

Name of Committee: Center for Scientific Review Special Emphasis Panel
Date: December 24, 1998
Time: 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM
Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications

Place: NIH, Rockledge 2, Bethesda, MD 20892, (Telephone Conference Call)
Contact Person: J. Scott Osborne, PHD, Scientific Review Administrator, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, 6701 Rockledge Drive, Room 4114, MSC 7816, Bethesda, MD 20892, (301) 435-1782

This notice is being published less than 15 days prior to the meeting due to the timing limitations imposed by the review and funding cycle.

Name of Committee: Center for Scientific Review Special Emphasis Panel
Date: December 24, 1998
Time: 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM
Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications

Place: NIH, Rockledge 2, Bethesda, MD 20892, (Telephone Conference Call)
Contact Person: J. Scott Osborne, PHD, Scientific Review Administrator, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, 6701 Rockledge Drive, Room 4114, MSC 7816, Bethesda, MD 20892, (301) 435-1782

This notice is being published less than 15 days prior to the meeting due to the timing limitations imposed by the review and funding cycle.

Name of Committee: Center for Scientific Review Special Emphasis Panel
Date: December 28, 1998
Time: 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM
Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications

Place: NIH, Rockledge 2, Bethesda, MD 20892, (Telephone Conference Call)
Contact Person: J. Scott Osborne, PHD, Scientific Review Administrator, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, 6701 Rockledge Drive, Room 4114, MSC 7816, Bethesda, MD 20892, (301) 435-1782

This notice is being published less than 15 days prior to the meeting due to the timing limitations imposed by the review and funding cycle.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 93.306, Comparative Medicine, 93.306; 93.333, Clinical Research, 93.333, 93.337, 93.393-93.396, 93.837-93.844, 93.846-93.878, 93.892, 93.893, National Institutes of Health, HHS)

Dated: December 18, 1998.

LaVerne Y. Stringfield,

Committee Management Officer, NIH.

[FR Doc. 98-34538 Filed 12-29-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated National Environmental Policy Act Document for Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge, Contra Costa County, California

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is preparing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document for Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. This notice advises the public that the Service intends to gather information necessary to prepare a CCP and environmental documents pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, and NEPA. The public is invited to participate in the planning process. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with the Service CCP policy to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the environmental documents.

DATES: To ensure that the Service has adequate time to evaluate and incorporate suggestions and other input into the planning process, comments should be received on or before January 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments or requests to be added to the mailing list to the following address: Planning Team Leader—Antioch Dunes NWR, California/Nevada Refuge Planning Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2233 Watt Avenue, Sacramento, California, 95825.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leslie Lew, Planning Team Leader, (916) 979-2085.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, mandates that all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System are to be managed in accordance with an approved CCP. The CCP will guide management decisions and identify refuge goals, long-range objectives, and management strategies for achieving refuge purposes. The planning process will consider many elements, including habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection, cultural resources protection, and environmental effects. Public input into this planning process is very important. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clear

understanding of the desired conditions for the refuges and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The Service is soliciting information from the public via written comments. The Service will send out special mailings, newspaper articles, and announcements to people who are interested in the refuge. These mailings will provide information on how to participate in public involvement for the CCP. Comments received will be used to develop goals, key issues, and habitat management strategies. Additional opportunities for public participation will occur throughout the process, which is expected to be completed in late 1999. Data collection has been initiated to create computerized mapping, including vegetation, topography, habitat types and existing land uses.

The refuge was established to protect a unique riverine dune ecosystem and three endangered species. The 55 acres owned by the Service, along with the 12 acres owned by Pacific Gas and Electric that are adjacent to the refuge, support the last known natural populations of the Antioch dunes evening primrose, Contra Costa wallflower, and Lange's metalmark butterfly. The refuge was the first National Wildlife Refuge to be created to protect endangered plants and insects.

In the early 1900's, the isolated dune habitat in the delta began to experience a dramatic change as human development expanded. The easily-accessible sand was harvested to make bricks. Large-scale sand mining and industrial development fragmented the sand dune habitat until only a small portion of the original ecosystem remained. Non-native grasses and vegetation encroached on the sand dunes to crowd the few remaining endangered plants. By the time the refuge was established, only a few acres of remnant dune habitat supported the last natural populations of Antioch Dunes evening-primrose, Contra Costa wallflower, and Lange's metalmark butterfly. The refuge was open for public use until 1986 when it was closed to protect the plants from trampling and wildfire. The refuge consists of two units that are managed to prevent the extinction of these unique species. Intensive management has already resulted in the highest Lange's metalmark butterfly population in 20 years.

The refuge purpose is to conserve fish, wildlife, and plants which are listed as endangered or threatened species. (16 U.S.C. § 1534 (Endangered Species Act of 1973)).

The outcome of this planning process will be a CCP to guide refuge management for the next 15 years, and associated NEPA document.

It is estimated that a draft CCP and NEPA document will be made available for public review in spring 1999.

Dated: December 21, 1998.

Elizabeth H. Stevens,

Acting Manager, California/Nevada Operations, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, California.

[FR Doc. 98-34499 Filed 12-29-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of an Environmental Assessment/Habitat Conservation Plan and Receipt of Application for an Incidental Take Permit for Construction and Operation of a Residential and Commercial Development on Approximately 471.5 Acres of the 714-Acre Balfour Tract, Austin, Travis County, Texas

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: BRE/Baldwin, L.P. (Applicant) has applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an incidental take permit pursuant to Section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act (Act). The Applicant has been assigned permit number TE-003593-0. The requested permit, which is for a period of 30 years, would authorize the incidental take of the endangered golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*). The proposed take would occur as a result of the construction and operation of a residential and commercial development on approximately 471.5 acres of the 714-acre Balfour Tract located in Austin, Travis County, Texas.

The Service has prepared the Environmental Assessment/Habitat Conservation Plan (EA/HCP) for the incidental take application. A determination of jeopardy to the species or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will not be made until at least 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 10(c) of the Act and the National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

DATES: Written comments on the application should be received on or before January 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the application may obtain a copy by

writing to the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Persons wishing to review the EA/HCP may obtain a copy by contacting Sybil Vosler, Ecological Services Field Office, 10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78758 (512/490-0063). Documents will be available for public inspection by appointment only during normal business hours (8:00 to 4:30). Written data or comments concerning the application and EA/HCP should be submitted to the Supervisor, Ecological Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 10711 Burnet Rd., Austin, Texas 78758. Please refer to permit number TE-003593-0 when submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sybil Vosler at the above Austin Ecological Service Field Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 9 of the Act prohibits the "taking" of endangered species such as the golden-cheeked warbler. However, the Service, under limited circumstances, may issue permits to take endangered wildlife species incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for endangered species are at 50 CFR 17.22.

Applicant: BRE/Baldwin, L.P. plans to construct a residential and commercial development on the 714-acre tract and will preserve a minimum of 121 acres of golden-cheeked warbler habitat on-site. An additional 124 acres of golden-cheeked warbler habitat will be purchased and preserved off-site. The construction will be located at the Balfour Tract, located approximately 1-mile east of the City of Lakeland Park (across the Colorado River) and approximately 3 miles northeast of the Village of Bee Cave and roughly 11 miles west of the downtown City of Austin. The preserved areas will be maintained in their natural state and title or conservation easement granted in perpetuity and will be held by a non-profit conservation organization or governmental agency approved by the Service.

Alternatives to this action were considered; however, increased development would result in greater levels of take of golden-cheeked warblers, and selling or not developing the subject property with federally listed species present was not economically feasible.

Geoffrey L. Haskett,

Acting Regional Director, Region 2, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

[FR Doc. 98-34496 Filed 12-29-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Bureau of Land Management

Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for Federal Permits Associated With Construction and Operation of the High Desert Power Plant Project, Victorville, San Bernardino County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior (Lead Agency); Bureau of Land Management, Interior (Cooperating Agency).

ACTION: Notice of intent; announcement of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service, with the Bureau of Land Management as a cooperator, intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. This Impact Statement will consider the Federal actions associated with the High Desert Power Plant Project. Specifically, the Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to issue an Endangered Species Act permit to the High Desert Power, Limited Liability Company, and other project proponents for take of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act, and for the future take, should it be needed, of the Mohave ground squirrel (*Spermophilus mohavensis*) and the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), a threatened species and a sensitive species, respectively, under the California Endangered Species Act. Take of these species would be incidental to the construction and operation of a natural gas power plant, electric lines, gas lines, and water lines associated with the High Desert Power Project. As part of the proposed action for the project, the Bureau of Land Management proposes to issue a right-of-way grant under Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 to the Southwest Gas Corporation for the construction and maintenance of a natural gas pipeline through Federal lands designated as desert tortoise critical habitat and managed by the Bureau.

The purpose of scoping is to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the range of issues and alternatives to be considered in preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be made available to the public. This notice is provided pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for