

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES BY ANNUAL ACRES TREATED AND TREATMENT TYPE

Treatment type	County	Alternative A <sup>1</sup>	Alternative B	Alternative C
Mechanical Treatment <sup>2</sup>	Marin	75	180	225
	San Francisco	5	10	10
	San Mateo	20	40	40
	Total	100	230	275
Prescribed Fire	Marin	100	120	285
	San Francisco	<1	<1	<1
	San Mateo	10	0	35
	Total	110	120	320

Source: GGNRA Fire Management Office, 2004.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated based upon current practice; the 1993 FMP did not specify number of acres per year per treatment type.

<sup>2</sup> Includes fuel reduction by methods such as mowing, cutting, short-term grazing, or selective thinning.

The DEIS was made available at park headquarters, visitor centers, and public libraries in the area. Two public presentations were made on the DEIS; the first at a City of Pacifica regularly scheduled City Council meeting on April 11, 2005 and the second at the regularly scheduled, bi-monthly GGNRA public meeting on April 19, 2005. The public was encouraged to submit comments on the DEIS via email, fax, or regular mail.

The NPS received twelve written comment letters and consultation letters with findings from the State Historic Preservation Officer on FMP conformance to the National Historic Preservation Act and from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as required under the Endangered Species Act. The Environmental Protection Agency provides the most comments, primarily focused on air quality and related matters. The letters and responses are included in appendices of the FEIS. The major issues raised during the public comment period included: Smoke management, clarification of the text on conformance with air quality regulations and the State Implementation Plan, herbicide use, structure of the EIS, protection of riparian and wetland areas, range of alternatives addressed, effects on Monarch butterfly habitat, and the need and benefits from interagency cooperation.

*Addresses:* Copies of the FMP FEIS may be obtained from the Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Fort Mason, Building 201, San Francisco, CA 94123, Attn: Fire Management Plan, or by email request to: [goga\\_fire@nps.gov](mailto:goga_fire@nps.gov) (please mark the email subject line "FMP FEIS"). Printed copies of the FMP FEIS or a copy on the FEIS on CD will be directly distributed to those who received the DEIS in these formats, and to any others who request it. The FMP

FEIS will be available at park headquarters, park visitor centers, and at local and regional libraries. The complete FMP FEIS will be posted on the park's Web site at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/goga> under the heading for GOGA FMP FEIS.

*Decision:* As a delegated EIS, the Regional Director of the Pacific West Region is responsible for the final decision on the selected FMP alternative. A Record of Decision, documenting the decision process in selecting the final FMP, may be considered by the Regional Director not sooner than 30 days following the publication by the Environmental Protection Agency of their notice of filing of the FMP FEIS in the **Federal Register**. Following approval of the FMP FEIS, the official responsible for implementing the new FMP will be the Superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Dated: November 3, 2005.

**George J. Turnbull,**

*Acting Regional Director, Pacific West Region.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **Final Environmental Impact Statement; Fire Management Plan for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area; Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, CA; Notice of Availability**

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Pub. L. 91-190, as amended), and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) identifying and

evaluating four alternatives for a Fire Management Plan for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). Potential impacts, and appropriate mitigations, are assessed for each alternative. When approved, the plan will guide all future fire management actions in the SMMNRA for the next five years. The FEIS documents the analysis of three action alternatives and a "no action" alternative.

An updated fire management program is needed to meet public safety, natural and cultural resource management, and wildland/urban interface protection objectives in the federally managed property of the SMMNRA. The "action" alternatives concentrate on wildland/urban interface community protection work and ecosystem protection, and vary in their mix of treatments available for completing work. The "no action" alternative describes the existing fire management program, which the park has not been able to effectively implement to protect neighboring lives and property. As a result, the risk of catastrophic fire has increased in recent decades.

#### *Proposal and Alternatives*

*Considered:* Alternative 2 (determined to be the "environmentally preferred" alternative) is proposed for implementation as the new Fire Management Plan (FMP). Termed the Mechanical Fuel Reduction/Ecological Prescribed Fire/Strategic Fuels Treatment alternative, it provides the maximum potential environmental benefits and minimizes the adverse impacts of fire management actions. Alternative 2 is the most flexible alternative, utilizing all available fire management strategies identified to be appropriate in the Santa Monica Mountains. Although strategic fuels reduction has the potential for both impacts and benefits in most of the impact areas analyzed, individual

strategic fuels reduction projects would be evaluated for their potential risk: benefit ratio. Work would be accomplished with a combination of NPS and other agency fire crews and by contract.

Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative) would continue the current NPS fire and vegetation management program to create a landscape mosaic of varying aged chaparral stands through the application of prescribed fire in separate watersheds, minimizing brush clearance. It should be noted that large scale burning has not been feasible to implement in accordance with the goals of the previous Fire Management Plan because of regulatory constraints on prescribed fire, especially those relating to air quality standards. Alternative 3 (Mechanical Fuel Reduction/Ecological Prescribed Fire) relies exclusively on prescribed burning to provide resource enhancement including control of exotic species and restoration of natural communities. Mosaic burning is eliminated. Fuel reduction is concentrated at the wildland urban interface to protect existing development and emphasizes mechanical or biomechanical fuel modification. This alternative provides effective protection of homes by focusing mechanical fuel reduction at the interface between homes and wildland vegetation, and provides ecological benefits from resource prescribed burning. Alternative 4 (Only Mechanical Fuel Reduction) relies exclusively on mechanical or biomechanical fuel modification at the wildland urban interface. Prescribed fire is eliminated. This alternative provides effective protection of homes by focusing mechanical fuel reduction at the interface between homes and wildland vegetation.

*Alternatives Considered but Rejected:* Three additional alternatives were considered but rejected from further deliberation because the interdisciplinary team determined that they were not feasible for one or more specific reasons. Alternative 5 (Suppression Only/No Vegetation Manipulation) was found to be inconsistent with NPS policies and guidelines as well as with the objectives of the SMMNRA fire management program, and inadequate to protect public safety. Alternative 6 (Mechanical Fuel Reduction on a Landscape Level) was also found to be inconsistent with NPS policies and guidelines as well as the objectives of the SMMNRA fire management program. Alternative 7 (Wildland Fire Use) could be a threat to public safety if implemented and

logistically infeasible to implement along the wildland-urban interface.

*Planning Background:* Public outreach was initiated in June 2001 coinciding with a planning workshop for agencies, cooperators and other partners. A Notice of Scoping for an environmental document was published in the **Federal Register** March 26, 2002, encouraging comments through an extensive scoping period ending August 31, 2002. Four public scoping meetings were hosted in Beverly Hills, Calabasas, Malibu and Thousand Oaks, California. Two additional meetings were held to gain additional input on the preliminary alternatives from fire agencies, cooperators and other partners. Letters were also sent to Native American representatives, requesting their comments and concerns related to cultural activities, practices or resources. Concerns raised in these meetings included: how to provide for public and firefighter safety; how to optimize the effectiveness of fuels treatments in the wildland-urban interface for property protection and to minimize impacts; the need to promote operational and policy coordination among all the agencies within the SMMNRA, including consistent brush clearance policies; the impact of fire management activities including suppression actions; containing the spread of invasive plants and animals; the use of prescribed fire for restoration activities, and appropriate land use planning. Based on the issues and concerns raised it was determined that an environmental impact statement rather than an environmental assessment would be completed. This would allow sufficient analysis to be undertaken in assessing the effects of particular alternatives and to ensure adequate involvement by the public and interested agencies.

The distribution of Draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the FMP began in May, 2004. Approximately 250 DEISs were distributed; 85 went to local libraries, 20 were handed out at the SMMNRA Visitor Center, and the remainder was provided to individuals by mail or in person at public meetings. A notice of availability of the DEIS was published in the **Federal Register** June 16, 2004, providing an opportunity for public review and comment through September 15, 2004. In order to facilitate public review and understanding of the proposed plan, four public meetings were held during July, 2004 in Calabasas, Woodland Hills, Malibu and Thousand Oaks, California. The meetings were advertised through the print media, on the SMMNRA

website and via 350 invitations sent to community leaders, neighborhood organizations, local agencies and stakeholder groups.

The NPS received a total of 25 written responses, generated either from the public meetings or from public notices. All of these comments were duly considered in finalizing the FEIS. Two main issues and concerns were expressed by the respondents: that the FEIS and FMP should prioritize public and firefighter safety as well as the protection of the unique Mediterranean ecosystem which the SMMNRA was established to protect. All alternatives provide numerous provisions for public and firefighter safety. Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 incorporate strong controls to protect native flora and fauna, minimizing the spread of invasive grasses and forbs. The Environmental Protection Agency expressed environmental concerns due to insufficient information. SMMNRA staff consulted closely with the EPA in preparing the FEIS. All comments and responses are documented in Appendix F of the FEIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the FEIS may be obtained from the Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, 401 W. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360, Attn: Fire Management Plan, or by e-mail request to: [samo\\_fire@nps.gov](mailto:samo_fire@nps.gov) (in the subject line, type: Fire Management Plan). The FEIS will be sent directly to those who previously received the DEIS or who have requested subsequently. The FEIS will also be available at local libraries in Agoura Hills, Beverly Hills, Calabasas, Malibu, Oak Park, Oxnard, Santa Monica, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village and selected locations in Los Angeles; and at regional libraries in Ventura County and selected locations in Los Angeles County. A comprehensive list of these locations, as well as the document itself, is posted on the park's Web page (<http://www.nps.gov/samo/pphtml/documents.html>).

*Decision:* As a delegated EIS, the official responsible for the final decision is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region; a Record of Decision may be approved by the Regional Director not sooner than 30 days after EPA's publication of the notice of filing of the FEIS in the **Federal Register**. Notice of the final decision will be also posted in the **Federal Register**. Following approval of the Fire Management Plan, the official responsible for implementation will be the Superintendent, SMMNRA.

Dated: November 3, 2005.

**George J. Turnbull,**

*Acting Regional Director, Pacific West Region.*

[FR Doc. E5-7893 Filed 12-27-05; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **Jackson Hole Airport Use Agreement Extension, Environmental Assessment, Grand Teton National Park, WY**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Jackson Hole Airport Use Agreement Extension, Grand Teton National Park.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C), the National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Assessment for the Jackson Hole Airport Use Agreement Extension for Grand Teton National Park, WY. This effort addresses a request from the Jackson Hole Airport Board to amend the use agreement between the Department of Interior and the Airport Board in order to ensure that the airport remains eligible for funding through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Alternatives to be considered include *Alternative 1: No Action*—The airport would continue operations under the existing use agreement which currently has an expiration date of April 27, 2033; *Alternative 2: Extend Agreement*—Jackson Hole Airport Board proposal to extend the use agreement for an additional two 10-year terms, bringing the expiration date to April 27, 2053; and *Alternative 3: Update and Extend Agreement*—Extend the use agreement for an additional two 10-year terms with minor modifications as mutually agreed to by the NPS and the Airport Board.

The Jackson Hole Airport is located within Grand Teton National Park on 533 acres of land under the administrative jurisdiction of the National Park Service. The airport operates under the terms and conditions of a use agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Jackson Hole Airport Board. The agreement, executed in 1983, was for a primary term of 30 years, with options for two 10-year extensions, both of which have been exercised. The agreement also includes a provision that further extensions, amendments, or modifications could be negotiated by the parties on mutually satisfactory

terms, and that the parties agree that upon expiration of the agreement, a mutually satisfactory extension of the agreement would be negotiated.

Since the FAA requires that the airport have more than 20 years remaining on its use agreement in order to remain eligible for Airport Improvement Program funds, an extension of the use agreement is needed to provide assurance that the airport will remain eligible for funding beyond the year 2013.

**DATES:** The National Park Service will accept scoping comments from the public through January 9, 2006.

**ADDRESSES:** Information will be available for public review and comment online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>, at Grand Teton National Park Headquarters Visitor Center in Moose, Wyoming, and at the Reference Desk of the Teton County Library in Jackson, Wyoming.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Margaret Wilson, Grand Teton National Park, P.O. Drawer 170, Moose, Wyoming 83012-0170, (370) 739-3390, [margaret\\_wilson@nps.gov](mailto:margaret_wilson@nps.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A scoping brochure has been prepared that describes the purpose and need for the project and issues identified to date. A copy of the brochure may be obtained at one of the addresses described above. If you wish to provide comments, you may do so by any one of several methods. You may mail comments to the Superintendent Office, Attention: Airport EA, P.O. Drawer 170, Moose, Wyoming 83012-0170. You may comment via the Internet at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Finally, you may hand-deliver comments to the Grand Teton National Park Headquarters Visitor Center at Moose, Wyoming. Our 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 address, you must state this 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.

Dated: November 22, 2005.

**Michael D. Snyder,**

*Acting Regional Director, Intermountain Region, National Park Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plan/Wilderness Study, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2)(C), and the Wilderness Act of 1964, 16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*, the National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) for a general management plan/wilderness study (GMP/WS) for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan. The EIS will be approved by the Regional Director, Midwest Region. This planning effort is a new start, not a restart of the planning effort that ended in 2002. With the publication of this notice of intent, the earlier planning effort has been terminated.

The GMP will establish the overall direction for the park, setting broad management goals for managing the area over the next 15 to 20 years. The plan will prescribe desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that are to be achieved and maintained throughout the park based on such factors as the park's purpose, significance, special mandates, the body of laws and policies directing park management, resource analysis, and the range of public expectations and concerns. The plan also will outline the kinds of resource management activities, visitor activities, and developments that would be appropriate in the park in the future. The wilderness study will evaluate portions of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Lakeshore) for possible designation as wilderness. The study will be included as a part of the general management plan.

A range of reasonable alternatives for managing the Lakeshore will be developed through this planning process and will include, at a minimum, a no-action and a preferred alternative. Major issues the plan will address include access to the Lakeshore, wilderness, management of areas new to