

[Federal Register Volume 64, Number 145 (Thursday, July 29, 1999)]
[Notices]
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From the Federal Register Online via the Government Publishing Office [www.gpo.gov]
[FR Doc No: 99-19332]

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management
[UT-030-99-1610-00]

Proposed Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement;
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Utah

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), and 43 CFR part 1610, the Proposed Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM), Utah. This notice announces the availability of the Proposed Management Plan, which may be protested for a 30 day period to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Proposed Management Plan provides decisions for management of approximately 1,870,765 acres of public lands in Kane and Garfield Counties in south-central Utah. The Proposed Management Plan: (a) Draws upon elements of each of the five alternatives analyzed in the Draft Management Plan/Draft EIS to formulate the Proposed Management Plan, (b) reflects consideration given to public comments on, and corrections to, the Draft Management Plan/Draft EIS, as well as rewording for clarification, and (c) incorporates a refined environmental impact analysis section. The FEIS is also being made available for 30 days prior to making any decision in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.10(a)(2).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris Killingsworth, Planning Coordinator, Bureau of Land Management, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, 335 South Main Street, Suite 010, Cedar City, Utah 84720, telephone 435-865-5100.

ADDRESSES: Protests must be addressed to the Director (WO-210), Bureau of Land Management, Attn: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator, 1849 C Street, NW., Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240, within 30 days after the date of publication of the notice for the Proposed Management Plan.

DATES: The Proposed Management Plan may be protested. The protest period will commence with the date of publication of a Notice of Filing by the Environmental Protection Agency, which is expected to be on July 30, 1999. Protests must be submitted in writing and must be postmarked on or before August 30, 1999.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Proposed Management Plan presents objectives and decisions for managing public lands for the following resource categories or uses: Geology; Paleontology; Archaeology; History; Soils and Biological Soil Crusts; Vegetation and Vegetation

Management; Riparian; Special Status Plant Species; Fish and Wildlife; Special Status Animal Species; Water; Air Quality; Recreational Facilities, Activities, and Uses; Rights-of-Way; Commercial Uses (Filming, Outfitter and Guides, Vending); Forestry Products; Valid Existing Rights; Livestock Grazing; Water Related Developments; Wildfire Management; Wildlife Services; Visual Resource Management; and Wild and Scenic Rivers. The BLM has concluded that 223 miles of river segments would be recommended as suitable for Congressional designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This Proposed Management Plan promotes opportunities for community based partnerships and collaborative processes for successful and effective management of public lands into the future.

The Draft Management Plan/Draft EIS was released for public review and comment in November of 1998 and was followed by a four month comment period. The draft management plan/draft EIS analyzed five alternative management strategies for public lands in GSENM, Utah.

The Monument Planning Office received over 6,500 comment letters on the draft management plan/draft EIS from local, State and Federal governments, interest groups, and the public at large. Since the release of the draft management plan/draft EIS, public meetings, workshops, mailings, and briefings have been conducted to solicit comments, new information, and ideas for the Proposed Management Plan.

The Proposed Management Plan responds to public comments received on the draft management plan/draft EIS. The Proposed Management Plan also corrects errors in the draft management plan/draft EIS identified through the public comment process and internal BLM review. The Proposed Management Plan and associated analysis presents a refined and modified version of the Preferred Alternative and the accompanying impact analysis contained in the draft management plan/draft EIS. The Proposed Management Plan can be used in conjunction with the draft management plan/draft EIS to facilitate review of the initial five alternatives. The description of the affected environment and detailed descriptions of the alternatives contained in the draft management plan/draft EIS, as well as some of the appendices, are referenced but not reproduced in the Proposed Management Plan.

Copies of the Proposed Management Plan are available from GSENM Planning Office, 335 South Main Street, Suite 010, Cedar City, Utah, 84720, 435-865-5100. Public reading copies will be available for review at all government-document depository libraries, and at the following BLM locations: Office of Public Affairs, Main Interior Building, 18th and C Streets N.W., Washington, DC 20240; Information Access Center (4th Floor), Utah BLM State Office, 324 S. State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84111; Cedar City District Office, 176 East DL Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84720; Kanab Field Office, 318 North First East, Kanab, Utah 84741; and GSENM Field Office, Escalante, Utah

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84726. Background information and reference materials used in developing the Proposed Management Plan are available for review, upon request, in Cedar City at the GSENM Planning Office.

Written protests on the Proposed Management Plan will be accepted for 30 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency published the Notice of Filing of this document in the Federal Register. It is anticipated that the filing date will be on July 30, 1999, thus ending the public review/protest period on August 30, 1999, and the Governor's 60-day consistency review on September 28, 1999. Any part of this Proposed Management Plan may be protested by parties who participated in the planning process. Protests must pertain to issues that were identified in the draft management plan/draft EIS or through the public comment process.

Protests must be addressed to the BLM Director at the address listed under ADDRESSES. The protest must be specific and contain the following information (43 CFR 1610.5-2):

--The name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest;
--A statement of the issue(s) being protested;
--A statement of the part(s) of the proposed amendment being protested, and a citing of pages, paragraphs, maps, etc., of the Proposed Management Plan, where practical.;
--A copy of all documents addressing the issue(s) that were submitted by the protestor during the planning process or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and
--A concise statement explaining why the proposed decision is believed to be in error.

At the end of the 30-day protest period, the 30-day NEPA administrative period, and the 60-day Governor's review period a Record of Decision will be issued approving the Plan. Approval will be withheld on any portion of the plan under protest until final action has been completed on such protest.

Dated: July 23, 1999.
Willie R. Taylor,
Director, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance.
[FR Doc. 99-19332 Filed 7-28-99; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4310-DQ-P