

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE BRIEFING PAPER

July 24, 2007

What is the title of this notice?

Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Clear Creek Management Area and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the Hollister Field Office, Hollister, California.

What is the date that the Field Office forwarded this notice to Washington?

July 24, 2007

What is the reason for this notice?

This action is a NOI to prepare an RMP/EIS. The notice announces the beginning of a land use planning process and a 90-day public scoping and comment period.

What are the reasons for the timing of the notice and the consequence, if any, of delaying or not issuing the release?

Any significant delay would set back the established schedule for release of the Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (September 2009).

We request that this notice be published by the Office of the *Federal Register* on or before August 31, 2007.

Does the notice relate to an Administration policy or priority, or a controversial issue, and if so, how?

The CCMA RMP is one of the major California BLM land use planning projects targeted for initiation in Fiscal Year 2007. This RMP will likely be controversial due to the combination of public health and safety concerns from exposure to naturally occurring asbestos and multiple use resource issues.

In January 2006, the BLM approved a Record of Decision (ROD) for the CCMA RMP Amendment and Route Designation. This ROD (2006) discussed the available studies at the time of publication on naturally occurring asbestos in the CCMA. At the same time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was conducting an asbestos exposure evaluation study in the CCMA. The study was designed to provide further information on the exposure levels from various types of activities in the CCMA. Initial results from the EPA study indicated that an environmental impact statement would be necessary to consider the new information and a range of management options for the CCMA.

Accordingly, BLM agreed to work with EPA and the public to appropriately respond to the new information upon completion of the EPA human health risk study. If the information is significantly

different than available studies, BLM agreed to expeditiously initiate a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review to consider the new information and potential management responses at the CCMA in light of any new findings. BLM and EPA agreed that this subsequent NEPA review would address general public access and recreation at the CCMA and analyze a full range of alternatives.

The major issues that will be addressed in this planning effort include: impacts to public safety and human health from naturally-occurring asbestos and past mining activities; designation and management of special management areas; ecosystem management and desired conditions; wildland and prescribed fire management; livestock grazing; motorized and non-motorized recreation management; lands available for disposal or of interest for acquisition; and potential for energy development.

Does the action described in this notice require coordination with State/tribal/local government?

Yes, both the Council on Environmental Quality and BLM planning guidance require close coordination with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and tribes. Potential cooperating agencies include: EPA, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and San Benito, Fresno, and Monterey Counties, in addition to two local Air Pollution Control Districts.

Formal consultation with the Tachi-Yokuts Tribe of the Santa Rosa Rancheria has occurred in the past and will continue. The tribe has also been invited to become a cooperating agency in the land use planning process. However, the planning effort does not apply to any Native American reservations.

Would a map enable the reviewer to better understand the impact or intent of the notice?

No.

Does this notice affect National Monuments or National Conservation Areas?

No.

Is there any additional pertinent information that reviewers need to know?

Please refer to the notice for additional information.