

*Name of Committee:* Center for Scientific Review Special Emphasis Panel.

*Date:* June 14–15, 2001.

*Time:* 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

*Agenda:* To review and evaluate grant applications.

*Place:* Radisson Barcelo, 2121 P Street, NW., Washington, DC 20037.

*Contact Person:* Victoria S. Levin, MSW, Scientific Review Administrator, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, 6701 Rockledge Drive, Room 3172, MSC 7848, Bethesda, MD 20892, (301) 435–0912, [levinv@csr.nih.gov](mailto:levinv@csr.nih.gov).

*Name of Committee:* Center for Scientific Review Special Emphasis Panel.

*Date:* June 15, 2001.

*Time:* 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*Agenda:* To review and evaluate grant applications.

*Place:* Holiday Inn, 8120 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814.

*Contact Person:* Paul D. Wagner, PhD, Scientific Review Administrator, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, 6701 Rockledge Drive, Room 5194, MSC 7840, Bethesda, MD 20892, (301) 435–6809, [wagnerp@csr.nih.gov](mailto:wagnerp@csr.nih.gov).

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 93.306, Comparative Medicine, 93.306; 93.333, Clinical Research, 93.333, 93.337, 93.393–93.396, 93.837–93.844, 93.846–93.878, 93.892, 93.893, National Institutes of Health, HHS)

Dated: May 22, 2001.

**LaVerne Y. Stringfield,**

*Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.*

[FR Doc. 01–13332 Filed 5–25–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140–01–M

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[CA–650–01–1220–JG–064B]

#### Closure Order for Motorized Vehicle Use, Surprise Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern BLM Route P71, Panamint Mountains, Inyo County, CA

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

**ACTION:** Notice of vehicle closure on BLM Route P71 in the Surprise canyon area of critical environmental concern, Panamint Mountains in Inyo County, California.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that BLM Route P71 is closed to motorized vehicle use within the Surprise Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

*Order:* The public lands from a point located in the vicinity of Chris Wicht Camp approximately four miles east of the intersection of BLM Route P71 and

the Indian Ranch/Wingate Road to the boundary of Death Valley National Park within the Surprise Canyon ACEC is hereby closed to all motorized vehicle use. 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 the BLM locked gate. Exemptions to this order may be granted to law enforcement and other emergency vehicles in the course of official duties. Exemptions to this order may be granted to the holders of private property in the vicinity of Panamint City in Death Valley National Park for reasonable access after receiving a written agreement and a key from the Ridgecrest Field Office Manager.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This closure is effective upon publication in the **Federal Register** and will remain in effect until rescinded by the authorizing official which will occur when a final decision on the disposition of the road will be made after the National Environmental Policy Act and California Desert Conservation Area Plan amendment processes are completed. BLM will implement the proposed action effective the date of publication in the **Federal Register**, without prior notice and opportunity for public comment, because of the imminent need for regulatory authority to prevent illegal/unauthorized vehicle intrusion into the Surprise Canyon Wilderness and potential risk to aquatic/riparian resources.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Ridgecrest Field Office, 300 South Richmond Road, Ridgecrest CA 93555, (760) 384–5405.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In March 16, 2000, the Center for Biological Diversity, et al. (Center) filed for injunctive relief in U.S. District Court, Northern District of California (Court) against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to immediately prohibit all grazing activities that may affect listed species. The Center alleges the BLM was in violation of section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by failing to enter into formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on the effects of adoption of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan (CDCA Plan), as amended, upon threatened and endangered species. On August 25, 2000, the BLM acknowledged through a court stipulation that activities authorized, permitted, or allowed under the CDCA Plan may adversely affect threatened and endangered species, and that the BLM is required to consult with the

FWS to insure that adoption and implementation of the CDCA Plan is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened and endangered species or to result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat of listed species.

Although BLM has received biological opinions on selected activities, consultation on the overall CDCA Plan is necessary to address the cumulative effects of *all* the activities authorized by the CDCA Plan. Consultation on an overall plan is complex and the completion date uncertain. Absent consultation on the entire plan, the impacts of individual activities, when added together with the impacts of other activities in the desert, are not known. The BLM entered into negotiations with plaintiffs regarding interim actions to be taken to provide protection for endangered and threatened species pending completion of consultation on the plan. Agreement on these interim actions avoided litigation of plaintiffs' request for injunctive relief and the threat of an injunction prohibiting all activities authorized under the plan. These interim agreements allowed BLM to continue appropriate levels of activity throughout the planning area during the lengthy consultation process while providing protection to the desert tortoise and other listed species in the short term. By taking interim actions as allowed under 43 CFR 8364.1, BLM contributes to the conservation of the endangered and threatened species in accordance with 7 (a)(1) of the ESA. BLM also avoids making any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources which would foreclose any reasonable and prudent alternatives which might be required as a result of the consultation on the CDCA Plan in accordance with 7(d) for the ESA. In January 2001, the parties signed the Stipulation and Proposed Order concerning All Further Injunctive Relief.

This closure order is issued to provide interim protection of riparian habitat, water quality, sensitive wildlife resources, and wilderness values within the Surprise Canyon ACEC until such a time when the BLM completes a thorough review and analysis of various methods of access in Surprise Canyon and complies with the processes required by the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. This interim closure will allow BLM to properly evaluate and arrive at a final decision on environmentally acceptable methods of access in Surprise Canyon while protecting the canyon from further impact caused by the operation of off-

highway vehicles. Concerns over the effects of off-highway vehicle use in Surprise Canyon on environmental quality and natural resources have been raised in a lawsuit filed against the BLM, and these concerns need to be addressed through the processes required by the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Desert Conservation Area Plan.

The canyon riparian zone currently does not meet the BLM's minimum standards for a properly functioning riparian system due to soil erosion and streambed alterations caused by off-highway vehicle use. The Surprise Canyon ACEC supports several California BLM and California State sensitive plant and animal species that are dependant on a properly functioning riparian system.

The 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 showing 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. The BLM will issue a final decision on allowable methods of public access in Surprise Canyon following completion of public scoping, and a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance document. The NEPA compliance document will evaluate a full range of options for management of human access to Surprise Canyon within the area affected by the interim closure.

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: May 23, 2001.

**Gail Acheson,**

*Acting Deputy State Director for Resources.*  
[FR Doc. 01-13538 Filed 5-25-01; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-40-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### Glen Echo Park, Montgomery County, MD

**ACTION:** Record of Decision.

#### I. Introduction

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), has prepared this Record of Decision on the Final Management Plan/Environmental

Impact Statement (FMP/EIS) for Glen Echo Park, Montgomery County, Maryland pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. This Record of Decision is a statement of the decision made, the background of the project, other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, the environmentally preferable alternative, measures to minimize environmental harm, and public involvement in the decision making process.

#### II. Background of the Project

For over a century, Glen Echo Park has served the region as a center for education, entertainment and cultural development. This special site, which has been a National Chautauqua site (1891), an amusement park site (1899-1968), and an arts and cultural park (1971-present), is 1.5 miles northwest of Washington, DC and has been a haven for generations of area residents and visitors. On April 1, 1970 GSA received title to the 9.3-acre site. The site was acquired through a land exchange for the Old Emergency Hospital at 1711 New York Ave., NW., Washington, DC and was held surplus by the General Services Administration (GSA). From 1971-1976, the National Park Service (NPS) operated the park in cooperation with GSA and the park officially became part of NPS in 1976. When the land was acquired it contained a number of structures that were in very poor condition. Several were removed and others received minimal repair. From the very beginning, the NPS recognized the need to establish a Public/Private Partnership to both rehabilitate the structures and establish a creative education program that would reflect the spirit of the Chautauqua Assembly. In 1984, an NPS approved Management Facilities Program outlined a five-year program incorporating short and long-term goals and a scope of work for projects to be funded by the Federal government and private sector. Unfortunately, funds from both groups were limited, improvements were minor, and park management began to consider historic leasing. Local citizen opposition to such a proposal led to the formation of the Glen Echo Park Foundation, which was established in May 1987 to raise \$3 million within five years for rehabilitation of the structures. The Foundation was unsuccessful in achieving its goal, and the park structures have continued to deteriorate.

By the mid-1990s, funding to rehabilitate decaying park structures was still not available and the park's resources were in danger of being lost.

The National Park Service began a process through which a Management Plan (MP) could be developed. As part of that process, the NPS examined options for future operation of the park, including scenarios that assumed existing park resources would eventually be lost. Since the planning process began, Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and the Federal government have all committed funding to support the stabilization and rehabilitation of the structures at Glen Echo Park. This funding, however, does not support improvements to the interior of the buildings, and does not help cover the park's operating expenses. Furthermore, as the structures continue to age, the maintenance needs of the park will continue to grow. A management plan for Glen Echo Park is needed to provide a framework for the continued management and operation of the park.

#### III. Decision (Selected Action)

The National Park Service will implement the preferred alternative, the Modified Public Partnership, identified in the FMP/EIS issued on March 9, 2001. Figure I illustrates the chosen management structure. Figure II illustrates the selected management zones for the park. The selected alternative is also the environmentally preferred alternative identified in the FMP/EIS. It will improve the visitor experience, maintain the traditional uses of the park, improve the diversity in its programs, and enhance the preservation of cultural and historic resources through an improved revenue structure. It is expected to create only minor environmental impacts and inconveniences to adjoining communities. As a part of this decision, the NPS will also implement measures to minimize adverse impacts to the environment (*i.e.* mitigations) (see VIII below).

The NPS has used public partnership arrangements very successfully at several parks. Based on this experience, along with the analysis of the potential environmental impacts contained within the FMP/EIS, the NPS believes the Modified Public Partnership alternative is the best arrangement for the park, the surrounding communities, and the park's users. Under the selected alternative, the NPS will enter into negotiations with Montgomery County, MD, to prepare a long-term agreement whereby Montgomery County would take over the majority of management and operations at Glen Echo Park. If the NPS and Montgomery County were unable to finalize an agreement, the NPS would seek another similar partner with