

811110 when submitting comments. Individuals wishing copies of the application or EA for review should immediately contact the office listed above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Craig Hansen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at the office listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under section 9 of the Act and its implementing regulations, "taking" of threatened and endangered species is prohibited. However, the Service, under limited circumstances, may issue permits to take threatened or endangered wildlife species if such taking is incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for threatened and endangered species are in 50 CFR 17.32 and 17.22, respectively.

The Applicant proposes to implement a HCP for the owl that will allow timber harvest on the 40-acre project area. The Applicant's proposed timber harvest may result in the take, as defined in the Act and its implementing regulations, of the owl. The permit would be in effect for one year. The terms of the HCP, which include conservation benefits for the owl, would be in effect into perpetuity.

The Applicant proposes to mitigate for potential impacts from incidental take of the owl by retaining a buffer of intact habitat, implementing a selective timber harvest, and placing a perpetual deed restriction on the property permanently prohibiting further timber harvest or tree removal. This would ensure the retention of some owl habitat and approximately 72 percent of the total number of trees after harvest. The retention of habitat and trees, and the deed restriction would ensure the availability of owl habitat in the future. The harvest method and timing would further minimize impacts to owls. If possible, all trees would be felled in winter or early spring which would minimally disturb owls and other wildlife. Harvesting while there is still snow on the ground would prevent potential ground disturbance by the felled trees. In addition, all felled trees would be removed by helicopter, thus precluding the need for road construction into the project area, and minimizing impacts to owl habitat and the ground.

The EA considers the environmental consequences of the proposed action and no-action alternatives. The proposed action alternative is the issuance of a permit under section 10(a) of the Act that would authorize

incidental take of the owl. The proposed action would require the Applicant to implement their HCP. Under the no-action alternative, the permit would not be issued, and the Applicant would avoid the take of owls by delaying harvest until: (1) the owl site center is moved such that the project area is outside the territorial circle, or (2) the owl territorial circle has been changed to historic status after 3 consecutive years of protocol owl surveys have resulted in no owl detections, or (3) regulatory release is provided, such as a 4(d) special rule under the Act providing an exemption for small landowners, or (4) forests on surrounding U.S. Forest Service or other land regenerates or develops to provide greater than 40 percent owl habitat within the 1.8 mile radius owl circle.

Dated: February 13, 1996.

(Notice: Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Receipt of an Application for a Permit Under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act by the Scofield Corporation.)

H. Dale Hall,

Acting Deputy Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

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Geological Survey

Application Notice Describing the Areas of Interest and Establishing the Closing Date for Receipt of Applications Under the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 1997

AGENCY: Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Applications are invited for research projects under the NEHRP.

The purpose of this program is to support research in earthquake hazards prediction; to provide earth-science data and information essential to determine seismic hazards present in the United States; and information essential to mitigate earthquake damage.

Applications may be submitted by educational institutions, private firms, private foundations, individuals, and agencies of state and local governments.

The NEHRP supports research related to the following general areas of interest:

- I. Evaluating National and Regional Hazard and Risk. National and regional hazard and risk maps are critical to effective risk reduction strategies.
- II. Evaluating Urban Hazard and Risk. The strong ground shaking and resulting

catastrophic losses in the 1994 Northridge earthquake reinforced the need for the U.S. Geological Survey to concentrate its efforts where the risks are highest, that is, in the nation's urban areas.

III. Understanding Earthquake Processes. The effectiveness of risk-mitigation strategies and disaster response are limited by our meager understanding of the tectonic processes that cause earthquakes and generate the strong shaking and ground failure that devastates the built environment.

IV. Providing Real-time Hazard Assessment. Effective earthquake hazard evaluation and response to damaging events depend on timely, accurate information. Short, intermediate, and long-term earthquake forecasts in regions of high earthquake potential can all lead to mitigation activities that reduce the losses in subsequent earthquakes.

V. Providing Geologic Hazards Information Services. Computer technology has evolved rapidly in recent years to the point that new powerful tools are accessible both to the providers and the users of geologic hazards information.

ADDRESSES: The program announcement is expected to be available on or about March 8, 1996. You may obtain a copy of Announcement No. 00001 by writing Francine Harris, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of Acquisition and Federal Assistance—Mail Stop 205C, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 22092, or by fax (703-648-7901). Organizations that applied for an FY 1996 award, and organizations that requested to be retained on the mailing list since the last announcement will be mailed a copy of Announcement No. 00001.

DATES: The closing date for receipt of applications will be on or about May 10, 1996. The actual closing date will be specified in Announcement No. 00001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Sims, Office of Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and Engineering—U.S. Geological Survey, Mail Stop 905, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 22092. Telephone: (703) 648-6722.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Authority for this program is contained in the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977, Public Law 95-124 (42 U.S.C. 7701 *et seq.*).

Dated: February 13, 1996.

Timothy E. Calkins,

Acting Chief, Office of Program Support.

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