

the Port. Other conservation and mitigation strategies will include:

- Regulated wetland (Clean Water Act section 404) impacts as a result of development on Parcel 3 would be mitigated on Parcels 4 and 5 (approximately 542 acres).

- Natural resource protection and mitigation planning would be primarily shaped by regulatory requirements.

- Wetland and wildlife habitat impacts from development of the road and rail infrastructure would be mitigated on the Port's Rufener property.

- Limited mitigation and habitat areas would be retained along the shoreline and the Flushing Channel on Parcel 3.

The draft HCP will identify HCP alternatives considered by the Port and will explain why those alternatives were not selected. The Services are responsible for determining whether the HCP satisfies ESA section 10 permit issuance criteria.

Under NEPA, a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed project must be developed and considered in the Services' environmental review. The Services have identified the following preliminary alternatives for public evaluation during the scoping period:

Alternative 1: No Action - Under the No Action Alternative, the ITPs would not be issued by the Services and the HCP would not be approved. The Port would be required to comply with all local, state, and Federal laws and regulations through the appropriate permitting processes.

Alternative 2: Proposed Alternative - There would be full implementation of the HCP, which includes a set of site-specific wetland, riparian, and upland habitat conservation measures that would be specific to the Columbia Gateway site and associated rail and road improvements.

Alternative 3: The HCP would be modified by changing or adding measures to further reduce the amount and risk of incidental take. These measures could involve different road and/or rail alignments, industrial development configurations, approaches to ESA compliance, conservation commitments, adaptive management, permit timeframes, covered lands, covered species, eligible parties and other covered activities.

Additional project alternatives may be developed based on input received from the public scoping process.

Request for Comments

The primary purpose of the scoping process is for the public to assist the Services in developing the EIS by identifying important issues and

alternatives related to the applicant's proposed action. The scoping workshop will allocate time for presentations by the Services and the Port, followed by informal questions and discussions.

Written comments from interested parties are welcome to ensure that the full range of issues related to the proposed permit request are identified. All comments and materials received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be released to the public.

Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the offices listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

The Services request that comments be specific. In particular, we request information regarding: direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that implementation of the proposed HCP or other alternatives could have on endangered and threatened and other covered species, and their communities and habitats; other possible alternatives that meet the purpose and need; potential adaptive management and/or monitoring provisions; funding issues; existing environmental conditions in the plan area; other plans or projects that might be relevant to this proposed project; permit duration; maximum acreage that should be covered; specific species that should or should not be covered; specific landforms that should or should not be covered; and minimization and mitigation efforts. NMFS and FWS estimate that the draft EIS will be available for public review in the summer of 2006.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the NEPA of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), other applicable Federal laws and regulations, and applicable policies and procedures of the Services. This notice is being furnished in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.7 of the NEPA regulations to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIS.

Reasonable Accommodation

Persons needing reasonable accommodations to attend and participate in the public meeting should contact Greg Smith (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). To allow sufficient time to process requests, please call no later than December 28, 2005. Information regarding the applicant's proposed action is available in alternative formats upon request.

Dated: November 29, 2005.

David J. Wesley,

Deputy Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

Dated: December 14, 2005.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E5-7564 Filed 12-19-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODES 4310-55-S, 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[(NV-912-0777)]

Notice of Public Meeting, Mojave Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council Meetings

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Mojave Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The Mojave Southern Great Basin RAC meetings will be held January 20, 2006; March 23, 2006; June 15 and 16, 2006; and August 17, 2006.

ADDRESSES: The Mojave Southern Great Basin RAC meetings will be held January 20, 2006 and March 23, 2006 at the BLM Las Vegas Field Office, located at 4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr., Las Vegas, NV; June 15, 2006, at the Bristlecone Convention Center 150 Sixth St., Ely, NV; and August 17, 2006 at the Beatty Community Center, 100 A-Ave. South, Beatty, NV.

The Mojave Southern Great Basin RAC meetings will usually begin at 8 a.m. and adjourn at approximately 4 p.m. Public comment periods regarding matters on the agenda will be held at 9:30 a.m. during each meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hillerie C. Patton, BLM Las Vegas Field Office Public Affairs Specialist at 702-515-5046.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Mojave Southern Great Basin RAC advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, on a variety of public issues in Southern Nevada. Topics of discussion during Mojave Southern RAC meetings may include land use planning, Environmental Impact Statements, recreation, fire

management, invasive species management, energy and minerals management, travel management, wilderness, wild horse herd management, cultural resource management, and other issues as appropriate.

These meetings are open to the public. The public may present written comments to the RACs. Each formal RAC meeting will also have time, as identified above, allocated for hearing public comments. Depending on the number of persons wishing to comment and time available, the time for individual oral comments may be limited.

Dated: December 14, 2005.

Juan Palma,

Las Vegas Field Manager, Designated Federal Officer for the Mojave Southern Great Basin RAC.

[FR Doc. 05-24241 Filed 12-19-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-HC-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Reclamation

Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Investigation, Contra Costa County, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will prepare an EIS to evaluate expanding the existing Los Vaqueros Reservoir and alternatives to improve water supply reliability and water quality for Bay Area water users, particularly those receiving water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; and contribute to lower cost implementation of the CALFED Environmental Water Account (EWA). Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, Contra Costa Water District will prepare an EIR on the proposed project concurrent with the EIS preparation. A joint EIS/EIR document will be prepared.

Reclamation was directed in Public Law 108-7, (Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2003) to conduct a feasibility-level investigation of the potential expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir.

DATES: Four scoping meetings will be held to solicit public input on the scope of the environmental document, alternatives, concerns and issues to be

addressed in the EIS. The scoping meeting dates are:

- Tuesday, January 24, 2006, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Sacramento, CA.
- Tuesday, January 24, 2006, 6 to 8 p.m. Antioch, CA.
- Wednesday January 25, 2006, 6 to 8 p.m., Livermore, CA.
- Thursday, January 26, 2006, 6 to 8 p.m., Concord, CA.

Submit written comments on the scope of the environmental document to Reclamation at the address below by February 28, 2006.

ADDRESSES: The scoping meeting locations are:

- Sacramento—Department of Water Resources, the Bonderson Building, 901 P Street, Public Hearing Room first floor, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- Antioch—Legion Hall, Veteran's Memorial Building 403 West 6th Street, Antioch, CA 94509.
- Livermore—Martinelli Event Center, Agricultural Center, 3585 Greenville Road, Livermore, CA 94550.
- Concord—Contra Costa Water District, 1331 Concord Ave., Concord, CA 94520.

Written comments on the scope of the environmental document should be sent to Ms. Patricia Roberson, Bureau of Reclamation, Mid Pacific Regional Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento CA 95825-1898; by e-mail at proberson@mp.usbr.gov; or faxed to (916) 978-5094. Further information on the investigation, including the interim results, can be found at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/vaqueros/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia Roberson, Reclamation Project Manager at the above address, (916) 978-5074; or Ms. Marguerite Naillon, Project Manager, Contra Costa Water District, P.O. Box H2O, Concord, CA 94524, (925) 688-8018. If you would like to be included on the EIS/EIR mailing list, please contact Jennifer Allen, CirclePoint, at (415) 227-1100 ext. 33 or j.allen@circlepoint.com.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

One of the five potential surface storage projects described in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's long-term plan is the expansion of the existing Los Vaqueros Reservoir, an existing 100,000-acre-foot off-stream surface storage facility, located in Contra Costa County, California. The existing facility is owned and operated by the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD).

The primary study area includes the Los Vaqueros Reservoir watershed and associated dam and reservoir facilities, which are situated in the coastal

foothills west of the Delta and east of the Bay Area, the central and south Delta, and service areas of Bay Area water agencies that may be directly affected by the project. The Bay Area water agencies that may be directly affected include Contra Costa Water District, Alameda County Water District, Santa Clara Valley Water district, and Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District—Zone 7. Due to the potential influence on other programs and projects, an extended study area is defined to include the service area of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the Central Valley of California.

Planning studies to date have focused on identifying water resources problems, needs, and opportunities in the primary study area, developing a set of planning objectives to help guide the remainder of the feasibility study, and formulating a set of initial alternatives. These elements of the study are summarized below.

Problems, Needs, and Opportunities

Water Supply Reliability. Deliveries of imported water to the Bay Area for drinking water supply are significantly reduced during dry years and critically dry years. Periods of multiple dry years can also occur, such as the droughts of 1928-1935 and 1976-1977, and most recently 1987-1992. These dry periods cause most local supplies, such as groundwater and locally stored runoff, to be depleted. At the same time, deliveries of imported water from the SWP and CVP are curtailed. Bay Area water agencies need to improve water supply reliability not only to reduce deficiencies during a drought, but also as an alternative supply in case of a catastrophic event or emergency in the Delta, such as a chemical spill or levee failure.

Environmental Opportunities. The Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta is the largest estuary on the West Coast and provides essential habitat for a diverse array of fish and wildlife. A variety of factors have contributed to the decline of fish species in the Delta, including the loss of habitat and water resources development. Water deliveries from the Delta have been curtailed in recent years to help protect threatened and endangered fish populations and their habitats. However, while pumping curtailments and other actions in the Delta have been beneficial to fish, they often have had adverse impacts on cities, farms, and businesses that depend on water supplies pumped from or through the Delta. Consequently, the Environmental Water Account (EWA) was developed to provide water project