

resulted in abundance estimates ranging from 313 to 435, with no clear trend. Since 1999 the subsistence harvest of this stock has been significantly restricted as compared to previous years (down to 0–2 whales annually). However, the population has not shown any significant response as was expected following the restriction on the number of animals taken in the subsistence harvest.

This draft Plan delineates reasonable actions necessary to protect the depleted Cook Inlet beluga whales under the MMPA. The conservation strategy outlined in the Plan is meant to guide Federal and other actions toward the goal of recovering the Cook Inlet beluga whales.

The Plan provides a description of the biology and life history of the Cook Inlet stock of beluga whales, a description of the population trends in recent decades and their current depleted status under the MMPA, and management goals and objectives for recovery of the stock. The Plan also outlines known and possible factors that may be influencing the stock including natural factors such as stranding events, predation, disease and environmental change, and human-induced factors that may be, or have been in recent years, influencing trends in the abundance of this stock. These human-induced factors include the subsistence harvest, commercial fishing and its potential to influence prey availability, pollution in the inlet, vessel traffic, noise, oil and gas development and possible effects from research activities.

The Plan outlines a conservation strategy that addresses each of the natural and human-induced factors that may be influencing the recovery of the stock. It also outlines a monitoring strategy for future subsistence harvests and the development and use of beluga whale habitat in Cook Inlet, and a research plan as part of the monitoring and recovery strategy. The recommended conservation actions are developed for each known factor that may be influencing the stock, and linked to the applicable research recommendations.

Public and Agency Involvement: The goals and objectives of the draft Plan can be achieved only if a long-term commitment is made to support the respective actions recommended herein. The shared resources and cooperative involvement of federal, state, and local governments, industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, Alaska Natives, and other invested individuals will be required throughout the recovery period.

NMFS is soliciting comments on the draft Plan with this notice. Comments can be forwarded to [see **ADDRESSES**].

Dated: March 11, 2005.

Donna S. Wieting

*Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

Office of the Actuary; Notice of a Meeting

AGENCY: Department of Defense.

ACTION: Notice of meeting; DoD Medicare-Eligible Retiree Health Care Board of Actuaries.

SUMMARY: A meeting of the Board has been scheduled to execute the provisions of Chapter 56, Title 10, United States Code (10 U.S.C. 1114 *et seq.*). The Board shall review DoD actuarial methods and assumptions to be used in the valuation of benefits under DoD retiree health care programs for Medicare-eligible beneficiaries. Persons desiring to: (1) Attend the DoD Medicare-Eligible Retiree Health Care Board of Actuaries meeting, or (2) make an oral presentation or submit a written statement for consideration at the meeting, must notify Bill Klunk at 703–696–7404 by May 10, 2005. Notice of this meeting is required under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

DATES: June 3, 2005, 1:30 p.m.–5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 270, Arlington, VA 22203.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Klunk, DoD Office of the Actuary, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 308, Arlington, VA 22203, (703) 696–7404.

Dated: March 10, 2005.

Jeannette Owings-Ballard,

*OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer,
Department of Defense.*

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a Permit Application for the Proposed Timber Branch Subdivision Phase II, Near Covington, St. Tammany Parish, LA

AGENCY: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, is initiating the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act in compliance with a judicial order. The Environmental Impact Statement is for a Department of the Army permit issued under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to install the infrastructure necessary to implement an approximately 82-acre residential development to provide single and multi-family residential lots in the vicinity of LA Hwy 1085 and Bricker Road, near Covington, Louisiana, some of the property containing regulated wetlands. The permit was subsequently enjoined by the United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana. Information obtained from preparation of this EIS will be utilized in the re-evaluation of the enjoined permit decision.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions concerning the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be addressed to Mr. Brian Breaux at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, OD–S, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160–0267, phone (504) 862–1938, fax number (504) 862–2117 or by E-mail at brian.w.breaux@mvn02.usace.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Proposed Action. The proposed action would include land-clearing, excavation, and deposition of fill material for site preparation and construction of drainage, utility and roadway infrastructure. Single-family and multi-family residential lots would then be offered for public sale. The approximately 82-acre project site grades through ridge and swale hardwood, mixed pine-hardwood/hardwood flats, pine flatwood, and pine savannah community types. Of the 82-acre development, 38.9 acres of pine flatwood/pine savannah wetlands would be directly affected by development.