

public after approval of the full Commission. A transcript will be available after November 30, 1997. For a copy of the minutes, contact the Superintendent, Manzanar National Historic Site, P.O. Box 426, Independence, California 93526.

Dated: September 25, 1997.

**Ross R. Hopkins,**

*Superintendent, Manzanar National Historic Site.*

[FR Doc. 97-27409 Filed 10-15-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### Mississippi River Coordinating Commission Meeting

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces an upcoming meeting of the Mississippi River Coordinating Commission. Notice of this meeting is required under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463).

**MEETING DATE, TIME, AND ADDRESS:** Wednesday, November 5, 1997; 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Council Chambers, Metropolitan Council, 230 East Fifth Street, St. Paul, Minnesota.

An agenda for the meeting will be available by October 17, 1997. Contact the Superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) at the address listed below. Public statements about matters related to the MNRRA will be accepted at this time.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Superintendent JoAnn Kyril, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, 175 East Fifth Street, Suite 418, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 (612-290-4160).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Mississippi River Coordinating Commission was established by Public Law 100-696, dated November 18, 1988.

Dated: October 2, 1997.

**Alan M. Hutchings,**

*Acting Regional Director, Midwest Region.*

[FR Doc. 97-27410 Filed 10-15-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

#### Request for Determination of Valid Existing Rights Within the Monongahela National Forest

**AGENCY:** Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of request for determination of valid existing rights and invitation for interested persons to participate.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) has been ordered by the United States District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia to determine whether Walter D. Helmick has valid existing rights (VER) to surface mine coal on Federal lands within the Monongahela National Forest in Pocahontas County, West Virginia. Mr. Helmick is successor in interest to Ernest J. Van Gilder, who previously submitted a VER request in connection with the same property. By this notice, OSM is inviting interested persons to participate in the proceeding and to submit relevant factual material on the matter. OSM intends to develop a complete administrative record and will render a final agency decision on whether Mr. Helmick has VER.

**DATES:** OSM will accept written materials on this request for a VER determination until 5 p.m. local time on October 31, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Hand deliver or mail written materials to: Peter R. Michael, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center, room 218, Three Parkway Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15200.

Documents contained in the Administrative Record are available for public review at the locations listed below during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center, Room 218, Three Parkway Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15200, Telephone: (412) 937-2867.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Charleston Field Office, 1027 Virginia Street E, Charleston, WV 25301, Telephone: (304) 347-7158.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Peter R. Michael, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Appalachian Regional Coordinating Center, Room 218, Three Parkway

Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15200, Telephone: (412) 937-2867.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 522(e) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 prohibits surface coal mining operations on certain lands unless a person has VER to conduct such operations or unless the operation was in existence on August 3, 1977. Section 522(e)(2) applies the prohibition to Federal lands within the boundaries of any national forest unless the Secretary of the Interior finds that there are no significant recreational, timber, economic, or other values that may be incompatible with surface coal mining operations and the surface operations and impacts are incident to an underground coal mine.

Under section 523 of the Act and 30 CFR 740.11, the approved State program (including the State definition of VER) applies to all Federal lands within States with approved regulatory programs. However, under 30 CFR 745.13, the Secretary has exclusive authority to determine VER for surface coal mining and reclamation operations on Federal lands within the boundaries of the areas specified in paragraphs (e)(1) and (e)(2) of section 522 of the Act. OSM reaffirmed these basic principles in the preamble to the suspension notice concerning VER published on November 20, 1986 (51 FR 41954).

The term VER is defined in Subsection 2.130 of the West Virginia Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations. Subsection 2.130 provides that VER exists, except for haul roads, in each case in which a person demonstrates that the limitation provided for in Section 22-3-22(d) of the West Virginia Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Act would result in the unconstitutional taking of that person's rights.

In 1994, Walter D. Helmick re-acquired from Ernest J. Van Gilder certain mineral rights beneath Federal lands within the Monongahela National Forest in the Little Levels District of Pocahontas County, West Virginia. Mr. Van Gilder had purchased the mineral rights from Mr. Helmick in 1990 and later requested a VER determination from OSM for his planned surface mining operation on the property in question. Mr. Helmick's current VER request incorporates as part of the administrative record all supporting documents and public comments received by OSM in response to the request of Mr. Van Gilder and previous interested parties.

Mr. Helmick alleges that he owns mineral rights on two adjacent tracts of