

potential users, the Refuge would also support adding ADA-compatible facilities for waterfowl hunters with mobility impairments in the Buena Vista Unit.

We would pursue a land exchange with BLM, transferring lands within the Boundary Unit west of State Highway 205 and other small parcels to BLM, in exchange for appropriate BLM lands. The land exchange would not affect hunting opportunities.

Fishing opportunities would continue at Krumbo Reservoir, along the upper Blitzen River, at the southern portion of East Canal, and at Mud and Bridge Creeks, and vehicle access to fishing sites would expand. In addition, the Refuge would develop a new pedestrian crossing at Bridge Creek, and provide a new late-summer bank-fishing opportunity on the Blitzen River, from Sodhouse Lane to the bridge on Boat Landing Road. Orientation and information would be added to fishing areas. Triploid rainbow trout stocking would continue at Krumbo Reservoir, and a genetic study of redband trout would be conducted.

Step-down management plans for historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources would be developed in cooperation with partners. Interpretation of historic sites would be expanded. Opportunities for American Indians to collect plant materials for traditional uses would be expanded. Monitoring and inventory of archaeological resources would increase. Step-down habitat and wildlife species inventory and monitoring plans would be developed, emphasizing focal species and national monitoring efforts. Plant community responses to meadow management strategies would be monitored through a third party scientific process. A database would be created to track data collected for all monitoring plans. We would continue to emphasize partnerships to maximize adaptive management.

Our volunteer program would continue, with an emphasis on increasing recruitment, retention, and return rates. Refuge staff would pursue sustainable practices to achieve energy independence and carbon negative Refuge management.

Alternative 3

Under Alternative 3, most of the habitat management practices under Alternative 2 would occur. The primary difference is that we would place equal emphasis on aquatic health (carp control) and developing a comprehensive riverine strategy. A detailed assessment of the geomorphology, ecology, hydrology, and

management function of the Blitzen River would occur for the first 7 years. This site-specific scientific information will then form the basis for any needed pilot projects and implementation of a comprehensive management strategy.

Management under Alternative 3 for wildlife viewing, photography, and welcome and orientation would be similar to Alternative 2, but there would be less emphasis on developed facilities, and more emphasis on self-guided and off-trail experiences. To promote this, a variety of access changes would occur. The 42-mile Blitzen Valley auto tour route (Center Patrol Road) would be closed to vehicle access August 15 to the fourth Friday of October in the Buena Vista Unit, and August 15 to March 1 in the P Ranch Unit, and would be redesigned into two or three shorter, year-round, auto tour routes. Walk-in free-roam access along the closed portions of the Center Patrol Road, and on the dike tops in the Buena Vista and P Ranch Units, would be allowed during the periods listed above to provide opportunities for self-guided and off-trail experiences. This would provide 11 weeks of free-roam opportunities in the Buena Vista Unit, and 27 weeks in the P Ranch Unit. Vehicle access to Krumbo Reservoir would be permitted from the fourth Friday of November to April; walk-in access would be allowed at other times of the year. The southern portion of East Canal Road to the confluence of Bridge Creek at the East Canal would remain open to year-round walk-in access. Year-round vehicle access would be allowed on Boat Landing Road near Refuge Headquarters, to the Malheur Lake elevated viewing platform. Both spur and loop trails a mile or less in length would be developed, as would a number of viewing overlooks and platforms. Existing trails would be upgraded to ADA standards.

The historic Audubon photography blind at Refuge Headquarters Display Pond would be restored under Alternative 3. In free-roam areas, temporary photography blinds would be permitted. The Refuge would maintain and replant trees and shrubs at four historic sites to provide habitat for and viewing of rare and incidental passerines.

The upland game and waterfowl hunts would be managed similar to Alternative 2, except that a Buena Vista waterfowl hunt would not be permitted, and ADA facilities would not be developed. A youth hunt would be explored for the Double-O Unit on the State-designated weekend.

Fishing opportunities and management would be the same as

Alternative 2, except that vehicle access to fishing areas would be less, which could limit the number of people fishing. Volunteer programs, EE and interpretation, docent-led tours, the land exchange with BLM, cultural and paleontological management, energy independence, and inventory and monitoring would be managed the same as under Alternative 2.

Comments

We solicited comments on the Draft CCP/EIS from March 5 to May 4, 2012 (77 FR 13139, March 5, 2012). We received comments from agencies, organizations, and individuals. To address the comments, minor changes and clarifications were made to the final CCP/EIS, and documented in Appendix N.

Public Availability of Documents

In addition to the information in **ADDRESSES**, printed copies of the document will be available for review at the following libraries: Harney County Library at 80 West "D" Street, Burns, OR 97720; and Bend Public Library, 601 NW., Wall Street, Bend, OR 97701.

Dated: December 13, 2012.

Hugh Morrison,

Acting Regional Director, Pacific Region, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 2012-30852 Filed 12-20-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R7-R-2012-N233; FF07R06000 FXRS12650700000] 123

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Soldotna, AK; Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Shadura Natural Gas Development Project

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Shadura Natural Gas Development Project is available for public review and comment. The EIS was prepared pursuant to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA); the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (Refuge Administration Act), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Refuge Improvement Act); and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). It describes five

alternatives for accessing the subsurface natural gas estate owned by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI), and provides analysis of the effects of those alternatives. The Service does not have a preferred alternative.

DATES: Please provide any written comments or information on the EIS by February 19, 2013.

ADDRESSES: Additional information concerning the Project can be found at <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/nepa.htm>.

Additional information concerning the Refuge may be found at <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=74525>.

Send your comments or requests for information by any one of the following methods:

- **Email:**
fw7_kenai_planning@fws.gov;
- **Fax:** Attn: Peter Wikoff, (907) 786-3976;
- **U.S. Mail:** Peter Wikoff, Natural Resource Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-231, Anchorage, AK 99503

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Wikoff, Natural Resource Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at (907) 786-3357, or at the address above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We have received an application for, and have prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for, a proposed right-of-way within the Refuge. The right-of-way would be in compliance with the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Section 1110(b) regarding access to inholdings, for the construction and operation of facilities associated with the exploration and production of natural gas from the subsurface estate within the Refuge. The United States owns the surface estate which is managed by the Service as part of the Kenai Refuge, and Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI), owns the subsurface estate of coal, oil, and gas in the project area. The Project would be in the northwestern portion of the Kenai Peninsula, approximately 4 miles southeast of the end of the road in Captain Cook State Recreation Area. The application is being made by NordAq Energy, Inc., the holder of the lease from CIRI for the area.

The EIS describes and evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives and the anticipated impacts of each. We are publishing this notice in compliance with the NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) to advise other agencies and the public that the EIS is available for public review and comment.

Alternatives Considered

Alternative 1—No Action

The No Action alternative is required by the NEPA to present the current situation for comparison with the other alternatives.

Action Alternatives (Alternatives 2–5)

Under any of the action alternatives (alternatives 2–5), the Shadura Natural Gas Development Project would be constructed, operated, maintained, decommissioned, and reclaimed. During the first stage of the project, a gravel road, gravel storage yards, and a minimal drilling/processing pad would be constructed. Then one natural gas well would be drilled and tested. If the results of this testing were unfavorable, all equipment and gravel would be removed and the affected areas would be restored to approximate preconstruction conditions. If the results of testing were favorable, the second stage would be constructed.

The second stage of construction would involve expanding the drilling/processing pad to its final size and configuration; drilling five additional natural gas wells, an industrial water well, and a Class II disposal well; and constructing production facilities.

Once constructed, the Project would operate for about 30 years. At the end of the Project's useful life, it would be decommissioned and the impacted areas reclaimed.

Alternative 2—Applicant's Proposed Action

The access road would extend from the North Kenai Spur Highway along the west and south sides of Salmo Lake to a drilling/processing pad. That portion of the access road outside the Refuge has already been permitted by the State of Alaska as part of another project.

The access road would be 4.3 miles long, about 2.7 miles of which would be on the Kenai NWR. The remaining 1.6 miles are on State and other lands. Of that portion on the Kenai NWR, about 1.7 miles of the road would be constructed in upland areas and about 1 mile would be in wetlands. The metering pad, gathering lines, and communication cable would be located parallel to the access road.

Alternative 3—Natural Gas Development With Northern Access

Under this alternative, the access road would be constructed around the north and east sides of Salmo Lake. The access road would be 4.6 miles long, of which 2.2 miles would be constructed on State and other lands, and 2.4 miles would be

on the Kenai NWR. About 3.7 miles would be in upland areas and about 0.9 mile would be in wetlands. The North Kenai Spur Highway would provide primary access to the project area. The metering pad, gathering lines, and communication cable would be located parallel to the access road.

Alternative 4—Natural Gas Development With Eastern Access

Under this alternative, the access road would be constructed from the east. The access road would be 3.3 miles long—all on the Kenai NWR. About 2.7 miles would be constructed in upland areas and about 0.5 mile would be in wetlands.

The metering pad, gathering lines, and communication cable would not follow the access road but be constructed in the same locations as for Alternative 2. They would be installed cross-country between the drilling/processing pad and the previously permitted road on State lands. The segment between the Kenai NWR boundary and metering pad would follow this previously permitted road. The North Kenai Spur Highway would provide primary access to the metering pad.

Alternative 5—Natural Gas Development With Southern Access

Under this alternative, an access road would be constructed from the southeast. The access road would be 5.5 miles long—all on the Kenai NWR. About 5.3 miles would be constructed in upland areas and about 0.2 mile would be in wetlands.

The metering pad, gathering lines, and communication cable would be constructed in the same locations as for Alternatives 2 and 4. They would be installed cross-country between the drilling/processing pad and the previously permitted road on State lands. The segment between the Kenai NWR boundary and metering pad would follow this previously permitted road. The North Kenai Spur Highway would provide primary access to the metering pad.

Public Input

Special mailings, newspaper advertisements, and other media announcements will inform the public of opportunities to provide written input throughout the planning process. The EIS and information pertaining to the right-of-way application for the project are available for viewing and downloading at <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/nepa.htm>.

Refuge Information

The Refuge covers approximately 2 million acres on the Kenai Peninsula in south-central Alaska. It is readily accessible by road from the city of Anchorage, which is home to 41.5 percent of Alaska's population. The Refuge consists of the western slopes of the Kenai Mountains and forested lowlands bordering Cook Inlet. The Kenai Mountains, with their glaciers, rise to more than 6,500 feet. Treeless alpine and subalpine habitats are home to mountain goats, Dall sheep, caribou, wolverine, marmots, and ptarmigan. Boreal forests extend from sea level to 1,800 feet and are composed of spruce and birch forests, which on the Refuge are intermingled with hundreds of lakes. Boreal forests are home to moose, wolves, black and brown bears, lynx, snowshoe hares, and numerous species of Neotropical birds, such as olive-sided flycatchers, myrtle warblers, and ruby crowned kinglets. At sea level, the Refuge encompasses the last remaining pristine major saltwater estuary on the Kenai Peninsula, the Chickaloon River Flats. The Flats provide a major migratory staging area and nesting habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl throughout the spring, summer, and fall. The Flats are also used as a haul-out area by harbor seals. Thousands of salmon migrate up the Chickaloon River system each year to spawn.

While the United States owns the land surface within the Refuge, portions of the subsurface estate are owned by CIRI. CIRI is an Alaska Native regional corporation established under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA; 43 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*). CIRI received the subsurface oil, gas, and coal estate to nearly 200,000 acres within the Refuge as part of its ANCSA entitlement. The State of Alaska also owns lands adjacent to the Refuge (Captain Cook State Recreation Area). ANILCA Section 1110(b) requires that the Service provide adequate and feasible access to the CIRI-owned subsurface estate. CIRI has previously leased other portions of its subsurface estate within the Refuge. Oil and gas are currently being produced from other production units within the Refuge.

The ANILCA (Section 303[4]) established the Refuge from the Kenai Moose Range and other lands, and set forth the following major purposes for which the Refuge was to be managed:

(i) To conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity, including, but not limited to, moose, bear, mountain goats, Dall sheep, wolves, and other furbearers; salmonoids and other fish; waterfowl

and other migratory and non-migratory birds;

(ii) To fulfill the international treaty obligations of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats;

(iii) To ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in paragraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the Refuge;

(iv) To provide in a manner consistent with subparagraphs (i) and (ii), opportunities for scientific research, interpretation, environmental education, and land management training; and

(v) To provide, in a manner compatible with these purposes, opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold it from public view, we cannot guarantee we will be able to do so.

Dated: December 17, 2012.

E. LaVerne Smith,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 2012-30756 Filed 12-20-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WO-220-12-1020-JA-VEIS]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement To Evaluate the Use of Three New Herbicides on Public Lands in 17 Western States

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Washington, DC, intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the use of aminopyralid, fluroxypyr, and rimsulfuron herbicides as part of the its vegetation treatment programs on public lands in 17 Western

States. By this notice, the BLM is announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

DATES: Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until February 19, 2013. For inclusion in the Draft EIS, all comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period, or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. The BLM will hold three public scoping meetings: On January 7, 2013, in Worland, Wyoming; January 9, 2013, in Reno, Nevada; and January 10, 2013, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The times and locations of the meetings can be found in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below. The BLM will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft EIS.

ADDRESSES: You may submit scoping comments related to the EIS for the use of aminopyralid, fluroxypyr, and rimsulfuron on BLM Public Lands in 17 Western States by any of the following methods:

- *Web site:* <http://blm.gov/3vkd>.
- *Email:* VegEIS@blm.gov.
- *Fax:* 206-623-3793.
- *Mail:* AECOM, Attn. Stuart Paulus, 710 Second Avenue, Suite 1000, Seattle, WA 98104.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the BLM Washington Office, 20 M Street SE., Room 2134, Washington, DC 20003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Gina Ramos, Senior Weeds Specialist, telephone 202-912-7226 or Stuart Paulus, Project Manager, telephone 206-403-4287. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the referenced individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This national programmatic EIS proposes to add aminopyralid, fluroxypyr, and rimsulfuron to the BLM's approved list of herbicides for (1) Controlling noxious weeds and other invasive species; and (2) Conserving and restoring native vegetation, watersheds, and fish and wildlife habitat. The EIS will evaluate the use of the three new herbicides as part of the BLM's vegetation treatment programs on public lands in 17 Western States. The analysis area will include all surface estate public lands administered