

both Edwin B. Forsythe and Cape May National Wildlife Refuges in New Jersey, collectively referred to as the Jersey Coast Refuges. These documents were prepared in compliance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and its implementing regulations.

The Acting Regional Director, Northeast Regional Office, in making his decision considered a reasonable range of three management alternatives discussed in the Environmental Assessment. The three alternatives were:

**Alternative A.** This was the No Action Alternative requirement by the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations on the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act. Under this Alternative there would be no change from our current management programs and emphasis at both Refuges. Seasonal travel and parking of motor vehicles would continue to be allowed in the Holgate Unit of the Brigantine Wilderness Area, on lands above mean high tide, in violation of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The beach at the Two Mile Beach Unit would continue to be closed to access by the public.

**Alternative B.** This was the Service's Proposed Action. This Alternative would initiate new wildlife population and habitat management programs; provide new wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities; increase our land protection efforts; and provide new office and visitor facilities at both Refuges. All lands above mean high tide in the Holgate Unit of the Brigantine Wilderness Area would be closed to motor vehicles by the public year-round in compliance with the Wilderness Act. We would initiate efforts to establish a seasonal boat concession to ferry anglers and other Refuge visitors to the southern tip of the Holgate Peninsula. The beach at the Two Mile Beach Unit would be open to seasonal access by the public.

**Alternative C.** This Alternative would initiate new wildlife population and habitat management programs; provide new wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities Refuge-wide; increase our land protection efforts; and provide new or remodeled office and visitor facilities at both Refuges. All lands above mean high tide in the Holgate Unit of the Brigantine Wilderness Area would be closed to motor vehicle access by the public year-round in compliance with the Wilderness Act. We would also seek to further restrict motor vehicle access at the Holgate Unit by obtaining a license from the New Jersey Tidelands Council to close State-owned riparian lands below the mean high line. We

would initiate efforts to establish a seasonal boat concession to ferry anglers and other Refuge visitors to the southern tip of the Holgate Peninsula. The beach at the Two Mile Beach Unit would be open year-round to access by the public.

Based on the analysis provided in the Environmental Assessment and the comments received from the public, the Acting Regional Director selected Alternative B (the Service's Proposed Action) to be enacted on the Refuges.

Alternative B was selected because it best achieves Refuge purposes, vision and goals; helps fulfill the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; maintains and, where appropriate, restores the ecological integrity of both Refuges and the Refuge System; addresses the significant issues and mandates; and is consistent with the principles of sound fish and wildlife management.

Based on his evaluation, the Acting Regional Director determined that the implementation of Alternative B would not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act and concluded that an environmental impact statement is not required. However, since the proposed closure of the Holgate Unit of the Brigantine Wilderness Area to motor vehicle use by the public above mean high tide has been highly controversial, he decided to provide a 30-day public review period for this period for this Finding of No Significant Impact prior to signing it. The public review period will end 30 days after this Notice is published. This public review period is in compliance with Council of Environmental Quality Regulation 1501.4(e)(2).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Copies of either Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, or the Finding of No Significant Impact, may be obtained by contacting: Mr. Stephen Atzert, Refuge Manager, Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 72, Great Creek Road, Oceanville, NJ 08231.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and Service policy require that all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System be managed in accordance with an approved refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan. The Plan guides management decisions and identifies refuge goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. The Service's planning process considered many elements, including habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection and land acquisition, wildlife-

dependent recreational uses, and cultural resources. Public input into the planning process also assisted in the development of the Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans, Environmental Assessment, and Finding of No Significant Impact. The Plans will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuges and how the Service will implement its management strategies.

Dated: January 25, 2001.

**G. Adam O'Hara,**

*Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.*

[FR Doc. 01-3691 Filed 2-13-01; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Availability

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has published a Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. This plan describes how the Service intends to manage the refuge over the next 15 years. The refuge is composed of all or part of 21 islands covering over 3,200 acres in four states (West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Ohio).

**DATES:** A public meeting will be held in each of the four states, with dates, times and addresses to be announced later in local newspapers and on the regional website (<http://northeast.fws.gov>). The meetings will provide an opportunity for all interested parties to present oral or written testimony on the draft document. The public meetings will be held in late February and early March.

All other comments should be sent by either traditional or electronic mail, no later than 45 days from date of this publication, to: Thomas Bonetti, Planning Team Leader, Northeast Regional Office, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035-9589; or FW5RW\_CCP@fws.gov.

**ADDRESSES:** Additional information or copies of the Draft CCP/EA may be obtained by contacting Thomas Bonetti at the above address, or by contacting Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, 3004 7th Street, Parkersburg, WV 26102-1811, telephone 304/422-0752.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment fully

describes, evaluates, and compares four alternatives for managing the natural resources and public use opportunities for the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge. One of the alternatives represents the Service's Proposed Action. The four alternatives are:

Alternative A. This alternative is the No Action alternative as required by National Environmental Policy Act regulations. Selection of this alternative would maintain the status quo; there would be no significant changes to current management practices. This alternative serves as the baseline from which to compare the other three alternatives.

Alternative B. This alternative represents the Service's Proposed Action; that is, the alternative currently recommended for approval. Selection of this alternative would include expansion of the Refuge by acquiring remaining islands and embayments, which total to over 8,000 acres. Alternative B would emphasize restoration and reforestation of native bottomland floodplain forest to the Ohio River. Opportunities for all six priority public uses would improve, including an increased importance on environmental education and outreach programs.

Alternative C. This alternative would increase Refuge habitat diversity with increased management of early successional habitat. This habitat would also be more favorable for many game species and associated expanded consumptive recreational uses. Fishing, hunting and trapping allowable by state laws regulations would be offered and promoted. Selection of this alternative would also increase acquisition to over 8,000.

Alternative D. This alternative would manage Refuge lands to provide and maximize undisturbed resting, feeding, and breeding areas for wildlife, especially migratory birds. All visitation would be tightly regulated and confined to certain designated areas. Hunting and fishing would be eliminated from all Refuge lands under this Alternative. Boating and shore use would also be prohibited on Refuge lands. Selection of this alternative would also increase acquisition to over 8,000 acres.

Dated: February 2, 2001.

**G. Adam O'Hara,**

*Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.*

[FR Doc. 01-3692 Filed 2-13-01; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Letters of Authorization To Take Marine Mammals

**AGENCY:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of issuance of a letter of authorization to take marine mammals incidental to oil and gas industry activities.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service implementing regulations [50 CFR 18.27(f)(3)], notice is hereby given that a Letter of Authorization to take polar bears incidental to oil and gas industry exploration activities has been issued to the following company:

*Company:* BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.

*Activity:* Production.

*Location:* Northstar.

*Date Issued:* January 9, 2001.

**CONTACT:** Mr. John W. Bridges at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management Office, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, (800) 362-5148 or (907) 786-3810.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Letters of Authorization are issued in accordance with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Rules and Regulations "Marine Mammals; Incidental Take During Specified Activities (65 FR 16828; March 30, 2000)."

Dated: January 29, 2001.

**David B. Allen,**

*Regional Director.*

[FR Doc. 01-3736 Filed 2-13-01; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[NV-020-1430-EU]

#### Termination of Desert Land Entry Classification and Segregation; Nevada

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This action terminates the desert-land classification N-58996, dated April 8, 1982, and also terminates the segregation for desert-land entries N-24429, N-24431, and N-24432, dated December 18, 1996. The land will be opened to the operation of the public land laws, including location and entry under the mining laws.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 16, 2001.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary L. Figarelle, Winnemucca Field Office, 5100 E. Winnemucca Boulevard, Winnemucca, Nevada 89445, 775-623-1500.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The desert-land classification for N-58996 was made on April 8, 1982, pursuant to Section 7 of the Taylor Grazing Act (43 U.S.C., etc. seq.). When entry to the land was allowed on December 18, 1996 for desert-land entries N-24429, N-24431, and N-24432, the lands became segregated from all other forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the mining laws. All three desert-land entrymen withdrew their applications after failing to provide final proof by the deadline of December 28, 2000.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Taylor Grazing Act (43 U.S.C., et. seq.), the desert land classification N-58996 made on April 8, 1982, and the desert-land entries allowed on December 18, 1996, are hereby terminated for the following described lands:

#### Mount Diablo Meridian, Nevada

T. 41 N., R. 28 E.,

Sec. 2: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;

Sec. 3: S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ ;

Sec. 4: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;

Sec. 9: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ; S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ,

NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;

Sec. 10: N $\frac{1}{2}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;

Sec. 11: W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ .

The area described contains 960 acres in Humboldt County.

1. At 9 a.m. on March 16, 2001, the land described above will be opened to the operation of the public land laws generally, subject to valid existing rights, the provision of existing withdrawals, other segregation of record, and the requirements of applicable law. All valid applications received at or prior to 9 a.m. on March 16, 2001, shall be considered as simultaneously filed at that time. Those received thereafter shall be considered in the order of filing.

2. At 9 a.m. on March 16, 2001, the land described above will be opened to location and entry under the United States mining laws, subject to valid existing rights, the provisions of existing withdrawals, other segregation of record, and the requirements of applicable law. Appropriation of any of the land described in this order under the general mining laws prior to the date and time of restoration is unauthorized. Any such attempted appropriation, including attempted adverse possession under 30 U.S.C. 38 (1988), shall best not rights against the United States. Acts