

expected to occur by December, 2000. The official responsible for the decision is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region, National Park Service; the official responsible for implementation is the Superintendent, Channel Islands National Park.

Dated: August 31, 1999.

John J. Reynolds,

Regional Director, Pacific West Region.

[FR Doc. 99-23765 Filed 9-10-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to Amend the General Management Plan for the Backcountry of Denali National Park and Preserve

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.
ACTION: General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement, Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing an amendment to the general management plan, a backcountry management plan and an accompanying environmental impact statement (EIS) for Denali National Park and Preserve. The purpose of the management plan and EIS is to formulate a comprehensive plan for the backcountry, including designated wilderness, of Denali National Park and Preserve that will provide management direction over the next 15-20 years. This new management plan will amend the 1986 General Management Plan for the backcountry of Denali National Park and Preserve. The backcountry of Denali National Park and Preserve is defined to include all of the park except for those areas designated specifically for development in the entrance area and along the road corridor. Many issues to be addressed in the backcountry management plan would affect the entire park, including developed areas. The NPS has initiated this management plan and EIS to address the rapidly growing level and diversity of uses, resource management needs, and the anticipated demand for future uses not foreseen or addressed in the 1986 General Management Plan.

Primary issues that the management plan and EIS will address are types and levels of visitor use, the visitor experience, resource protection, subsistence use, facility development and maintenance, administration of the

backcountry management program, coordination with other land management agencies, research and other scientific uses, motorized uses including snowmachine and aircraft use, and fire management.

The proposed action in the management plan and EIS will include guidelines for the types and levels of a variety of backcountry uses and outline methods for resource protection. The proposal will allocate visitor use of the backcountry to prevent user conflicts and to continue providing for high quality visitor experiences and diverse opportunities. The proposed action will include zoning to provide for a spectrum of visitor opportunities ranging from motorized use areas to "quiet zones" where motorized uses would be prohibited. This will address visitor and management concerns about the existing conditions in which user conflicts occur.

Possible alternatives in the EIS will propose variations in the types and levels of backcountry uses. One alternative to the proposed action will be to provide for expanded uses similar to the level and types of uses in national parks in the lower 48. A second alternative will limit recreational and other backcountry uses so that Denali National Park and Preserve would be more comparable to other large national parks in Alaska with less visitor use. A no action alternative will also be included.

The NPS is seeking ideas on possible alternatives. The NPS will hold open house scoping sessions in fall 1999 in Fairbanks, the Denali National Park area, Talkeetna/Trapper Creek, and Anchorage. Specific dates, times, and locations of these scoping sessions will be announced in area newspapers. The NPS will continue to meet with other government agencies, organizations, and the public for information sharing.

The draft management plan/EIS is anticipated to be available for public review in late summer 2000. Public meetings will be scheduled in the Denali National Park/Healy area, the Talkeetna/Trapper Creek area, Fairbanks, and Anchorage, Alaska, after release of the draft management plan/EIS. The final EIS is expected to be released during summer 2001.

Interested groups, organizations, individuals and government agencies are invited to comment on the plan. 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 administrative record, which we

will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the administrative record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. 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.

The EIS is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4331 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR part 1500.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Stephen P. Martin, Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve, PO Box 9, Denali Park, Alaska 99755. Telephone (907) 683-2294.

Dated: September 1, 1999.

John Quinley,

Acting Regional Director, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 99-23762 Filed 9-10-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Availability of Plan of Operations and Environmental Assessment for Continuing Operations of 6 Gas Wells; Pantera Energy Company, (Lake Meredith National Recreation Area), Hutchinson County, TX

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 9.52(b) of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations that the National Park Service has received from Pantera Energy Company a Plan of Operations for the continuing operations of 6 gas wells within Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, Hutchinson County, Texas.

The Plan of Operation and Environmental Assessment are available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days from the publication date of this notice in the Office of the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area/Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, 419 East Broadway, Fritch, TX. Copies are available from the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area/Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, Post Office Box 1460, Fritch, Texas 79036 and will be sent