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Department of the Interior, Central Utah Project Completion Act Office, 302 East 1860 South, Provo, Utah 84606
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Uintah and Ouray Agency, 988 South 7500 East, Fort Duchesne, Utah 84026.

Dated: March 10, 1997.

Ronald Johnston,

CUPCA Program Director, Department of the Interior.

[FR Doc. 97-6495 Filed 3-13-97; 8:45 am]

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Office of the Secretary

Notice of Intent (Notice) To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Hold Public Scoping Workshops on Water Resource Management Proposals in Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, and Washoe Counties, Nevada

AGENCY: Office of the Assistant Secretary—Water and Science, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Interior plans to hold four public scoping workshops to gather information that can be used to prepare an EIS on actions related to water resources in the Truckee and Carson Rivers. The purpose of this EIS is to review, in a comprehensive manner, four proposed actions and consider the environmental effects of those and other actions. The Truckee-Carson Coordination Office, acting on behalf of the Department of the Interior, will serve as lead agency and supervise preparation of the EIS. Cooperating federal agencies include Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

DATES: Public scoping workshops will be held at the following locations beginning at 7:00 pm and ending no later than 9:00 pm on the dates indicated:

Date	Location
March 11, 1997 ..	Fallon Convention Center, Fallon, Nevada.
March 13, 1997 ..	Fernley Town Building, Fernley, Nevada.
March 18, 1997 ..	U.S. Geological Survey Conference Room, Carson City, Nevada.
March 20, 1997 ..	Washoe County Commissioners Chambers, Reno, Nevada.

Interested persons are encouraged to attend the workshops to identify and discuss major issues, concerns, opportunities, and alternatives that

should be considered in the EIS. The workshops will begin with a brief presentation describing the proposed action followed by an opportunity for interested citizens to provide information relevant to the EIS preparation process. The primary purpose of the scoping workshops is to identify issues and information related to the proposed project rather than to debate those issues.

These meetings supplement scoping meetings held in September 1995 on three of the four proposed actions. Scoping comments submitted following those meetings will also be considered in preparing this EIS.

The scoping period will begin on the date of the first scoping meeting and remain open through preparation of the EIS. Interested agencies, organizations, and individuals are asked to submit written comments on the scope of the environmental document on or before April 28, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties are requested to send their written comments on the scope of the environmental document, significant issues that should be addressed, and alternatives that should be considered to the following address: EIS Scoping Comments, Truckee-Carson Coordination Office, 1000 William Street, Suite 100, Carson City, Nevada 89701.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Truckee and Carson Rivers flow eastward out of the Sierra Nevada mountains and drain to interior basins. The Truckee River terminates in Pyramid Lake; the Carson River terminates in the Stillwater wetlands and Carson Sink. Water rights disputes over waters of the Truckee and Carson Rivers date back to the 1860's during a period of booming regional mining and lumbering activity. Consumptive use of water from the two rivers increased significantly during the late 1880's and early 1900's with the advent of various irrigation developments, including the Newlands Irrigation Project, one of the first Federally funded irrigation projects. With the increasing growth and urbanization of the 20th Century, additional demands were placed on the Region's water supply. In addition, issues brought forward by the establishment of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Indian Reservation in 1859, and the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribes Indian Reservation in 1902 played a major role in the evolution of water-rights disputes in the region.

Before the mid-1800's, all water in the Truckee River flowed into Pyramid Lake with overflows forming Winnemucca

Lake, supporting fish populations essential to the life and economy of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. In Lahontan Valley, the Carson River flowed into vast wetlands that sustained major populations of waterfowl, shorebirds and other wildlife. A substantial population of Native Americans inhabited the wetlands and were dependent on its resources. Gradually, upstream consumptive use and changes to water quality in the two rivers contributed to the degradation of wetland and lake habitats and the species that depended on them. Substantial change was caused by the development of the Newlands Irrigation Project, authorized by the Reclamation Act of 1902.

A majority of the Newlands Project acreage, known as the Carson Division, is located in the Carson River watershed. However, in most years, water entitlements in the Carson Division cannot be satisfied solely by Carson River flows. Varying quantities of Truckee River water are annually diverted out of the Truckee River watershed and away from Pyramid Lake to serve agriculture, wetlands, and other water rights in Lahontan Valley and in the Truckee Division of the Newlands Project. Primarily as a result of diversions for the Newlands Project, the level of Pyramid Lake began to decline and today, the lake is more than 65 feet lower than it was 100 years ago. In addition, primary wetlands in Lahontan Valley, which historically fluctuated between 100,000 and 300,000 acres in size, were reduced to a current average of 9,800 acres as a consequence of water use on the Carson River and prolonged drought. Today, remaining wetlands are primarily sustained by irrigation return flows, a portion of which can be of poor quality.

Public Law 101-618, the Truckee-Carson-Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act, was enacted in 1990. The Act assigned numerous diverse responsibilities to the Department of the Interior for initiating actions addressing, in part, wetlands, endangered species, and water resource management. The Department of the Interior also has responsibilities to satisfy settlement agreements, meet Newlands Project water rights, and properly protect resources held in trust for Indian tribes in the region.

Proposed Actions

The EIS will consider the potential impacts of the proposed water resource management actions described above and the interrelationships of these waters.

1. The Secretary is authorized and directed by Section 206(a) of the Act to acquire water and water rights to sustain, on a long-term average, 25,000 acres of primary wetland habitat in Lahontan Valley. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is preparing a wetlands management plan detailing actions necessary to best manage water being acquired to sustain 25,000 acres of wetland habitat, including the timing of water applications to wetlands, and the volumes of acquired water to be applied.

2. Section 207(a) directs the Secretary to expeditiously implement plans for the conservation and recovery of endangered cui-ui, a fish species found only in Pyramid Lake and the lower Truckee River. Section 207(c)(1) authorizes the Secretary to acquire water and water rights to assist the conservation and recovery of the species. General recovery actions are authorized under the Endangered Species Act. The recovery objective stated in the Cui-ui Recovery Plan, completed by the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1992, is to improve the status of cui-ui so that the species has at least a 0.95 probability of persisting for 200 years. This objective necessitates securing spawning habitat in the lower Truckee River and rearing habitat in Pyramid Lake as well as an avenue of passage for spawners and larvae.

3. The Secretary is considering modifications to the Newlands Irrigation Project Operating Criteria and Procedures (OCAP). The OCAP were most recently modified in 1988 and in the intervening years, several factors which affect water management in the Project have changed. For example, the number of water-righted, irrigated acres in the Project has not expanded to meet predicted levels. Also, formulas used to calculate allowable diversions of Truckee River water to the Project need to be revised to reflect current and expected conditions within the Project. Short-term OCAP adjustments within the framework of the existing criteria and procedures are currently in preparation to account for changes in water demand assumptions and operational experience gained since 1988. The Department of the Interior will examine more fundamental potential revisions to OCAP in order to optimize the use of Project water to meet competing uses and legal responsibilities, including serving agricultural water rights, meeting trust responsibilities to the Pyramid Lake Paiute and Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribes, conserving and recovering endangered fish species, restoring and

protecting Lahontan Valley wetlands, and meeting other water demands.

4. In October 1996, the United States signed the Truckee River Water Quality Settlement Agreement with the cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, the State of Nevada, and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. The agreement resolves litigation over approval and operation of the Reno-Sparks water treatment facility brought by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe against Reno, Sparks, the State of Nevada, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Under terms of the agreement, the Department of the Interior will allocate \$12 million over five years to acquire Truckee River water rights and dedicate them to a joint program to manage an equal quantity of water rights to be acquired by Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County for the purpose of improving water quality and instream flows in the Truckee River from Reno to Pyramid Lake. In addition, the Department of the Interior agreed to aid Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County in meeting water quality goals by storing acquired water in federal Truckee River reservoirs and timing releases to improve instream flows during normally dry periods of the summer and early fall.

Other Actions To Be Considered

In addition, the EIS will consider an extensive list of proposed and active projects that may have cumulative impacts within the scope of this document. Two actions authorized under P.L. 101-618 are being reviewed in separate EISs. These are: (1) Modification of reservoir and river operations on the Truckee River as described in the Truckee River Operating Agreement draft EIS currently being prepared by the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and expected to be released in the spring of 1997; and (2) acquisition of water for development of wetlands at the terminus of the Carson River as described in the Lahontan Valley Wetlands Water Rights Acquisition Program final EIS released by the FWS in September 1996.

Additional projects and actions to be considered include the new Operation and Maintenance contract for the Newlands Irrigation Project; possible agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe regarding water and water-rights management, acquisition, and protection; efforts of the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire water from the Upper Carson River; implementation of the agreement with the Department of the Navy to conserve and transfer water from the Fallon Naval Air Station to the

Fish and Wildlife Service; and possible water storage agreements for Lahontan Reservoir. The EIS proposed in this Notice will, as part of its analysis, consolidate and review the effects of these and other water management actions identified during the scoping process.

This notice is being published, and the environmental review of this project will be completed, in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1508.22).

Tentative Schedule

Estimated dates for completion of activities for an environmental impact statement evaluating the potential impacts of water resources management in the Truckee and Carson Rivers program are:

Milestone	Date
Public Scoping Period Identification of Alternatives.	April 1997. May 1997.
Draft EIS Published .. Public Hearings on DEIS.	December 1997. January 1998.
Final EIS filed with EPA.	June 1998.
Implementation of Decisions.	August 1998.

Dated: March 7, 1997.

Patricia J. Beneke,

Assistant Secretary—Water and Science.

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Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council; Restoration of Resources and Services Injured by Oil Spill; (FY 1998) Proposals Request

AGENCY: Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary.

ACTION: Invitation for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council is asking the public, private organizations, and government agencies to submit proposals for the restoration of the Exxon Valdez oil spill region. The Invitations to Submit Restoration Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 1998, a booklet explaining the process, is available from the Trustee Council office.

DATES: Proposals are due April 15, 1997, at 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, 645 "G" Street, Suite 401, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Restoration Office, (907) 278-8012 or