

back out of line of sight from the river, fewer, but thicker conductors);

Alternative 2: Single circuit 345kV overhead on 120–130' single steel poles, underground 161kV, transition structures at overhead to underground changeover;

Alternative 3: 161kV upgraded on 85–95' steel poles, 345kV underground, transition structures at underground to overhead changeover;

Alternative 4: 345kV and 161kV underground, transition structures at underground to overhead changeover.

The NPS preferred alternative is alternative 1: Long-span Option.

Persons wishing to comment on the FEIS may do so by any one of several methods. They may mail comments to Superintendent, Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, P.O. Box 708, 401 Hamilton Street, St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024, Attention: Jill Medland. They also may comment via e-mail to sacn_aw_row_eis@nps.gov (include name and return address in the e-mail message). Finally, they may hand-deliver comments to Riverway Headquarters, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, 401 Hamilton Street, St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024.

The NPS's 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 record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which 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 or officials of organizations or businesses available for public inspection in their entirety.

The responsible official is Ernest Quintana, Midwest Regional Director, National Park Service.

Dated: October 18, 2004.

Alan M. Hutchings,

Acting Regional Director, Midwest Region.

[FR Doc. 04–27610 Filed 12–16–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4312–96–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plan for Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Manteo, NC

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and National Park Service policy in Director's Order Number 2 (Park Planning) and Director's Order Number 12 (Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making) the National Park Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plan for Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. The authority for publishing this notice is contained in 40 CFR 1506.6.

The statement will assess potential environmental impacts associated with various types and levels of visitor use and resources management within the National Historic Site. This General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement are being prepared in response to the requirements of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, Pub. L. 95–625. The National Park Service is currently accepting comments from interested parties on issues, concerns, and suggestions pertinent to the management of Fort Raleigh.

Suggestions and ideas for managing the cultural and natural resources and visitor experiences at Fort Raleigh are encouraged. Comments may be submitted in writing to the address listed at the end of this notice or through the GMP Web site, which is linked to the park's Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/fora>.

The National Park Service will publish periodic newsletters on the GMP Web site to present scoping issues and preliminary management concepts to the public as they are developed. Public meetings to present draft management concepts will be conducted in the local area. Specific locations, dates, and times will be announced in local media and on the GMP Web site.

Please note that due to public disclosure requirements, the National Park Service, if requested, is required to make the names and addresses of those who submit written comments public. Anonymous comments will not be considered. However, individual respondents may request that we withhold their names and addresses from the public record. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address,

you must state that request prominently at the beginning of your comment. 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.

DATES: Locations, dates, and times of public scoping meetings will be published in local newspapers and may also be obtained by contacting the National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, Planning and Compliance Division. This information will also be published on the General Management Plan Web site for Fort Raleigh.

ADDRESSES: Scoping suggestions should be submitted to the following address to ensure adequate consideration by the Service: Superintendent, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, 1401 National Park Drive, Manteo, North Carolina, 27954. Telephone: 252–473–2111, ext. 150.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Superintendent, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, 1401 National Park Drive, Manteo, North Carolina, 27954. Telephone: 252–473–2111, ext. 150.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Draft and Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement will be made available to all known interested parties and appropriate agencies. Full public participation by Federal, State, and local agencies as well as other concerned organizations and private citizens is invited throughout the preparation process of this document.

The responsible official for this Environmental Impact Statement is Patricia A. Hooks, Regional Director, Southeast Region, National Park Service, 100 Alabama Street SW., 1924 Building, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

Dated: October 28, 2004.

Patricia A. Hooks,

Regional Director, Southeast Region.

[FR Doc. 04–27609 Filed 12–16–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4312–KA–P

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare a General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the National Park Service (NPS) announces its intent to prepare a General Management Plan and

Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) for the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia. The park contains 550 acres that comprise significant portions of the 17th and 18th century Washington family plantation holdings, including the site of the home where George Washington was born and spent his early years. Prepared by planners in the NPS Northeast Region, with assistance from advisors and consultants, the GMP/EIS will propose a long-term approach to managing the George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Superintendent, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, (804) 224-1732

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Consistent with the site's mission, NPS policy, and other laws and regulations, alternatives will be developed to guide the management of the site over the next 15 to 20 years. The alternatives will incorporate various zoning and management prescriptions to ensure resource preservation and public enjoyment of the site. The environmental consequences that could result from implementing the various alternatives will be evaluated in the plan. Impact topics will include cultural and natural resources, visitor experience, park operations, the socioeconomic environment, impairment, and sustainability. The public will be invited to express opinions about the management of the site early in the process through public meetings and other media; and will have an opportunity to review and comment on a draft GMP/EIS. Following public review processes outlined under NEPA, the final plan will become official, authorizing implementation of a preferred alternative. The target date for the Record of Decision is December 2007.

Dated: November 22, 2004.

Vidal Martinez,

Superintendent, George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

[FR Doc. 04-27606 Filed 12-17-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for an Elk Management Plan, Wind Cave National Park, SD

AGENCY: National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

SUMMARY: Under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) for an Elk Management Plan for Wind Cave National Park (WICA), South Dakota. An elk management plan is needed to manage the elk population within established acceptable levels, to identify a range of elk management strategies that are compatible with long-term protection of other park resources and natural ecosystems and processes, and to test for and manage disease situations in the elk population. A number of factors contribute to the need for this plan. The elk population within the park has fluctuated since reintroduction and dictated both lethal and translocation control in the past. Due to the insufficient number of predators and the limited movement of elk in and out of the park, the elk population will likely continue to grow unchecked. Excessive browsing caused by high densities of elk may adversely affect mixed-grass prairie and other forage, as well as cultural resources in the park. Furthermore, this plan is needed because the NPS has the responsibility to manage the elk population within the park at levels that are compatible with park goals.

DATES: The National Park Service (NPS) intends to conduct public scoping at locations in South Dakota, including Pierre, Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Custer, and Hot Springs. Public scoping is intended to identify issues and concerns that should be addressed in the development of an Elk Management Plan for WICA. To be most helpful to the scoping process, comments should be received within 60 days of the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. See details for sending comments in **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** below. Please check local newspapers, the WICA Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/wica>, or contact the name listed below to find out when and where these open houses will be held and to view draft documents and other current information regarding elk management and the EIS. In addition to this scoping process, there will be additional opportunities to comment on the plan throughout the planning process, including the draft and final document.

ADDRESSES: Information will be available for public review and comment at WICA headquarters located 14 miles north of Hot Springs, SD. The address is: Wind Cave National Park, RR1, Box 190, Hot Springs, SD 57747.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Farrell, Public Information Officer, or

Linda Stoll, Superintendent, at 605-745-4600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NPS seeks to complete an EIS to address elk management at WICA. Section 4.4.2 of the NPS Management Policies (2001) provides for the active management of native animals when management of a population is necessary because it occurs in unnaturally high or low numbers because of human influence. An elk management strategy is needed at WICA because past and current actions within and beyond the park have created conditions that allow the WICA elk population to increase with little or no control. These conditions include the insufficient number of elk predators, the limited effectiveness of public hunting outside of the park as a population control method for elk that range primarily within the park, lack of significant winter kill and other environmentally-caused elk mortalities, high reproductive and survival rates, and the discontinuation of translocating elk from the park.

Elk were reintroduced to the park in 1913 to restore an extirpated native species. The park is surrounded by thirty-seven miles of 7 foot high and four miles of 4.5 foot high woven-wire fence. This fence was designed to allow for movement of most wildlife, yet confines bison within the park. Wolves and bears have been extirpated since the late 1800s, and effective natural predation on ungulates is limited to that which occurs by mountain lions, coyotes and bobcats. Since elk reintroduction in 1913, the population has doubled approximately every 3 years. Research was conducted in the mid-1960s and again in 2003 to provide insight into the forage requirements of elk and other grazers in the park. The resulting data, which considers the forage needs of all ungulates in the park, suggested the park could maintain approximately 350-400 elk. Since reintroduction, the population has exceeded 400 at various times, prompting the removal of animals by both lethal and translocation means. In the fall of 2002, chronic wasting disease (CWD) was found in the park. The NPS policy dictates that translocation of elk may only occur if the animals are free of disease, which removes the possibility of translocation of animals from WICA. Currently, the elk herd numbers about 700, exceeding the maximum number of animals that data suggest can be sustained long-term without negatively affecting other park resources.

A determination of the effects of the elk management plan will be conducted