

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management**

[AZ-030-1050-00; AZA-25624]

Notice of Realty Action, Recreation and Public Purpose (R&PP) Act Classification, Arizona**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.**ACTION:** Notice.

SUMMARY: The Golden Valley, Fire Department, Station #2, 749 S. Egar Road, Golden Valley, Arizona, has filed an R&PP application amending their original lease of 2½ acres for a fire station to add an additional 2½ acres for a training facility located on the following public lands.

Gila and Salt River Base and Meridian, Mohave County, ArizonaTownship 21 North, Range 19 West
Sec 16, SE¼SE¼SE¼NE¼

Comprising 2½ acres, more or less

Lease or conveyance is consistent with current BLM land use planning and would be in the public interest.

The lease/patent, when issued, will be subject to the following terms, conditions, and reservation:

1. Provisions of the Recreation and Public Purpose Act and to all applicable regulations of the Secretary of the Interior.

2. A right-of-way for ditches and canals constructed by the authority of the United States.

3. All minerals shall be reserved to the United States, together with the right to prospect for mine, and remove the minerals.

Detailed information concerning this action is available for review at the office of the Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office, 2475 Beverly Avenue, Kingman, Arizona.

Upon publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, the lands will be segregated from all other forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the general mining laws, except for lease or conveyance under the Recreation and Public Purpose Act and leasing under the mineral leasing laws.

For a period of 45 days from the date of publication of this notice, interested persons may submit comments regarding the amended proposed lease/conveyance or classification of the land to Joyce Bailey, Realty Specialist, Kingman Field Office, 2475 Beverly Ave, Kingman, Arizona, 86401, telephone (520) 692-4400. Any adverse comments will be reviewed by the State

Director. In the absence of any adverse comments, the classification will become effective 60 days from the date of publication of this notice.

John R. Christensen,*Field Manager.*

[FR Doc. 98-3340 Filed 2-9-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-32-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Reclamation****Notice of Intent To Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for a Recovery Implementation Program for Four Threatened and Endangered Species in the Central Platte River Region and Announcement of Public Scoping Meetings****AGENCY:** Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement, and announcement of public scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce their intent to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended.

This PEIS will evaluate impacts of alternative Recovery Implementation Programs (Programs) to: (1) Secure defined benefits for the target species and their associated habitats to assist in their conservation and recovery through a basin-wide cooperative approach that can be agreed to by the three states and the Department of the Interior (Department); (2) serve as the reasonable and prudent alternative to offset the effects of existing and new water related activities in the Platte River Basin that, in the absence of such a Program, would be found by FWS to be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the target species or adversely modify designated critical habitat; (3) help prevent the need to list more basin associated species pursuant to the ESA; and (4) mitigate new water related activities in a state in a manner that will not increase the mitigation responsibilities of other signatory states.

The Department invites other Federal agencies, States, Indian tribes, local governments, and the general public to submit written comments or suggestions concerning the scope of the issues to be addressed, alternatives to be analyzed, and the environmental impacts to be

assessed in the Draft PEIS. The public is invited to participate in a series of scoping workshops and meetings that will be held during the months of February through April in Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado. A schedule of the meetings is provided. Those not desiring to submit comments or suggestions at this time, but who would like to receive a copy of the Draft PEIS, should write to the address below.

During the scoping process, Reclamation and the Service will be identifying which other Federal, State and local agencies, and tribal governments may have expertise or authority relative to the Program and may be invited to become cooperating agencies in the preparation of the PEIS.

When the Draft PEIS is complete, its availability will be announced in the **Federal Register** and in the local news media. Comments will be solicited on this document.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Curt Brown, Study Manager, or Ms. Lynn Holt, Outreach Coordinator, Platte River EIS Office, PO Box 25007, Mail Code PL-100, Department of the Interior, Denver, Colorado 80225-0007. Telephone: (303) 445-2096. FAX: (303) 445-6331.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

The States of Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado, and the U.S. Department of the Interior have entered into an agreement to begin cooperatively addressing endangered species issues in the Platte River in Nebraska which may affect the entire Platte River Basin, including development of a recovery implementation program (Program). (*Cooperative Agreement for Platte River Research and Other Efforts Relating to Endangered Species Habitat Along the Central Platte River, Nebraska*. Signed July 1, 1997, by the Governors of Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska, and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.) A copy of the Cooperative Agreement may be obtained by contacting the Platte River EIS Office, or attending a scoping meeting. It is also available at the Platte River EIS website: <http://www.usbr.gov/platte>.

Purpose and Need for Action

The whooping crane, piping plover, and interior least tern, which are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), use the

Central Platte River Valley in Nebraska. The Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the reach of the Central Platte River from Lexington to Shelton, Nebraska, as critical habitat for the whooping crane. The pallid sturgeon, which occurs in the Lower Platte River between its confluence with the Elkhorn and the Missouri River, is also listed as endangered. Together, these four species are the "target species" for the partnership.

The waters of the Platte River serve the people of Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska in many ways. Federal and non-Federal water projects in the Platte River Basin, including 15 major dams, provide municipal and industrial water supplies for about 3.5 million people, irrigate millions of acres of farmland, and generate millions of dollars in hydroelectric power. These projects also provide flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat.

The Service has concluded that suitable habitat in the Central Platte region for the target species has been significantly reduced by water diversions and other factors, such as highway and bridge construction and other changes in land use that have come with extensive settlement throughout the Platte River Basin. Under the ESA, Federal agencies must ensure that the water projects which they operate or for which they provide Federal permits or funds are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or to adversely modify critical habitat. If a project is likely to cause these adverse impacts, its operation must be modified or other measures undertaken to protect the species.

Many water projects in the Platte River Basin are now or soon will be undergoing a review of their impacts on endangered species. These projects include Reclamation's North Platte Projects in Wyoming and western Nebraska and the Colorado Big Thompson Project in Colorado; the Corps of Engineers' reservoirs in the Denver area; and a large number of non-Federal water storage and diversion projects, primarily in Colorado, which require renewal of permits from the U.S. Forest Service. Also included are the non-Federal hydropower projects in Nebraska and Colorado, including Kinglsey Dam, which require license renewals from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The Department believes that the best approach to addressing the ESA issues in the Platte region in Nebraska is a basin-wide, cooperative effort to improve and maintain habitat for the target species. The alternative to a basin-

wide approach would be for each of these water projects in the Platte River Basin to undergo individual review and lengthy proceedings to develop separate measures to help the listed species. The Department believes that a basin-wide, cooperative approach will be more effective, efficient, and equitable, and provide greater certainty for water users regarding compliance with the ESA.

The purpose of the Proposed Program, and any Program alternatives formulated is to:

1. Secure defined benefits for the target species and their associated Platte River habitat through a Program that offsets the effects of existing and new water related activities in the basin that without a Program would be found likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the target species or adversely modify critical habitat. ("Associated habitats," "water related activities," and "new water related activities" are defined in the Cooperative Agreement.) This will be accomplished by implementing certain aspects of the Fish and Wildlife Service recovery plans for the target species that relate to their associated habitats by:

- Improving and maintaining the migrational habitat for the whooping cranes.
- Improving and maintaining the reproductive habitat for the interior least tern and the piping plover.
- Testing the assumption that it is possible to improve habitat for the pallid sturgeon by managing flows in the Central Platte River that may also affect the sturgeon's habitat in the Lower Platte River.

2. Ensure that the effects of future water activities in the Platte River Basin are offset so that they are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the target species or adversely modify critical habitat. Mitigate new water related activities in the States of Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska in a manner that will not increase the mitigation responsibilities of the other states.

3. Provide greater regulatory certainty regarding compliance with section 7 of the ESA, by serving as the reasonable and prudent alternative under the ESA for existing and new water related activities.

4. Help prevent the need to list more species associated with the Platte River as threatened or endangered pursuant to the ESA.

5. Accomplish these goals through a cooperative, basin-wide approach that can be agreed to by the three States and the Department of the Interior.

The Proposed Federal Action

The Cooperative Agreement describes a proposed Recovery Implementation Program to address the endangered species issues. This proposed Program, and alternatives, will be evaluated according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

The long-term objectives for the proposed Program are to:

- Provide additional or modified river flows to and through the Central Platte habitat area. The Service has identified flow levels they believe are necessary to provide adequate habitat for the endangered species. Existing flows currently fall short of these targets. The Department and the States agree that flow targets will be reviewed and may be modified as new information becomes available.

- Improve habitat through management, leasing, or acquisition of approximately 29,000 acres of suitable habitat between Lexington and Chapman, Nebraska.

- Mitigate or offset any impacts on the target species that might result from new water related activities in the basin.

The first phase of the proposed Program (10–12 years) would:

- Reduce shortages to the current target flows by an average of 130,000 to 150,000 acre-feet per year. The proposed Program would restore the original storage capacity of Pathfinder Reservoir in Wyoming; establish an environmental water account in Lake McConaughy in Nebraska; and develop a groundwater recharge and river re-regulation project near Tamarack State Wildlife Area in Colorado. These three actions are expected to reduce shortages by approximately 70,000 acre-feet of water. A basin-wide study will look for ways to provide an additional 60,000 acre-foot reduction in flow shortages through water conservation and water supply options.

- Protect or restore, through acquisition, lease, or easement, 10,000 acres of habitat in the Central Platte River area between Lexington and Chapman, Nebraska. The Nebraska Public Power District's Cottonwood Ranch between Overton and Elm Creek (2,650 acres) will contribute to that goal.¹

All water conservation, habitat management, leases, easements, or acquisition of lands to meet these goals

¹ In later phases of the proposed Program, the holdings of the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Nature Conservancy, and the Audubon Society, totaling approximately 9,000 acres of habitat, will be included toward the long-term goal of 29,000 acres.

would be undertaken only with willing sellers and participants.

Progress made under this initial phase of the proposed Program would be closely monitored. The cooperating entities would then evaluate the results of the first phase and define any subsequent approaches and actions needed to meet the overall goals.

Additional description of the proposed Program can be obtained by contacting the Platte River EIS Office at the address above.

Programmatic EIS

The impacts of the proposed Program and alternatives will be evaluated through a PEIS. This assessment will look at the effects of the proposed Program and alternatives primarily upon the habitat of the four target threatened and endangered species along the Central Platte River in Nebraska in order to assess the degree to which each alternative achieves the program purposes. Other impacts of the alternatives will be examined more broadly. Once a preferred alternative is selected for implementation, further NEPA compliance may be required for site-specific Federal actions. For example, the PEIS will examine the effects of restoring the original storage in Pathfinder Reservoir upon the water operations of Reclamation's North Platte reservoirs and the downstream effects upon the habitat of the target species. If this element is part of the ultimately selected Program, an additional site-specific NEPA study would likely need to be undertaken to assess, for example, the construction impacts of raising Pathfinder Dam. Similarly, it is expected that the PEIS will examine the benefits to the habitat of the target species from a range of water conservation measures throughout the Platte River Basin, including the costs of such measures and their broad effects on factors such as water use, associated revenues, and local taxes. It is possible that further NEPA compliance might be required prior to implementing some specific conservation measures in specific locations.

A Draft PEIS is scheduled for completion by mid-1999.

Public Scoping

Scoping meetings will be held in Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska in February through April of 1998 for the purpose of obtaining public input and suggestions on the significant issues related to the proposed action. The schedule and locations for these activities are shown below. The public is especially asked to provide input on:

(1) alternative approaches to meeting the needs and purposes of the Federal action. For example, are there more effective or feasible ways to improve or protect the habitat of the four target species? Suggestions could address individual elements of a plan, such as ways to conserve water or to improve habitat management, or could provide broader options, such as reoperation of the Federal reservoirs in the Platte River Basin. Suggestions also could address such factors as the timing of a program, e.g., implementing an entire program at the onset, rather than using the phased, adaptive management approach in the proposed Program.

(2) impacts of the proposed Program and alternatives that should be evaluated and reported. In addition to the effects of the alternatives on the habitat of the target species, what are likely to be significant consequences of the various options that should be considered and reported?

Schedule of Scoping Meetings

A series of meetings will be conducted in Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Each will begin with a 1-hour open house at which the public can informally discuss issues and ask questions of staff and managers involved in the Platte River Endangered Species Partnership.

The open house will be followed by a more formal scoping meeting in which each participant will be given time to make comments. Speakers should plan on 5 minutes for their comments. These comments will be formally recorded. Speakers are encouraged to provide written versions of their oral comments, and any other additional written materials, for the record.

Comments may also be sent directly to the Platte River EIS Office to be included in the record.

Dates of Scoping Meetings

February 25, 1998, 5–8 p.m., Loveland, CO
 March 2, 1998, 4–7 p.m., Scottsbluff, NE
 March 3, 1998, 2–5 p.m., North Platte, NE
 March 4, 1998, 4–7 p.m., Grand Island, NE
 March 5, 1998, 4–7 p.m., Lincoln, NE
 March 11, 1998, 3–6 p.m., Kearney, NE
 March 17, 1998, 3–6 p.m., Saratoga, WY
 March 18, 1998, 4–7 p.m., Casper, WY
 March 19, 1998, 2–5 p.m., Torrington, WY
 March 26, 1998, 4–7 p.m., Sterling, CO
 April 7, 1998, 6–9 p.m., Denver, CO

Addresses of Scoping Meetings

- Loveland—Loveland Museum, 503 North Lincoln Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537.

- Scottsbluff—Scottsbluff Inn, 1901 21st Avenue, Scottsbluff, NE 69361.
- North Platte—Camino Inn & Suites, Jct US 83 & I-80, North Platte, NE 69101.
- Grand Island—Holiday Inn Midtown, 2503 South Locust, Grand Island, NE 68801.
- Lincoln—The Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, 33rd and Holdrege Street, Lincoln, NE 68583.
- Kearney—Regency Inn, 301 2nd Avenue, Kearney, NE 68847.
- Saratoga—Riviera Lodge, 104 East Saratoga Street, Saratoga, WY 82331.
- Casper—Casper Hilton Inn, 800 North Poplar Street, Casper, WY 82601.
- Torrington—The King's Inn, 1555 S Main Street, Torrington, WY 82240.
- Sterling—Ramada Inn, I-76 & Highway 6, Sterling, CO 80751.
- Denver—Stapleton Plaza Hotel and Fitness Center, (Ballroom Arapaho A), 3333 Quebec Street, Denver, CO 80207.

Dated: February 5, 1998.

Patricia J. Beneke,

Assistant Secretary—Water and Science, Department of the Interior.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: United States International Trade Commission.

TIME AND DATE: February 19, 1998 at 2:30 p.m.

PLACE: Room 101, 500 E Street S.W., Washington, DC 20436.

STATUS: Open to the public.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Agenda for future meeting: none
2. Minutes
3. Ratification List
4. Inv. Nos. 731–TA–776–779 (Preliminary) (Certain Preserved Mushrooms from Chile, China, India, and Indonesia)—briefing and vote.
5. Outstanding action jackets:
 1. Document No. GC–98–001: Decision whether to grant the appeals of Order No. 96 in Inv. No. 337–TA–383 (Certain Hardware Logic Emulation Systems and Components Thereof).

In accordance with Commission policy, subject matter listed above, not disposed of at the scheduled meeting, may be carried over to the agenda of the following meeting.

By order of the Commission: