



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Point Reyes National Seashore
Point Reyes, California 94956

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7617

October 8, 2010

Dear Interested Party:

The National Park Service (NPS) is beginning the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate a potential issuance of a Special Use Permit for commercial oyster operations within Drakes Estero at Point Reyes National Seashore. Public scoping is the first step to involve the public in the NEPA process. Scoping includes holding meetings (see page 2) and providing opportunities for the public to comment so that their concerns are identified early and the analysis is focused on important issues.

The NPS encourages comments on the draft purpose and need, and requests that the public identify topics and concerns that should be addressed in the EIS. Commenters are also encouraged to bring forward any new information that the NPS may not be aware of that would be of use in preparing the EIS.

Project Purpose and Need

Pursuant to Section 124 of Public Law 111-88, the Secretary of the Interior has the discretionary authority to issue a Special Use Permit for a period of 10 years to Drakes Bay Oyster Company (DBOC) for commercial harvesting and processing of shellfish at Point Reyes National Seashore. The existing Reservation of Use and Occupancy and associated Special Use Permit held by DBOC expire on November 30, 2012. DBOC has submitted a request for the issuance of a new permit upon expiration of the existing permit.

On behalf of the Secretary, the NPS will use the NEPA process to engage the public and evaluate the effects of continuing the commercial operation within the national park. The results of the NEPA process will be used to inform the decision of whether a new Special Use Permit should be issued to DBOC for a period of 10 years.

Project Objectives

- Manage natural and cultural resources to support their maximum protection, restoration, and preservation.
- Manage wilderness and potential wilderness areas to preserve the character and qualities for which they were designated.

- Engage a broad spectrum of the public and relevant agencies in the NEPA process.

Scoping Meetings

The National Park Service will be hosting three public meetings during the initial scoping phase of this process. The open house style meetings will be identical in format and are intended to gather comments from the public that will be used in shaping the EIS. The meetings are scheduled at the following locations:

Tuesday October 26, 2010, 6-8pm

Dance Palace Community Center
503 B Street
Point Reyes Station, CA 94965

Wednesday October 27, 2010, 6-8 pm

Multi-Purpose Room, Bay Model Visitor Center
2100 Bridgeway
Sausalito, CA 94965-1753

Thursday October 28, 2010, 6-8 pm

Community Room, REI Berkeley
1338 San Pablo Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94702

Public Comment

If you cannot attend one of the public scoping meetings or would like to provide comment in another form, you can still participate online or in writing. The preferred method for submitting comments is via the internet through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment site at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/pore>. From the main page, click on the Drakes Bay Oyster Company Special Use Permit EIS link, and then on the “Scoping Letter” link to comment. You may also mail or hand deliver comments to “DBOC SUP EIS c/o Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore, 1 Bear Valley Road, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956”. Written comments will also be accepted at the public meetings.

The comment period will close 30 days after publication of the Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS in the Federal Register and will be announced via press release and on the park’s website (www.nps.gov/pore).

Comments will not be accepted by FAX, e-mail, or in any other way than those specified above. Bulk comments in any format (hard copy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others will not be accepted. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to

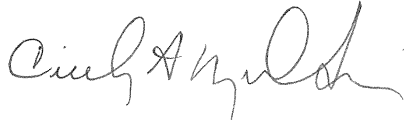
withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Project timeline

- October/November 2010: Public Scoping
- Fall 2011: Draft EIS released with 60-day public review and comment period
- Summer 2012: Final EIS completed and released
- July 2012: Record of Decision signed

If you have questions regarding this process, please contact Outreach Coordinator Melanie Gunn at Point Reyes National Seashore at (415) 464-5162. We appreciate your participation in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cicely A. Muldoon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small horizontal line at the end.

Cicely A. Muldoon
Superintendent