

Advisory body scheduled to meet during the month of February 1997.

Name: National Advisory Council on the National Health Service Corps.

Date and Time: February 6-9, 1997.

Place: Radisson Hotel, La Jolla, 3299 Holiday Court, La Jolla, California 92037.

The meeting is open to the public.

Agenda: Agenda items include updates on the National Health Service Corps program, meetings with current and former NHSC providers; presentations on managed care, academic-community educational linkages, and the future role of the Corps; and meetings of NHSC workgroups on new environment strategies, health system linkages, and mission coalition building.

The opening meeting will be held on Thursday, February 6 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and will include an orientation session for new Council members. On Friday and Saturday, meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude around 7:00 p.m. Sunday's meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and adjourn around noon.

The meeting is open to the public. Anyone requiring information regarding the subject Council should contact Ms. Jewel Davis, National Advisory Council on the National Health Service Corps, Health Resources and Services Administration, 8th floor, 4350 East West Highway, Rockville, Maryland 20857, Telephone (301) 594-4144.

Agenda Items are subject to change as priorities dictate.

Dated: January 7, 1997.

J. Henry Montes,

Director, Office of Policy and Information Coordination, HRSA.

[FR Doc. 97-724 Filed 1-10-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4160-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Reopening of Comment Period on Draft Recovery Plan for the Wetland and Aquatic Species of the Owens Basin, Inyo and Mono Counties, California and Related Public Information Workshops

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of reopening of comment period and related public information workshops.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the reopening of the comment period for a draft recovery plan for endangered, proposed, and species of concern found in the wetland and aquatic habitats of the Owens Basin in Inyo and Mono Counties, California, and related public information workshops. The recovery plan targets recovery of 11 species found throughout the Owens River drainage on Federal, State and private

lands. Also available for review is the draft Owens Basin Management Guidelines Plan for rare species. The Service solicits review and comment from the public on these draft plans. Three public information workshops will be held in conjunction with the reopening of the comment period.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan and/or Management Guidelines Plan must be received on or before April 14, 1997 to ensure consideration by the Service.

Public information workshops will be held:

Tuesday, February 11, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Mammoth High School, Multipurpose Room, 365 Sierra Park Road, Town of Mammoth Lakes;

Wednesday, February 12, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fairgrounds, Home Economics Building, Sierra Street and Fairgrounds Drive, Bishop; and

Thursday, February 13, from 6 to 8 p.m. in Statham Hall, corner of Jackson and Bush, Lone Pine, California.

ADDRESSES: The draft recovery plan and/or Management Guidelines Plan are available for public inspection, by appointment, during regular business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday) at the Service's Ventura Field Office, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California, 93003, phone 805-644-1766. Copies of the draft plans may also be obtained by written or phone request to the Ventura Field Office. (Note: Copies of the draft Management Guidelines Plan will automatically be mailed to all parties who received the draft recovery plan during its previous release.) Comments and materials regarding the plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor at the Ventura Field Office. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection upon request, by appointment, at the Ventura Field Office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Carl Benz, Assistant Field Supervisor, Division of Listing and Recovery, in the Ventura Field Office (see **ADDRESSES** section).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On August 26, 1996, the Service published a notice of availability for public review of a draft recovery plan for endangered, proposed, and species of concern found in the wetland and aquatic habitats of the Owens Basin in Inyo and Mono Counties, California. The original comment period closed on October 25, 1996. The draft Management Guidelines Plan was not

completed at that time and therefore not available for public review.

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide recovery efforts, the Service prepares recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of listed species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for reclassification from endangered to threatened or removal from the list, and estimate the time and cost for implementing the needed recovery measures.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. The Service and other Federal agencies will take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

The draft recovery plan for the Owens Basin wetland and aquatic species addresses conservation of the following species: Owens tui chub, Owens pupfish, Fish Slough milk-vetch, Owens speckled dace, Long Valley Speckled dace, Inyo County mariposa lily, Owens Valley checkerbloom, Fish Slough springsnail, Owens Valley springsnail, Aardhal's springsnail, and Owens Valley vole. Owens tui chub and Owens pupfish are federally listed as endangered, and the Fish Slough milk-vetch has been proposed for listing as endangered. All of these species are threatened by loss and degradation of wetland and aquatic habitats.

The draft recovery plan was developed in accordance with the Service's recent policy emphasizing an ecosystem approach to conservation of endangered species. The goal of the recovery plan is to restore the target species to secure status within their natural habitats. Protecting the ecosystem of endangered species in the Owens Basin will also protect other locally rare species, and, it is hoped, avert future declines in plant and wildlife populations that could lead to future listings.

The draft recovery plan was developed with the participation of

State and Federal land management agencies, local agencies and property owners, including the California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Inyo National Forest, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. The plan calls for restoration of wetland and aquatic habitats throughout the Owens River drainage. The plan describes tasks that, when accomplished, should ensure the survival of target species, and thereby justify their removal from the endangered and threatened species list.

The draft Management Guidelines Plan for rare species was completed to provide management guidance to the Department of Fish and Game. The Management Guidance Plan is supplemental to, but independent from, the draft recovery plan. In essence, they are separate documents.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the draft recovery plan and Management Guidelines Plan described herein. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the plan or completion of a final Management Guidelines Plan.

Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: January 3, 1997.

Thomas J. Dwyer,
Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 97-721 Filed 1-10-97; 8:45 am]

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Notice

Notice of Scoping Meeting on Intent to Prepare Environmental Impact Statement in Anticipation of Receiving a Permit Application to Incidentally Take Listed Species From the Endangered San Marcos and Comal Springs Ecosystems Under Section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act, by the Bexar Metropolitan Water District and Possibly Others, Comal, Bexar, and Hays Counties, Texas

ACTION: Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement and announcement of scoping meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an anticipated incidental take permit application, including a required Habitat Conservation Plan, from the

Bexar Metropolitan Water District (District) and possibly others. The species proposed to be taken from the San Marcos and Comal Springs Ecosystems (Edwards Aquifer), include the federally-listed San Marcos gambusia (*Gambusia georgei*), fountain darter (*Etheostoma fonticola*), and Texas wild-rice (*Zizania texana*).

This notice is provided as required by the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), (50 CFR 17.22) and National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1501.7) regulations.

The Service is soliciting information and comments on the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the human environment. NEPA scoping procedures are intended to insure that information on the proposed action, alternatives and impacts are solicited from the public, and that all information is available to public officials and citizens before planning decisions are made. Accurate scientific analysis, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny are essential to implementing NEPA. NEPA documents concentrate on the issues that are significant to the action in question. The Service invites the public to submit information and comments either at a meeting on 13 February 1997, or in writing. The Service requests that comments be as specific as possible.

Major environmental and species concerns in this scoping process include the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that implementation of the proposal could have on endangered and threatened species, critical habitat, and other environmental resources, and the quality of the human environment. Other relevant issues include effects of aquifer and water withdrawal levels on Comal and San Marcos spring flows, effects of various aquifer water use management options and alternative water supply options on the environments affected by those options, and effects on the downstream environment.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before 1 May 1997. A public hearing for receipt of comments will be held in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, Thursday, 13 February 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Steve Helfert, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, 10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200, Austin, Texas

78758-4460. The public hearing will be held from 7 to 10 pm, at Dwight Middle School, 2454 W. Southcross, San Antonio, Texas 78211. For further information on the scoping meeting location contact Janie Valenzuela at Bexar Metropolitan Water District, 2047 West Malone, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas 78225, (210) 345-6500.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Alisa M. Shull, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at the above address, telephone (512) 490-0057, facsimile (512) 490-0974.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Service proposes to prepare an EIS to evaluate the impacts of alternatives associated with issuing an incidental take permit under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA. Several parties, including the Bexar Metropolitan Water District, have indicated an interest in pursuing incidental take authorization.

Section 9 of the ESA prohibits the taking of federally listed animal species, unless authorized under the provisions of section 7 or 10 of the ESA. The term "take" under the ESA includes actions that may directly kill or injure listed species, actions that significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns such as feeding and breeding, and actions that detrimentally modify habitat to the extent that it harms individuals of the species.

Section 10(a)(1)(B) allows the Fish and Wildlife Service to permit taking of listed species provided that taking is incidental to an otherwise legal activity and that it will not jeopardize a listed species. A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) must be submitted as part of the incidental take permit application by the applicant.

The San Marcos and Comal Springs Ecosystems are dependent upon adequate springflow from the San Antonio Segment of the Edwards Aquifer to support endangered species and critical habitat, as well as several species proposed for federal listing. The Edwards Aquifer is the sole source of drinking water for over 1.5 million people in the San Antonio Metropolitan Region. Given the growing water use, anticipated for the San Antonio Region, an overall management plan seems necessary to assure the sustained springflow in the two systems.

Decline of springflow in the two systems will result in "take" of listed species and in an appreciable reduction of the value of critical habitat, and an appreciable reduction in the likelihood of survival and recovery of listed species. The Service has estimated minimum springflow for the two