

January 9, 2006

## Notice Briefing Statement

**Unit:** Amistad National Recreation Area

**Title:** Notice of termination of an environmental impact statement for the Amistad National Recreation Area General Management Plan

**Congressional District:**

Texas:

23<sup>rd</sup> District:

Henry Bonilla

Senate:

John Cornyn and Kay Hutchinson

The National Park Service (NPS) is terminating the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Amistad National Recreation Area General Management Plan (GMP) because it has determined an environmental assessment (EA) will suffice.

### Background

- A notice of intent to prepare an EIS for the Amistad National Recreation Area GMP was published in Vol. 68, No. 11, of the January 16, 2003, *Federal Register*. The congressional delegation's staff was notified that the National Park Service was updating the GMP that guides the management of Amistad National Recreation Area during the initial scoping for this project in the summer of 2002.
- The "Director's Order 12 Handbook" states that it is standard NPS practice and policy to prepare an EIS for a park GMP because a GMP is a major federal action, with long-term management implications for a unit of the NPS (§7.1A). The Environmental Quality Division, through the Associate Director for Natural Resources Stewardship and Science, may grant an exception to the EIS requirement when it is clear that the potential for significant impact does not exist. The request for a waiver was approved on December 19, 2005.
- Section 4.10 of the "Director's Order 12 Handbook" states that if an EIS is terminated, a *Federal Register* notice announcing the termination must be published.

### Issues

- The plan was originally scoped as an EIS. However, few public comments were received in the scoping process. Although several concerns were expressed during the public scoping process, particularly about future access for fishing and other recreational activities, no issues were identified for the GMP that have the potential for controversial impacts. The planning process has generated little public interest and controversy and no substantive issues have been raised by the public.
- Neither of the management alternatives developed for the national recreation area would result in substantial changes in the operation and management of the area. No major or significant impacts to resources from any of the actions in the action alternatives were identified during analysis.
- Work is now proceeding on completing the GMP/EA. Converting the EIS to an EA will substantially reduce costs and time in completing the planning process.
- The draft GMP/EA is expected to be distributed for a 30-day public comment period in the spring/summer of 2006. The draft document will be mailed to the recreation area's mailing list,

placed on the park's web site, and be available at the recreation area and other locations. Public open houses on the draft document will be held in Del Rio, Texas. Input from local/state official is anticipated upon release of the draft document. A finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is expected to be signed by the regional director, in the summer of 2006, completing the planning process.

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