

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces that the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is available for Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

The CCP was prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Goals and objectives in the CCP describe how the agency intends to manage the refuge over the next 15 years.

DATES: Comments on the Draft CCP/EIS must be received on or before August 31, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Draft CCP are available on compact disk or hard copy. You may access and download a copy via the planning Web site: (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/uppermiss/index.html>) or you may obtain a copy by writing to the following address: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Conservation Planning, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111.

All comments should be addressed to Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Attention: CCP Comment, 51 East 4th Street, Room 101, Winona, Minnesota 55987, or direct e-mail to r3planning@fws.gov. Comments may also be submitted through the Service's regional Web site at: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Don Hultman at (507) 452-4232.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge encompasses 240,000 acres along 261 miles of Mississippi River floodplain in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois. The Refuge was established by Congress in 1924 to provide a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds, fish, other wildlife, and plants. The Refuge is perhaps the most important corridor of habitat in the central United States due to its species diversity and abundance, and it is the most visited refuge in the United States with 3.7 million annual visitors.

The focus of the CCP over the next 15 years will be on safeguarding existing habitat; enhancing floodplain habitat in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the states; increasing the abundance of fish and wildlife; improving wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities such as

hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation; ensuring that traditional non-wildlife-dependent recreation remains compatible with the mission of the refuge system and the purposes of the refuge; and improving staffing and infrastructure capability.

The EIS evaluates four alternatives: (1) No action or current direction; (2) wildlife focus; (3) public use focus; and (4) wildlife and integrated public use focus (preferred). The alternatives differ mainly in the level of effort and resources given to fish and wildlife and habitat management and public use opportunities and programs. Under the preferred alternative all current recreational uses would continue, although the location, season of use, and means of use could change.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee et seq) requires the Service to develop a CCP for each National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose in developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year strategy for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management, conservation, legal mandates, and Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction for conserving wildlife and their habitats, the CCP identifies wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update these CCPs at least every 15 years in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4370d).

Dated: March 7, 2005.

Charles M. Wooley,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota.

[FR Doc. 05-8498 Filed 4-27-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for Construction of a Single-Family Home in the City of Palm Bay, Brevard County, FL

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Dorothy V. Jacobs and Paul A. Jacobs (Applicants) request an incidental take permit (ITP) pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), as amended (Act). The Applicants anticipate taking about 0.23 acre of Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) (scrub-jay) foraging, sheltering, and possibly nesting habitat incidental to lot preparation for the construction of a single-family home and supporting infrastructure in the City of Palm Bay, Brevard County, Florida (Project). The destruction of 0.23 acre of foraging, sheltering, and possibly nesting habitat is expected to result in the take of one family of scrub-jays.

The Applicants' Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) describes the mitigation and minimization measures proposed to address the effects of the Project to the Florida scrub-jay. These measures are outlined in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below. We have determined that the Applicants' proposal, including the proposed mitigation and minimization measures, will individually and cumulatively have a minor or negligible effect on the species covered in the HCP. Therefore, the ITP is a "low-effect" project and would qualify as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as provided by the Department of Interior Manual (516 DM2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1). We announce the availability of the HCP for the incidental take application. Copies of the HCP may be obtained by making a request to the Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). Requests must be in writing to be processed. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act and NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

DATES: Written comments on the ITP application and HCP should be sent to the Service's Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**) and should be received on or before May 31, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the application and HCP may obtain a copy by writing the Service's Southeast

Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia. Please reference permit number TE089995-0 in such requests. Documents will also be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the Regional Office, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30345 (Attn: Endangered Species Permits), or Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 6620 Southpoint Drive South, Suite 310, Jacksonville, Florida 32216.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. David Dell, Regional HCP Coordinator, (see **ADDRESSES** above), telephone: 404/679-7313, facsimile: 404/679-7081; or Mr. Michael Jennings, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Jacksonville Field Office, Jacksonville, Florida (see **ADDRESSES** above), telephone: 904/232-2580, ext. 113.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: If you wish to comment, you may submit comments by any one of several methods. Please reference permit number TE089995-0 in such comments. You may mail comments to the Service's Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). You may also comment via the Internet to david_dell@fws.gov. Please submit comments over the Internet as an ASCII file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include your name and return address in your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation from us that we have received your Internet message, contact us directly at either telephone number listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). Finally, you may hand deliver comments to either Service office listed below (see **ADDRESSES**). Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the administrative record. We will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law. There may also be other circumstances in which we would withhold from the administrative record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. We will not, however, consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

The Florida scrub-jay (scrub-jay) is geographically isolated from other

species of scrub-jays found in Mexico and the western United States. The scrub-jay is found exclusively in peninsular Florida and is restricted to xeric uplands (predominately in oak-dominated scrub). Increasing urban and agricultural development have resulted in habitat loss and fragmentation which has adversely affected the distribution and numbers of scrub-jays. The total estimated population is between 7,000 and 11,000 individuals.

The decline in the number and distribution of scrub-jays in east-central Florida has been exacerbated by tremendous urban growth in the past 50 years. Much of the historic commercial and residential development has occurred on the dry soils which previously supported scrub-jay habitat. Based on existing soils data, much of the historic and current scrub-jay habitat of coastal east-central Florida occurs proximal to the current shoreline and larger river basins. Much of this area of Florida was settled early because few wetlands restricted urban and agricultural development. Due to the effects of urban and agricultural development over the past 100 years, much of the remaining scrub-jay habitat is now relatively small and isolated. What remains is largely degraded due to the exclusion of fire which is needed to maintain xeric uplands in conditions suitable for scrub-jays.

The Applicants' residential construction will take place within section 5, Township 29 South, Range 37 East, Palm Bay, Brevard County, Florida on Lot 31, Block 316, Port Malabar Unit 9. Lot 31 is within 438 feet of locations where scrub-jays were sighted during 2001-2002 surveys for this species. Scrub-jays using the subject residential lot and adjacent properties are part of a larger complex of scrub-jays located in a matrix of urban and natural settings in areas of Brevard and northern Indian River counties. Within the City of Palm Bay, 20 families of scrub-jays persist in habitat fragmented by residential development. Scrub-jays in urban areas are particularly vulnerable and typically do not successfully produce young that survive to adulthood. Persistent urban growth in this area will likely result in further reductions in the amount of suitable habitat for scrub-jays. Increasing urban pressures are also likely to result in the continued degradation of scrub-jay habitat as fire exclusion slowly results in vegetative overgrowth. Thus, over the long-term, scrub-jays within the City of Palm Bay are unlikely to persist, and conservation efforts for this species should target acquisition and management of large

parcels of land outside the direct influence of urbanization.

The subject residential parcel lies within a "high density" urban setting, and the corresponding territory size of the resident scrub-jays has been estimated to range from 5.2 to 10.8 acres based on average territory sizes of scrub-jay in other urban areas. Data collected from 12 scrub-jay families within the city limits of Palm Bay during the 2000 and 2001 nesting seasons provided information about survival and reproductive success of scrub-jays, but did not attempt to estimate territory sizes. This information indicated that territory boundaries tended to shift from year to year, making calculations of territory size difficult. Similarly, point data do not reliably indicate occupied habitat over time since birds in urban settings tend to move within and between years. Thus, using known territory boundaries and point data to delineate occupied habitat likely underestimates areas occupied by scrub-jays.

To assess whether the Applicants' parcel was within occupied scrub-jay habitat, we calculated the maximum average "shift" in territories locations between 2000 and 2001. Based on these estimates, we calculated a maximum average shift of 438 feet between years. We subsequently used the 438 feet as a buffer to surround known territory boundaries and point locations for scrub-jays. We reasoned that 438 feet represented a biologically-based buffer, within which scrub-jays were likely to occur. Application of the 438-foot buffer to known territories and point locations provides a quantitative method to delineate occupied scrub-jay habitat in highly urbanized areas within the city limits of Palm Bay.

The Applicants' residential lot falls within the 438-foot buffer established for known scrub-jay territories and/or point data. Although the Applicants' property lacks substantial woody vegetation typically required for scrub-jay nesting and sheltering habitat, it does provide suitable foraging habitat. Accordingly, loss of this habitat due to residential construction will result in the destruction of scrub-jay foraging habitat.

The Applicants propose to conduct construction activities outside of the nesting season. Other on-site minimization measures are not practicable as the footprint of the home, infrastructure and landscaping on the 0.23-acre lot will utilize all the available land area. On-site minimization may not be a biologically viable alternative due to increasing negative demographic effects caused by urbanization.

The Applicants propose to mitigate for the loss of 0.23 acre of scrub-jay habitat by contributing \$3,082 to the Florida Scrub-jay Conservation Fund administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Funds in this account are ear-marked for use in the conservation and recovery of scrub-jays and may include habitat acquisition, restoration, and/or management. The \$3,082 is sufficient to acquire and perpetually manage 0.46 acre of suitable occupied scrub-jay habitat based on a replacement ratio of two mitigation acres per one impact acre. The cost is based on previous acquisitions of mitigation lands in southern Brevard County at an average \$5,700 per acre, plus a \$1,000 per acre management endowment necessary to ensure future management of acquired scrub-jay habitat.

We have determined that the HCP is a low-effect plan that is categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis, and does not require the preparation of an EA or EIS. This preliminary information may be revised due to public comment received in response to this notice. Low-effect HCPs are those involving: (1) Minor or negligible effects on federally listed or candidate species and their habitats, and (2) minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources. The Applicants' HCP qualifies for the following reasons:

1. Approval of the HCP would result in minor or negligible effects on the Florida scrub-jay population as a whole. We do not anticipate significant direct or cumulative effects to the Florida scrub-jay population as a result of the construction project.

2. Approval of the HCP would not have adverse effects on known unique geographic, historic or cultural sites, or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

3. Approval of the HCP would not result in any significant adverse effects on public health or safety.

4. The project does not require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, nor does it threaten to violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

5. Approval of the Plan would not establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

We have determined that approval of the Plan qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the NEPA, as provided

by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1). Therefore, no further NEPA documentation will be prepared.

We will evaluate the HCP and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act. If it is determined that those requirements are met, the ITP will be issued for the incidental take of the Florida scrub-jay. We will also evaluate whether issuance of the section 10(a)(1)(B) ITP complies with section 7 of the Act by conducting an intra-Service section 7 consultation. The results of this consultation, in combination with the above findings, will be used in the final analysis to determine whether or not to issue the ITP.

Dated: April 7, 2005.

Jacquelyn B. Parrish,

Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR-110-5882-PO-MD75; HAG05-0107]

Notice of Meetings

AGENCY: Medford District, Bureau of Land Management, DOI.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: The Medford District Resource Advisory Committee will meet in Medford to gain a common understanding of the process related to Pub. L. 106-393, tour project sites, and discuss proposed fiscal year 2006 projects. Agenda topics include background and history of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, election of a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, and development of a common vision; on-site inspections of 2005 projects and proposed 2006 projects; and presentations and discussions regarding proposed 2006 Title II projects.

DATES: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for meeting dates.

ADDRESSES: The field trips will start from, and the meetings will be held at, the Medford District Office, located at 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Gillespie, Medford District Office (541-618-2424).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The field trip dates are:

1. July 14, 2005, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

2. July 28, 2005, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The meeting dates are:

1. June 9, 2005, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
2. August 11, 2005, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
3. August 18, 2005, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A public comment period will be held from 2 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. on June 9, 2005, and from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on August 11, 2005 and August 18, 2005.

(Authority: 43 CFR subpart 1784/Advisory Committees)

Mary L. Smelcer,

Acting District Manager, Medford.

[FR Doc. 05-8503 Filed 4-27-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Civil Division

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comments Requested

ACTION: 60-Day notice of information collection under review: Claim for Damage, Injury, or Death

The Department of Justice (DOJ), Civil Division, has submitted the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The proposed information collection is published to obtain comments from the public and affected agencies. Comments are encouraged and will be accepted for "sixty days" until June 27, 2005. This process is conducted in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.10.

If you have comments especially on the estimated public burden or associated response time, suggestions, or need a copy of the proposed information collection instrument with instructions or additional information, please contact Director, Torts Branch, Civil Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20530.

Written comments and suggestions from the public and affected agencies concerning the proposed collection of information are encouraged. Your comments should address one or more of the following four points:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agencies estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information,