

preparation of the Gunnison Gorge NCA/Wilderness plan to examine proposed issues and planning criteria. This scoping process will also include an evaluation of the existing Resource Management Plan in the context of NCA management.

ADDRESSES: For further information and/or to have your name added to the NCA/Wilderness Plan mailing list, contact Karen Tucker, Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office, 2505 South Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401; Telephone (970) 240-5309; Fax. (970) 240-5367.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area and Wilderness Plan will replace the existing Recreation Area Management Plan for the Gunnison Gorge Recreation Lands, Colorado (RAMP, 1985) and Addition to the Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP Add., 1988) and amend the Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS, 1987). Existing decisions in those documents which are still valid will be carried forward into the new NCA Management Plan. The Uncompahgre RMP/EIS and Gunnison Gorge Recreation Area Management Plans are located in the Uncompahgre Field Office in Montrose, Colorado.

The NCA planning area includes the 57,725 acres Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area and 17,700 acres Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area included within the NCA boundary. Other BLM lands immediately adjacent to the NCA, Wilderness Area, and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park will also be included within the planning area boundary. These lands include, but are not limited to the former Tri-State lands, approximately 5,000 acres located at the northwest end of the NCA, public lands in the Peach Valley and Flat Top area on the NCA's west and south border, and public lands on the east side of the Gunnison River in the Red Canyon and Fruitland Mesa areas.

Public and focus groups meetings will be held throughout the plan scoping and preparation period. Meeting locations will be rotated between the towns of Montrose, Delta, Olathe, Hotchkiss, Crawford, and Paonia in order to ensure local community participation and input. An interactive NCA web site will provide additional opportunities for public comment and participation. Written comments will also be accepted throughout the planning process at the address shown above. A newsletter will be sent out to all interested individuals

and groups requesting comments on the planning proposal. Meetings and comment deadlines will be announced through the local news media, in the newsletter, and on the BLM NCA web site. Additional public participation opportunities will be provided for comment on the alternatives and upon publishing the Draft NCA/EIS.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the BLM office in Montrose, Colorado. Some of the issues that have been identified in the initial phases of the NCA Plan process include: Water quantity and quality, water rights, landscape health, riparian and aquatic habitat protection, threatened and endangered specie habitat protection, wildlife habitat quality and fragmentation, declining biodiversity, reintroduction of native species, and noxious weed control. Other factors to be considered include recreation and resource use, protection of wilderness, riparian, and scenic values, the level and intensity of recreation management, including allocation of commercial and private river and upland use, upgrade and new construction of recreation facilities, cultural resource protection and interpretation, grazing of livestock, management of the mineral estate on adjacent areas not withdrawn from mineral entry and location, public access, transportation and utility corridors, off highway vehicle designations, and woodland product harvest.

The following disciplines will be represented on the BLM planning team: Wilderness, recreation, wildlife, fisheries, range management, forestry, geology, realty, soils, and hydrology. Planning criteria include: policy, legal, and regulatory constraints, The Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999 (P. L. 106-76, October 21, 1999), the Wilderness Act, public land health standards, as well as other requirements to maintain scenic values, recreational values and meet public recreation demands, determine the level of management intensity required, determine the need for land or easement acquisition, and set management objectives to protect the priority resources within the NCA and Wilderness.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999 designated the 57, 25 acre Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (NCA) and Wilderness Area (17,700 acres) which are managed by the Bureau

of Land Management Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) in Montrose, Colorado. The Act also upgraded the former Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument (which is contiguous to the NCA) to National Park status and expanded the National Park with the transfer of approximately 7,000 acres of former BLM managed land to the National Park Service. A National Conservation Area or NCA is the designation given by the U.S. Congress to special lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management to permanently protect and conserve identified resource values of national interest. The 1999 Act directs the BLM to develop a "comprehensive plan for the long-range protection and management of the Conservation Area" within four years of the designation date.

Dated: August 10, 2000.

Allan J. Belt,

Uncompahgre Field Office Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ General Management Plan, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Lassen, Plumas, Shasta and Tehama Counties, California; Notice of Availability

SUMMARY: Pursuant to § 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190 as amended), the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, has prepared a draft environmental impact statement assessing the potential impacts of the proposed General Management Plan for Lassen Volcanic National Park, located in northeastern California. The park currently contains approximately 79,000 acres of designated Wilderness. The subject document identifies and analyzes four alternatives (and appropriate mitigation strategies) for the management and use of Lassen Volcanic National Park over the next 15 years.

Proposed Plan and Alternatives: The draft environmental impact statement includes three "action" alternatives and one "no action" (existing conditions) alternative.

Alternative A: No Action, assumes that physical facilities would remain largely unchanged and that staffing and operational funding would remain relatively constant over the planning period.

Alternative B: Resource Preservation and Basic Visitor Service, provides a program for preserving, and where

necessary, restoring significant park resources. It includes significant staffing and funding increases for the park's resource management functions, restores key elements of the park's infrastructure, provides for restoration of several specific sites having natural system conflicts, establishes a standards-based management zoning system, and proposes designation of approximately 25,000 additional acres as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The plan also includes program increases and visitor facility improvements to provide for quality basic visitor service.

Alternative C: Resource Protection and Enhanced Visitor Experience. This alternative is the proposed General Management Plan for Lassen Volcanic National Park. It includes all the features of Alternative B, and provides enhancement to visitor experience by making more facilities available during winter months, and increasing interpretive services, facilities, and information.

Alternative D: Resource Protection and Expanded Visitor Opportunities, includes all of the features of Alternative C and, in addition, provides for expansion of family and group campgrounds at several locations. It also expands winter access at the north entrance by plowing the park road an additional 9 miles to the Devastated Area, and keeping one loop of the campground open for winter camping.

Significant adverse environmental impacts would be expected to result from Alternative A as a number of environmental resources are undergoing deterioration under current conditions. All of the action alternatives include programs to arrest the deterioration of resources and mitigation features to avoid or reduce impacts from implementation of project features.

Comments: Persons wishing to provide information or express any concerns about management issues and future land management direction are encouraged to comment. All responses must be postmarked not later than October 31, 2000, and these letters should be addressed to the Superintendent, Lassen Volcanic National Park, P.O. Box 100, Mineral, California 96063-0100. Questions regarding the proposed plan or public meetings should be directed to the Superintendent either by mail in care of the above address, or else by telephone at (530) 595-4444.

If individuals submitting comments request that their name or/and address be withheld from public disclosure, it will be honored to the extent allowable by law. Such requests must be stated

prominently in the beginning of the comments. There also may be circumstances wherein the NPS will withhold a respondent's identity as allowable by law. As always: NPS will make available to public inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses; and, anonymous comments may not be considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Seven public meetings will be held in communities in the vicinity of the park. Dates and locations are shown below. All meetings with one exception will be held from 7-8:30 pm (a morning meeting will be held 10-12 am on September 9).

August 29—Redding Community Center, 777 Cypress Avenue, Redding.

August 30—Red Bluff Community/Senior Center, 1500 South Jackson St., Red Bluff.

August 31—City Council Chamber, 421 Main Street, Chico.

September 5—Chester Memorial Hall, 225 Gay Street, Chester.

September 6—Veteran's Memorial Building, 1205 Main Street, Susanville.

September 7—Shingletown Fire Hall, 1 mile east of Shingletown on Highway 44.

September 9—Mineral School, 38355 Scenic Avenue, Mineral.

Decision: The official responsible for the final decision is Regional Director, Pacific West Region; subsequently the official who will be responsible for implementation will be the Superintendent, Lassen Volcanic National Park.

Dated: August 11, 2000.

William C. Walters,

Deputy Regional Director, Pacific West.

[FR Doc. 00-21086 Filed 8-17-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Final Environmental Impact Statement, Interagency Bison Management Plan for the State of Montana and Yellowstone National Park

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Availability of final environmental impact statement plan.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Park Service announces the availability of a final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming.

DATES: The DEIS was on public review from June 12, 1998 through November 3, 1998. Responses to public comment are addressed in the FEIS. There will be a 30-day public review on the FEIS. Comments must be post-marked by October 2, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the FEIS are available from the Superintendent, Yellowstone NP, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 82190. Public reading copies of the FEIS will be available for review at the following locations:

Office of the Superintendent,
Yellowstone NP, Yellowstone
National Park, WY 82190, Telephone:
(307) 344-2010.

Planning and Environmental Quality,
Intermountain Support Office—
Denver, National Park Service, P.O.
Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287,
Telephone: (303) 969-2851.

Office of Public Affairs, National Park
Service, Department of Interior, 18th
and C Streets NW, Washington, D.C.
20240, Telephone: (202) 208-6843.

Comments on the FEIS should be sent to: Bison Management Plan EIS Team,
Yellowstone National Park, Attn: Sarah
Bransom, YCR, PO Box 168,
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FEIS presents 8 alternatives with a full range of management techniques for maintaining a wild, free ranging bison population while minimizing the risk of transmitting the disease Brucellosis from bison to domestic cattle on public and private lands in Montana adjacent to Yellowstone National Park. Management techniques used in various combinations to meet the plan's objectives include capturing and testing bison for Brucellosis, quarantining, slaughtering, hunting, and vaccination.

The FEIS in particular evaluates the environmental consequences of the proposed action and the other alternatives on the following topics: bison population, recreation, livestock operations, socioeconomic, threatened, endangered and sensitive species, other wildlife species, human health, cultural resources, and visual resources.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Superintendent, Yellowstone National
Park, at the above address and
telephone number.

John A. King,

*Acting Director, Intermountain Region,
National Park Service.*

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