SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under section 9 of the Act and its implementing regulations, ''taking'' of threatened and endangered species is prohibited. However, the Services, 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.

The Applicant has addressed species conservation and ecosystem management on approximately 170,000 acres of its land in the Cascade Mountains of Washington. The subject ownership occurs in a ''checkerboard'' pattern in an area commonly referred to as the I–90 Corridor. The term ''checkerboard'' refers to alternate sections of public and private land.

The Applicant is proposing to implement a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which was designed to complement the Federal Northwest Forest Plan, and includes various forms of mitigation which are integral parts of the HCP. It also includes a schedule of habitat amounts to be provided for the 100-year plan. These habitats include eight stand-structure types (ranging from early-successional stages, such as stand initiation, to late-successional stages, such as old growth) and habitat for northern spotted owls (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) (owls). Owl-habitat projections include projections for nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat and for foraging and dispersal habitat. Mitigation for gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) and grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos = U.a. horribilis*) include avoidance of timber harvest and road construction in certain habitats, limits to road densities, provision of visual cover, and other specific management prescriptions. The Applicant plans to avoid or minimize the take of marbled murrelets (*Brachyramphus marmoratus marmoratus*), but has included murrelets in the permit application in case some incidental take occurs. Minimum prescriptions are also provided for riparian and wetland areas, and watershed analyses will be completed on an accelerated basis. Specific prescriptions will also be implemented for a number of other species and special habitats. The underlying purpose or goal of the proposed action is to develop a management plan for these lands upon which incidental take of listed species can be based so that economic benefits can be realized from those lands while providing necessary habitat for listed and unlisted wildlife species.

Development of the Final EIS

In development of this Final EIS, the Services have initiated action to ensure compliance with the purpose and intent of NEPA. Scoping activities were undertaken preparatory to developing the Draft EIS. A Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS was published in the February 8, 1995, Federal Register (60 FR 7577). This was followed by a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIS and receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit published in the November 17, 1995, Federal Register (60 FR 57722).

Potential consequences, in terms of adverse impacts and benefits associated with the implementation of each alternative, were described in the Draft EIS. Key issues addressed in the Draft and Final EIS are identified as the effects that implementation of the various alternatives would have upon: (1) Threatened and endangered species; (2) other wildlife and their habitats; (3) surrounding and intermingled land uses; and (4) other aspects of the physical and the human environment. Each alternative was evaluated for its potential to result in significant adverse impacts, and the adequacy or inadequacy of the proposed measures to avoid, minimize, and substantially reduce the effects.

The Services received 166 letters (representing 260 groups and individuals) and 424 pre-printed cards (representing 477 individuals) providing comment on the Draft EIS. A total of 737 signatures were represented in letters, cards, and attached petitions. Comments were varied. Topics covered in the comments included the range of alternatives, length of the comment period, adequacy of mitigation, credibility of the science relied upon in developing conservation strategies, adequacy of the impacts analysis, population viability of the subject species, uncertainty surrounding alternatives, assurances provided to the Applicant, and permit issuance criteria. The Final EIS contains summaries of, and responses to, all comments received during the comment period. Issues and potential consequences remain constant from the Draft to the Final EIS.

Alternatives Analyzed In the Final EIS

The Draft EIS considered nine alternatives, but only advanced four for further detailed study. Alternatives considered but not advanced for detailed analysis included the following: (1) no harvest on Plum Creek land; (2) compliance with Federal Aquatic Conservation Strategies; (3) land exchanges; (4) retention of unroaded areas in Plum Creek ownership; and (5) inclusion of all Plum Creek properties within the general planning area. Four alternatives were advanced for detailed analysis. Under the No-action Alternative, the Applicant would avoid the take of any and all Federally listed species and no permit would be issued. Under the Riparian Alternative, emphasis for conservation of fish and wildlife species would be placed in riparian and wetland areas; other portions of the ownership would be managed for aggressive timber harvest. Under the Dispersal Alternative, riparian areas would continue to be managed for fish and wildlife; but, in addition, upland areas would be managed to provide dispersal habitat for owls. The Proposed Action builds upon the benefits of the previous alternatives. It, too, places emphasis for conservation on riparian and wetland areas; but, in addition, commits to implementation of the Applicant's Environmental Principles; provision of nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat for owls; and provision of habitat deferrals for owls and northern goshawks. It includes specific mitigation for other wildlife such as the gray wolf, grizzly bear, Larch Mountain salamander, and other species and special habitats. The Proposed Action remains the Services' preferred alternative.

The Final EIS contains minor modifications to the Draft EIS and also highlights minor changes made to the HCP in response to public comments. Additional information regarding these changes may be obtained from the Services at the above address.

Dated: March 26, 1996.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

Deputy Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 96–8914 Filed 4–11–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

Bureau of Land Management

[OR–050–1220–00:G6–0107]

Closure of Public Lands; Oregon

April 3, 1996.

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice is hereby given that effective immediately, the area as legally described below is closed to all motorized vehicle use year-long.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: This closure order applies to all areas within Township 17

South, Range 22 East, Section 24, NE of the SE; and Section 24, SE of the SE.

The areas described above are closed to all motorized vehicle use year-long. The purpose of this closure is to protect wildlife resources. More specifically, this closure is ordered to protect a Bureau sensitive species from human disturbance. Current uses at this location jeopardize the continued presence of this species at this site; restricted use will reduce or eliminate these impacts. Exemptions to this closure will apply to administrative personnel of the Bureau of Land Management. Other exemptions to this closure order may be made on a case-by-case basis by the authorized officer. The authority for this closure is 43 CFR 8364.1: Closure and restriction orders.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sarah Nichols, Wildlife Biologist, BLM, Prineville District, P.O. Box 550, Prineville, Oregon 97754, telephone (541) 416–6725.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Violation of this closure order is punishable by a fine not to exceed $1,000 and/or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months as provided in 43 CFR 8360.0–7.

Dated: April 3, 1996.

Harry R. Cosgriffe,

Central Oregon Area Management, Prineville District.

[FR Doc. 96–9104 Filed 4–11–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–33–M

[CO–010–1020–00–241A]

Call for Nominations on Resource Advisory Councils

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to solicit public nominations for a limited number of seats on each of three Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Advisory Councils currently assisting BLM in Colorado. The three councils, the Northwest, Southwest and Front Range were established in 1995 by the Secretary of the Interior, provide advice to BLM on management of the public lands. Nominations should be received 45 days from the publication date of this notice. In making appointments to Resource Advisory Councils, the Secretary will also consider nominations made by the Governor of the State or States affected.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) directs the Secretary of the Interior to establish advisory councils to provide advice on land use planning and issues related to management of lands administered by BLM. Section 309 of FLPMA directs the Secretary to select 10 to 15 member citizen-based advisory council that are established and authorized consistent with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). In order to reflect a fair balance of viewpoints, the membership of Resource Advisory Councils must be representative of the various interests concerned with the management of the public lands. These include three categories:

Category One—

• holders of federal grazing permits, representatives of energy and mining development, transportation or rights of way, timber industry, off-road vehicle use or developed recreation;

Category Two—

• representatives of environmental and resource conservation organizations, dispersed recreation interests, archeological and historic interests, or wild horse and burro groups;

Category Three—

• representatives of State and local government, employees of State agencies responsible for the management of natural resources, land, or water, Native American tribes, academicians involved in natural sciences, or the public at large.

The Northwest Resource Advisory Council has two openings in Category One, one opening in Category Two, and two openings in Category Three (one of these two openings must be filled by an elected official).

The Southwest Resource Advisory Council has three openings in Category One, two openings in Category Two, and one opening in Category Three opening.

The Front Range Resource Advisory Council has one opening in Category One, two openings in Category Two, and two in Category Three (one of these two openings must be filled by an elected official).

Individuals may nominate themselves or others. Nominees must be residents of the State in which the council has jurisdiction. Nominees will be evaluated based on their education, training, and experience of the issues and knowledge of the geographical area of the Council. Nominees should have demonstrated a commitment to collaborative resource decision making. All nominations must be accompanied by letters of reference from represented interests or organizations, a completed background information nomination form, as well as any other information that speaks to the nominee's qualifications.

The nomination period will also be announced through press releases issued by the BLM Colorado offices. Nominations for Resource Advisory Councils should be sent to the appropriate BLM offices listed below:

Northwest Resource Advisory Council, Attention: Lynda Boody, 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506

Southwest Resource Advisory Council, Attention: Roger Alexander, 2465 S. Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401

Front Range Resource Advisory Council, Attention: Ken Smith, 3170 E. Main St., Canon City, CO 81212

DATES: All nominations should be received by the appropriate BLM Office on or before May 28, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORMS CONTACT: Northwest Resource Advisory Council: Lynda L. Boody, (970) 244–3000. Southwest Resource Advisory Council: Roger Alexander, (970) 249–7791 (after April 21, 1996, please dial 970–240–5300). Front Range Resource Advisory Council: Ken Smith, (719) 269–8500.

Completed Nomination/Background Forms should be returned to the same addresses listed above.

Dated: April 5, 1996.

Mark T. Morse,

District Manager.

[FR Doc. 96–9099 Filed 4–11–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–JB–M

[UT–040–1020]

Management Framework Plans, etc.; Utah; Correction

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Correction.

CORRECTION: This notice serves to inform the public that the correct address for protest to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management regarding the Proposed Amendment to the Virgin River Management Framework Plan of the Dixie Resource Area, Cedar City District is as follows: Director (480), Resource Planning Team, 1849 C Street NW., Washington, DC 20240.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Crisp, Area Manager, Dixie Resource Area, Cedar City District, at 345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah 84770, (801) 673–4654.

Samuel D. Montgomery,

Branch Chief, Planning and Environmental Coordination.

[FR Doc. 96–9157 Filed 4–11–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–DQ–P