

planning process will consider many elements including wildlife and habitat management, public recreational activities, and cultural resource protection. Public input into the planning process is essential.

St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge was established in January 1990, to preserve, improve, and create habitat for waterfowl. The refuge encompasses 24,125 acres and is located in the western section of Adams County in southwest Mississippi, 7 miles south of Natchez, Mississippi. The western boundary of the refuge is the Mississippi River with the eastern boundary following the bluffs and the southern boundary, the Homochitto River.

Authority: This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Pub. L. 105-57.

Dated: May 3, 2003.

J. Mitch King,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 03-12536 Filed 5-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plans for the Five Refuges in the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

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

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces that final comprehensive conservation plans (CCP) are available for each of the five refuges in the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex: Trustum Pond NWR, Block Island NWR, Sachuest Point NWR, Ninigret NWR, and John H. Chafee NWR at Pettaquamscutt Cove. These CCPs, prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 6688dd *et seq.*), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, describe how the Service intends to manage these refuges over the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the CCPs are available on compact diskette or hard copy, and can be obtained by writing: Rhode Island NWR Complex, 3769D Old Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island, 02813, 401-364-9124. Copies of the

CCPs can also be accessed and downloaded at the following Web site address: <http://northeast.fws.gov/planning>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Charlie Vandemoer, Refuge Manager, at the address above, or Nancy McGarigal, Planning Team Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Regional Office, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, Massachusetts, 01035, (413) 253-8562.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A CCP is required by the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 6688dd *et seq.*). The purpose in developing CCPs is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year strategy for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife science, conservation, legal mandates, and Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, the CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. These CCPs will be reviewed and updated at least every 15 years in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 6688dd *et seq.*), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Dated: September 9, 2002.

Dr. Mamie A. Parker,

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Note: This document was received at the Office of the Federal Register on May 15, 2003.

[FR Doc. 03-12630 Filed 5-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AK-962-1410-HY-P; AA-6649-C, ALA-2]

Alaska Native Claims Selection

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of decision approving lands for conveyance.

SUMMARY: As required by 43 CFR 2650.7(d), notice is hereby given that an appealable decision approving lands for conveyance pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act will be issued to Atxam Corporation for lands in T. 52 S., R. 73 W., and T. 53 S., R. 79 W., Seward Meridian, Alaska, located in the vicinity of Atka, Alaska, aggregating approximately 42 acres. Notice of this decision will also be published four times in the Anchorage Daily News.

DATES: The time limits for filing an appeal are:

1. Any party claiming a property interest which is adversely affected by the decision shall have until June 19, 2003 to file an appeal.

2. Parties receiving service of the decision by certified mail shall have 30 days from the date of receipt to file an appeal.

Parties who do not file an appeal in accordance with the requirements of 43 CFR part 4, subpart E, shall be deemed to have waived their rights.

ADDRESSES: A copy of the decision may be obtained from: Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, 222 West Seventh Avenue, #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Barbara Waldal, by phone at (907) 271-5669, or by e-mail at barbara_waldal@ak.blm.gov.

Barbara Opp Waldal,

Land Law Examiner, Branch of ANCSA Adjudication.

[FR Doc. 03-12511 Filed 5-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-650-01-1220-JG-O64B]

Closure Order for Motorized Vehicle Use, Furnace Creek Canyon Road, Mono County, California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of vehicle closure in Furnace Creek Canyon, White Mountains, Mono County, California.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the route through Furnace Creek Canyon is closed to motorized vehicle use.

Order: The public lands, located to the southwest from a point near the mouth of Furnace Creek canyon approximately 1.25 miles below the U.S. Forest Service boundary and 2.5 miles from HWY 264, are closed to the use of

motorized or off-road vehicles. No person may use, drive, transport, park, let stand, or have charge or control over any motorized vehicle in the area located east of the closure signs and locked gate. Exemptions to this order may be granted to law enforcement and other emergency vehicles in the course of official duties and for other approved administrative activities performed by the Bureau of Land Management or U.S. Forest Service. Exemptions may also be granted to those persons involved with ranching activities associated with the Whitewolf Grazing Allotment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This closure became effective Friday, March 7, 2003. The closure will remain in effect unless rescinded by the authorizing official. The permanent decision regarding motorized or off-road vehicle use in Furnace Creek will be determined through an amendment of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, which is expected to occur by June 30, 2004. BLM will implement the purposed action soon after the effective closure date of March 7, 2003 without prior notice and opportunity for public comment because of the imminent need for regulatory authority to prevent damage to wetland and riparian resources.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Ridgecrest Field Office, 300 South Richmond Road, Ridgecrest CA 93555, (760) 384-5400.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM has established national standards for the management and protection of riparian and wetland habitat on the Public Lands. Monitoring conducted during November 2002 and February 2003 indicates that the Furnace Creek fluvial system is not meeting the BLM's standards for a properly functioning riparian system. presently, portions of the Furnace Creek drainage are considered "functional-at risk". Riparian-wetland areas are considered "functional-at risk" when an existing soil, water, or vegetation condition makes them susceptible to degradation. Presently, there are seven locations in Furnace Creek where the existing vehicle route crosses the stream. Significant erosion and sedimentation of the stream are occurring at two stream crossings. Erosion in both locations is contributing excessive sediment to the adjacent riparian area. moreover, head-cutting is forming at both locations. Head-cuts are a fluvial geomorphic feature indicative of unstable conditions. The proposed closure order is consistent with protecting and

restoring Furnace Creek to a properly functioning riparian system.

Bureau of Land Management's regulatory policy concerning the use of off-road vehicles on public lands is found in 43 CFR 8341. Whenever the authorized officer determines that OHV use will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on resources (soil, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cultural, historic, scenic, recreation, or other resources), the area must be immediately closed to the type of use causing the adverse effects. The closure must remain in force only until the adverse effects are eliminated and measures to prevent their recurrence have been implemented (whichever occurs first). A considerable adverse environmental effect resulting from the use of off-road vehicles is defined in 43 CFR part 8341 as any environmental impact that causes:

(a) Significant damage to cultural or natural resources, including but not limited to historic, archaeological, soil, water, air, vegetation, scenic values; or

(b) Significant harassment of wildlife and/or significant disruption of wildlife habitats; . . . and is irreparable due to the impossibility or impracticality of performing corrective or remedial action.

Furnace Creek canyon will remain open for human use that does not entail the use of a motorized vehicle within the area closed by this order. Maps depicting the affected area are available by contacting the Ridgecrest Field Office, California Desert Conservation Area, Ridgecrest, CA. A gate will be erected at the closure points and the affected area will be posted with public notices and standard motorized vehicle closure signs.

Authority for this closure is found in 43 CFR 8364.1. Violations of this order may be subject to the penalties provided according to 43 CFR 8360.0-7.

Dated: March 11, 2003.

Hector A. Villalobos,
Ridgecrest Field Manager.

[FR Doc. 03-12522 Filed 5-19-03; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4310-AG-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID-076-1220-BA]

Notice of Closure to Off-highway Vehicle Use

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of closure to off-highway vehicle use.

SUMMARY: With the publication of this notice, all existing trails and cross-country travel on certain lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Shoshone Field Office are closed to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. The closure will remain in effect until the proposed Resource Management Plan (FY2005) can implement OHV designations, or until such time as the authorized officer of the Shoshone Field Office determines the closure may be lifted. The closure is in accordance with 43 CFR 9268.3(d)(1)(i-iii) and 43 CFR 8341.1(f)(4).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Kurtz, Outdoor Recreation Planner, (208) 732-7296, BLM Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Blaine County Muldoon Summit Road dips where it passes through Bureau of Land Management administered land, resulting in limited visibility for 1/4 of a mile causing public safety issues. Within this section, All Terrain Vehicles (ATV), motorcycles and snowmobiles cross the county road to gain momentum to hill climb. These vehicles are climbing steep slopes resulting in ruts, vegetation damage, noxious weed spread and erosion. The vertical trails also cause visual scars for the surrounding residents and communities. These lands are also important winter wildlife habitat areas. This closure will protect these resources and reduce the potential for further noxious weed invasion. Private landowners adjacent to the lands have complained about the resource damage. This closure is in response to those complaints.

The area of closure includes BLM lands, specifically described wholly or partially:

Boise Meridian

T. 2 N., R. 19 E., Sec.31, N1/2NW1/4 (80 Acres).

Detailed maps of the area closed to OHV and recreational use are available at the BLM Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352.

Dated: April 3, 2003.

Rick VanderVoet,

Acting Shoshone Field Manager.

[FR Doc. 03-12516 Filed 5-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-GG-P