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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability, Final Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), on behalf of the Department of the Interior (DOI), as a Natural Resource Trustee (Trustee), announces the release of the Final Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment (RP/EA) for Operable Unit 3 (OU-3) of the Asbestos Dump Superfund Site, Morris County, New Jersey. The Final RP/EA describes the DOI's selected action to restore natural resources injured as a result of chemical contamination at the Asbestos Dump Superfund Site.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the Final RP/EA may be made to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey Field Office, 927 North Main Street, Pleasantville, New Jersey, 08232.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Clay Stern, Environmental Contaminants Branch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey Field Office, 927 North Main Street, Pleasantville, New Jersey, 08232. Interested parties may also call 609-646-9310, x27 or send electronic mail to clay—stern@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the authority of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980 as amended, commonly known as Superfund, (42 U.S.C. 9601 *et seq.*), * * * “[Trustees] may assess damages to natural resources resulting from a discharge of oil or a release of a hazardous substance * * * and may seek to recover those damages.” Natural resource damage assessments are separate from the cleanup actions undertaken at a hazardous waste site, and provide a process whereby the Trustees can determine the proper compensation to the public for injury to natural resources. At OU-3 of the Asbestos Dump Superfund Site in Morris County, New Jersey, DOI was the sole natural resource trustee involved in the Federal government's settlement with the National Gypsum Corporation (NGC). The Service, acting on behalf of the DOI, determined that contamination at OU-3 had degraded and injured trust

resources within the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. The injuries resulted from the deposition of asbestos containing materials, and mercuric and lead based compounds at the 5.58-acre site.

As part of a Consent Decree requiring remedial actions at OU-3, DOI settled with NGC for natural resource damages. The settlement of approximately \$3.6 million was designated for restoration, replacement, or acquisition of the equivalent natural resources injured by the release of contaminants at the site.

The Final RP/EA is being released in accordance with the Natural Resource Damage Assessment Regulations found at Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulation Part 11. The Final RP/EA describes several natural resource restoration, acquisition, and protection alternatives identified by the DOI, and evaluates each of the possible alternatives based on all relevant considerations. The DOI's Preferred Alternative is to use the settlement funds in a combination of projects aimed to restore, enhance, and protect in perpetuity, fish and wildlife habitat within the Great Swamp Watershed. Details regarding the proposed projects are contained in the Final RP/EA.

The Final Revised Procedures for the DOI in implementing the National Environmental Policy Act were published in the **Federal Register** on January 16, 1997. Under those procedures the DOI has determined that the Preferred Alternative will not have significant environmental effects as described in the Draft RP/EA and the attached Finding of No Significant Impact Statement. Accordingly, the Preferred Alternative described in the Draft RP/EA will not require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Author

The primary author of this notice is Clay Stern, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey Field Office, 927 North Main Street, Pleasantville, New Jersey, 08232.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980 as amended, commonly known as Superfund, (42 U.S.C. 9601 *et seq.*).

Dated: July 24, 2001.

Mamie A. Parker,

Acting Regional Director, Region 5, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area, Whiskeytown Unit, Shasta County, CA Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Fire Management Plan

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given, in accord with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), that public scoping has been initiated for a conservation planning and environmental impact analysis effort intended to update the Fire Management Plan (FMP) for the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. The purpose of the scoping process is to elicit early public comment regarding current issues and concerns, a suitable range of alternatives, the nature and extent of potential environmental impacts, appropriate mitigating measures, and other matters which should be addressed in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Background: The Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area was created by Congress in 1965. The Whiskeytown Unit is administered as a unit of the National Park Service (NPS), with the Shasta and Trinity units of the National Recreation Area administered by the USDA Forest Service. Research has shown that fire is a significant natural process across a large portion of the 42,500 acres within the authorized boundaries of the park. Following several decades of total fire suppression, a fire management program was begun in the 1970s and has continued to the present time. Three forms of wildland fire management have been used to achieve natural and cultural resource management and hazard fuel reduction goals; aggressive suppression of unwanted wildfires; prescribed burning; and mechanical fuel reduction.

The last revision of the FMP was based upon completion of an Environmental Assessment process, which culminated in a Finding Of No Significant Impact approval of the program in 1993. However, since that time a broad range of new issues, improved information and technology, and unforeseeable limitations have emerged which have the potential to affect the future direction of the fire management program within the park. Some of these issues include but are not limited to: a continued decline in ecosystem health due to fire suppression; increased hazardous fuels buildup; expanding uses and development at the wildland-urban interface; increased risks and costs