Operations and Environmental Assessment for Continuing Operations of 6 Gas Wells; Pantera Energy Company, (Lake Meredith National Recreation Area), Hutchinson County, TX

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 9.52(b) of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations that the National Park Service has received from Pantera Energy Company a Plan of Operations for the continuing operations of 6 gas wells within Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, Hutchinson County, Texas.

The Plan of Operation and Environmental Assessment are available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days from the publication date of this notice in the Office of the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area/Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, 419 East Broadway, Fritch, TX. Copies are available from the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area/Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, Post Office Box 1460, Fritch, Texas 79036 and will be sent