

Office is corrected to read: "Wanamaker Building, 12th Floor, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3380".

Dated: June 29, 1995.

Michael B. Janis,

General Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing.

[FR Doc. 95-16490 Filed 7-5-95; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-931-5440-00-ZBAF; CACA 30814]

Ward Valley-Notice of Proposed Classification; California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management proposes to classify approximately 1,000 acres of land suitable for continued retention by BLM rather than State Indemnity Selection by the California State Lands Commission.

DATES: Comments and protests must be in written form, must be mailed or sent by August 7, 1995, and must be received by August 14, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to the California State Director, BLM (CA-931), 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2845, Sacramento, California 95825.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: BLM Public Information, California State Office, 916-979-2800.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following proposed classification decision is being issued in accordance with the provisions of 43 U.S.C. 315 (f) and 43 CFR 2450. All persons who wish to protest or comment may present their views in writing to the address above by the dates listed above. No particular format is required, but protests should be clearly labeled protests. Upon receipt and review of the timely protests and comments, the final decision will be made by the Secretary.

Lands Suitable for Retention

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has examined the following described lands owned by the United States to determine if, pursuant to a petition submitted by the State Lands Commission (SLC), they should be classified initially for selection by the State of California under the State Indemnity Acts, 43 U.S.C. 851-52, or, in the alternative, for continued retention under multiple use management by the BLM:

San Bernardino Meridian

T. 9 N., R. 19 E.

Sec. 26, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

Sec. 27, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$

Sec. 34

Sec. 35, W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$

Consisting of 1,000 acres, more or less, situated in San Bernardino County, California.

The above-described lands lie in the Ward Valley, an area within the low desert portion of California's Mojave Desert, located approximately 24 miles west of the City of Needles, in San Bernardino County, California. The Department of Health Services (DHS) of the State of California has determined on the basis of site selection criteria developed by the DHS, pursuant to the California Radiation Control Law, California Health and Safety Code § 25811.5(c), that the above described lands (hereinafter the "Ward Valley lands") constitute the most suitable site on state or federally-owned public lands in the State of California for the location of a low level radioactive waste disposal facility. In 1993, the DHS issued a radioactive materials license for the operation of such a facility on the Ward Valley lands. At the same time, the DHS, acting on behalf of the State, entered into a lease agreement to lease the Ward Valley lands to the licensee. This lease agreement provides that it shall become effective if and when the State acquires title to the lands.

The Ward Valley lands may not be selected by the State of California pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 851-52 without first being appropriately classified and opened by the BLM for such selection. In addition to the effort of the SLC to acquire the Ward Valley lands through the state indemnity selection process, the DHS, acting on behalf of the State of California, has applied to the BLM for a direct sale of the lands to the State. The lands would be sold under the authority of sections 203, 208 and 209 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 43 U.S.C. 1713, 1718-1719. Thus, pending before the BLM at the present time are the initiatives of two separate agencies of the State, each seeking by different means to vest title to the Ward Valley lands in the State of California.

In relation to the Ward Valley lands, the DHS and the BLM jointly issued a final environmental impact report/statement (EIR/EIS) entitled "State of California Indemnity Selection & Low-Level Radioactive Waste Facility." The preferred alternative in the EIR/EIS identified the Ward Valley lands as the site for a low level waste facility. A Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) designating a

direct sale as the proposed action, rather than an indemnity selection conveyance, also was issued after the BLM received the DHS application. The present use of the Ward Valley lands is discussed at pages 3.1-98 through 3.1-104 of the EIR/EIS. The affected environment is described at pages 3.1-1 through 3.1-139 of the EIR/EIS. The EIR/EIS discusses, among other matters, the relevant biological, cultural and paleontological resources; geology and seismicity; hydrology; climate and air quality; and visual features. The EIR/EIS, together with other studies and correspondence from interested parties, served as the information and technical data base for this classification decision.

The Ward Valley lands are included in the California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980, as amended. The Ward Valley lands are designated in the plan as Multiple Use Class M (moderate use) lands. Class M lands suitable for hazardous waste disposal may be transferred for this use at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior. The Ward Valley lands are not within a grazing district and are withdrawn from the mining and agricultural entry laws. The General Plan of San Bernardino County designates the Ward Valley lands as being suitable for limited rural development. The SLC has not indicated what it intends to do with the Ward Valley lands if they are classified for state selection. Either retention or sale of the Ward Valley lands would be consistent with BLM planning, and, depending upon whether retention is permanent or temporary and the use that eventually will be made of the land, may be consistent with state programs or local planning.

In the past, the Governor of California has expressed his desire, consistent with the DHS application, for a direct sale of the Ward Valley lands to the State. A recently issued report prepared by the National Research Council (NRC) contains several recommendations relating to the use of the Ward Valley site as a low level radioactive waste disposal facility. Additional recommendations or requirements may result from the biological opinion on the impacts of transfer of the site on the threatened desert tortoise. Measures described in the NRC report or the consultation on the tortoise may be included in the title transfer document if the Ward Valley lands are conveyed by a direct sale pursuant to the FLPMA. However, as pointed out below, this would not be possible if the lands are selected and transferred by means of the state indemnity selection acts.

Indemnity selections fulfill a public purpose, namely, contributing toward

satisfaction of the obligation of the United States owed to California for school land grants. There are, however, many federally-owned public lands, other than the Ward Valley lands, that are available in California and that are suitable for this purpose, whereas, as documented in the DHS site selection process and the EIR/EIS, public lands in the State of California having the same geological and hydrological characteristics of the Ward Valley lands are extremely scarce or nonexistent. Accordingly, the value of the Ward Valley lands for use as a low level waste disposal site is very high and meets a unique public purpose.

Further, FLPMA sanctions direct sales to support important public policies and objectives and provides for such sales to be conditioned to insure proper land use and protection of the public interest. In contrast, the state indemnity selection acts do not contain provisions authorizing the imposition of terms or conditions that address the potential impacts of subsequent uses of the land and that are intended to assure their maximum future use as for example, in this case, a site for the disposal of low level waste. Additionally, a direct sale made pursuant to FLPMA avoids the need for an additional administrative transfer of the lands from the SLC to the DHS (if the former should be so inclined) to allow siting of the proposed waste facility.

In light of the foregoing, and after having weighed all the relevant factors, I conclude that the Ward Valley lands should remain in federal ownership under multiple use management, as provided in the California Desert Conservation Plan of 1980, as amended. This will allow transfer of the Ward Valley lands for low level radioactive waste disposal purposes to the State of California by direct sale, the method of transfer the State Governor prefers, and will provide the opportunity to include appropriate conditions and safeguards regarding future use of the lands when and if they may be sold to the State. If the lands are not disposed of to the State, they will remain subject to BLM planning and management.

In accordance with the pending classification petition of the SLC and 43 C.F.R. Part 2400, the above described lands are classified for retention and the SLC indemnity selection application accompanying the petition is rejected.

Dated: June 29, 1995.

Edward L. Hastey,
State Director.

[FR Doc. 95-16519 Filed 7-5-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-40-P

U.S. Geological Survey

Calista Corp.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Geological Survey is planning to enter into a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with Calista Corporation, an Alaska Native regional corporation. The purpose of the CRADA is to conduct geologic mapping and geochemical sampling in the Holy Cross A-4 and A-5 quadrangles on both Calista land and adjoining Federal land. Any other organizations interested in pursuing the possibility of a CRADA for similar kinds of activities should contact the U.S. Geological Survey.

DATE: This notice is effective July 6, 1995.

ADDRESS: Information on the proposed CRADA is available to the public upon request at the following location: U.S. Geological Survey, Branch of Alaskan Geology, 4200 University Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4667.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marti L. Miller of the U.S. Geological Survey, Branch of Alaskan Geology, at the address given above; telephone 907/786-7437; fax 907/786-7401; email mmiller@tardaddy.wr.usgs.gov.

P. Patrick Leahy,
Chief Geologist.

[FR Doc. 95-16603 Filed 7-5-95; 8:45 am]

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Geological Survey

Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC); Public Review of Wetlands Classification System

ACTION: Notice; Request for comments.

SUMMARY: The FGDC is sponsoring a public review of an existing wetlands classification system, "Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States," by Cowardin et al., USFWS, FWS/OBS-79/31, to be considered for adoption as an FGDC standard. If adopted, the standard must be followed by all Federal agencies for data collected directly or indirectly (through grants, partnerships, or contracts).

In its assigned leadership role for developing the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), the FGDC recognizes that the standards also must meet the needs and recognize the views of State and local governments, academia, industry, and the public. The purpose of this notice is to solicit such views. The FGDC invites the community to review, test, and evaluate the proposed classification system.

Comments are encouraged about the content, completeness, and usability of the proposed standard.

The FGDC anticipates that the proposed wetlands standard, after updating or revision, will be adopted as a Federal Geographic Data Committee standard. The standard may be forwarded to other standards organizations for adoption if interest warrants such actions.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before October 15, 1995.

CONTACT AND ADDRESSES: Requests for written copies of the classification system being proposed as a standard, and reviewer comments concerning this standard, should be sent by mail to Wetlands Standards Review, FGDC Secretariat (attn: Jennifer Fox), U.S. Geological Survey, 590 National Center, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia, 22092; telephone 703-648-5514; facsimile 703-648-5755; or Internet "gdc@usgs.gov". The proposed standard may also be purchased from the Government Printing Office/Superintendent of Documents at 202-512-1800, Document No. 024-010-00665-0, or the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) at 703-487-4650; it is also available for viewing on the Internet at the National Wetlands Inventory Home Page; the URL is: <http://www.nwi.fws.gov>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: For classification purposes, wetlands are defined as: *lands that are transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water, and that have one or more of the following attributes: (1) At least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes; (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil; and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.*

Areas of deepwater, traditionally not considered wetlands, are included in this classification system as Deepwater Habitats. Deepwater Habitats are defined as: *permanently flooded lands lying below the deepwater boundary of wetlands, including environments where surface water is permanent and often deep, with water, rather than air, the principal medium within which the dominant organisms live.*

The classification system presents a method for grouping ecologically similar wetlands. It is hierarchical, with wetlands differentiated as follows: system, subsystem, class, subclass, hydrologic modifiers, water chemistry modifiers, dominance type, special