

planning standards for national wildlife refuges and strengthens the compatibility standard for national wildlife refuges by defining a mission for the National Wildlife Refuge System and specifying that uses of refuges must be compatible with both the purpose(s) of the individual refuge and mission of the System. It also clarifies that if there are conflicts between the purpose(s) of a refuge and the mission of the System, the conflict must be resolved to first protect the purpose(s) of the refuge. Furthermore, the Service is directed to recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreation as the priority public uses of the System, facilitate compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, and provide increased opportunities for families to experience compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.

Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge was established " * * * as a range and breeding ground for antelope and other species of wildlife * * * " by Executive Order 7523 on Dec. 21, 1936. The 1994 CMP for the refuge emphasized wildlife habitat management actions, de-emphasized wildlife population management actions, and did not establish population objectives for pronghorn. Pronghorn population numbers have fluctuated widely since the establishment of the refuge, and the population is currently declining despite significant habitat improvements that have occurred since the Service began implementing the CMP in 1994.

This decline has surfaced debate over pronghorn population objectives and the role of wildlife population management in meeting these objectives and other refuge goals including the public use direction provided by Congress in the Refuge Improvement Act. The existing management plan provides that "wildlife populations, with few exceptions, would be managed through managing upland and wetland habitat" on the refuge. The limited direction provided for population management in the CMP, such as in the case of predator control, is ambiguous and has resulted in public controversy over interpretations of the CMP's intent.

The Service is initiating a public process to develop a PMP that is intended to resolve some of the differences in interpretation of the CMP and to provide more detailed direction on pronghorn management that reflects recent legislative direction and biological information that has been gathered since the CMP's completion. The PMP will establish population management objectives for the

pronghorn herd that uses the Refuge, develop population management actions to meet these objectives, develop decision criteria that could be used to initiate these population management actions, and establish a link between these population objectives and the wildlife-dependent recreational uses the Service is directed to provide. No changes are contemplated to the habitat-related objectives or actions approved in the 1994 CMP.

The range of alternative pronghorn population management strategies being considered for the PMP at this time include to: (1) maximize the pronghorn population and increase wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities in a manner consistent with the habitat objectives of the 1994 CMP (intensive population management intervention to benefit pronghorn); (2) define and maintain minimum pronghorn population limits that will meet public expectations about the purpose of the refuge and demand for wildlife recreation (limited, incremental population management intervention); and (3) manage the pronghorn population primarily through management of refuge habitat as provided in the 1994 CMP (population management intervention only when the species is at risk) (no action). The alternatives that will be considered in the PMP and supplemental EIS are expected to evolve through the public participation process.

The supplemental EIS would identify the environmental consequences of changes and additions the proposed PMP and its alternatives would make to the CMP 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), and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: October 5, 1998.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 98-29503 Filed 11-3-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Receipt of Petition for Reassumption of Jurisdiction From the Native Village of Barrow

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice is published in exercise of authority delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs by 209 DM 8.

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-608) provides, subject to certain specified conditions, that Indian tribes may petition the Secretary of the Interior for reassumption of jurisdiction over Indian child custody proceedings.

This is notice that the petition has been received by the Secretary from the Native Village of Barrow for the reassumption of jurisdiction over Indian child custody proceedings. The petition is under review and may be inspected at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Social Services, 1849 C Street, NW, Room 4603 MIB, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Dated: October 23, 1998.

Kevin Gover,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

[FR Doc. 98-29556 Filed 11-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-660-99-1610-00]

Shooting Closure on Public Lands in San Diego County, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, DOI.

ACTION: Closure Order.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is permanently closing 320 acres of public land near La Posta, southern San Diego County, California, to recreational target shooting. The closure is necessary due to safety hazards, fire danger, noise nuisance, litter and resource degradation and land use conflicts. BLM intends to eliminate these safety and environmental problems almost entirely by closing the area to target shooting. The closure will affect most of the recreational target shooters using BLM public lands in southern San Diego County. It will not affect licensed hunters in the pursuit of lawful game or law enforcement officers while in the performance of their official duties.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The closure is effective November 4, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Hansen, Acting Field Manager, USDI Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, 690 W. Garnet Avenue, P.O. Box 1260, North Palm Springs, CA 92258-1260. Telephone: (760) 251-4800.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The legal description for the Federally-managed lands permanently closed to recreational shooting (herein known as the La Posta parcel) is as follows: Township 17 South, Range 5 East, Section 25, East ½ SBM. The parcel is east of La Posta Road, approximately 4.5 miles south of Old Highway 30. The 320 acres parcel is a flat open field with a hill lying to the east.

On May 6, 1994, BLM held a public meeting on-site at the La Posta shooting area. Various safety concerns were expressed by local residents, causing BLM to consider better ways to manage the La Posta site or close it. Since that time, BLM has held more meetings and received numerous comments from the public, both opposing the shooting area and supporting it. Due to the growing list of problems associated with the shooting area, a temporary emergency closure was executed on June 26, 1996. Permanent closure of this area is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Safety Hazards

The eastern hill should serve as an adequate backstop for shooters placing their targets near its base. But many shooters place their targets high on the hill, trying to get a longer range. When doing this, bullets ricochet or carry directly east over the hill. Three quarters of a mile of down range on the other side of the hill lies a ranch. Investigations by BLM law enforcement indicate that horses, cattle and buildings have been hit by bullets and there have been near misses with people. There is also concern about the Campo historic train that runs through the ranch on Sundays. Immediately south and even closer to the shooting area lies another ranch that is frequently used by recreational groups and campers. Although shooters are supposed to shoot east into the hill, shots have been directed south towards this ranch, striking the house and resulting in near misses with people.

2. Fire Danger

From 1986 to 1992, the U.S. Forest Service had 25 fires near the La Posta site that were caused by target shooters. In 1994, the BLM La Posta site itself half burned by a fire started on the adjacent U.S. Navy shooting range. BLM has fire orders prohibiting the use of tracer rounds, steel core and incendiary types of ammunition, but evidence shows that target shooters are still causing many of the fires in the local area. Without the La Posta site being significantly graded, fire is a serious threat to the nearby residents.

3. Noise Nuisance

Prior to the emergency closure, on a busy day as many as 15 groups of shooters used the La Posta site at one time. The shooting started at dawn and continued nonstop until dark. One could hear the shooting from as far as five miles away. For the ranch only 500 feet to the south and other nearby residents on La Posta Road, it was a major nuisance.

4. Litter and Resource Degradation

The La Posta site used to be a natural area that attracted local hikers, hunters and dog trainers. Now targets, trash, broken glass and shells litter the area. Two major cleanups organized by local gun stores helped, but only temporarily. Despite frequent patrols by BLM law enforcement, and many concerned shooters and others picking up after themselves, the site deteriorated more each year.

5. Land Use Conflicts

The La Posta site was leased for cattle grazing long before it became a popular shooting area. The grazing lease is still valid yet the rancher is unable to use the area. BLM has also previously issued an apiary permit for the area. The placement of 100 beehives near numerous groups of shooters would likely result in injuries. There are also two mining claims on the east hill, down range. The grazing lease, apiary permit and mining claims are all incompatible land uses with target shooting.

BLM recognizes target shooting as a legitimate recreational use on the public lands. Before closing the La Posta site, several alternative sites were considered. Thus far, safety, fire, noise, environmental, land use, and legal access concerns have prevented the designation of any specific alternative shooting area. This closure is not intended to prohibit recreational target shooting on other BLM public lands; Nor does it affect licensed hunters in the pursuit of lawful game, or law enforcement officers while in the performance of their official duties. Individuals looking for alternative shooting areas are encouraged to obtain a BLM map from the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office. Authority for this supplementary rule is established by 43 CFR 8364.1. Violation of the rule is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1000 and/or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months.

Dated: October 23, 1998.

Chris Roholt,

Acting Field Manager, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office.

[FR Doc. 98-29524 Filed 11-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-40-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID-024-1020-01]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Land Use Plan Amendment

SUMMARY: The Snake River Resource Area, Upper Snake River District, is proposing to amend the Cassia Resource Management Plan to allow for the reallocation of 300 AUMs from livestock usage to bighorn sheep usage via a bighorn sheep reintroduction on Jim Sage Mountain in Cassia County, Idaho.

DATES: The public, state and local governments, and other Federal Agencies are invited to participate in the amendment process. Identification of issues, concerns, or other written comments pertaining to this notice will be accepted until November 30, 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed plan amendment would allow the reallocation of 300 AUMs of forage from livestock to bighorn sheep on Jim Sage Mountain in Cassia County, Idaho via a bighorn sheep reintroduction on public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The actual reintroduction of bighorn sheep would be conducted by the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game with assistance from BLM and other agencies and individuals.

The public land where the reintroduction is proposed is currently managed for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat and recreation as part of the Jim Sage Allotment, #5003. All the aforementioned uses would continue.

Public participation in the amendment process will include publication of this notice in the **Federal Register** and local newspapers and the mailing of this notice to state and local governments, private individuals, and other interested parties. Depending on the amount of public interest, public meetings may be held in the Snake River Resource Area Office, Burley, Idaho.

ADDRESSES: Any comments on this notice should be mailed by close of business on November 30, 1998 to the Bureau of Land Management, Snake River Resource Area, Attention: Kurt Pavlat, 15 East, 200 South, Burley, ID 83318.