

laws and regulations from any of the littoral states in the Caspian Sea basin. Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and Turkmenistan have therefore failed to meet the conditions of the special rule. As a result, beluga sturgeon caviar (including products containing caviar, such as cosmetics) and meat from these countries are no longer eligible for the exemption from threatened species permits provided by the special rule. Therefore, you may not import or re-export, sell or offer for sale in foreign commerce, or deliver, receive, carry, transport, or ship in foreign commerce in the course of a commercial activity any beluga sturgeon caviar or meat from these Caspian Sea countries on or after the effective date of this **Federal Register** notice (see **DATES** section) without a threatened species permit. Beluga sturgeon caviar or meat originating in these countries that has been shipped on or after the effective date of this **Federal Register** notice (see **DATES** section) without a threatened species permit issued under 50 CFR 17.32 will be refused clearance upon arrival in the United States, including shipments that have been exported directly from the countries listed above in this paragraph, re-exported through an intermediary country, or transported as personal or household effects.

Threatened species permits may only be issued for beluga sturgeon from the Caspian Sea basin if we determine that the proposed import, re-export, or interstate or foreign commerce would meet the regulatory requirements in 50 CFR 17.32. Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed activities would provide for the conservation of the species.

*Beluga sturgeon products legally imported before the trade suspension.* Beluga sturgeon caviar or meat from Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, or Turkmenistan that was legally imported into the United States prior to the trade suspension will continue to be authorized for interstate commerce under the special rule without a threatened species permit. Due to the perishable nature of sturgeon caviar and meat, the exemption for interstate commerce in beluga sturgeon caviar and meat legally imported prior to the trade suspension will continue for a period of no more than 18 months after the date of issuance of the original Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) export permit, in accordance with the CITES resolution on the "Conservation of and trade in sturgeons and paddlefish" (Resolution Conf. 12.7

(Rev. CoP13)). Individuals should maintain accurate records to be able to demonstrate that their beluga sturgeon caviar and meat were legally imported prior to the trade suspension.

*Conditions for lifting of the trade suspension.* Under the special rule, if the littoral states fail to submit a basin-wide management plan for beluga sturgeon, or if we are unable to confirm that all littoral states in the basin are signatories to the plan, we will immediately suspend trade with all littoral states in the basin until we are satisfied that such a management plan exists. Likewise, under the special rule, if the littoral states fail to submit copies of national laws and regulations that implement the basin-wide management plan, we will immediately suspend trade with the given littoral states until we are satisfied that such laws and regulations are in effect. For us to consider lifting the trade suspension, the littoral states of the Caspian Sea basin must submit a basin-wide management plan for beluga sturgeon, agreed to by all littoral states in the basin. In addition, each littoral state wishing to export beluga sturgeon caviar and meat to the United States under the exemption provided by the special rule must submit copies of their national laws and regulations that implement the basin-wide plan. Information on how to submit such materials is located in the **ADDRESSES** section.

*Black Sea basin.* We are in the process of reviewing information received from littoral states in the Black Sea basin. In accordance with the special rule, trade may continue from the littoral states of the Black Sea that have declared export quotas for beluga sturgeon (*i.e.*, Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro), as required under CITES, while we complete our review.

*Aquaculture facilities.* The special rule allows aquaculture facilities outside the Caspian and Black Sea basins to obtain an exemption from threatened species permits otherwise required under 50 CFR 17.32 if they meet certain conditions. We have not yet received any requests for such an exemption. Under the special rule, there is no deadline for receipt of applications from aquaculture facilities seeking an exemption.

**Authority:** The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: September 22, 2005.

**Craig Manson,**

*Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[AK-040-05-1610-DP-086L]

#### Notice of Availability of the Ring of Fire Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Anchorage Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) management policies, the Ring of Fire Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) has been prepared for public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Anchorage Field Office. The Ring of Fire Draft RMP/EIS will provide the management guidance for resource decisions on 1.3 million acres of fragmented BLM-administered lands spread from below the Dixon Entrance in southeast Alaska to Attu Island at the end of the Aleutian Chain. The Ring of Fire RMP/EIS will revise management direction for approximately 10 percent of the lands covered by the Southcentral Management Framework Plan of 1980, and will provide management for approximately 90 percent of the lands not previously addressed in a management plan.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be mailed or hand delivered to the BLM Anchorage Field Office, Ring of Fire RMP/EIS, 6881 Abbott Loop Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2599. The public is invited to review and comment on the range and adequacy of the draft alternatives and associated environmental effects. For comments to be most helpful, they should relate to specific concerns or conflicts that are within the legal responsibilities of the BLM and can be resolved in this planning process. Comments can also be sent via e-mail to [akrofrmp@blm.gov](mailto:akrofrmp@blm.gov). To request a CD or hard copy of the document or to be included on the mailing list, contact Amy Lewis via e-mail at [Amy\\_Lewis@urscorp.com](mailto:Amy_Lewis@urscorp.com), or via phone at (907) 261-9730. Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, may be published as part of the Final EIS and Proposed RMP. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning

of your written comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by the law. All submissions from organizations and business, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

**DATES:** Comments on the Ring of Fire Draft RMP/EIS will be accepted for 90 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes their Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**. Comments on the Ring of Fire Draft RMP/EIS must be received on or before the end of the comment period at the physical address or e-mail address listed above. Specific dates and locations of public meetings to gather public comment will be announced through news releases and notices.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Robert Lloyd (*akrofrmp@blm.gov*) at (907) 267-1246 or Amy Lewis (*Amy.Lewis@urscorp.com*) at (907) 261-9730.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Ring of Fire RMP planning area covers 1.3 million acres of BLM-administered lands. The Ring of Fire Draft RMP/EIS focuses on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield as prescribed by section 202 of FLPMA. The Ring of Fire Draft RMP/EIS considers and analyzes four alternatives, including a No Action and a preferred alternative. The alternatives provide variable levels of support to all resources and programs present in the planning area and are designed to guide future management and resolve land management issues identified during the early stages of the planning process. The alternatives were developed based on extensive public scoping and involvement.

There are five main resources addressed through this planning process. The Lands and Realty section addresses the need to determine the appropriate mix of lands and realty actions needed to provide a balance between land use and resource protection. The Off-highway Vehicles (OHV) section addresses management of access trails and roads for the use of OHVs for various purposes, including recreation, commercial uses, subsistence activities, and the general enjoyment of public lands while protecting natural and cultural resources. The Recreation section examines how recreation should be managed to provide a diversity of experiences on BLM-managed lands. The document analyzes what measures are necessary to ensure that a diversity of recreational opportunities is

maintained, and what level of commercial recreational use is appropriate to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities. The Leasable Minerals section and the Locatable Minerals section address the need to determine which areas should be made available for mineral exploration and development. One Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is recommended for designation in the preferred alternative and is also considered in other alternatives—the Neacola Mountains ACEC, containing approximately 229,000 acres. The ACEC would have the following resource use limitations: (1) Closed to locatable and saleable mineral entry (but open to mineral leasing), (2) OHV use limited, (3) VRM Class III, and (4) ROW avoidance. The public involvement and collaboration process implemented for this effort included 10 public scoping meetings. Notices of these meetings and invitations to participate in the development of this plan were sent to over 400 individuals, organizations, and tribal entities, as well as to State, Federal, and local government agencies. Meetings were held at the Native Village of Eklutna in Eklutna and at the Chilkat Indian Village IRA in Klukwan. Continuous involvement throughout the planning process has taken place with the State of Alaska, and several meetings have been held between the State and the BLM at varying levels of authority to discuss the Ring of Fire RMP/EIS. A joint BLM-State position was created as part of this project, with that person acting as liaison between the State of Alaska and the BLM during this planning process.

After comments on the Ring of Fire Draft RMP/EIS are reviewed and any adjustments to the document are made, a Proposed RMP and Final EIS are expected to be available in spring 2006.

**Julia Dougan,**

*Acting State Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[CA-190-05-1610-DT]

#### Notice of Availability of Proposed Plan Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA).

**DATES:** For decisions being considered that would amend the existing plan decisions, BLM Planning Regulations (43 CFR 1610.5-2) state that any person who participated in the planning process, and has an interest that may be adversely affected, may protest. The protest must be filed within 30 days of the date that the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its notice of receipt of the Final EIS for the CCMA in the **Federal Register**. Instructions for filing of protests are described in the front cover of the Proposed RMPA and Final EIS for the CCMA and included in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice. Decisions that make designations on individual routes are not protestable, but are appealable to the Interior Board of Land Appeals under 43 CFR part 4 upon adoption of a Record of Decision.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** George Hill, (831) 630-5000.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This planning project considers designating a route network and off-highway vehicle (OHV) area designations (open, limited, closed) for serpentine barren areas (soils devoid of vegetation) and the designation of expanded boundaries for the San Benito Mountain Research Natural Area (SBMRNA), an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in the CCMA. The planning area is approximately 75,000 acres located in San Benito and Fresno Counties, California and is managed by the (BLM) Hollister Field Office. The area is currently managed according to the CCMA RMPA, as adopted in 1999.

The Proposed Action contained in the Proposed RMPA and Final EIS for the CCMA contains the following proposed decisions: Designations for OHV use on the routes currently inventoried and assessed by the BLM; adoption of route designation and area designation criteria for serpentine barren areas; and designation of an expanded boundary and interim management for the SBMRNA. The Draft RMPA and Draft EIS for the CCMA was published in May 2004. BLM accepted public comment on the Draft EIS from July 16 through November 15 of 2004. Comments received from the public during the review period and comments from