

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Geological Survey****Advisory Committee on Water Information; Meeting**

BUREAU: Geological Survey (USGS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI).

SUMMARY: This is to inform the public about the February 1998 meeting of the ACWI. The meeting is open to the public.

DATE: The meeting will begin on February 17, 1998, at 9 a.m. EST, and will adjourn on February 18 at 12:45 p.m.

LOCATION: Sheraton Reston Hotel, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy Lopez, Executive Secretary of the ACWI, at telephone number: (703) 648-5014 or facsimile number: (703) 648-5644. Her address is 417 National Center, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA 20192. Anyone needing special arrangements of services to participate effectively in the meeting is requested to inform Beth Cox at telephone number (703) 648-6832. For special arrangements please let Ms. Cox know by noon EST, Friday 13, so that your needs can be accommodated.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The ACWI is the major national mechanism for implementing Office of Management and Budget Memorandum No. 92-01, Coordination of Water Resources Information. With over 30 member organizations, the ACWI represents a wide range of water-resources interests and functions. The members include all levels of government and the private sector. The ACWI advises the Federal Government on activities and plans related to Federal water-information programs and the effectiveness of those programs in meeting the Nation's water information needs. Also, member organizations of the ACWI collaborate with others to sponsor workshops, symposia, and other forums to foster better communication among Federal and non-Federal sectors about water-information activities and needs.

At this meeting, the ACWI will discuss a variety of topics including water-resources aspects of the President's Fiscal Year 1999 Budget Request, the Clean Water Action Plan, water-resources decision support systems, geospatial data priorities for water-resources management, streamgaging concerns, the need for a subordinate group to address water

quantity information issues, and water-quality monitoring and assessment. For more detailed information about the program, please contact Ms. Lopez as shown above.

The meeting will include an opportunity for public comments. To make public comments, please provide a written request by noon EST, February 12, 1998, to Ms. Lopez. The request should include the name of the person that will be speaking and the general topic. Verbal comments to the ACWI should not exceed 5 minutes. At the meeting please provide 40 written copies of the comments to the registration desk for distribution and archiving as required by law. Anyone wishing to provide written information to the ACWI may do so at anytime by providing 40 copies to Ms. Lopez.

Dated: January 23, 1998.

Lewis Wade,

Acting Assistant Chief Hydrologist, Office of Information.

[FR Doc. 98-2164 Filed 1-28-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-31-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Indian Affairs****National Tribal Consultation; Meeting**

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Tribal Consultation Meeting—Tribal Trust Account Holders and Allottees.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Office of the Secretary will conduct four (4) consultation meetings with any Indian tribe, band, nation, allottee group, individual allottee, other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688), which is recognized as eligible for the trust programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

The purpose of these consultation meetings is to obtain oral comments regarding the Recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior for Settlement of Disputed Tribal Trust Fund Accounts, which were delivered to the U.S. Congress on November 13, 1997. The Recommendations of the Department were based on comments received in a prior consultation process in January 1997, on legislative options for settling tribal trust fund claims. The Recommendations developed by the Department of the Interior consist of a

report and legislative proposals aimed at settling more than two decades of disputed balances in Tribal Trust Fund accounts.

The Administration is pursuing a three-pronged strategy to address issues related to the Department of the Interior's administration and management of Indian trust funds. First, it is proposing this legislative approach that utilizes informal dispute resolution mechanisms to address claims that tribes may have with regard to the Department's past management of tribal trust fund accounts. Second, in conjunction with the special Trustee for American Indians, the Department has developed recommendations for improving the underlying trust management and accounting systems. Third, the Department has proposed legislation to end the increasing fractionation of ownership of Indian allotted lands.

The consultation meetings will be held to receive tribal comments on the first part of this strategy—the Secretary's Recommendations for settlement of disputed tribal trust funds accounts. Tribes may attend any of the consultation sessions.

DATES (1998): Four consultation sessions will be conducted:

February 9, 1998, Portland, OR, Airport Sheraton Hotel, 8235 NE Airport Way, Portland OR, 503-281-2500.

February 10, 1998, Albuquerque, NM, Sheraton Uptown Albuquerque, 2600 Louisiana Blvd., NE., Albuquerque, NM, 505-881-0000.

February 11, 1998, Oklahoma City, OK, Radisson Inn Hotel, West Interstate 40 & Meridian Ave., Oklahoma City, OK, 405-947-7681.

February 12, 1998, Minneapolis, MN, Minneapolis/St Paul Hilton, 3800 East 80th Street, Minneapolis, MN, 612-854-2100 or 800-637-7453.

All sessions will begin at 9 AM and continue until completed, except the Albuquerque, NM meeting which will begin at 8 AM. Public attendance may be limited to the space available.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240, 202-208-5116, FAX 202-208-6334.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of these consultation meetings is to provide Indian Tribal trust account holders and Allottees an opportunity to provide comments regarding the "Recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior for Settlement of Disputed Tribal Trust Fund Accounts." The objectives of the Recommendations are:

- Acknowledge and respect tribal sovereignty.
- Achieve a settlement that is fair to both the Indian community and the general public.
- Achieve the most resource-efficient settlement of claims (in terms of conserving federal government and tribal time, money, and staff).
- Encourage settlement by providing incentives to settle and disincentives to litigate.
- Use the most informal settlement processes available rather than litigation to encourage tribal participation.
- Obtain funding for the settlement without reducing appropriations for the BIA and Special Trustee budgets and tribal programs.
- Achieve agreement on account balances through September 30, 1992, or the date of settlement, as an agreed-upon starting point for the future.

The Department's Recommendations build on the legislative options for settlement that the Department submitted to Congress on December 11, 1996, and that we sent to you at the same time. After submitting the options to Congress, the Department consulted with and provided an opportunity for written comments from tribal representatives throughout the country about the approaches we were considering. A copy of the Report on the Recommendations of the Department was distributed to all Tribal Leaders on November 13, 1997.

All oral comments presented by tribes and individuals at these consultation meetings will be recorded and transcribed.

Summaries of the meetings will be available for public inspection and copying ten days following the meeting.

Dated: January 23, 1998.

Kevin Gover,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

[FR Doc. 98-2094 Filed 1-28-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-02-U

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Order of Temporary Closure to Non-Authorized Use of Certain Public Lands in Ward Valley, San Bernardino County, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Needles Field Office.

ACTION: Order of temporary closure to non-authorized uses of public lands.

SUMMARY: This order closes approximately 2,000 acres within Ward Valley, California to all uses, including

but not limited to camping, motorized vehicle use, recreation, and casual use, unless those uses are otherwise specifically authorized by the Bureau of Land Management. This closure does not affect uses authorized by any right-of-way, permit, or other valid authorization approved by the BLM authorized officer for the public lands described in this order, except that the existing protest encampment maintained by the Fort Mojave Tribe under BLM permit CA-37890 shall be relocated to site E, as described in permit CA-37890, consistent with the terms provided in permit CA-37890. No activities authorized by the encampment permit shall be undertaken outside the cleared area of site E on any lands closed pursuant to this notice. The closure covers the following public lands:

T. 9 N., R. 19 E., SBM
 Sec 22, S $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec 23, W $\frac{1}{2}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
 Sec 26, W $\frac{1}{2}$ of W $\frac{1}{2}$;
 Sec 27, all;
 Sec 34, all;
 Sec 35, W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The closure will become effective February 13, 1998 and will remain effective for a period of six months from the effective date, unless terminated earlier through an order reopening the lands upon completion of the drilling activities referenced below.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this temporary closure is to ensure that drilling and related activities to be undertaken by the Department of the Interior and the California Department of Health Services pursuant to a decision record issued January 16, 1998, at the Ward Valley site are carried out under conditions which will ensure public safety, promote site security, and provide for integrity of the sampling activities. Authority for this closure may be found in Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations 8364.1. The closure effected by this order is the minimum necessary for effective law enforcement because it is the minimum which will allow for control of access from Interstate 40.

This closure was analyzed in environmental assessment CA-069-EA7-42. The closure is within the scope of the Finding of No Significant Impacts prepared on EA CA-069-EA7-42. The impacts identified were temporary and minor.

This order constitutes the final decision of the Department.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Molly Brady, Field Manager, U.S. D.I., Bureau of Land Management, Needles Field Office, 101 West Spikes Road,

Needles, California 92363, tel: (760) 326-7000.

Approved: January 26, 1998.

Bob Armstrong,

Assistant Secretary, Lands and Minerals Management.

[FR Doc. 98-2312 Filed 1-27-98; 9:02 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-40-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WY-985-0777-66]

Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Coalbed Methane Development Projects South of Gillette, Wyoming

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Coalbed Methane Development Projects South of Gillette, Wyoming, in Campbell County.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) must analyze the impacts of actions we permit on Federal lands and minerals. As part of this analysis, the cumulative affects of the proposed action and other activities occurring in the area must be considered. Three Environmental Assessments (EA) (Pistol Point, Marquiss, and Lighthouse) and one Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (Gillette South) to address proposed coalbed methane (CBM) development have been completed for the area south of Gillette. When we completed the EIS in October of 1997, the apparent success of the coalbed methane play was drawing additional operators into the basin.

Feedback we received from industry indicated we could see an additional 2,600 to 3,000 CBM wells south of Gillette by the year 2007 if development success continues as it has been. With this information, BLM decided another EIS would be necessary to address this additional interest.

DATES: Comments to be considered in the draft EIS should be submitted by March 2, 1998. The draft EIS should be available for public review by October of 1998.

ADDRESSES: Questions or concerns should be addressed to Richard Zander in the BLM Buffalo Resource Area Office, 1425 Fort Street, Buffalo, WY 82834.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Zander, phone 307-684-1100.