

determined suitable or unsuitable this week.

Dated: March 25, 1999.

Fred Karnas, Jr.,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development.

[FR Doc. 99-7825 Filed 4-1-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4210-29-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Arid Lands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Arid Lands Ecology Reserve

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated Environmental Assessment for the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve in the Arid Lands National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Arid Lands Ecology (ALE) Reserve. The Service manages the ALE Reserve pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding, and an associated permit, with the Department of Energy (DOE). The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with Service CCP policy and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations to accomplish the following: (1) advise other agencies and the public of our intentions; (2) obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the plan and environmental document; and (3) provide notice that the Service is proposing an administrative boundary to incorporate lands it manages for DOE into the National Wildlife Refuge System.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before May 3, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Address comments and requests for more information to: Dave Goeke, Refuge Manager, Arid Lands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 3250 Port of Benton Blvd., Richland, WA 99352.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave Goeke, Refuge Manager, at (509) 371-1801.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The ALE Reserve, formally known as the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, is being managed by the Service under agreement with DOE. The Service

entered into a 25-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 20, 1997, for the protection and management of the Hanford Site area known as the ALE Reserve. Pursuant to the MOU, the FWS is to prepare a comprehensive plan to govern management activities on the ALE Reserve. DOE is a cooperating agency on the CCP/EA. The CCP/EA will be prepared by the Service, which will consult with DOE during the process.

Concurrent with the planning process, the FWS will evaluate public comments on the EA and determine whether to establish a refuge boundary. The refuge boundary would permit the Service to administer inclusive areas as part of the NWRS once acquired or when overlaying management authority has been granted by permit from DOE. The refuge boundary would include the ALE Reserve, but final delineation of a boundary will depend on additional information and public involvement.

The Service started the comprehensive conservation planning process for the ALE Reserve study area in June, 1998. Several internal Service meetings were conducted to develop a timeline and strategy for involving the public in the planning process. Since then, the Service has met with the Benton County Commission and with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to discuss issues and concerns regarding management of the ALE Reserve. Also, the Service conducted a public meeting and open house in Richland, Washington, on January 14, 1999. Approximately 60 people attended the open house and approximately 120 participated in the public meeting. Information from those meetings can be provided by Refuge staff at the address given above. A newsletter has been distributed and approximately 80 people have provided written comments in response.

The CCP guides management decisions and identifies refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving wildlife and habitat management purposes. Public input into the process is encouraged. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the ALE Reserve and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The CCP will support the requirements of the MOU and will address the following topics:

(A) Habitat management;

(B) Wildlife population management, including federally-listed endangered and threatened species, migratory birds, and other native wildlife species;

(C) Public use management, including hunting, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation

(D) Cultural resource identification and protection

The ALE Reserve is a 120 square-mile tract of land in the southwestern portion of the Hanford Site. The Hanford Site was acquired by the U.S. Government in 1943 as a national security area for the production of weapons-grade plutonium. The ALE Reserve was managed for many years for DOE by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. The ALE Reserve generally is inaccessible to the public, though limited access is occasionally granted. Although part of the Hanford Site, the ALE Reserve was established to preserve a vegetation type that once covered great expanses in the West. The site is also designated as the Rattlesnake Hills Research Natural Area.

Alternatives (and their effects) that address issues and management strategies associated with the CCP topics will be included in the environmental document. With the publication of this notice, the public is encouraged to send written comments on these and other issues, courses of action that the Service should consider, and potential impacts that could result from implementation of the CCP on the ALE Reserve. All comments received from individuals on environmental documents become part of the official public record. Requests for such comments will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations [40 CFR 1506.6(f)], and other Service and Departmental policy and procedures. When requested, the Service generally will provide the names and addresses of individuals who wrote comments. However, telephone numbers will not be provided in response to such requests to the extent permissible by law. Additionally, public comment letters are not required to identify the author or the author's address. Such comments may be submitted anonymously to the Service.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NEPA Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: March 26, 1999.

Cynthia U. Barry,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1.

[FR Doc. 99-8135 Filed 4-1-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

United States Geological Survey

Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI)

AGENCY: United States Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of an open meeting of the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI).

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of a meeting of the ACWI. This meeting of the ACWI is to discuss broad policy-related topics relating to national water initiatives, and to hear reports from ACWI subgroups. The proposed agenda will include a series of discussions concerning various U.S. Government policies and programs related to the development and dissemination of water information.

The ACWI has been established under the authority of the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum 92-01 and the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The purpose of the ACWI is to provide a forum for water-information users and professionals to advise the Federal Government of activities and plans which may improve the effectiveness of meeting the Nation's water information needs. More than 30 organizations have been invited by the Secretary of the Interior to name representatives to the ACWI. These include Federal departments, State, local, and tribal government organizations, industry, academia, agriculture, environmental organizations, professional societies, and volunteer groups.

DATES: The formal meeting will convene at 8:00 a.m., on May 18, 1999, and will adjourn on May 19, 1999 at 3:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Sheraton Reston Hotel, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Ethan T. Smith (Executive Secretary), Chief, Water Information Coordination Program, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, 417 National Center, Reston, VA 20192. Telephone: 703-648-5022; Fax: 703-648-5295.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This meeting is open to the public. A half hour will be set aside for public comment. Persons wishing to make a brief presentation (up to 5 minutes) are

asked to provide a written request with a description of the general subject to Dr. Smith at the above address no later than noon, April 27, 1999. It is requested that 40 copies of a written statement be submitted at the time of the meeting for distribution to members of the ACWI and placement in the official file. Any member of the public may submit written information and (or) comments to Dr. Smith for distribution at the ACWI.

Dated: March 26, 1999.

Lewis V. Wade,

Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Information, U.S. Geological Survey.

[FR Doc. 99-8110 Filed 4-1-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-31-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NV-030-1220-00; Closure Notice No. NV-030-99-001]

Emergency Closure of Federal Lands

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that certain public lands in the vicinity of the Peterson Mountain Natural Area, Washoe County, Nevada, are closed to all motorized vehicles. This closure is necessary due to unauthorized road construction and off-road vehicle use which is causing considerable adverse effects to soil, vegetation and wildlife habitat in the area. It is possible that cultural resources also are being impacted.

DATES: This closure goes into effect on April 1, 1999, and will remain in effect until the Manager, Carson City Field Office, determines it is no longer needed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margaret Jensen, Assistant Manager, Division of Nonrenewable Resources, Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, Nevada 89701. Telephone (775) 885-6100.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The authorities for this closure are 43 CFR 8341.2, 43 CFR 8342.3 and 43 CFR 8364.1. Any person who fails to comply with a closure order is subject to arrest and fines in accordance with applicable provisions of 18 USC 3571 and/or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months.

This closure applies to all motorized vehicles excluding (1) any emergency or law enforcement vehicles while being used for emergency purposes, and (2) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized in writing by the Manager, Carson City Field Office. The public lands affected by this closure are located just east of Petersen Mountain and,

while excluding main access roads in this area, include all lands being used as an unauthorized motorcycle race course within:

Mt. Diablo Meridian

T.22N., R.18E.
Sec. 11

A map of the area closed to motorized vehicles is posted in the Carson City Field Office.

Dated: March 23, 1999.

John O. Singlaub,

Manager, Carson City Field Office.

[FR Doc. 99-8109 Filed 4-1-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-HC-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR-025-09-1430-01; G-0156]

Temporary Closure of Public Land

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management (BLM), DOI.

ACTION: Notice of Temporary Closure of Public Land.

The following described public land is being temporarily closed to motorized vehicular traffic pursuant to 43 CFR 8364.1:

Willamette Meridian

T.23S., R.26E.,
Sec. 28, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 29, SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

Those portions of the above-described land west of the Chickahominy Reservoir Access Road; south and west of the waterline of Chickahominy Reservoir; and, north of U.S. Highway 20.

The following exceptions apply:

1. Law enforcement, emergency personnel, and Bureau of Land Management and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife employees while engaged in official duties without a written waiver.

2. Motorized water craft without a written waiver.

3. Other individuals in the possession of a written waiver who, as determined by the Authorized Officer, have a demonstrated need to travel by motorized vehicle in the area being closed.

The closure is necessary to prevent damage to roads and adjacent resources during extremely wet springtime conditions. Unrestricted traffic during this time of year is creating excessive impacts to soil and vegetative resources resulting in erosion and sedimentation of the reservoir. Additionally, funds are