

purpose of announcing that no additional properties have been determined suitable or unsuitable this week.

Dated: October 28, 1999.

Fred Karnas, Jr.,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development.

[FR Doc. 99-28692 Filed 11-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4210-29-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of the Reassessment of the Interim Wolf Control Plan for the Northern Rocky Mountains

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service, announce the availability of the Reassessment of the Interim Wolf Control Plan for the Northern Rocky Mountains, which includes northwestern Montana and the Panhandle of northern Idaho (Exclusive of the Experimental Population Area). Our 1988 Interim Wolf Control Plan (Control Plan) was developed in response to a recommendation in the 1987 Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan) to conserve and enhance survival and propagation of the gray wolf, and is implemented under an Endangered Species Act section 10 permit. The Control Plan has been carried out for 11 years to control problem wolves.

A notice of availability of the draft reassessment was published in the **Federal Register**, Volume 63, Number 78, on April 23, 1998, soliciting review and comments from the public for 30 days. Based on the review and the comments received, we have modified the Control Plan to include changes in the following areas—(1) Management zones; (2) encouraging research in deterring wolf depredations on livestock; (3) recordkeeping and analysis; (4) non-lethal control techniques and; (5) monitoring of the wolf population in northwestern Montana. The Control Plan also was amended to include the need to control wolves that kill pets and an increased educational effort about wolf recovery and management in northwestern Montana.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to obtain a copy of the Reassessment and the Modified Interim Wolf Control Plan may do so by contacting the Wolf Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, 100 North Park, Suite 320, Helena, Montana 59604, or by accessing the website. The Control Plan and the Reassessment can be retrieved from the Service's Region 6 website at <www.r6.fws.gov/wolf>. The complete administrative record of this action is on file at the above address and is available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ed Bangs, Wolf Recovery Coordinator (see **ADDRESSES** above), or at telephone (406) 449-5225, extension 204, or e-mail <rockymtwolf@fws.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The primary goal of our endangered species program is to restore an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem. Recovery Plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for recovery levels for downlisting or delisting the species, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures identified.

Under provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the northern Rocky Mountains wolf population was listed as endangered, and we approved the Wolf Recovery Plan for the Northern Rocky Mountains (Recovery Plan) in 1987. The Recovery Plan recognized that, where ranges of wolves and livestock overlap, some livestock would be killed by wolves. In order to address this issue, the Recovery Plan identified the need "to delineate recovery areas and identify and develop conservation strategies and management plan(s) to ensure perpetuation of the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf." To respond to this need, a task was included to develop and implement a wolf control/contingency plan for dealing with wolf depredations. An Interim Wolf Control Plan for Montana and Wyoming (Control Plan) was approved by the Service's Regional Director on August 5, 1988. The Control Plan included criteria for determining problem wolves, criteria for their disposition, and protocols and techniques for control actions.

We conduct control of problem wolves through our section 10 permit authority. Under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Act, "The Secretary (of the Interior) may permit, under such terms and conditions as he may prescribe—(A) any act otherwise prohibited by section 9 for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species."

The Control Plan has been carried out for 11 years to control problem wolves. On February 27, 1998, a draft evaluation of the Control Plan was completed to see if it was achieving its goal of helping recovery of the Northern Rocky Mountain endangered wolf population. The evaluation looked at—(1) the effectiveness of the program in facilitating wolf recovery, (2) effectiveness of the guidelines for determining problem wolves, conducting wolf control actions and the disposition of problem wolves, (3) the analysis, accuracy, consistency and value of the reporting and recording of actions for the record, and (4) recommendations for the wolf control program.

A recommendation in the draft reassessment was to subject the review to a wider and more professional scrutiny by publishing a notice of availability in the **Federal Register**, and sending it to experts experienced in managing wolf/livestock conflicts. A notice of availability was published in the **Federal Register**, Volume 63, Number 78, on April 23, 1998, soliciting review and comments from the public for 30 days. Copies of the notice were sent to congressional delegates and the Governors in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Copies were sent to U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services State directors and their Regional Office. All cooperators were made aware of the notice of availability through the gray wolf weekly report mailing list and postings on several Internet websites.

We received 25 written and 1 verbal response to the draft reassessment. Comments were reviewed and 22 relevant issues regarding the Control Plan were categorized and addressed. The categories, number of comments, and responses to relevant issues are listed in the final version of the Reassessment. After careful review and analysis of comments received, and the evaluation of the Control Plan, some of the recommendations in the draft reassessment were modified and several additional recommendations have been added to the Modified Interim Control Plan. We have modified the Control Plan for the Northern Rocky Mountains to include changes in the following areas—(1) management zones; (2) encouraging research in deterring wolf depredations on livestock; (3) recordkeeping and analysis; (4) non-lethal control techniques and; (5) monitoring of the wolf population in northwestern Montana. The Control Plan also was amended to include the need to control wolves that kill pets and a recommendation to increase

educational efforts about wolf recovery and management in northwestern Montana.

Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: October 28, 1999.

Terry Terrell,

Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.

[FR Doc. 99-29001 Filed 11-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Three Public Open Houses Prior to Proposing a Revision to the Special Rule for a Nonessential Experimental Population of Red Wolves in North Carolina

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public open houses.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service, announce three public open houses in eastern North Carolina to present information to, and answer questions from the public prior to proposing a change to the special rule for the nonessential experimental population (NEP) of red wolves in eastern North Carolina under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act).

DATES AND ADDRESSES: We will hold the first open house on Tuesday, November 16, 1999, at the Mattamuskeet Lodge, Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, 1 Mattamuskeet Refuge Road, Swan Quarter, North Carolina 27885, from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. The second open house will be on Wednesday, November 17, 1999, at the Vernon James Research & Extension Conference Center, 207 Research Station Road, Plymouth, North Carolina 27962, from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. The third open house will be on Thursday, November 18, 1999, at Tyrrell Hall, 108 South Water Street, Columbia, North Carolina 27925, from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Brian T. Kelly, Wildlife Biologist/Field Projects Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1969, 708 North Highway 64/264, Manteo, North Carolina 27954 (telephone 252/473-1131, extension 27).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The red wolf is an endangered species that is currently found in the wild only

as a NEP in northeastern North Carolina on the Alligator River, Pocosin Lakes, and Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuges; the U.S. Air Force's Dare County Bombing Range; and adjacent private land in Beaufort, Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties, North Carolina; and as an endangered species in three small island propagation projects located on Bulls Island in South Carolina and Cape St. George and St. Vincent Islands in Florida. These four carefully managed wild populations contained a minimum of 48 animals as of September 30, 1999. The remaining red wolves are located in 33 captive-breeding facilities in the United States. The captive population numbered 161 animals as of September 30, 1999.

We published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** of July 24, 1986 (51 FR 26564), to introduce red wolves into Alligator River, Dare County, North Carolina. We published a final rule on November 19, 1986 (51 FR 41790), making a determination to implement the proposed action with some modifications. We determined that the red wolf population in Dare County and adjacent Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties would be a NEP, according to Section 10(j) of the Act. We revised the rule in the **Federal Register** of November 4, 1991 (56 FR 56325), to add Beaufort County to the list of counties where the NEP designation would apply. We reevaluated the status of the population after 5 years and included input from public meetings in this reevaluation.

We published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** of November 24, 1993 (58 FR 62086), to revise the special rule for NEPs of red wolves in North Carolina and Tennessee. We published a final rule in the **Federal Register** of April 13, 1995 (60 FR 18940), making a determination to implement the proposed action with some modifications.

We will hold three public open houses in eastern North Carolina. Through these open houses, we will provide the public with a forum to obtain information and ask questions of us before we request their formal comment through the rulemaking process.

Author

The primary author of this notice is Brian T. Kelly (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section).

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: October 29, 1999.

H. Dale Hall,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 99-29000 Filed 11-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR-090-00-2822-JL-N843; GP0-0024]

Closure of Public Lands in Lane County, OR

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Closure of public lands and access road in Lane County, Oregon.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that certain public lands and access road in Lane County, Oregon are indefinitely closed to all public use, including vehicle operation, recreation, hunting, parking, camping, shooting, hiking and sightseeing. The closure is made under the authority of 43 CFR 8364.1.

The public lands affected by this closure are located within the Austa Fire Unit and are specifically identified as follows:

Willamette Meridian, Oregon

T. 18 S., R. 8 W.

Sec. 9: All lands south of the north right-of-way line of the Bonneville Power Administration Transmission line

Sec. 10: BLM Road No. 18-8-10 in the S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$

Sec.15: N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

Containing approximately 450 acres.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following persons, operating within the scope of their official duties, are exempt from the provisions of this closure order: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) employees; BLM and BPA contractors and their subcontractors; State of Oregon, local and other federal government employees; State of Oregon, local and other federal contractors and their subcontractors; the holders of BLM road use permits that include roads within the closure area; purchasers of BLM resources within the closure area and their employees and subcontractors. Access by additional parties may be allowed, but must be approved in advance in writing by the Authorized Officer.

Any person who fails to comply with the provisions of this closure order may be subject to, but not limited to, the penalties provided in 43 CFR 8360.0-7, which include a fine not to exceed \$1,000 and/or imprisonment not to