

of the open house will be made in the local press. The public is encouraged to attend the scoping meeting and send written comments and suggestions concerning preparation of the EIS to Mr. Thomas Bradley, Superintendent, Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, PO Box 708, 401 Hamilton Street, Saint Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024. The NPS will accept comments at this address at any time during the EIS process. However, to facilitate timely identification of issues and impact topics to be addressed in the EIS, the NPS recommends that initial comments be submitted by November 1, 2002.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There may also be circumstances where we would withhold from the 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, officials, organizations, or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Jill Medland, Compliance Specialist, Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, PO Box 708, 401 Hamilton Street, Saint Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024, telephone 715-483-3284, Extension 609.

Dated: September 4, 2002.

William W. Schenk,

Regional Director, Midwest Region.

[FR Doc. 02-24066 Filed 9-20-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the Feasibility Study (Special Resource Study) on the

Preservation of Civil War Battlefields and Related Historic Sites along the Vicksburg Campaign Trail in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. These sites will each be examined with a view to how they might best be preserved and linked together into the Vicksburg Campaign Trail. The study process entails evaluating the national significance, suitability, feasibility, and management options for each identified site according to NPS standards and criteria established by the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields (1993).

For each site, experts and professional historians will determine whether it qualifies as Tier I (nationally significant), Tier II (regionally or state significant), or Tier III (locally significant). Based on this evaluation, some sites may be recommended for addition to the National Park System. Protection and interpretation of sites not recommended for addition to the National Park System will be sought via other arrangements, that may include management by other Federal agencies, State or local governments, non-profit organizations or private owners. These different management options form the basis for various alternatives, the environmental impacts of which will be analyzed in the DEIS. Through the scoping process, the NPS welcomes suggestions from the public both of potential sites and possible management options.

DATES: Public meetings will be conducted during the course of the project. Additional scoping opportunities such as public meetings, newsletters, etc. will be announced in the local media. Representatives of the NPS will be available to discuss issues, resource concerns, and the planning process at each of the public meetings. This Notice will also serve as an additional scoping method. Persons who may be interested in or affected by the Feasibility Study/DEIS are invited to participate in the scoping process by responding to this Notice with written comments. The scoping process will help define issues or problems facing the feasibility study.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the Vicksburg Campaign Trail Feasibility Study, potential sites, management options, and environmental issues that should be addressed should be directed to Bill Koning, National Park Service Planner, Denver Service Center, PO Box 25287, 12795 W. Alameda Parkway, Denver, CO 80225-0287.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for information concerning

dates and background on the feasibility study, including a brochure describing the process should be directed to William O. Nichols, Superintendent, Vicksburg National Military Park, 3201 Clay Street, Vicksburg, MS 39183, (601) 636-0583, or Bill Koning, National Park Service Planner, Denver Service Center, PO Box 25287, 12795 W. Alameda Parkway, Denver, CO 80225-0287, (303) 969-2390.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On July 4, 1863, after an eight-month campaign and siege, heavily-fortified Vicksburg, Mississippi capitulated to Federal forces commanded by General Ulysses S. Grant. This surrender gave the Union control of the Lower Mississippi River and effectively cut the Confederate States of America in half. It was regarded by many at the time, including President Abraham Lincoln, as one of the pivotal events of that great conflict; contemporary Civil War historians continue to regard it in that light. Grant's monumental campaign to capture the "Gibraltar of the Confederacy" is seen by military historians as a brilliant logistical exhibition, encompassing long and difficult flanking maneuvers, cavalry raids, pitched battles, naval engagements, and siege warfare. Grant's triumph at Vicksburg paved the way for his subsequent battles at Chattanooga in November 1863, and then—as commander of all Union armies—at the Wilderness and Petersburg; ultimately, it made possible his starring role at Appomattox as well as his eventual election as President of the United States.

In November 2000, Public Law 106-487 authorized a feasibility study on the preservation of Civil War battlefields along the Vicksburg Campaign Trail. The task is to examine and evaluate a variety of sites in four states associated with the Civil War events of the Vicksburg Campaign. The feasibility study is to be completed within three years and is to examine a large number (over 400) and wide variety of sites in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Each site will be evaluated for national significance, as well as the suitability and feasibility of adding it to the National Park System. This DEIS will examine the potential environmental effects of different management options for the sites found to be eligible for inclusion in the National Park System.

The legislation directs a review of current NPS programs, policies, and criteria to determine the most appropriate means of preservation; to make evaluations for the establishment

of a site and management entity consisting of a unit of government or private non-profit organization; and to make recommendations to the states regarding the management, preservation, and interpretation of natural, cultural and historical resources associated with the various sites. Furthermore, the legislation directs that partnerships among Federal, State, and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector be identified where they would provide an effective means of preserving specific battlefield sites. Finally, the legislation requires that methods of ensuring continued local involvement in the management of battlefield sites be explored.

The responsible official for this DEIS is Jerry Belson, Regional Director, National Park Service, Southeast Region, 100 Alabama Street SW., Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

Dated: June 19, 2002.

W. Thomas Brown,

Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region.

[FR Doc. 02-24064 Filed 9-20-02; 8:45 am]

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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 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Backcountry Management Plan, General Management Plan Amendment, and Environmental Impact Statement, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) is amending the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve General Management Plan with a Backcountry Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS). Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve was established by the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). With passage of ANILCA, Congress designated 8.9 million acres of wilderness within the park and preserve and set forth special provisions for management in recognition of the unique situations and traditional lifeways of 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 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The backcountry currently is defined to include the park's designated wilderness and other non-developed areas of the park. The Nabesna and McCarthy roads would not be included in this process. Tracts in private ownership are excluded, including the settled areas of McCarthy/Kennecott, Slana, Nabesna, Chisana, and May Creek. The airstrips associated with these settlements would be excluded as well.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve 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 Glacier Bay 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 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve 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 1986 General Management Plan. Specific topics to be addressed in the plan/EIS include, but are not limited to: backcountry hiking, sport hunting, mountaineering, aviation, boating, snowmobiling, dogsledding, commercial services, administrative and scientific/research activities, and the various facilities related to these activities.

The proposed action and other action alternatives will assess variations in the type 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 Wrangell-St. Elias 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 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Glacier Bay

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 Wrangell-St. Elias draft plan/EIS is anticipated to be available for public review in the spring of 2005. 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 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: Gary Candelaria, Superintendent, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, P.O. Box 439, Copper Center, Alaska 99573. Telephone (907) 822-5234.

Dated: August 22, 2002.

Ralph H. Tingey,

Acting Regional Director, Alaska.

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