

endangered or threatened. Take of federally listed fish and wildlife is defined under the Act as including to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." The Service may, under limited circumstances, issue permits to authorize incidental take (*i.e.*, take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity). Regulations governing incidental take permits for threatened and endangered species are found in 50 CFR 17.32 and 17.22.

The Applicants are proposing to construct an automotive test track facility and associated water line and access roads to evaluate the safety, performance and handling of concept, prototype and production automobiles to be manufactured at HMA's automotive assembly and manufacturing plant currently under construction in Birmingham, Alabama. HMA proposes to construct the facility on 4,340 acres located approximately 60 miles southeast of Bakersfield, California, 9 miles east of the community of Mojave, California and 0.5 mile north of State Highway 58 in Kern County, California. The proposed project is located in the west Mojave Desert. The proposed facility will consist of a 6-mile long oval test course, two access roads, a winding track, a vehicle dynamics area, a hill-up road, a straight stability road, a support building and parking lot and perimeter fencing. The proposed project includes installation of desert tortoise exclusion fencing around the 4,340-acre site perimeter and removal and relocation of desert tortoises from the site. The project also includes an off-site access road from State Highway 58 that will remove 8.5 acres of desert tortoise habitat. Finally, the City of California City proposes to build a 2-mile water line extension and widen Joshua Tree Boulevard to serve the project, which will result in adverse effects to 20 acres of desert tortoise habitat.

The 4,340-acre project site includes 1,140 acres that were part of the Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment (LTA) Project, a land exchange program between private parties and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Pursuant to a Biological Opinion issued by the Service to BLM on January 8, 1998, (6844440 (CA-063.50) (1-8-98-F-60R)), any proposed take of desert tortoise on the 1,140 acres must be authorized by the Service, but no further mitigation is required for take of the desert tortoise or impacts to its habitat.

The project site is classified by BLM as Category III habitat for desert tortoise

and is occupied by desert tortoise. Category III habitat is defined as areas that are not essential to maintenance of viable populations, that contain low to medium densities, and that are not contiguous with medium- or high-density areas and in which the population is stable or decreasing. The proposed project site supports three common Mojave Desert plant communities—desert saltbush scrub, Mojave creosote bush scrub, and Joshua tree woodland. Past and current grazing of domestic sheep has degraded the site. Field survey observations also documented signs of human disturbance, including approximately 60 acres of unimproved roads, scattered shotgun shells and bullet casings, trash, and abandoned campsites and automobiles. Signs of historical military use also are found throughout the site, including ammunition casings and at least one aircraft crash site.

During directed surveys in March and April 2002, three live desert tortoises were observed on the proposed development site. An additional survey performed in May 2003 observed 8 live tortoises. Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to directly affect 834.5 acres of occupied desert tortoise habitat. In addition, the 4,340-acre site will no longer be accessible to desert tortoise due to installation of desert tortoise exclusion fencing around the perimeter of the site. The State Highway 58 access road will remove 8.5 acres of desert tortoise habitat, and the City water line extension and Joshua Tree Boulevard road access will adversely affect 20 acres of desert tortoise habitat. Impacts to 1,140 acres on the project site already have been mitigated pursuant to the LTA 1998 Biological Opinion. The Applicants propose to mitigate for the remaining desert tortoise impacts by acquiring 3,228.5 acres of higher quality desert tortoise habitat in an area adjacent to the Desert Tortoise Natural Area and translocating desert tortoises from the Hyundai site to a location that will be managed for the desert tortoise. Based on the survey results and habitat impacts, the Service concluded that implementation of the proposed project likely will result in take of less than 40 desert tortoises due to their translocation from the project site.

The Service's Environmental Assessment considers the environmental consequences of five alternatives, including: (1) The No Action Alternative, which consists of no permit issuance and no development on the Hyundai property at this time; (2) the On-Site Fencing Alternative, which consists of installing desert tortoise exclusion fencing around the test track

and other features on the Hyundai property and moving tortoises outside the exclusion fence to adjacent areas on the Hyundai property; (3) the San Bernardino County Automotive Test Course Site, which consists of locating the project to a site within San Bernardino County; (4) the Riverside County Automotive Test Course Site, which consists of locating the project to a site within Riverside County; and (5) the Proposed Action, which consists of installing desert tortoise exclusion fence around the perimeter of the Hyundai property and relocating all desert tortoises to an off-site location. Except for the No Action Alternative, the alternatives to the Proposed Action would adversely affect more federally listed species than the Proposed Action Alternative.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(a) of the Act and the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (40 CFR 1506.6). All comments that we receive, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public. We will evaluate the application, associated documents, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of NEPA regulations and section 10(a) of the Act. If we determine that those requirements are met, we will issue a permit to the Applicants for the incidental take of the desert tortoise.

Dated: July 18, 2003.

D. Kenneth McDermond,

*Manager, California/Nevada Operations
Office, Sacramento, California*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[MT-912-0777-XP]

Notice of Public Meetings; Western, Central, Eastern Montana, and Dakotas Resource Advisory Council Meetings; Montana

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

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), the Western, Central, and Eastern Montana, and the

Dakotas Resource Advisory Councils will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The Western Montana RAC meeting will be held September 10, 2003, at the Search and Rescue Building in Dillon, Montana, beginning at 10 a.m. The public comment period on Sustaining Working Landscapes (SWL) and other topics will begin at 1 p.m. and the meeting is expected to adjourn by 3 p.m. Also on the agenda will be information about the Montana/Dakotas Off-Highway Vehicle policy.

The Central Montana RAC will meet September 23–25, 2003, at the Agricultural Museum in Fort Benton, Montana. The RAC members will tour the Missouri River on September 23. The meeting will convene at 8 a.m. on September 24. Public comment periods on SWL and other topics are scheduled for that day from 12–12:30 p.m. and 4–5 p.m. Another public comment session is scheduled for 8 a.m.–8:30 a.m. on September 25. The meeting should adjourn at 12:45 p.m. on September 25. Also on the agenda will be information about the Montana/Dakotas Off-Highway Vehicle policy and the Blackleaf EIS.

The Eastern Montana RAC will meet August 14, 2003, at 8 a.m. in Billings, Montana, at the Hampton Inn. The public comment period on SWL and other topics will begin at 2 p.m., and the meeting will adjourn at about 3:30 p.m. Also on the agenda will be information about the Montana/Dakotas Off-Highway Vehicle policy.

The Dakotas RAC will meet September 3, 2003, at 2 p.m. at the Golden Hills Resort Best Western, in Lead, South Dakota, to tour Grizzly Gulch fire rehabilitation and monitoring. The meeting will resume at 8 a.m. on September 4, 2003, at the Golden Hills Resort Best Western. Sustaining Working Landscapes and other topics, including the Montana/Dakotas Off-Highway Vehicle policy, will be discussed with public comment taken on those and other issues beginning at 2 p.m.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 15-member Councils advise 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 Montana and the Dakotas. At these four meetings, the Councils will accept public comment on the SWL initiative and possibly develop recommendations on the same for the consideration of the Montana/Dakotas State Director.

All meetings are open to the public. The public may present written

comments to the Council. Each formal Council meeting will also have time 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 who plan to attend and need special assistance, such as sign language interpretation, or other reasonable accommodations, should contact the BLM as provided below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For the Western Montana RAC, contact Marilyn Krause, Resource Advisory Council Coordinator, at the Butte Field Office, 106 North Parkmont, Butte, MT 59701, telephone 406–533–7617, or Tim Bozorth, Field Manager, at the Dillon Field Office, 1005 Selway Drive, Dillon, MT 59725, telephone 406–683–2337.

For the Central Montana RAC, contact David L. Mari, Lewistown Field Manager, at the Lewistown Field Office, P.O. Box 1160, Airport Road, Lewistown, MT 59457, 406–538–7461.

For the Eastern Montana RAC, contact Mark Jacobsen, Resource Advisory Council Coordinator, at the Miles City Field Office, 111 Garryowen Road, Miles City, MT 59301, 406–233–2831.

For the Dakotas RAC, contact Doug Burger, North Dakota Field Manager, at the North Dakota Field Office, 2933 Third Avenue West, Dickinson, ND 58601, 701–227–7700.

Dated: July 17, 2003.

A. Jerry Meredith,

Associate State Director, Montana State Office.

[FR Doc. 03–18956 Filed 7–24–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR–100–5882–AF; HAG03–0236]

Notice of Public Meeting, Roseburg Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Cancellation of meetings for the Roseburg District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Advisory Committee under section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106–393).

SUMMARY: This notice is published in accordance with section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Meeting notice is hereby given for the Roseburg District BLM Resource Advisory Committee pursuant to section 205 of the Secure Rural School and

Community Self Determination Act of 2000, Public Law 106–393 (the Act). Topics to be discussed by the Roseburg District BLM Resource Advisory Committee include specific information of specific projects and/or decisions on specific projects.

DATES: The Roseburg Resource Advisory Committee was scheduled to meet at the BLM Roseburg District Office, 777 NW. Garden Valley Boulevard, Roseburg, Oregon 97470 on July 21, July 28, and August 4, 2003 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. These meetings have been canceled. For briefing information please refer to HAG–03–0134.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Act, five Resource Advisory Committees have been formed for western Oregon BLM district that contain Oregon & California (O&C) Grant Lands and Coos Bay Wagon Road lands. The Act establishes a six-year payment schedule to local counties in lieu of funds derived from the harvest of timber on federal lands, which have dropped dramatically over the past 10 years.

The Act creates a new mechanism for local community collaboration with Federal land management activities in the selection of projects to be conducted on Federal lands or that will benefit resources on Federal lands using funds under Title II of the Act. The Roseburg District BLM Resource Advisory Committee consists of 15 local citizens (plus 6 alternates) representing a wide array of interests.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Additional information concerning the Roseburg District BLM Resource Advisory Committee may be obtained from E. Lynn Burkett, Public Affairs Officer, Roseburg District Office, 777 NW. Garden Valley Blvd., Roseburg, Oregon 97470 or elynn_burkett@blm.gov, or on the Web at <http://www.or.blm.gov>.

Dated: July 18, 2003.

Gail S. Schaefer,

Acting Roseburg District Manager.

[FR Doc. 03–18958 Filed 7–24–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Environmental Documents Prepared for Proposed Oil and Gas Operations on the Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service, Interior.