

important ecological process in maintaining the native plant communities of the park, but wildfire poses a hazard to life and property at the urban/wildland interface areas. The park has had a fire management program since 1986; the plan was updated in 1994. The park utilizes a limited number of forms of fire management to achieve natural and cultural resource management and hazard fuel reduction goals including complete suppression, prescribed burning and mechanical fuel reduction.

The current environmental impact analysis of the park's fire management program was initiated in 1986 and culminated in a Finding Of No Significant Impact. Since that time, a spectrum of new issues, improved information, and unforeseeable constraints have emerged which have the potential to affect the future direction of the fire management program within the park. Some of these factors include but are not limited to: a potential decline in ecosystem health due to anthropogenically increased fire frequency, increased hazards and costs associated with fire suppression at the urban/wildland interface, and more stringent air quality regulations.

Information and Comment: As noted, the National Park Service will undertake a conservation planning and environmental impact analysis effort to address issues and concerns regarding any update in the current fire management program, and identify new alternatives for fire management in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. At this time, it has not been determined whether an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared, however, this scoping process will aid in this determination.

As an early step in this undertaking, a series of four public scoping meetings will be conducted in April, 2002. California cities where scoping meetings will be held are: Calabasas/Agoura Hills, Malibu, Beverly Hills, and Thousand Oaks. For those unable to attend meetings, a scoping document will be available upon request. The main topics to be addressed in the scoping document and meetings are: background information on the fire management program; a review of relevant policy and law affecting the fire management program; an assessment of current fire management needs; and the identification of issues and potential alternatives related to future fire management in the park. All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are encouraged to provide comments or suggestions. Written comments

regarding the fire management program update must be postmarked no later than August 31, 2002.

For confirmed details about the scoping meetings, or to request a copy of the scoping background material and provide comments, please contact: Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area; Attn: Corrina Marote B—Fire Management Plan; 401 West Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, California 91360 or via telephone at (805) 370-1845.

If individuals submitting comments request that their name or/and address be withheld from public disclosure, it will be honored to the extent allowable by law. Such requests must be stated prominently in the beginning of the comments. There also may be circumstances wherein the NPS will withhold a respondent's identity as allowable by law. As always: NPS will make available to public inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses; and, anonymous comments may not be considered.

Decision: The official responsible for final approval is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region, National Park Service. Subsequently, the official responsible for implementation would be the Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The draft fire management plan and environmental document are expected to be available for public review in June, 2002. At this time it is anticipated that the final plan and environmental document are to be completed in October, 2002.

Dated: February 8, 2002.

John J. Reynolds,

Regional Director, Pacific West.

[FR Doc. 02-7249 Filed 3-25-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

General Management Plan; Middle and South Forks Kings River Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan; North Fork Kern River Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan; Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Tulare and Fresno Counties, California; Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) will prepare Comprehensive Management Plans for the Middle and

South Forks Kings River and the North Fork Kern River, which in 1987 were designated as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The purpose of these Comprehensive Management Plans is to provide direction and overall guidance on managing these wild and scenic rivers within the boundaries of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. These plans will be prepared concurrently with the park's ongoing General Management Plan (GMP), in accord with 40 CFR 1501.7 and 40 CFR 1508.22 of the regulations of the President's Council on Environmental Quality for the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Pub.L. 91-190). This notice supersedes a previous Notice of Intent which was published in the October 28, 1997 **Federal Register** (V62,N208,PP55827-28). The forthcoming Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the GMP will be expanded to include Comprehensive Management Plans for these river segments.

Background

Congress directed the NPS to revise the GMP for these parks to recognize these designations. The EIS will include an evaluation of the potential impacts, if any, and appropriate mitigation strategies, associated with implementing Comprehensive Management Plans (CMP) for wild and scenic river management. The CMPs will establish boundaries and identify appropriate classification of segments, and the GMP and CMPs will ensure that no development or use of park lands will be undertaken that is inconsistent with the designation of these river segments.

Comments

Comments concerning the scope of the CMPs, and any new information regarding the GMP, are encouraged at this time. Scoping comments regarding the GMP received previously are recorded in the administrative record and will also continue to be addressed (a synopsis of issues and concerns received overall will be available). Written comments concerning the CMPs or/and GMP should be sent to: Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, 47050 Generals Highway, Three Rivers, CA 93271-9651. All written responses must be postmarked not later than March 29, 2002. For additional info, or requests to be added to the project mailing list, contact Dr. David Graber, GMP Coordinator, at the above address or via telephone at (559) 565-3173.

If individuals submitting comments request that their name or/and address

be withheld from public disclosure, it will be honored to the extent allowable by law. Such requests must be stated prominently in the beginning of the comments. There also may be circumstances wherein the NPS will withhold a respondent's identity as allowable by law. As always: NPS will make available to public inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses; and, anonymous comments may not be considered.

Decision

As a delegated EIS, the official responsible for the final decision is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region; subsequently the official responsible for implementation is the Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. At this time it is anticipated that the Draft EIS for the GMP/CMPs will be available for public review in the fall of 2002. Distribution of the document will be duly noted in the **Federal Register** and announced via local and regional press. Thereafter the Final EIS would be completed in the spring of 2003.

Dated: January 16, 2002.

Cynthia Ip,

Acting Regional Director, Pacific West Region.

[FR Doc. 02-7253 Filed 3-25-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-70-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Funding Assistance for Non-Federal Acquisition of Civil War Battlefield Land

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Availability of Funding for Acquisition of Civil War Battlefield Land.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) announces the availability of funds to assist States and local communities in acquiring for permanent protection lands, or interests in lands, at significant Civil War battlefield sites.

ADDRESSES: Funding proposals should be mailed to: Hampton Tucker, National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services, 1849 C Street, NW., NC 200, Washington, DC, 20240, telephone (202) 343-3580.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Hawke, National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services, 1849 C Street, NW., NC 200, Washington, DC, 20240, telephone (202) 343-1005.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) announces the availability of funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to help States and local communities acquire and preserve our nation's threatened Civil War Battlefields, as authorized by the FY 2002 Department of the Interior Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 107-63). The \$11 million available for matching grants will be administered by the ABPP and awarded through a competitive process over three years (fiscal years 2002 through 2004). Each grant requires a dollar-for-dollar non-Federal match. Grants are available for the fee simple acquisition of land, or for the acquisition of permanent, protective interests in land, at Civil War Battlefields listed in the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission's (CWSAC) 1993 Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields. Higher consideration will be given to proposals for acquisition at battlefields defined as Priority 1 or 2 sites in the CWSAC Report. The CWSAC Report and a listing of battlefields' priority status can be found on the ABPP's Web site at <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/priority.htm>.

Who May Apply

Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants will be awarded to units of State and local governments. In any case where a private non-profit organization seeks to acquire battlefield land with assistance from this program, that organization must apply in partnership with a State or local government agency. The government agency may then subgrant the federal funds to the non-profit organization. In any case where a local government or a private non-profit organization acquires land or an interest in land with assistance from this program, it must convey an acceptable perpetual protective easement on the land to the State Historic Preservation Officer or other governmental agency acceptable to the National Park Service, in accordance with the Administrative Requirements set out below.

What Is Funded

Grants must be used to acquire battlefield land or to acquire a permanent, protective interest (i.e., a perpetual easement) in battlefield land. Additional costs associated with the acquisition—such as appraisal costs, survey fees, title insurance, and other closing costs—are also eligible grant costs. Eligible battlefields are those listed in the CWSAC's 1993 Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields. CWSAC Priority 1 & 2 sites will be given highest consideration. Eligible

acquisitions should lie within the "core" areas of these battlefields, as defined by the CWSAC. Proposals for acquisition of battlefield land outside the "core" area but within the "study" area as defined by the CWSAC are eligible but will be considered a lower priority than "core" area land. Land lying entirely outside of the CWSAC "study area" is not eligible for assistance from this program. In any case where the land proposed for acquisition lies partially within the study area and partially outside the study area, the majority of the land must be within the study area. Contact the ABPP to confirm core and study area boundaries. There is no minimum grant request. Typically, \$500,000 will be the maximum award, though NPS will entertain larger requests under special circumstances. Past acquisition grants have ranged from \$50,000 to \$500,000, with an average grant of \$220,000.

Ordinarily, grant funds will be awarded for acquisitions that take place following the award of the grant. However, a State or local government may apply on behalf of a non-profit organization that has borrowed money in order to acquire land immediately in order to prevent its imminent sale for development, provided that the land in question is not currently protected by public ownership of a permanent, protective interest in the land. Grant assistance for the retirement of such privately held debt must result in the public ownership of either the fee simple interest or a permanent, protective interest in the land, in accordance with the other terms of this offering. However, the fact of such prior purchase creates no additional priority for funding assistance from NPS.

Administrative and Funding Requirements

- A dollar-for-dollar non-Federal match is required for all projects; Federal appropriations or other Federal grants may not be used for match. Matching funds should be "in-hand" or otherwise committed at the time that the acquisition proposal is submitted to NPS. NPS will accept proposals from applicants who have not yet secured their matching share, but it reserves the right to provide such applicants with a conditional response pending the availability of matching funds within a specified period of time. If partners will not commit matching funds without the leverage provided by this acquisition grant, applicants may provide a letter from potential funding sources guaranteeing that receipt of a battlefield acquisition grant will release matching funds.