



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

California State Office
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W1623
Sacramento, CA 95825
www.ca.blm.gov

MAR 09 2010

In Reply Refer To:
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CA910

Representative Jim Costa
20th Congressional District, California
1314 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Costa:

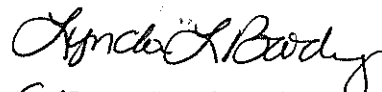
Thank you for your letter of March 4, 2010 requesting an extension of the public comment period for the Clear Creek Management Area Draft Resource Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

BLM received numerous requests, including from county and state government and Congressional offices, to extend the comment period on the draft RMP/EIS. Because the plan addresses potential long term restrictions on public lands, we are extending the comment period to allow further input.

The public comment period for the Clear Creek Management Area Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement has been extended by 45 days. We have enclosed our news release for your convenience.

BLM is committed to managing these important public resources in a manner that protects public health and safety while allowing the public access to use and enjoy their public lands. Please feel free to call me at your convenience if you require additional clarification or have any questions.

Sincerely,


For James Wesley Abbott
Acting State Director

Enclosures:
News Release



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
News Release

For Release: Sept. 1, 2009

CA-CC-09-85

Contact: David Christy (916) 941-3146

BLM Closes Clear Creek Management Area to New Mining Claims

The Bureau of Land Management has closed 28,953 acres of public lands in Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA) in southern San Benito and western Fresno counties to new mining claims for two years. The notice of proposed withdrawal was published today in the Federal Register.

The Secretary of the Interior proposes to withdraw the lands from location and entry under the United States mining laws for a period of 20 years. This action temporarily segregates the lands for up to two years from new mining claims while various studies and analyses are made to support a final decision on the withdrawal application.

Comments, objections or requests for a public meeting in connection with the proposed withdrawal will be accepted until DATE. Written comments should be addressed to the Field Manager, Hollister Field Office, BLM, 20 Hamilton Court, Hollister, Calif. 95023.

BLM closed CCMA to public entry on May 1, 2008, in response to a human health risk assessment by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that concludes recreational off-highway vehicle use (OHV) of "more than one visit per year put(s) adults and children above EPA's acceptable excess lifetime cancer risk range," adding that "children may be at greater risk...because of their life expectancy."

Rick Cooper, BLM's Hollister Field Manager stated, "Protecting the public's health and safety is BLM's number one priority. Based on EPA's results, we believe a temporary closure of most of the CCMA to new mining claims is in the public interest."

BLM manages approximately 63,000 acres of public lands in the CCMA. The area has been used extensively for OHV recreation for many years as well as for other recreational uses such as hunting and rock hounding. The lands include a variety of landforms, including the Serpentine Area of Critical Environmental Concern, the San Benito Mountain Research Natural Area, and three major watersheds, the Pajaro, the Arroyo Pasajaro and Silver Creek.

For further information on the mining closure contact Dan Byrne, realty specialist in the Hollister Field Office at (831) 630-5021, Duane Marti, realty specialist in the BLM State Office, at (916) 978-4675, Brandon Anderson, BLM lands clerk, at (916) 978-4674.

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