

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Issuance of Permit for Marine Mammals**

On July 8, 1999, a notice was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol. 64, No. 130, Page 36891, that an application had been filed with the Fish and Wildlife Service by Mike H. Boyd, Cartersville, GA for a permit (PRT-014003) to import one polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) trophy taken from the Lancaster Sound population, Canada for personal use.

Notice is hereby given that on August 16, 1999, as authorized by the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) the Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the requested permit subject to certain conditions set forth therein.

Documents and other information submitted for these applications are available for review by any party who submits a written request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Phone (703) 358-2104, or Fax (703) 358-2281.

Dated: October 8, 1999.

Kristen Nelson,

Acting Chief, Branch of Permits, Office of Management Authority.

Documents and other information submitted with the application are available for review, *subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act*, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the above address within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice.

[FR Doc. 99-26835 Filed 10-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Geological Survey****Notice of Availability of Information**

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of information.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is proposing to change a long-standing policy regarding access to documents compiled by the Defense Minerals Administration, the Defense Minerals Exploration Administration, and the Office of Minerals Exploration.

Previously, only the record title holder of the underlying property or a person with written permission from the record title holder had access to the documents. The USGS purposes to make this information available to any requester.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 1, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Kathleen M. Johnson, U.S. Geological Survey, 913 National Center, Reston, VA 20192.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathleen M. Johnson, 703-648-6110.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 1950, Congress enacted the Defense Production Act, 50 U.S.C. App. § 2061 *et seq.* authorizing the President to "make provision * * * for the encouragement of exploration, development, and mining of critical and strategic minerals, metals, and materials." *Id.* § 2093. The President delegated his authority under the Act to various Federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior. Exec. Order No. 10,161, 15 FR 6105 (1950). Under this delegated authority, the Secretary of the Interior established the Defense Minerals Administration (DMA). Sec. Order No. 2605, 15 FR 8718 (1950). The DMA's purpose was to maintain production from existing mineral sources, to expand production from known but inactive sources, and to provide Government support for exploration of new mineral deposits. GEORGE F. HOWE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, HISTORY OF DEFENSE AGENCIES, Part IV (1953). To further the third stated purpose, the DMA started a program to provide funds for exploration projects for "unknown or undeveloped sources of strategic or critical metals and minerals." Mineral Order No. 5, 16 FR 3183 (1951). Before its termination on November 20, 1951, the DMA received 1,015 requests for assistance. *Id.* at 77. Of these, as of October 30, 1951, 153 had resulted in contracts, 324 had been denied, 40 had been withdrawn by the applicant, and 489 were pending. *Id.* at Appendix VI, Part IV.

Although the DMA had been terminated, the Department of the Interior continued the program for exploration assistance with the formulation of the Defense Minerals Exploration Administration (DMEA). Secretarial Order No. 2726, 18 FR 3804 (1953). The DMEA operated similarly to the DMA. See DMEA Order No. 1, 17 FR 2090 (1952). The DMEA was terminated on June 30, 1958. 23 FR 4003 (1958). Before its termination, the DMEA received 3,888 applications for assistance, and 1,159 applications were

approved and executed into contracts. H.R. Rep. No. 85-2276, 1958 U.S.C.C.A.N. 3701. Of the applications executed into contract, 337 were certified as having discovered a significant amount of ore. *Id.* At the time the DMEA was terminated, there were 170 contracts in force. *Id.*

In August of 1958, Congress enacted Public Law 85-701, 72 Stat. 700 (1958), authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to enter into exploration contracts providing for Government financial assistance for the discovery of domestic mineral reserves. 30 U.S.C. 641 *et seq.* Under this authority, the Secretary of the Interior established the Office of Minerals Exploration (OME). Secretarial Order No. 2834, 23 FR 7555 (1958). The program for exploration assistance under the OME was similar to that under the DMA and DMEA. See 30 CFR part 301 (1958).

In 1965, OME and its functions were transferred to the USGS. 30 FR 2865 (1965). After fiscal year 1974, USGS did not request appropriations for new contract funds, and in 1979, Congress discontinued funding for the OME program.

These programs produced a variety of technical information in the proposed work plans, monthly progress reports, inspection reports, final reports (final reports were prepared by both the Government and the contractor), and audits, among other routine correspondence between the application and the Government. The Government entered into contracts with entities in 44 States; the 6 States that did not have contracts are Delaware, Indiana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Rhode Island. The files from these contracts were stored in various Federal archival locations. However, in 1996, the USGS consolidated all of the DMA, DMEA, and OME files in its office in Spokane, Washington.

Access to the information contained in the files was limited to either the current property owner or to anyone with a letter of authorization from the current property owner. USGS had limited access to these documents because of the business-sensitive nature of some information contained within them. USGS recently reviewed both its authority to withhold the information contained in these files and the policy of withholding the information. As a result of this review, USGS believes that because the exploration assistance programs are no longer in existence, and the vast majority of the properties and companies described no longer exist in their original forms, release of this information will not harm the business interests of the companies or

individuals who submitted it. For these reasons, USGS believes it is no longer necessary to withhold this information, and is seeking comments on this proposed change in its policy.

Dated: October 7, 1999.

P. Patrick Leahy,

Chief Geologist, U.S. Geological Survey.

[FR Doc. 99-26759 Filed 10-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-Y7-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

Digital Earth Interagency Working Group; Meeting

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Digital Earth Interagency Working Group, chaired by NASA with representatives from other Federal departments and agencies, will hold an open meeting at the USGS facility in Reston, Virginia, to discuss options for a near-term demonstration of the Digital Earth vision (for details visit www.digitalearth.gov). Throughout Federal, State, and local government, the private sector, and other public sector interests, there exist data, infrastructure, partnerships, and capability to support the exploitation of geospatial information to answer questions of concern to students, researchers, community leaders, and others. The goal of this meeting will be to identify existing and emerging data, infrastructure, and tools that can be brought together to provide an "alpha version" of the Digital Earth vision in a limited number of use contexts (e.g., students asking a question about the effects of pollution on their community). The results of this discussion may lead to subsequent Commerce Business Daily requests for proposals.

DATES: The meeting will be held in the USGS main Auditorium on Monday, October 25, 1999, commencing at 8 a.m. and adjourning at 1 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To reserve a space at the meeting, please contact Mr. Mark Reichardt at (703) 648-5742, or via e-mail at mreichardt@usgs.gov. Although the meeting is open to all interested parties, space is limited and will be allocated on a first come basis. Please limit requests to one member of your organization.

Dated: October 6, 1999.

John A. Kelmelis,

Acting Chief, National Mapping Division.

[FR Doc. 99-26758 Filed 10-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-Y7-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[MT-010-1430-01; MTM-88157]

Notice of Closure of Public Land to Certain Uses in Yellowstone County, MT

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior

ACTION: Closure of 765 acres of public land to the use of motorized vehicles and mechanized vehicles, the discharge of firearms, horseback riding, hang gliding, and rock climbing.

SUMMARY: Notice is served that public land located approximately one mile directly east of downtown Billings, Montana, known as the Four Dances Natural Area (formerly known as Sacrifice Cliff or the Larsen property), is closed to the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) and mechanized vehicles including mountain bicycles, the discharge of any firearms including pellet guns, horseback riding, hang gliding, and rock climbing. The closure will be in effect beginning on November 1, 1999, and remain in effect until public consultation is completed and an activity plan for the area is approved. OHV use includes all types of motor vehicles except for those authorized for administration operations, law enforcement, and property maintenance or other BLM management programs. This closure is necessary to protect public land and adjacent private property, and for public safety. More detailed information, the legal land description and survey plats of the area are on file at the Billings Field Office.

Also, effective November 1, 1999, the Four Dances Natural Area will be open for restricted use as a walk-in area for hiking, picnicking, cross country skiing, and wildlife viewing. The area will be open daily to the public from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. Camping will be allowed by permit only. Dogs must be leashed and under the control of the owner. Fires and firewood cutting are prohibited.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sandra S. Brooks, Field Manager, BLM, Billings Field Office, P.O. Box 36800, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59107-6800 or call 406-896-5013.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Authority for this action is outlined in sections 302, 303, and 310 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, (43 U.S.C. 1716) and Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations Subject 8341 (43 CFR 8341.2) and 8364 (43 CFR 8364.1). Any person who fails to comply with this closure is subject to citation or arrest and a fine up to \$1,000 or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months, or both. This closure applies to all persons except persons authorized by the Bureau of Land Management.

Dated: October 6, 1999.

Sandra S. Brooks,

Field Manager.

[FR Doc. 99-26873 Filed 10-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-84-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-930-5410-00-ZBKC; CACA 41100]

Conveyance of Mineral Interests in California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of segregation.

SUMMARY: The private land described in this notice, aggregating 51.00 acres, is segregated and made unavailable for filings under the general mining laws and the mineral leasing laws to determine its suitability for conveyance of the reserved mineral interest pursuant to section 209 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976. The mineral interests will be conveyed in whole or in part upon favorable mineral examination. The purpose is to allow consolidation of surface and subsurface of minerals ownership where there are no known mineral values or in those instances where the reservation interferes with or precludes appropriate nonmineral development and such development is a more beneficial use of the land than the mineral development.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathy Gary, Bureau of Land Management, California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, California 95825, (916) 978-4677.

Mount Diablo Meridian

T. 26 S., R. 37 E.,

Sec. 7, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

County—Kern

As Reservation—All coal and other minerals.

Upon publication of this Notice of Segregation in the **Federal Register** as