

Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report. A response to each comment received in these letters has been included in Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report considered five alternatives, including the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternatives. Under the No-Action Alternative, landowners within the County would continue to apply for individual incidental take permits on a case-by-case basis, resulting in piecemeal planning that would establish isolated patches of mitigation land scattered throughout the County. This could result in cumulatively significant adverse impacts to those species which would benefit from larger tracts of interconnected habitats.

Under the Reduced Land Acquisition/ Increased Preserve Enhancement Alternative, mitigation would focus on habitat enhancement which could interfere substantially with agricultural activities, creating significant adverse impact to agricultural productivity in the County. This alternative would have questionable benefits to the covered species because habitat enhancement is unpredictable and may be unsuccessful.

Under the No Wetlands Coverage Alternative, landowners within the County would continue to apply for individual permits pursuant to the Federal Clean Water Act, which is expected to result in piecemeal planning. Mitigation lands would likely consist of smaller and more widely scattered habitat blocks than would occur with the Proposed Action, resulting in cumulatively significant adverse impacts to those wetland-dependent species which would benefit from larger tracts of interconnected habitats.

Under the Preserve Location Outside of the County Alternative, significantly less habitat within the County would be preserved than with the Proposed Action, adversely impacting some covered species by creating gaps in the species' range and potentially disrupting the genetic integrity of some populations. This alternative could also adversely impact relatively immobile species that are unable to relocate to distant newly created habitats.

The analysis provided in the Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report is intended to accomplish the following: inform the public of the proposed action; address public comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report; disclose the direct,

indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the proposed actions; and indicate any irreversible commitment of resources that would result from implementation of the proposed action.

Dated: November 20, 2000.

John Engbring,

Acting Deputy Manager, Region 1, California/ Nevada Operations Office, Sacramento, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-690-01-5101-01-B109; CACA-CACA-40467]

Notice of Extension of the Public Comment Period on the Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Cadiz Groundwater Storage Dry-Year Supply Program

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the public comment period on the Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Cadiz Groundwater Storage Dry-Year Supply Program has been extended to Monday, January 8, 2001. The original public comment was scheduled to close on Monday, December 4, 2000.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of the Interior, the Federal lead agency, and Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California, the State lead agency, developed the supplement in response to public and agency concerns about groundwater management and potential air quality impacts associated with the project, proposed by Metropolitan in partnership with Cadiz, Inc. Cooperating agencies in developing the supplement were the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The Supplement provides more information on the proposed project and includes a Groundwater Monitoring and Management Plan (Plan). The Plan would govern water storage and extraction operations, including the amount of indigenous groundwater that may be extracted over the 50-year life of the proposed project.

The project proposes to utilize the groundwater basins under a portion of the Cadiz and Fenner Valleys, about 60 miles southwest of Needles, Calif., to store water imported from

Metropolitan's Colorado River Aqueduct during years with surplus water and extract the stored water and available indigenous groundwater for use by Metropolitan to serve its customers.

Some of the necessary facilities involved would be located on Cadiz, Inc. private land, while a 35-mile-long pipeline and other facilities would be on public lands administered by BLM.

The supplement is available online at www.ca.blm.gov/needles/nepa01.html.

Review copies are available at BLM offices in Needles (101 West Spikes Road) and Riverside (6221 Box Springs Blvd.), and Metropolitan's Los Angeles headquarters (700 North Alameda Street), as well as local public libraries.

Comments on the Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Cadiz Groundwater Storage Dry-Year Supply Program should be addressed to the Bureau of Land Management, Attn: James Williams, 6221 Box Springs Blvd., Riverside, CA 92507 or Metropolitan Water District, Attn: Jack Safely, P.O. Box 54153, Los Angeles, CA 90054.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James Williams at (909) 697-5390 or Jack Safely at (213) 217-6981.

Dated: November 27, 2000.

Bruce Shaffer,

Associate District Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY-030-2001-1060-JJ]

Notice of Intent to Extend the Time Period for Removal of Excess and Stray Wild Horses

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

SUMMARY: On June 21, 2000, notice was published in the **Federal Register** at Vol. 65, No 120, pgs 38572-38573, which stated in part, "* * * the Rawlins and Lander Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management plan to remove 500-600 excess and stray horses from three contiguous areas of the Rawlins and Lander Field Offices known as the Lost Creek HMA, an area designated as I-80 North, and the Antelope Hills HMA * * * The removal is scheduled to begin after September 30, 2000, and conclude prior to January 1, 2001. The Appropriate Management Level for these three contiguous areas is 140. At least 140 horses will remain in the area after the removal is completed."