

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****National Park Service****Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the National Coal Heritage Area, Management Action Plan**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

**ACTION:** Availability of draft environmental impact statement for the National Coal Heritage Area Management Plan.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Park Service announces the availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the National Coal Heritage Area (NCHA) in West Virginia. The National Coal Heritage Area Act of 1996 requires the NCHA, with guidance from the National Park Service, to prepare a management plan for the heritage area. The purpose of the Management Action Plan is to (1) set forth the integrated cultural, historical, and land resource management policies and programs in order to retain, enhance, and interpret the significant values of the lands, water, and structures of the Area. (2) describe the guidelines and standards for projects that involve preservation, restoration, maintenance, operations, interpretation, and promotion of buildings, structures, facilities, and sites; and (3) set forth the responsibilities of the State of West Virginia, units of local government, nonprofit entities, in order to further historic preservation and compatible economic revitalization.

The study area, designated as the National Coal Heritage Area, includes the following eleven counties in the southern region of West Virginia Boone, Cabell, Fayette, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Raleigh, Summers, Wayne, and Wyoming.

The National Park Service (NPS) maintains three park sites within the region: New River Gorge National River, The Bluestone National Scenic River and the Gauley National Recreation Area. Otherwise the majority of land is non-federal and the NPS assumes a management role only within their park units. Instead, conservation, interpretation and other activities are managed by partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and private nonprofit organizations. The national heritage area is managed by the State of West Virginia Division of Culture and History, and Division of Tourism. The National Park Service has been

authorized by Congress to provide technical and financial assistance for a limited period to the state (up to 10 years from the time of the designation in 1996).

**DATES:** The DEIS will remain on Public Review through April 30th. Public Meetings will be scheduled and notice will be made of the meeting through a broad public mailing and publication in the local newspaper.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Peter Samuel, Project Leader, Philadelphia Support Office, National Park Service, U.S. Custom House, 200 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, *peter\_samuel@nps.gov*, 215-597-1848.

(If you correspond using the internet, please include your name and return address in your e-mail message. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.)

Dated: February 20, 2002.

**Len Emerson,**

*Assistant Regional Director, Northeast Region.*

[FR Doc. 02-8624 Filed 4-9-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-70-M**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****National Park Service****Non-Native Deer Management Plan, Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, CA; Notice of Scoping**

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given, in accordance with the 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 process for preparing a non-native deer management plan for Point Reyes National Seashore. The purpose of the scoping process is to elicit early public comment regarding issues and concerns, a suitable range of alternatives and appropriate mitigating measures, and the nature and extent of potential environmental impacts that should be addressed.

*Background:* Point Reyes National Seashore is a unit of the National Park System. It was established by Congress on September 13, 1962 "to save and preserve, for the purpose of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped" (Pub. L. 87-657). Fallow deer (*Dama dama*) and axis deer (*Axis axis*) from the San Francisco Zoo were introduced to Point Reyes in the mid 1940s prior to the establishment of the National Seashore. They are native to Mediterranean Europe and southern Asia, respectively. Their populations were controlled by hunting until commencement of park management operations by the National Park Service in 1971. Subsequently, national park rangers culled non-native deer in an attempt to control their populations. This culling decreased after 1995, and numbers of the non-native deer have apparently increased. The native cervid fauna at Point Reyes comprises two species, black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) and tule elk (*Cervus elaphus nannodes*). The latter was extirpated in the 19th Century, reintroduced to the area in 1978, and currently is the subject of a program to establish a free-ranging herd within designated wilderness area in the park.

Point Reyes National Seashore has never formulated or published a management plan for the non-native deer within its boundaries. Large population sizes of the two species of non-native deer, the ongoing management program to re-establish and favor the two native deer species, and potential adverse effect of forage competition with and disease transmission from the non-native to the native deer necessitate the development and implementation of a non-native deer management plan for Point Reyes National Seashore.

*Comment Process:* As noted, the National Park Service will undertake an environmental analysis effort to address issues and alternatives for non-native deer management at Point Reyes National Seashore. 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 the preparation of either document.

As the first step in this undertaking, a public scoping and information meeting will be held May 4, 2002 at the Dance Palace in Point Reyes Station. For those unable to attend the meeting, a scoping document will be available through the park. At this time its anticipated that the primary topics to be

addressed at the public meeting include: background information on the non-native deer management program; a review of relevant policy and law affecting the non-native deer management program; an assessment of current non-native deer management needs; and the identification of issues and concerns, alternative courses of action related to non-native deer management in the park, and potential impacts and appropriate mitigation strategies. All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide comments or suggestions. Written comments regarding the exotic deer management program must be postmarked no later than July 5, 2002. To provide comments, inquire about the scoping meeting, or to request a copy of the scoping background material and provide comments, please contact: Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore; Attn: Exotic Deer Management Plan; Point Reyes Station, California 94956; telephone (415) 464-5102.

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 draft non-native deer management plan and environmental document are expected to be available for public review in the late fall of 2002. At this time it is anticipated that the final plan and environmental document are to be completed in Spring 2003. Following the conclusion of the scoping period the determination of whether to prepare an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement will be made by the Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore. Subsequently, the official responsible for approval of either a Finding of No Significant Impact or a Record of Decision is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region; and then the Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore would be responsible for implementing the approved management actions.

Dated: January 14, 2002.

**John J. Reynolds,**

*Regional Director, Pacific West Region.*

[FR Doc. 02-8698 Filed 4-9-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-70-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### **Record of Decision, General Management Plan/Visitor Use and Facilities Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota**

**AGENCY:** NPS, Interior.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), has prepared this record of decision (ROD) on the final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the general management plan (GMP) and visitor use and facilities plan (VUFP), Voyageurs National Park in Koochiching and St. Louis Counties, Minnesota. This ROD is a statement of the decision made, the background of the project, other alternatives considered, the environmentally preferred alternative, the basis for the decision, measures to minimize environmental harm, whether any actions in the plan constitute an impairment of park resources and values, and public involvement in the decision making process.

The Regional Director, NPS, Midwest Region approved the ROD on January 18, 2002.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Superintendent, Voyageurs National Park, 3131 Highway 53, International Falls, Minnesota 56649-8904.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The NPS will implement a slightly modified version of the proposed action described and analyzed in the draft EIS. The modifications made to the proposed action will either not result in any additional or changed environmental impacts from those analyzed in the draft, or will result in impacts similar to those reported in the draft EIS for another alternative.

The selected alternative, referred to in the final EIS as the "modified proposed action" and in the remainder of this ROD as the GMP or "plan," contains elements of alternatives 1, 2, and 3 and the original proposed action as analyzed in the draft EIS, and presents a balanced approach to resource protection and visitor use. It is also responsive to public comments, many of which indicated the park should not significantly change existing types and levels of recreational use. Although very few changes to existing uses will occur,

the plan includes additional trails, including one that links the communities of Kabetogama and Ash River. It will also result in a moderate increase in the number of overnight sites and new day use and visitor destination sites. It further anticipates an upper limit for the number of houseboats that may overnight in the park at one time. Houseboat use will continue at existing levels, and could increase. The specific number of houseboats permitted—the park's carrying capacity for houseboats as directed in 16 U.S.C. 1a-7(b)(3)—will be determined in a subsequent houseboat management plan. That plan will be initiated when the number of overnight houseboats reaches 60 per basin. No sooner than the summer of 2002, the park will begin to require a no-fee, self-registration permit for any overnight use in the park to gather information to guide future decisions.

The plan includes efforts intended to intensify natural resource protection through research and management. The NPS will complete an inventory of natural resources and develop a comprehensive inventory, monitoring and research program. A revised fire management plan will be developed to support a broader range of resource management objectives and to reestablish natural fire regimes without unduly reducing visitation or visitor enjoyment. The park will continue as it does now, to identify, evaluate for significance, plan for, protect and share information about cultural resources, including structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, ethnographic resources and collections. Historic properties that represent each cultural resource theme and focus on the park's mission, purpose, significance and interpretive themes will be retained. A monitoring program to determine visitor use, need for resource protection and the quality of the visitor experience will be initiated, and the information gathered from the program used for future, more site-specific planning.

#### **Specifics of the Selected Alternative**

*Natural and Cultural Resource Management.* The NPS intends to implement the alternative identified as "modified proposed action" in the final GMP/EIS. This alternative will expand and intensify natural resource protection efforts through increased inventory and monitoring programs, partnerships, and research. Resource management plans will be revised as needed (such as the *Wildland Fire Management Plan* and the *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management*