

to reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. Direct and indirect impacts that will be analyzed include disturbance during construction of water control structures, changes in pond water depth and salinity, changes to water quality in the receiving Bay, creeks and sloughs, and effects caused by operation and maintenance.

The list of issues presented below is preliminary both in scope and number. These issues are presented to facilitate public comment on the scope of the EIS/EIR, and are not intended to be all-inclusive or to be a predetermination of impacts to be considered.

Water Quality

The EIS/EIR will describe existing water quality conditions in the salt ponds within the project area and the receiving waters; characterize effects of discharges including changes in salinity, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, BOD, and metals; and consider potential effect of the timing of discharges as well as the specific location of discharges.

Contaminants

The EIS/EIR will describe existing contaminant levels in sediments of the salt ponds and adjacent Bay, creek and sloughs including chromium, copper, lead, nickel, silver, zinc, arsenic, cadmium and mercury; and consider potential effects of water level management in remobilization of buried contaminants.

Biological Resources

The EIS/EIR will describe existing habitat and characterize changes in wildlife habitat and wildlife use in ponds and receiving waters. The EIS/EIR will also identify potential sensitive species and habitats in or near the project area and determine their abundance and extent of sensitive habitats that may be impacted by project implementation. Specific species to be addressed include California clapper rail, snowy plover, California least tern, salt marsh harvest mouse, Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

Air Quality

The EIS/EIR will evaluate effects of changes in water quality and water elevations that may cause the release of hydrogen sulfide and other odorous organic gases.

Flood Protection

The EIS/EIR will evaluate effects of introduction of water circulation into ponds to changes in flood protection to neighboring developments.

Economics

The EIS/EIR will evaluate effects of the project to commercial fishing of Bay shrimp, including the initial release of pond contents to sloughs and creeks where juveniles are found.

Cumulative Impacts

The EIS/EIR will examine the cumulative impacts of past, ongoing, and probable future projects affecting tidal marsh and estuarine habitats in the South Bay. Projects will include other salt pond restoration projects and wetland habitat improvement project.

Scoping Process

The EIS/EIR will be prepared in compliance with NEPA and Council on Environmental Council Regulations, contained in 40 CFR parts 1500–1508; and with CEQA, Public Resources Code Sec 21000 *et seq.*, and the CEQA Guidelines as amended. Because requirements for NEPA and CEQA are somewhat different, the document must be prepared to comply with whichever requirements are more stringent. The Service will be the lead agency for the NEPA process and the Department of Fish and Game will be the lead agency for the CEQA process. In accordance with both CEQA and NEPA, these lead agencies have the responsibility for the scope, content, and legal adequacy of the document. Therefore, all aspects of the EIS/EIR scope and process will be fully coordinated between these two agencies.

The draft EIS/EIR will incorporate public concerns associated with the project alternatives identified in the scoping process and will be distributed for at least 45-day public review and comment period. During this time, both written and verbal comments will be solicited on the adequacy of the document. The final EIS/EIR will address the comments received on the draft during public review and will be made available to all commenters on the draft EIS/EIR and anyone requesting a copy during the 45-day public review period. The final EIS/EIR shall (1) provide a full and fair discussion of the proposed action's significant environmental impacts, and (2) inform the decision-makers and the public of reasonable measures and alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment.

The final step in the Federal EIS process is the preparation of a Record of Decision (ROD), a concise summary of the decision(s) made by the USFWS. The ROD can be published immediately after the final EIS comment period has

ended. The final step in the State EIR process is certification of the EIR, which includes preparation of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan and adoption of its findings, should the project be approved. A certified EIR indicates the following: (1) The document complies with CEQA; (2) the decision-making body of the lead agency reviewed and considered the final EIR prior to approving the project; and (3) the final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.

This notice is provided pursuant to regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (40 CFR 1506.6).

Dated: March 13, 2003.

Steve Thompson,

Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office.

[FR Doc. 03–6661 Filed 3–19–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Receipt of Petitions for Federal Acknowledgment of Existence as an Indian Tribe

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

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

Pursuant to 25 CFR 83.9(a) notice is hereby given that the following groups have each filed a letter of intent to petition for acknowledgment by the Secretary of the Interior that the group exists as an Indian tribe. Each letter of intent was received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on the date indicated, and was signed by members of the group's governing body.

Western Cherokee of Arkansas/
Louisiana Territories, c/o Mr. Floyd H. Masterson, Sr., PO Box 700, Ellington, Missouri 63638. October 5, 2001.

Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians, c/o Ms. Beverly Folkes, 1931 Shady Brook Drive, Thousand Oaks, California 91362. January 17, 2002.

Dumna Tribal Council, c/o Ms. Karin Kirkendall, 1003 South Ninth Street, Fresno, California 93702. January 22, 2002.

The Golden Hill Paugussett Tribal Nation, c/o Mr. Samuel E. Dixon, Jr., 205 Ivy Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511. February 8, 2002.

Qutekcak Native Tribe, c/o Mr. Arne Hatch, PO Box 1467, Seward, Alaska 99664. February 13, 2002.

Hudson River Band, c/o Mr. Edward VanGuilder, PO Box 18, North Granville, New York 12854. April 19, 2002.

Pamaque Clan of Coahuila Y Tejas Spanish Indian Colonial Missions, Inc., c/o Mr. Joe Rick Mendoza, 4510 Chedder Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78227. April 23, 2002.

Arista Indian Village, c/o Sonia Marie McMorris, PO Box 61841, Houston, Texas 77208. May 21, 2002.

Wesget Sipu, Inc., c/o Mr. Carrol Theriault, 50 Blaine School Road, Fort Kent, Maine 04743. June 4, 2002.

Paugussett Tribal Nation of Waterbury, Connecticut, c/o Mr. Richard John Cam, 199 Easton Avenue, Waterbury, Connecticut 06704. July 3, 2002.

Muskegon River Band of Ottawa Indians, c/o Gerald L. Olman, 1235 Sherwood Drive, North Muskegon, Michigan 49445. July 26, 2002.

Tsalagi Nation Early Emigrants 1817, c/o Ms. Nancy Long Walker, 1454 Stoney Mountain Road, Rougemont, North Carolina 27572. July 30, 2002.

Chaloklowa Chickasaw Indian People, c/o Mr. Vernon M. Tanner, 501 Tanner Lane, Hemingway, South Carolina 29554. August 14, 2002.

Native American Mohegans, Inc., c/o Ms. Eleanor Fortin, PO Box 1066, Norwich, Connecticut 06360. September 19, 2002.

Ohatchee Cherokee Tribe Nation of New York and Alabama, c/o Mr. Chief Sitting Sun, PO Box 21-1018, Brooklyn, New York 11221. December 16, 2002.

Piro/Manso/Tiwa Tribe of Guadalupe Pueblo, c/o Ms. Natalia Melon, PO Box 16181, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88004. December 17, 2002.

Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, c/o Mr. Walter D. Brown, III, 33334 Sandy Ridge Road, Franklin, Virginia 23851. December 30, 2002.

United Mascogo Seminole Tribe of Texas, c/o Mr. William Warrior, 228 Linda Vista, Del Rio, Texas 78840. December 31, 2002.

Avoyel-Taensa Tribe/Nation of Louisiana, Inc., c/o Mr. Romes Antoine, 177 Green Acres, Simmesport, Louisiana 71369. January 9, 2003.

Wyandot of Anderdon Nation, c/o Mr. Steve Gronda, 2674 West Jefferson, Trenton, Michigan 48183. January 21, 2003.

Central Tribal Council, c/o Mr. James W. Shepherd, Sr., PO Box 460, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554. January 21, 2003.

This notice acknowledges receipt of these letters of intent to petition and does not constitute notice that the petitions are under active consideration. Notice of active consideration will be sent by mail to the petitioner and other interested parties at the appropriate time.

Third parties may submit factual and/or legal arguments in support of or in opposition to each group's petition and may request to be kept informed of all general actions affecting the petition. Third parties should provide copies of their submissions to the petitioner. Any information submitted will be made available on the same basis as other information in the BIA's files.

The petitions may be examined, by appointment, in the Department of the Interior, BIA, Branch of Acknowledgment and Research, MS: 4660-MIB, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240; Telephone: (202) 208-3592.

Dated: February 26, 2003.

Aurene M. Martin,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

[FR Doc. 03-6659 Filed 3-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-4J-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-920; COC-28650]

Public Land Order No. 7558; Opening of National Forest System Land Under Section 24 of the Federal Power Act; Colorado

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Public land order.

SUMMARY: This order opens, subject to the provisions of section 24 of the Federal Power Act, 54.88 acres of National Forest System land withdrawn by a Secretarial Order which established Bureau of Land Management Power Site Classification No. 372. This action will permit consummation of pending land disposal and retain the power rights to the United States. The land has been and will remain open to mineral leasing and, under the provisions of the Mining Claims Rights Restoration Act of 1955, to mining.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 21, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Doris E. Chelius, BLM Colorado State Office, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093, (303) 239-3706.

Order

By virtue of the authority vested in the Secretary of the Interior by section 24 of the Act of June 10, 1920, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 818 (1994), and pursuant to the determination of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in DVCO-560-000, it is ordered as follows:

At 9 a.m. on April 21, 2003, the following described National Forest System land withdrawn by the Secretarial Order dated October 31, 1944, which established Power Site Classification No. 372, will be opened to disposal, subject to the provisions of section 24 of the Federal Power Act as specified by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission determination DVCO-560-000, and subject to valid existing rights, the provisions of existing withdrawals, other segregations of record, and the requirements of applicable law:

Roosevelt National Forest

Sixth Principal Meridian

T. 1 S., R. 73 W.,

sec. 35, lots 21, 22, and 23.

The area described contains 54.88 acres in Gilpin County.

Dated: March 5, 2003.

Rebecca W. Watson,

Assistant Secretary—Land and Minerals Management.

[FR Doc. 03-6672 Filed 3-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-920-1430-ET; COC 28629]

Public Land Order No. 7557; Opening of Public Lands Under Section 24 of the Federal Power Act; Colorado

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Public Land Order.

SUMMARY: This order opens, subject to the provisions of section 24 of the Federal Power Act, 419.65 acres of public lands withdrawn by a Secretarial Order which established Bureau of Land Management Power Site Classification No. 93. This action will permit consummation of a pending land disposal action with retention of the power rights to the United States. The lands have been and will remain open to mineral leasing and, under the provisions of the Mining Claims Rights Restoration Act of 1955, to mining.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 19, 2003.