

Dated: March 31, 1997.

Stanley T. Albright,

Regional Director, Pacific West Region.

[FR Doc. 97-10430 Filed 4-22-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Final Environmental Impact Statement for Resources Management Plan to Improve Water Quality and Conserve Rare Species and Their Habitats on Santa Rosa Island; Channel Islands National Park, Santa Barbara County, California; Notice of Availability

Summary

Pursuant to § 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190, as amended), the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement assessing the potential impacts of alternatives identified in a Resources Management Plan proposed for improving water quality and conserving rare species and their habitats on Santa Rosa Island in California. Once approved, the plan will guide resources management on Santa Rosa Island for the next 15 years.

Background

The Final Environmental Impact Statement and Resources Management Plan (FEIS/RMP) presents and analyzes a proposal and four alternatives for improving water quality and riparian areas and promoting conservation of rare species and their habitats on Santa Rosa Island. "Rare species" includes: species which have been listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered in accordance with the Endangered Species Act; those species which are candidates for such listing; and those which were formerly candidates.

Alternatives

The Draft EIS/RMP (Draft) was made available for public review and comment on May 6, 1996, and had identified Alternative C, Targeted Management Action, as a preferred alternative. In response to public comment on the Draft, the National Park Service has identified a different alternative as the proposed action in the FEIS/RMP. The new proposed action, Alternative D, Revised Conservation Strategy, would improve water quality, protect riparian habitat areas, and conserve rare species and their habitats on Santa Rosa Island, in part by requiring changes in the Vail & Vickers

cattle grazing-commercial hunting operation over the next 14 years. Additional actions proposed include: the immediate closure of two pastures to cattle and horses, and reduction in the number of cattle grazing in other pastures with resources at risk; removing deer from the island within three (3) years and phased removal of elk over a fourteen (14) year period. The Park would also implement road management actions to reduce impacts to island streams from existing practices; develop a comprehensive weed management plan to address problems resulting from invasion of alien plant species; and develop monitoring programs for rare species, water quality and riparian areas.

The following alternatives to the proposal are also evaluated in the FEIS/RMP:

Alternative A, No Action, would continue the existing cattle ranching and commercial hunt operation, with no changes.

Alternative B, Minimal Action, includes exclusion of cattle from one pasture, removal of deer from the island, and construction of small riparian enclosures in several drainages.

Alternative C, Targeted Action, includes removal of cattle and horses from one pasture, implementation of a seasonal grazing rotation in another pasture, construction of small riparian enclosures, and removal of deer and reduction of elk.

Alternative E, Immediate Removal of Ungulates, includes removal of all cattle, horses, elk and deer from the island within three years.

Decision Process

A "no action" period on the part of the National Park Service will end 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of receipt of this FEIS/RMP is filed in the **Federal Register**. Subsequently, notice of a Record of Decision (ROD) will be published, prior to any implementation of elements of the proposed action. Anticipated elements include the following: after the ROD has been duly noticed, the National Park Service will revise terms of an existing Special Use Permit issued to Vail & Vickers, so as to make their forthcoming operations consistent with the alternative selected and identified in the ROD. Accordingly, at that time the existing Special Use Permit would be revoked and replaced with a new permit incorporating pertinent management practices prescribed in the selected FEIS/RMP alternative.

Information

Inquiries about the FEIS/RMP or requests for copies should be directed to Channel Islands National Park, 1901 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura, CA 93001, or by telephone at (805) 658-5776.

Dated: April 11, 1997.

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Regional Director, Pacific West Region.

[FR Doc. 97-10531 Filed 4-22-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Mojave National Preserve Notice of Intent to Prepare Environmental Impact Statement for AT&T Corp's Removal of Coaxial Cable

Summary

In accordance with § 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL91-190), the National Park Service is initiating an environmental impact analysis process to identify and assess potential impacts of alternative means proposed for recovering approximately 220 miles of a coaxial cable communications system. AT&T Corp. of Atlanta, Georgia (AT&T) owns and maintains a transcontinental Phillips-140 cable system, a portion of which extends for 709 miles between Mojave, California and Socorro, New Mexico. This communications technology is obsolete and AT&T officials have notified the Department of the Interior of their desire to remove segments of the system (consisting of underground coaxial communications cable and appurtenant surface and below-ground servicing facilities).

Background

AT&T was originally issued Right-of-Way Grants for the subject communications system in 1963 and 1964. In March, 1997 a formal request to terminate portions of the right-of-way was submitted to the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to the terms of the grants. Upon preliminary review of the formal termination request and supplemental materials (an environmental report and draft plan of operation for removing the cable), it has been determined that the potential for significant impact to the human environment may exist. Notice is hereby given that it is anticipated that a draft environmental impact statement and removal plan (DEIS/RP) will be prepared. As the Department's designated lead bureau, the National