

analyze comments sent in response to this notice and include them in the request for approval from the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*

Nominations of Significant Caves

The Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988, 102 Stat. 4546, 16 U.S.C. 4301, requires identifying, protecting and maintaining, to the extent possible, significant caves on lands managed by the Department of the Interior. The implementing regulations are found at 43 CFR 37—Cave Management. The regulations were issued on October 1, 1993. Federal agencies must consult with “cavers” and other interested parties and develop a listing of significant caves. The regulations establish criteria for identifying significant caves and integrate cave management into existing planning and management processes to protect cave resource information. Protecting the information will prevent vandalism and disturbance of significant caves.

The public and other government agencies provide (a) names and addresses, (b) name and phone number of a key contact, (c) cave name, (d) cave location, (e) topographic and/or cave maps, (f) name of the administering federal agency and agency filed office name and address where the cave is located, (g) description of the cave, and (h) description of the applicable criteria significant caves, such as biota, cultural, geologic/mineralogic/paleontologic, hydrologic, recreational, and/or educational or scientific. If the Department did not collect the information, it could not identify, manage, and protect significant caves in accordance with the law.

This collection of information is short, simple, and limited to the information necessary for efficient operation of the program. The information collected is a voluntary, non-recurring submission necessary to receive a benefit. There is no other source for the information, and failure to submit the necessary information could result in a significant cave not receiving appropriate protection. Respondents already maintain this information for their own recordkeeping purposes and need only compile it for submission.

Based on the Department's experience in administering cave resources as described above, the public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 3 hours per response. The estimate includes the time for research, time to transcribe and audit the data, and time to prepare the nomination. The

number of responses is estimated to be about 200 per year. The frequency of response is once per nomination. The estimated total annual burden on new respondents is 600 hours.

Access to Confidential Cave Information

Other federal or state agencies, bona fide educational or research institutes, or individuals or organizations assisting the land management agencies with cave management activities may request access to confidential cave information. The written request should include: (a) name, address and telephone number of the person responsible for the security of the information, (b) a legal description of the cave location, (c) a statement of the purpose of the request, and (d) written assurance that the requesting party will maintain the confidentiality of the information and protect the cave and its resources. The Department uses the information provided to determine whether disclosure will create a substantial risk to cave resources. If the Department did not collect the information, it could not identify, manage or protect significant caves in accordance with the laws.

The collection of information is short, simple and convenient to the applicant. The information collected is a voluntary, non-recurring submission necessary to receive a benefit. The respondents already maintain this information for their own recordkeeping purposes and need only compile it.

Based on the Department's experience administering cave resources as described above, the information collection burden for confidential cave information requests is about 1 hour per request. The number of requests per year is ten. The frequency of response is once per request. The estimated total annual burden on new respondents is 10 hours.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will also be a matter of public record.

Dated: March 27, 2000.

Carole Smith,

BLM Information Collection Officer.

[FR Doc. 00-7837 Filed 3-29-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-84-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NV-030-2822-JL-J787; Closure Notice No. NV-030-00-001]

Emergency Closure and Vehicle Restriction on Federal Lands

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that certain public lands south of Hungry Ridge and northwest of Spanish Springs Valley, Washoe County, Nevada, are closed to all motorized vehicles. This closure is necessary due to unauthorized construction of a motorcross track in a rehabilitated materials pit, and off-road vehicle use which is causing considerable adverse effects to soils and vegetation. In addition, motorized vehicle use is restricted to existing roads and trails on all public lands under the jurisdiction of the Carson City Field Office which were burned during the 1999 fire season. These fires were identified by the following names: (1) Sand Springs/Fairview; (2) Cold Springs; (3) Stillwater Complex; (4) Shoshone; (5) New Pass; (6) Cemetery; (7) Fish; (8) Wilcox; (9) Reservoir; (10) Red Rock; (11) Pah Rah; and (12) Sutro. This restriction is necessary in order to allow for recovery and revegetation of these lands.

DATES: This closure becomes effective immediately and these restrictions will go into effect on March 20, 2000, and will remain in effect until the Manager, Carson City Field Office, determines they are no longer needed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John O. Singlaub, Manager, Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, Nevada 89701. Telephone (775) 885-6100.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The authorities for the closure and restrictions are 43 CFR 8341.2, 43 CFR 8342.3 and 43 CFR 8364.1. Any person who fails to comply with a closure or restriction order is subject to arrest and fines in accordance with applicable provisions of 18 U.S.C. 3571 and/or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months.

This order applies to all motorized vehicles excluding (1) any emergency or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes, and (2) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized in writing by the Manager, Carson City Field Office.

The public lands affected by the closure order are located approximately one mile west of Nevada Highway 445 at the south end of Hungry Ridge, and include all lands being used as an unauthorized motorcycle race course within:

Mt. Diablo Meridian

T. 21 N., R. 20 E.

Sec. 22, NE¼NE¼NW¼

The public lands affected by the restriction order constitute approximately 151,000 acres and are located throughout the area administered by the Carson City Field Office. These lands are depicted on maps posted in the Carson City Field Office. Copies of these maps also may be obtained from the Field Office.

Dated: March 8, 2000.

John O. Singlaub,*Manager, Carson City Field Office.*

[FR Doc. 00-7906 Filed 3-29-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-HC-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management**

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for Amendments to the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Resource Management Plans Regarding Cross-Country Travel by Off Highway Vehicles and Mountain Bikes; 30-Day Scoping Period Announced

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Gunnison and the Uncompahgre Field Offices, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Colorado, propose to prepare an Environmental Assessment and amend their respective resource management plans to prohibit cross-country travel by off-highway vehicles and mountain bikes on certain lands managed by each of these agency offices. Cross-country travel is defined as travel off established, existing roads and trails. Established, existing roads and trails, for this proposal, are defined as: roads and trails that exist on the ground at the time agency decisions become effective, and are described in agency travel inventories, or are easily recognizable on the ground as a route, and have been traveled routinely by users. This action is interim in nature, and is necessary so these offices can responsibly manage the land and meet people needs by preventing the proliferation of new, user-created routes and help maintain a quality recreation experience until intensive travel management planning can be completed by the agencies for the affected lands. The affected BLM offices propose changing OHV designations under 43 CFR 8342.2 on BLM-managed lands currently designated "open" year-long,

and "limited seasonally", to "limited to existing roads and trails", in order to prohibit cross-country travel by OHVs. In addition, under 43 CFR 8364.1 the offices propose to limit mountain bike use to "existing roads and trails" on all lands where use is not currently prohibited. Snowmobile use would not be addressed in this proposal. Implementing these proposed land use plan amendments would be an interim and temporary measure until the offices can conduct intensive and detailed travel management planning on the affected lands. After the completion of the EA, the BLM offices would then issue decisions amending existing resource management plans.

This effort is being undertaken in coordination with the Forest Service which is proposing similar measures on National Forest lands managed by the Gunnison and Paonia Ranger Districts within the Gunnison National Forest, Region 2.

The public is invited to comment on this proposal and to contact the local offices for additional information. The 30-day time period for receiving comments from the public will begin on the day this notice is published in the **Federal Register**, and will end 30 days after the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. Informal scoping occurred from February 24, 2000, through March 24, 2000. This notice will satisfy the requirement for the affected BLM offices to conduct formal scoping. Comments received during the scoping period will be considered during the preparation of the EA.

All alternatives to be considered during the EA process will be formulated after the scoping period is over and all comments are received.

DATES: Submit comments on or before May 1, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments concerning this notice to Bill Bottomly, Bureau of Land Management, 2465 South Townsend Avenue, Montrose, CO 81401. Electronic mail can be sent to bill_bottomly@co.blm.gov. The local addresses and telephone numbers of the affected BLM offices are: Gunnison Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 216 N. Colorado, Gunnison, CO 81230 (970)641-0471; Uncompahgre Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 2505 S. Townsend Avenue, Montrose, CO 81401 (970)240-5300.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Bottomly at (970)240-5337.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The GFO manages approximately 585,000 acres in the study area. In the GFO, approximately 365,660 acres are

currently "open" year-long and approximately 73,430 acres are "limited seasonally" to motorized use. Mountain bike use is currently unrestricted on approximately 537,000 acres. The UFO manages approximately 66,825 acres within the study area for this proposal. Of the lands managed by the UFO in the study area, approximately 27,060 acres are "open" year-long and 36,690 acres are "limited seasonally" to motorized use. Mountain bike use is currently unrestricted on all BLM-managed lands in the study area managed by the UFO.

The affected agency resource management plans were prepared prior to much of the recent increase in OHV and mountain bike use, and the new development of all terrain vehicle technology. One of the many opportunities on public land is traveling the back country for recreational pursuits, such as sight-seeing, wood cutting, fishing, hunting, and other activities. It is the goal of both offices to provide for a wide spectrum of dispersed recreation activities while minimizing environmental impacts and conflicts between user groups. Some of this use occurs on public lands where OHV use is currently limited to existing or designated roads and trails. However, there are large areas of public land that are open to cross-country travel off roads and trails by OHVs, including mountain bikes. This unrestricted use has the potential to continue the spread of noxious weeds, create user conflicts, cause erosion, damage cultural sites, and disrupt wildlife and wildlife habitat. With an increase in OHV and mountain bike traffic, and changes in OHV technology, the public, and the land management agencies, recognize the need to evaluate current management decisions for those areas where driving off roads and trails is allowed. A change in management direction would be accomplished through an EA and an amendment to the BLM resource management plans. The BLM plan amendments would address the use of wheeled, motorized vehicles designed for and/or capable of travel off roads and trails, and mountain bike use. The BLM proposes changing the areas currently open seasonally or year-long to cross-country OHV and mountain bike use to a designation that allows for travel only on existing roads and trails. These changes in designation would prohibit cross-country travel by wheeled, motorized vehicles designed for and/or capable of travel off roads and trails, and mountain bike. However, this would not change most of the current limited or closed designations, or designated intensive use areas.