

the above address or call (202) 208-3550.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meetings are a follow-up to similar meetings conducted by the OIEP/BIA since 1990. The purpose of the consultation, as required by 25 U.S.C. 2010(b), is to provide Indian tribes, school boards, parents, Indian organizations and other interested parties with an opportunity to comment on potential issues raised during previous consultation meetings or being considered by the BIA regarding Indian education programs. A consultation booklet for the April meetings is being distributed to Federally recognized Indian Tribes, Bureau Area and Agency Offices and Bureau-funded schools. The booklets will also be available from local contact persons and at each meeting.

Dated: February 24, 1997.

Ada E. Deer,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

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Bureau of Land Management

[WY-930-1610-00]

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the management of Big Cedar Ridge Fossil Plant Area in Washakie County, Wyoming.

SUMMARY: The decision record for the Big Cedar Ridge Fossil Plant Area outlines management for 1,550 acres in the Bighorn Basin Resource Area of the Worland District, amends the 1988 Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the former Washakie Resource Area, and designates an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) on 260 acres, where fossil plants are concentrated.

The general management objective and emphasis within the Big Cedar Ridge Fossil Plant Area will be for scientific research, public education, recreation, and protection of the fossil resources.

The BLM will also pursue withdrawal of the public lands from entry under the mining laws to prohibit the staking of mining claims on 260 acres of BLM-administered public lands where fossils are concentrated. This action constitutes an amendment to the Washakie RMP.

In addition, an ACEC is designated on the same 260 acres. This ACEC designation constitutes an amendment to the Washakie RMP and will take

effect at the end of a 60-day public comment period.

EFFECTIVE DATES: Comments on the Big Cedar Ridge Fossil Plant proposed ACEC should be sent to the BLM's Worland District Office at P.O. Box 119, Worland, Wyoming 82401, within 60 days of the publication date of this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margy Tidemann, Editorial Assistant, Bureau of Land Management, at the address cited above or at 307-347-5100.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The fossil concentration areas at Big Cedar Ridge, discovered in 1990 by Dr. Scott Wing of the Smithsonian Institution, meet the relevance and importance criteria for ACEC designation. The plants form a complete late Cretaceous-age vegetative community that was buried in-place by volcanic ash about 72 million years ago. The flora, consisting of flowering plants, ferns, palms, and conifer trees, preserves a true instant in time, highlighting relationships between the ancient landscape and its vegetation. Paleobotanists have already been able to establish plant, soil, and topographic associations. This is possibly the oldest site in the world where such associations are seen. Excavations in 1992 resulted in the identification of over 100 new plant species. Scientists have also been able to distinguish at least five different types of insect predation which took place on the flora of Big Cedar Ridge.

As described in the decision record for the area, a detailed activity or implementation plan will be developed for the 260-acre fossil concentration areas. These areas will be routinely monitored and any needed management changes will be made to insure that resource damage does not occur.

The 260-acre fossil concentration areas will be managed primarily for research, public education, and fossil interpretation, as well as hobby (noncommercial) collection of fossils.

Surface-disturbing activities that are not related to research, public education, interpretation, or hobby collection of fossils will be prohibited in the 260-acre fossil concentration areas.

As required, further environmental analyses will be conducted on any future site-specific activity or implementation planning to be done in the Big Cedar Ridge area. This would include opportunities for public comment.

Any detailed activity planning that may be conducted in the Big Cedar Ridge area will consider needs for site-specific mitigation of surface-disturbing activities for things like locating trails,

roads, exhibits, and facilities to enhance public education.

Dated: February 19, 1997.

Alan R. Pierson,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 97-5086 Filed 2-28-97; 8:45 am]

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Bureau of Land Management

[AK-910-07-1310-00-NPR-A]

Notice of Scoping Meetings on an Integrated Activity Plan (IAP/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska (NPR-A)

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is announcing scoping meetings for its IAP/EIS for approximately 4.6 million acres in northeastern NPR-A. The IAP/EIS will address long-term management strategies for several natural resources that are present in the area. Potential issues that the IAP/EIS may address include, but are not limited to, wildlife resources (terrestrial and aquatic) protection; mineral resource development (including oil and gas leasing); subsistence resources and activities and possible impacts on subsistence from various management alternatives; access; recreation; visual resources; threatened and endangered species; and historic, cultural, soil, water, and vegetation resources. Potential management actions and activities that may be considered in the IAP/EIS and that may have environmental and subsistence impacts for the area include mineral material extraction, leasable mineral exploration and development, recreation, commercial development, modification of the existing Special Areas, and identification of any new areas for additional resource protection. These public scoping meetings will provide an opportunity for the public to contribute ideas and information about the resources of the area and how they should be managed. Translators will be present at meetings in Barrow, Atkasuk, and Nuiqsut.

DATES: The BLM will hold public scoping meetings according to the following schedule:

1. March 17, 1997, Barrow, Alaska, North Slope Borough Assembly Room, 7:30 p.m.
2. March 18, 1997, Atkasuk, Alaska, Community Center, 7:30 p.m.