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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Office of the Secretary

[WO-220-1060-00-24 1A]

#### Notice of Reestablishment of the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board

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

**ACTION:** Reestablishment of the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board.

**SUMMARY:** This notice is published in accordance with Section 9(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (5 U.S.C. App.). Pursuant to Section 7 of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (Pub. L. 92-195), notice is hereby given that the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture are reestablishing the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board to provide advice concerning management, protection, and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros on the public lands administered by the Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, and the Department of Agriculture, through the Forest Service.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bud C. Cribley, Wild Horse and Burro Program Specialist, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Room 314, 1620 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 452-5073.

#### Certification

I hereby certify that the reestablishment of the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board is necessary and in the public interest in connection with the Secretary of the Interior's statutory responsibilities to manage the lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Dated: December 23, 1997.

**Bruce Babbitt,**

Secretary of the Interior.

[FR Doc. 98-1550 Filed 1-22-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Intent To Revise the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual and Establish Regulations as They Relate to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Pub. L. 105-57)

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Refuge Improvement Act) was signed by President Clinton on October 9, 1997. The Refuge Improvement Act amends and builds upon the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (NWRSA), (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*). This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will be developing new or revised policies pursuant to the Refuge Improvement Act. The key policy areas to be addressed are listed later in **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**. This notice also identifies opportunities for public review and comment.

Interested persons contacting the Service as described in **ADDRESSES** below, will be provided draft Service Manual chapters as they are prepared and will be notified of due dates for written comments. Final chapters will be issued following review of public comments. Proposed regulations will be developed through the rule making process.

**ADDRESSES:** Requests to receive copies of the specific draft Service Manual chapters as they are prepared should be sent via mail to: Refuge Improvement Act Project, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Refuges, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Rm. 670, Arlington, VA 22203, Fax (703) 358-2248, or email to: Refuge\_Improvement\_Act@FWS.gov.

Each request should include a complete mailing address to which the draft chapters will be sent.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The nearly 93 million acre National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) has been administered, since its inception, under a collection of Presidential proclamations, Executive Orders, administrative orders, and laws. Until 1966, and enactment of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (NWRSA), there was no single Federal law that governed administration of the Refuge System. The NWRSA provided guidance for refuge management; but in the 32 years since its passage, Refuge System acreage

has grown more than threefold, wildlife management issues have increased in complexity and controversy, and the demands for recreational and economic uses of refuges have increased substantially.

The Refuge Improvement Act amends and builds upon the NWRSA in a manner that provides an "Organic Act" for the Refuge System similar to those laws which exist for other Federal Lands. The Refuge Improvement Act will serve to ensure that the Refuge System is effectively managed as a national system of lands, waters, and interests for the protection and conservation of our nation's wildlife resources.

The Refuge Improvement Act's principal focus is to establish clearly the wildlife conservation mission of the Refuge System, provide guidance to the Secretary of the Interior for management of the Refuge System, provide a mechanism for unit-specific planning, and give managers clear direction and procedures for making determinations regarding wildlife conservation and public uses of units of the Refuge System.

The Service will be implementing the Refuge Improvement Act by developing new or revised Service Manual chapters for the Refuge System. All units within the Refuge System will be managed with regard to these chapters which will guide management strategies for achieving individual unit purposes and the Refuge System mission.

Key issues to be addressed in specific Service Manual chapters include:

- Biological integrity of the Refuge System;
- Appropriate general public uses for the System;
- Implementation of the compatibility test; and
- Comprehensive conservation planning.

Public input into the development of these key Service Manual chapters is essential. The Service will provide these draft chapters to interested agencies and individuals as described above in **ADDRESSES**. These draft chapters will also be available on the National Wildlife Refuge System web site: (<http://refuges.fws.gov>) during the pre-rulemaking public review and comment period. Any resulting proposed regulations will be available for public review and comment through the rule making process.

Due to the varying levels of complexity of issues, some chapters will require more time for development than others. Therefore, specific draft chapters will be made available to the public as they are prepared. The Refuge

Improvement Act requires the Service to establish new compatibility policy and regulations within two years of enactment. There are no other directives in the Refuge Improvement Act for specific policy updates; however, the Service desires to move forward expeditiously on the specific policies listed in this notice to incorporate the most important provisions of the Refuge Improvement Act into all management functions. The Service estimates that draft Service Manual chapters for these issues will be available for public review and comment beginning in May 1998.

This notice and the public participation in this implementation process is being conducted in accordance with the policy and rulemaking requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act (5 U.S.C. 553), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, including the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Pub. L. 105-57), Executive Order 12996, and associated Service policies and procedures.

Dated: January 16, 1998.

**Donald Barry,**

*Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

[CO-030-5101-00-YCKD; COC-51280]

#### Notice of Availability of the Draft Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for a TransColorado Gas Transmission Project; Colorado and New Mexico

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, and Forest Service, Department of Agriculture.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability of a Supplement to The Final Environmental Impact Statement TransColorado Gas Transmission Project; Colorado and New Mexico.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as lead agency, and in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has prepared a Draft Supplement (Supplement) to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the TransColorado Gas Transmission

(TransColorado) project on federal lands in Colorado and New Mexico.

TransColorado is the proponent. Lands managed by the BLM in the Montrose, Craig, and Grand Junction Districts in Colorado, and the Farmington District in New Mexico, and the USFS in the Uncompahgre and San Juan National Forests, Colorado, are crossed by the TransColorado pipeline project. The Supplement addresses the environmental impacts of the construction, operation, maintenance, and ultimate abandonment of known proposed route changes and minor realignments (less than 100 ft.) of the approved pipeline and right-of-way (ROW) grant COC-51280, and the impacts of the proposed construction and use of known additional temporary work areas adjacent to the approved ROW or, proposed ROW route changes or minor realignments. This Supplement will also address the impacts of the construction and use minor realignments and alternative temporary work areas in unspecified locations. These unspecified temporary work areas and minor realignments will be addressed to accommodate conditions that might be encountered during construction. Also addressed in the Supplement are proposed modifications to several environmental protection measures contained in the original right-of-way (ROW) grant and Record of Decision (ROD).

Please focus comments on the proposed actions and alternatives in the Supplement to the FEIS.

**DATES:** The 60-day public comment period for the Draft Supplement runs from January 23, 1998 until March 9, 1998.

Written comments on the Draft Supplement must be submitted or postmarked no later than March 9, 1998. Written comments may also be presented at the public meetings to be held on February 17, 1998, at 7:00 p.m. in the Double Tree Inn, 501 Camino del Rio in Durango, Colorado; on February 18, 1998 at 7:00 p.m. at the Ponderosa Restaurant, 108 South 8th in Dolores, Colorado; and on February 19, 1998 at 7:00 pm at the Holiday Inn, 755 Horizon Drive in Grand Junction, Colorado.

**ADDRESSES:** Any comments on this document should be sent to Bill Bottomly, TransColorado Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Montrose District Office, 2465 South Townsend Avenue, Montrose, CO 81401. The Draft Supplement to the FEIS and the FEIS are available for public review at the above address, and at the following offices of the BLM and USFS: the Grand Junction District

Office, the Montrose District Office, the Grand Mesa/Uncompahgre/Gunnison National Forest Office, the San Juan National Forest/San Juan Resource Area office, and the Farmington District Office.

Public reading copies are available at the federal depository libraries in Colorado and New Mexico and public libraries within San Juan County, New Mexico, and La Plata, Montezuma, Dolores, San Miguel, Montrose, Delta, Mesa, Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bill Bottomly (970) 240-5337, Ilyse Auringer (970) 385-1341, or Steve Hemphill (970) 874-6633.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** After preparing a Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement in 1992, the BLM and the USFS signed Records of Decision on December 1, 1992 and issued a ROW grant and adjacent Temporary Use Permit (TUP) for subsequent construction, operation and maintenance of the 292 mile-long TransColorado Gas Transmission pipeline from Meeker, Colorado to Bloomfield, New Mexico. Under the authority of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (30 U.S.C. 185), as amended by the Act of November 16, 1973 (37 Stat. 567), BLM issued a 50 foot-wide ROW grant on December 4, 1997, accompanied by a 25 foot-wide TUP, excepting 1.7 miles near Grand Junction, Colorado. The FERC issued TransColorado a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity on June 3, 1994. TransColorado completed the 22.5 mile Phase I of the project in December, 1996. The proponent is now prepared to construct the remainder of the pipeline during 1998.

Public participation has occurred throughout the Supplement to the FEIS process. The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare this Supplement to the FEIS was published in the **Federal Register** on November 21, 1997. "Open House" forums were held from October 21 through December 10, 1997 at Norwood, Durango, Delta, Rangely, Dolores, and Grand Junction, Colorado. Field trips to locations on the San Juan National Forest were offered on November 15 and 22, 1997.

Signed: January 14, 1998.

**Jamie E. Connell,**

*Associate District Manager, Montrose District, BLM.*

**Robert L. Storch,**

*Forest Supervisor, Grand Mesa/Uncompahgre/Gunnison National Forests.*

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