

two species on January 26, 2000 (65 FR 4140). The Virgin spinedace was proposed for listing as endangered on May 18, 1994 (59 FR 25875). The Virgin Spinedace Conservation Agreement and Strategy (VSCA) to eliminate or reduce impacts threatening the continued existence of Virgin spinedace was finalized on April 11, 1995, and, subsequently, the proposal to list was withdrawn on February 6, 1996 (61 FR 44010). All three of these fish species are endemic to the Virgin River Basin through Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. The southwestern willow flycatcher is a neotropical migratory bird listed as endangered on February 27, 1995 (60 FR 10693) that seasonally occupies sites along the Virgin River and throughout the Desert Southwest. In addition, the Virgin River Basin retains a diversity of native desert animal and plant species, many of which are declining due to impacts from human development in the area.

Despite Federal listing of the two fish species, implementation of recovery actions in the Virgin River to benefit endangered fish have been minimal due to limited funding for recovery over the past 25 years. Furthermore, conflicts have arisen between water development interests and those managing for protection of native species that rely on the river environment. Specifically, contention between the local environmental community and local water developers over operations of the Quail Creek Diversion in the Virgin River near Hurricane, Utah, led to discordant relations and threats of litigation among the agencies and organizations interested in water use.

To resolve this situation, the interested entities agreed to develop the Virgin River Resource Management and Recovery Program that would provide a mechanism to prioritize, fund, and implement recovery actions while allowing water development necessary to meet human needs in the Utah portion of the Virgin River Basin. It is anticipated that the Program will not only provide recovery actions that are necessary to offset impacts from proposed development actions to the native protected species, but further lead to full recovery of the endangered fish species, conservation of the Virgin spinedace, as well as provide benefits to the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher.

The Program will encompass the VRFRP and the VSCA so that actions identified in these documents can be funded, implemented, and evaluated for effectiveness. In addition, the Program will provide measures to offset proposed Federal project impacts during

Section 7 consultations in order to prevent future conflict over water development and minimize impacts of Federal projects on protected aquatic species. Goals and objectives of the Program are based on recovery of the endangered fish and conservation of Virgin spinedace in an environment of continuing water development. Although some impacts to native species are expected through future water development projects, recovery actions have been and will continue to be implemented in advance of project impacts such that the status of species and/or its habitat is expected to improve and remain greater than that necessary to offset anticipated impacts. A crediting system has been developed to assess, measure, and track benefits and impacts of projects, and is designed to maintain measured benefits at a higher level than impacts so that the Program is always moving towards recovery and conservation of protected species.

Although participation is limited to Utah portions of the Virgin River Basin at this time, it is expected that the remaining portions of the Virgin River Basin in Arizona and Nevada will be invited to participate in the Program in future years as it becomes better established and demonstrates effectiveness.

It is important to note that participation in this Program does not represent or guarantee legal authority for any water development project. Such projects must be evaluated individually as they are proposed and continue to be subject to all applicable Federal and State laws including NEPA and ESA. This DEA is not intended to provide analysis for specific project impacts, but rather analyzes only effects of Federal participation in the Program.

*Author:* The primary author of this notice is Yvette K. Converse, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 145 East 1300 South State Street, Suite 404, Salt Lake City, Utah 84115 (801-524-5001, extension 135).

#### Authority

The authorities for this action are the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1532 *et seq.*)

Dated: September 15, 2000.

**Spencer F. Conley,**

*Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[OR-030-00-1220-PA; GPO-0374]

#### Notice of Meeting of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center Advisory Board

**AGENCY:** National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Vale District, Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is given that a meeting of the Advisory Board for the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center will be held on Tuesday, October 3, 2000 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Conference Room at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Oregon Highway 86, Flagstaff Hill, Baker City, OR. At an appropriate time, the Board will recess for approximately one hour for lunch. Public comments will be received from 11 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., October 3, 2000. Topics to be discussed are the Strategic Plan Update and reports from Coordinators of Subcommittees.

**DATES:** The meeting will begin at 8 a.m. and run to 4 p.m. October 3, 2000.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David B. Hunsaker, Bureau of Land Management, National Historic Oregon Trail, Interpretive Center, P.O. Box 987, Baker City, OR 97814, (Telephone 541-523-1845).

**Juan Palma,**

*Vale District Manager.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

(NV-930-1430-ET; NVN-50250)

#### Notice of Proposed Extension of Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meeting; Nevada

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy (DOE) has filed an application to extend the withdrawal of 4,255.50 acres of public land in Nye County to maintain the physical integrity of the subsurface environment at Yucca Mountain. The withdrawal being extended is Public Land Order No. 6802. This withdrawal will expire on September 24, 2002, unless extended. The land is currently withdrawn from location under the United States mining laws and from