

Dated: August 11, 1989.

John H. Kelso.

Acting Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

Approval for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System as a State Administered Component

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

Pursuant to the authority granted the Secretary of the Interior by Section 2 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (82 Stat. 906, 16 U.S.C. 1273), and upon proper application of the Governor of the State of Illinois, the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River is designated as a State-administered component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This action is based on the designation of the river by the State of Illinois and the protection offered this river and its immediate environment by and pursuant to applicable State laws and regulations.

On August 20, 1987, the Governor of Illinois petitioned the Secretary of the Interior to add the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River to the National System. (See *Federal Register* of January 20, 1988, page 1525.) This river had been designated as a State Protected River on August 8, 1986. The Secretary on November 14, 1988, denied the State's application to include the river segment as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System under State administration.

In response to a request for reconsideration from the Governor of Illinois on February 15, 1989, the Secretary conducted a complete review of the State application and documents associated with the designation decision. As a result of that review, the Secretary has determined that a 17.1-mile segment of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion should be designated as a State-administered scenic river component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, as provided for in section 2(a)(ii) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The State of Illinois has fulfilled the requirements of the Act by designating this segment as a "State Protected River" and by adopting a program of action that will adequately protect the river from adverse State actions. The National Park Service evaluation of the river concluded that Middle Fork meets the criteria for a national scenic river.

Accordingly, the river segment is classified as scenic pursuant to section 2(b) of the Act.

Middle Fork of the Vermilion River.

The segment of the river from River Mile 29.8 at the Conrail Railroad crossing north of U.S. 150 to River Mile 46.9 north-northeast of Collison, all in Vermilion County.

This action is taken following substantial public involvement and consultation with the Departments of Agriculture, Army, and Transportation, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as required by section 4(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. A public meeting on the State's proposed river management plan and application for national designation of the river was held in Danville, Illinois, on February 26, 1987. In addition, a 45-day period for public comment on the State's application and river management plan and on the environmental assessment of the proposed national designation was provided from January 20 to March 5, 1988. All comments received have been carefully considered.

Notice is hereby given that effective upon this date, the above-described river segment is approved for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System as a scenic river area to be administered by the State of Illinois.

The primary author of this notice is Tom Gilbert, National Park Service, 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, NE 68102, Phone 402/221-2481.

Dated: August 11, 1989.

Manuel Lujan Jr.,
Secretary of the Interior.

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Bureau of Land Management

[CA-930-09-4310-13]

Afton Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern and the Adjacent Area

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Implementation of the management plan for the Afton Canyon Natural Area and the surrounding area, including vehicle route designation decisions and supplemental rules.

SUMMARY: The California Desert Conservation Area Plan identified the Afton Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) as an

area with significant riparian, wildlife, and scenic values which require special management attention. The management plan prescribes actions for the protection and preservation of those resource values. The planning area includes 41,500 acres within T. 10 N., R. 5 E.-6 E.; T. 11 N., R. 5 E.-7 E.; T. 12 N., R. 6 E.-7 E, SBM. Authorities for the management plan are 43 CFR 8341, 8342, and 8360; Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Sec. 202e); National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; and the California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980, as amended. Both written and oral public comments were evaluated in reaching these management decisions. An 82-day public comment period extended from October 1, 1988 to December 21, 1988. Two public meetings were held (in Barstow of November 1, 1988, and in Riverside on November 2, 1988) to solicit comments on the draft management plan. The draft management plan was then revised based on public comment and the final management plan was signed on June 8, 1989. The decision to implement the management plan was made on the basis of an Environmental Assessment (EA) which considered the environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives. No significant adverse effects were found and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was made. The EP and FONSI are available for public inspection at the Barstow BLM Office.

The Afton Canyon area will remain open to uses which are compatible with the protection and preservation of riparian, wildlife, and visual resources. The management plan prescribes the following actions: Amend the CDCA Plan to expand the Afton Canyon ACEC from 4,800 acres to 8,160 acres; consolidate land ownership by acquiring, through exchange, most private land within the 41,500 area acre; designate a basic vehicle access network of open routes and designate all other routes and washes as closed to vehicle use; reroute the Mojave Road for two and one-half miles to remove vehicle use from the prime riparian area; rehabilitate closed vehicle routes; allow camping only in designated campgrounds; prohibit recreational shooting except for legal hunting only with shotguns using non-solid projectiles in the expanded ACEC; increase on-the-ground management (law enforcement, educational, and visitor services activities); sign the area to provide visitor information regarding services, as well as activities which are allowed and prohibited; remove exotic plant species (tamarisk) and replant with