

knowledgeable in and represent one or more of the following communities of interests: weed science; fisheries science; rangeland management; forest science; entomology; nematology; plant pathology; veterinary medicine; the broad range of farming or agricultural practices; biodiversity issues; applicable laws and regulations relevant to invasive species policy; risk assessment; biological control of invasive species; public health/epidemiology; industry activities; international affairs or trade; tribal or state government interests; environmental education; ecosystem monitoring; natural resource database design and integration; and internet-based management of conservation issues.

Members should also have practical experience in one or more of the following areas: representing sectors of the national economy that are significantly threatened by biological invasions (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, public utilities, recreational users, tourism, etc.); representing sectors of the national economy whose routine operations may pose risks of new or expanded biological invasions (e.g. shipping, forestry, horticulture, aquaculture, pet trade, etc.); developing natural resource management plans on regional or ecosystem-level scales; addressing invasive species issues, including prevention, control and monitoring, in multiple ecosystems and on multiple scales; integrating science and the human dimension in order to create effective solutions to complex conservation issues including education, outreach, and public relations experts; coordinating diverse groups of stakeholders to resolve complex environmental issues and conflicts; and complying with NEPA and other federal requirements for public involvement in major conservation plans. Members will be selected in order to achieve a balanced representation of viewpoints, so to effectively address invasive species issues under consideration. No member may serve on the ISAC for more than three (3) consecutive terms. All terms will be limited to two (2) years in length.

Members of the ISAC and its subcommittees serve without pay. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services of the ISAC, members shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the government service, as authorized by section 5703 of Title 5, United States Code.

Submitting Nominations

Nominations should be typed and should include the following:

1. A brief summary of no more than two (2) pages explaining the nominee's suitability to serve on the ISAC.
2. A resume or curriculum vitae.
3. At least two (2) Letters of reference.

Nominations should be sent no later than January 15, 2004, to Lori Williams, National Invasive Species Council (OS/SIO/NISC), 1849 C Street NW., Washington, DC 20240.

To ensure that recommendations of the ISAC take into account the needs of the diverse groups served, the Department of the Interior is actively soliciting nominations of qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities and members of low income populations.

Dated: December 9, 2003.

Lori C. Williams,

Executive Director, National Invasive Species Council.

[FR Doc. 03-30918 Filed 12-15-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Draft Environmental Assessment/Habitat Conservation Plan and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for Elizabeth Cross Roads Property, Town of Elizabeth, Elbert County, CO

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability and receipt of application.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that Elizabeth Cross Roads LLC (Applicant) has applied to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended. The proposed permit would authorize the incidental take of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) (Preble's), federally-listed as threatened, through loss and modification of its habitat associated with construction of the Elizabeth Cross Roads Business Park, a commercial development, and an associated utility line in Elizabeth, Elbert County, Colorado. The duration of the permit would be 10 years from the date of issuance.

We announce the receipt of the Applicant's incidental take permit application, which includes a combined Environmental Assessment/Habitat

Conservation Plan (EA/HCP) for the Preble's for the Elizabeth Cross Roads Property. The proposed EA/HCP is available for public review and comment. It fully describes the proposed project and the measures the Applicant would undertake to minimize and mitigate project impacts to the Preble's.

The Service requests comments on the EA/HCP and associated documents for the proposed issuance of the incidental take permit. All comments on the EA and permit application will become part of the administrative record and will be available to the public. We provide this notice pursuant to section 10(a) of the Act and the National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

DATES: Written comments on the permit application and EA/HCP should be received on or before February 17, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Comments regarding the permit application and EA/HCP should be addressed to Susan Linner, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Field Office, 755 Parfet Street, Suite 361, Lakewood, Colorado 80215. Comments also may be submitted by facsimile to (303) 275-2371.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Kathleen Linder, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Colorado Field Office, telephone (303) 275-2370.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Document Availability

Individuals wishing copies of the EA/HCP and associated documents for review should immediately contact the above office. Documents also will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

Background

Section 9 of the Act and Federal regulations prohibit the "take" of a species listed as endangered or threatened. Take is defined under the Act, in part, as to kill, harm, or harass a federally listed species. However, the Service may issue permits to authorize "incidental take" of listed species under limited circumstances. Incidental take is defined under the Act as take of a listed species that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity under limited circumstances. Regulations governing permits for threatened species are promulgated in 50 CFR 17.32.

The Elizabeth Cross Roads Property is located at the northwest corner of Highway 86 and County Road 17, along Running Creek, in the Town of Elizabeth, Elbert County, Colorado. The

project site is 8.1 hectares (20 acres), but the proposed project will directly impact a maximum of 1.7 hectares (4.2 acres) that may result in incidental take of the Preble's. Of the total amount of impacted acreage, 0.6 hectare (1.4 acres) will be temporarily disturbed and will be revegetated. An HCP has been developed as part of the preferred alternative. The proposed HCP will allow for the incidental take of the Preble's by permitting a commercial development and associated utilities to be constructed in an area that may be periodically used as foraging, breeding or hibernation habitat.

In addition to the Proposed Action, alternatives considered included—(a) Waiting for the Elbert County Regional HCP to be approved, (b) developing the site without avoidance of Preble's habitat, (c) developing the portion of the site that will have no impacts to Preble's habitat, and (d) no action. The draft EA analyzes the onsite, offsite, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project and all associated development and construction activities and mitigation activities on the Preble's, and also on other threatened or endangered species, vegetation, wildlife, wetlands, geology/soils, land use, water resources, air and water quality, and cultural resources. All of the proposed permanent impacts are in upland areas outside of the 100-year floodplain. The Applicant, using the Service's definition of Preble's habitat, has determined that the proposed project would impact approximately 1.7 hectares (4.2 acres) of potential Preble's habitat. The mitigation will likely provide a net benefit to the Preble's and other wildlife by planting of native shrubs and protecting existing habitat along Running Creek from any future development.

Only one federally-listed species, the threatened Preble's, occurs onsite and has the potential to be adversely affected by the project. To mitigate impacts that may result from incidental take, the HCP provides mitigation for the commercial site by protecting and enhancing 2.1 hectares (5.3 acres) of the Running Creek corridor onsite and its associated riparian areas from all future development. Approximately 0.6 hectare (1.41 acres) of temporarily disturbed grassland will be enhanced prior to construction by fencing to eliminate grazing and an additional 1.6 hectares (3.9 acres) will be enhanced native shrub planting and native grass reseeding. Measures will be taken during construction to minimize impact to the habitat, including the use of silt fencing to reduce the amount of sediment from construction activities

that reaches the creek. All of the proposed mitigation area is within the boundaries of the Elizabeth Cross Roads property, all of which is included in the drainage basin of Running Creek.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Act. We will evaluate the permit application, the EA/HCP, and comments submitted therein to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act. If it is determined that those requirements are met, a permit will be issued for the incidental take of the Preble's in conjunction with the construction of Elizabeth Cross Roads Business Park. The final permit decision will be made no sooner than 60 days after the date of this notice.

Dated: November 14, 2003.

Ralph O. Morgenweck,

Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.

[FR Doc. 03-30957 Filed 12-15-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Alaska OCS Region, Beaufort Sea Oil and Gas Lease Sale 195, March 2005

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

ACTION: Request for information and Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Assessment.

SUMMARY: The Secretary's approved 5-Year OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2002-2007 provides for 3 sales: Sales 186, 195, and 202 to be held in the Beaufort Sea program area. The pre-sale process incorporated planning and analysis for all three sales. From the initial step in the process (the call for information and nominations (call)) through the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Consistency Determination (CD) step, the process covered the multiple sale proposals. However, there will be complete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), OCS Lands Act, and Coastal Zone Management Act coverage for each sale, and each sale will be preceded by a proposed and final notice of sale. The environmental analysis and the CD for Sale 195 will focus primarily on new issues and/or changes in the State's federally-approved coastal management plan.

The call and NOI to prepare an EIS for Sales 186, 195, and 202 was published in the **Federal Register** on September 19, 2001, at 66 FR 48268. The Beaufort Sea final EIS for Sales 186, 195, and 202

was released in February 2003 (OCS EIS/EA, MMS 2003-001). The first sale, Sale 186, was held on September 24, 2003. The MMS is now initiating a request for information for Beaufort Sea Sale 195.

DATES: Comments on the Request for Information and on the NOI must be received no later than 45 days following publication of this document in the **Federal Register** in envelopes labeled "Comments on the Request for Information for Beaufort Sea Sale 195" or "Comments on the NOI to Prepare an Environmental Assessment", as appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please call Tom Warren at (907) 271-6691 in MMS's Alaska OCS Region regarding questions on the request for information/NOI to prepare an Environmental Assessment.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental analysis and the CD for Sale 195 will focus primarily on new issues that may have arisen since the completion of the EIS for Sales 186, 195, and 202 (February 2003) and on any changes that may have occurred in the State's coastal management plan. The process will lead to identification of the area to be included in the proposed notice of sale. Each of these steps, including the proposed notice of sale, provides for a public comment period. At the culmination of each step and after analysis of any public comments, the MMS will decide whether to proceed to the next step. This process will:

- Focus on the environmental analysis by revising types and levels of impacts that changed since the analysis was done for Sale 186;
- Result in any new issues being more easily highlighted by the public;
- Eliminate issuance for public review of repetitive, voluminous EISs for each sale; and
- Result in a more efficient and responsive application of the NEPA.

The MMS will analyze all comments received in response to this request for information and re-examine information previously submitted in response to the call and the draft and final EISs for Sales 186, 195, and 202. The MMS will then identify the area to be analyzed in the NEPA document.

This request for information does not indicate a decision to lease in the area described below. Final delineation of the areas for possible leasing will be made after completion of the pre-sale steps described above and in compliance with the final 5-year program and applicable laws, including