

constitute a quorum. All actions of the committee shall require at least ten concurring votes: Provided, if the public member or the public alternate member acting in the place and stead of the public member, is present at a meeting, then eleven members shall constitute a quorum. Any action of the committee on which the public member votes shall require eleven concurring votes. If the public member abstains from voting on any particular matter, ten concurring votes shall be required for an action of the committee.

(b) The committee may vote by mail, telephone, fax, telegraph, or other electronic means; Provided that any votes cast by telephone shall be confirmed promptly in writing. Voting by proxy, mail, telephone, fax, telegraph, or other electronic means shall not be permitted at any assembled meeting of the committee.

(c) All assembled meetings of the committee shall be open to growers and handlers. The committee shall publish notice of all meetings in such manner as it deems appropriate.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

36 CFR Part 7

RIN 1024-AC97

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, Personal Watercraft Use

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing to designate areas where personal watercraft (PWC) may be used in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, Texas. This proposed rule implements the provisions of the NPS general regulations authorizing a park unit to allow the use of PWC by promulgating a special regulation. The NPS *Management Policies 2001* directs individual parks to determine whether PWC use is appropriate for a specific park unit based on an evaluation of that park's enabling legislation, resources and values, other visitor uses, and overall management objectives.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 10, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the proposed rule should be sent to the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, P.O. Box 1460, Fritch, TX 79036-1460, Fax: (806) 857-2319, e-

mail: LAMR_Superintendent@nps.gov. If you comment by e-mail, please include "PWC rule" in the subject line and your name and return address in the body of your Internet message. Also, you may hand deliver comments to the Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, 419 East Broadway, Fritch, Texas.

For additional information see "Public Participation" under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Judy Shafer, Office of Policy and Regulations, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW., Room 7250, Washington, DC 20240. Phone: (202) 208-7068. E-mail: Judy_Shafer@nps.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Additional Alternatives

This proposed rule would implement portions of the preferred alternative in the Environmental Assessment published March 10, 2003. The public should be aware that two other alternatives were presented in the EA, including a no-PWC alternative, and those alternatives should also be reviewed and considered when making comments on this proposed rule.

Personal Watercraft Regulation

On March 21, 2000, the National Park Service published a regulation (36 CFR 3.24) on the management of personal watercraft (PWC) use within all units of the National Park System (65 FR 15077). This regulation prohibits PWC use in all national park units unless the NPS determines that this type of water-based recreational activity is appropriate for the specific park unit based on the legislation establishing that park, the park's resources and values, other visitor uses of the area, and overall management objectives. The regulation banned PWC use in all park units effective April 20, 2000, except 21 park units. The regulation established a 2-year grace period following the final rule publication to provide these 21 park units time to consider whether PWC use should be allowed.

Description of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area is near Fritch, Texas, in the center of the Texas Panhandle, about 40 miles northeast of Amarillo, Texas. The reservoir was formed in the 1960s when the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation constructed Sanford Dam on the Canadian River. The dam was built to supply water to 11 communities in the Panhandle by means of 322 miles of

pipeline. The National Recreation Area consists of about 45,000 acres; the historic average reservoir pool covers about 10,000 acres.

Lake Meredith is a major site of water-based recreation in the Panhandle, averaging more than 1.5 million visits per year from 1992 to 1999. There are no comparable large bodies of water or land that provide such recreational diversity in the Panhandle area. The largest nearby recreation area is Palo Duro Canyon State Park, a beautiful scenic and historic area, but lacks the water resources of Lake Meredith.

The lands and waters of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area support a major sport fishery and contain facilities for camping, picnicking, and boating. Lake Meredith is the only public land in a radius of approximately 50 miles that permits the hunting of deer, quail, ducks, and other migratory birds.

Congress created Lake Meredith National Recreation Area on November 28, 1990. Public Law 101-628 states this National Park System unit is "to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of the lands and waters associated with Lake Meredith in the State of Texas, and to protect the scenic, scientific, cultural, and other values contributing to the public enjoyment of such lands and waters" (16 U.S.C. 460eee). By making Lake Meredith part of the National Park System, Congress emphasized the importance of protecting and interpreting the natural and cultural resources of the park. The legislation codified the long-standing administrative arrangements between the Bureau of Reclamation and the NPS.

Purpose of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

The purpose of the park is addressed in the following statements excerpted from the park's *Strategic Plan*.

1. Provide for the safe public use, understanding, and enjoyment of the diverse recreational opportunities.
2. Educate the public to instill an understanding and sense of stewardship of the cultural, natural, historic, scenic and recreational resources of the park.
3. Provide opportunities for scientific study of natural and cultural resources.

Significance of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

The following park resources and values define the significance of Lake Meredith:

1. The impounding of the Canadian River in 1965 created a man-made lake that fulfills outdoor recreational needs such as sport fishing, hunting, boating, horseback riding, hiking, scuba diving,