

of foraging habitat through fire suppression and loss of mature trees, and the loss of valuable genetic resources because of small population size and isolation of populations.

The objective of this revision is to provide a framework for the recovery of the red-cockaded woodpecker so that protection under the Act is no longer necessary. As recovery criteria are met, the status of the species will be reviewed and it will be considered for removal from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (50 CFR part 17). The red-cockaded woodpecker will be considered for delisting when (1) there are 10 populations that each contain at least 350 potential breeding groups (400 to 500 active clusters), and 1 population that contains at least 1,000 potential breeding groups (1,100 to 1,400 active clusters) from among 13 designated primary core populations (see recovery plan for the list of primary core populations and the recovery units in which they are located); (2) there are 9 populations that each contain at least 250 potential breeding groups (275 to 350 active clusters), from among 10 designated secondary core populations (see recovery plan for the list of secondary core populations and the recovery units in which they are located); (3) there are at least 250 potential breeding groups (275 to 350 active clusters) distributed among designated essential support populations in the South/Central Florida Recovery Unit, and six of these populations (including at least two of the following—Avon Park Air Force Range, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Ocala National Forest) exhibit a minimum population size of 40 potential breeding groups; (4) the following populations are stable or increasing and each contain at least 100 potential breeding groups (110 to 140 active clusters)—(a) Northeast North Carolina/Southeast Virginia Essential Support Population of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain Recovery Unit, (b) Talladega/Shoal Creek Essential Support Population of the Cumberlands/Ridge and Valley Recovery Unit, and (c) North Carolina Sandhills West Essential Support Population of the Sandhills Recovery Unit; and (5) for each of the populations meeting the above size criteria, responsible management agencies shall provide (a) a habitat management plan that is adequate to sustain the population and emphasizes frequent prescribed burning, and (b) a plan for continued population monitoring.

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

Dated: March 5, 2003.

Sam D. Hamilton,

Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 03-6680 Filed 3-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Conduct Public Scoping and Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement Regarding the Development of a Habitat Conservation Plan for the Pacific Coast Population of the Western Snowy Plover in Oregon

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are advising the public that we intend to gather information necessary to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and conduct public scoping regarding the potential issuance of an incidental take permit under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended, for the threatened Pacific coast population of the western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) within Oregon. We anticipate that the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation (OPRD) will develop a habitat conservation plan (HCP) and apply for an incidental take permit for this species covering beach management activities. Incidental take permits are authorized under section 10(a) of the Act. We are providing this notice to advise other agencies and the public of our intent to prepare an EIS and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the EIS. This EIS will provide a comprehensive analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of beach management alternatives. It will also analyze proposed mitigation and minimization measures for anticipated incidental take from the implementation of an HCP for the western snowy plover resulting from the HCP.

DATES: Written comments for this initial scoping phase will be accepted until April 28, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to State Supervisor, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2600 SE 98th Avenue, Suite 100, Portland, OR 97266. Comments

may also be submitted by electronic mail (e-mail) to *orp&r_hcp@r1.fws.gov*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Richard Szlemp, Fish and Wildlife Service; telephone 503-231-6179; or Michelle Michaud, Project Manager, OPRD, telephone 503-378-4168, ext. 288.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 9 of the Act, and its implementing Federal regulations prohibit the "taking" of a species listed as endangered or threatened. The term "take" means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, capture or collect listed wildlife, or attempt to engage in such conduct. Harm includes habitat degradation or modification that kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Under section 10(a) of the Act, we may issue permits for take of listed species that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for threatened and endangered species are found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 50 CFR 17.32 and 50 CFR 17.22.

The OPRD has management responsibility on all Oregon coastal beaches (approximately 260 miles) for such activities as recreation, ocean shore alterations (riprap, seawalls, etc.), natural product removal (sand), and non-traditional activities (e.g., weddings, commercial filming, fireworks displays). Such activities may result in take of the threatened Pacific coast population of the western snowy plover.

In accordance with section 10(a) of the Act, OPRD will prepare an HCP which will address conservation of western snowy plovers and their habitat, while providing for recreational use, non-traditional uses, and for ocean shore alteration activities on the entire length of Oregon's beaches. The proposed HCP will consider all uses on ocean beaches from low mean tide to the actual or statutory vegetation line, whichever is furthest inland, as well as all OPRD owned and managed coastal park units.

Availability of Comments

Comments will be available for public inspection at OPRD, 1115 Commercial Street, NE, Salem, Oregon. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be

available for public inspection in their entirety.

Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish your name and/or address withheld from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. We will not, however, consider anonymous comments.

Dated: March 14, 2003.

Rowan W. Gould,

Deputy Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 03-6677 Filed 3-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-600-03-1010-BN-241A]

Notice of Public Meetings, Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council Meetings

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council (RAC) will meet as indicated below.

The Northwest Colorado RAC meetings will be held May 8, 2003 at the Colorado North Western Community College—Johnson Bldg. Banquet Room, located at 500 Kennedy Drive in Rangely, Colorado; August 14, 2003 at the Parachute Community Center located at 222 Grand Valley Way in Parachute, Colorado; and November 13, 2003 at the Holiday Inn located at 755 Horizon Drive in Grand Junction, Colorado.

The Northwest Colorado RAC meetings will begin at 9 a.m. and adjourn at approximately 4 p.m. Public comment periods at the meetings will be in the morning at 9:30 a.m. and in the afternoon, to start no later than 3 p.m.

DATES: Northwest Colorado RAC meetings are May 8, 2003, August 14, 2003, and November 13, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Larry J. Porter, RAC Coordinator, Bureau of Land Management, 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 81506; Telephone (970) 244-3012.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Northwest Colorado RAC advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, on a variety of planning and management issues associated with public land management in Colorado.

Purpose of the Northwest Colorado RAC May 8, 2003 meeting is to consider several resource management related topics including; RAC goals and priorities, coal bed methane development update, North Fruita Desert Plan update, fire program update, Committee reports, RAC Chairman/BLM Director Washington Office meeting report, Roan Plateau Plan update, and Northwest Colorado Stewardship update. Topics of discussion for the following Northwest Colorado RAC meetings scheduled for August 14, 2003 and November 13, 2003 will include fire management, land use planning, weeds management, travel management, wilderness, wild horse program update, land exchange proposals, cultural resources, and other issues as appropriate.

These RAC meetings are open to the public. The public may present written comments to the RAC. Each RAC meeting will also have time, as identified above, allocated for hearing public comments. Depending on the number of persons wishing to comment and time available, the time for individual oral comments may be limited. Individuals planning to attend the meetings who need special assistance should contact the RAC Coordinator listed above.

Dated: March 13, 2003.

Larry Porter,

Acting Western Slope Center Manager.

[FR Doc. 03-6682 Filed 3-19-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-JB-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Joint Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report for the South Bay Salt Ponds Initial Stewardship Project

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior (Lead Agency).

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report for the South Bay Initial Stewardship Project.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) are preparing a joint Environmental

Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to address the potential impacts of the Initial Stewardship Project for the South Bay Salt Ponds (ISP) in south San Francisco Bay, California. The joint EIS/EIR will address the design, implementation, and maintenance of the proposed ISP to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and all necessary permits and approvals from other local, state, and federal agencies.

This notice describes the proposed action and possible alternatives; notifies that an EIS/EIR will be prepared and considered; invites the participation of other Federal, State and local agencies, affected Tribes, and the public in the process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action (the scoping process); and describes the proposed scoping process, including the scoping meeting to be held.

DATES: A public scoping meeting to solicit comment on the environmental effects of the ISP and the scope and significant issues to be analyzed in the EIS/EIR will be held on March 27, 2003 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Visitor Center, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR, #1 Marshlands Road, Fremont, California. Call (510) 792-0222 if directions are needed. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the public scoping meeting should contact the Refuge Manager at (510) 792-0222 sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow time to process the request. Written comments are encouraged and should be received on or before April 21, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Information or comments related to the NEPA process should be submitted to Refuge Manager, San Francisco Bay NWR Complex, P.O. Box 524, Newark, CA 94560. Written comments may also be sent by facsimile to (510) 792-5828. All comments received, including names and addresses will become part of the administrative record and may be made available to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions regarding the NEPA process, including scoping may be directed to Margaret Kolar, Refuge Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, San Francisco Bay NWR Complex, P.O. Box 524, Newark, California 94560 (telephone (510) 792-0222). For questions concerning the CEQA process, please contact Carl Wilcox, Habitat Conservation Manager, California