

from commenting on the individual weed listings contained in Category 3. We are unable to address questions or comments regarding the individual Category 3 listings, especially questions or comments regarding particular State regulations and/or restrictions on particular weeds. Such concerns should be addressed to the appropriate State plant board. State officials are requested to submit amendments to their weed list that have been made since the drafting of this rule.

Other Questions

Sterile Cultivars of Federal Noxious Weeds

Imperata cylindrica, a listed Federal noxious weed, has sterile cultivars that are widely planted in the United States and extensively sold in the nursery trade. The wild, seed-producing biotype is clearly undesirable, but many in the nursery trade consider the sterile cultivars to be well-behaved ornamentals. Should there be a category of Federal noxious weeds where only seed producing cultivars are regulated, such that sterile cultivars would be exempt from the regulations? *Imperata cylindrica* would be moved into this category, and other species, such as *Vetiveria zizanioides*, vetiver grass, could be listed in this category as well. Seeds of weeds in this category (and by extension, the commodities they reside in) would be prohibited from entering the United States or moving interstate, but vegetatively produced sterile stock could be moved without restriction.

Weeds for Human Consumption

Some of the currently listed Federal noxious weeds are valued as foods by various groups. For example, *Ipomoea aquatica* (Chinese water spinach) was imported in large quantities before it was listed as a Federal noxious weed and is now widely available in specialty markets around the United States. Should APHIS issue permits for the importation and interstate movement of certain weeds for consumption only? If so, under what conditions?

Pest Risk Assessments

APHIS uses pest risk assessments (PRA's) as a basis for weed exclusion decisions. Individuals with an interest in seeing a particular plant species listed as a Federal noxious weed (Category 1 or Category 2) may submit draft risk assessments for review and consideration. Some of the Category 3 and Category 4 weeds might also be candidates to be listed as Federal noxious weeds, and proponents may submit draft risk assessments for review.

The PRA guidelines for weeds are available on the Internet at "http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/weeds/weedsrisk99.html". The main components of a risk assessment include:

1. Taxonomy and description of the plant species.
2. Distribution.
3. Local, State, or other control efforts in the United States.
4. Determination of the consequences of introduction by considering risk elements 1-4.
 - Risk element 1: Habitat suitability in the United States.
 - Risk element 2: Spread potential after establishment, dispersal potential.
 - Risk element 3: Economic impact.
 - Risk element 4: Environmental impact.
5. Determination of the likelihood of introduction or spread.
6. Citation of references.

We welcome comments related to risk assessment guidelines and the process itself.

Allocation of Resources and Funding

Given that APHIS has limited resources for weed programs, should we focus all our resources on the exclusion of weeds not yet introduced into the United States (Category 1) and on the control and eradication of introduced weeds of limited distribution (Category 2)? Which programs should receive the highest priority for funding? Should we also provide additional guidance on controlling widespread weeds (Category 3 and Category 4)? What kind of guidance should we provide regarding the Category 3 and Category 4 lists?

APHIS conducts the following activities under the weed program. In what order of priority should limited resources be devoted? Which of these activities should receive highest priority? Which should receive lowest?

- Port of entry inspection and detection.
- Eradication of incipient infestations.
- Review of weed permit applications and issuance of weed permits.
- Survey and early detection of noxious weeds.
- Risk assessment to support new listings or delistings.
- Devitalization studies (for example, heat, radiation, and microwave treatments for commodities infested with noxious weeds).
- Weed control technology, development and transfer.
- Regulation review and revision (regulations promulgated under the Federal Noxious Weed Act, Federal Seed Act, and Federal Plant Pest Act).

- Data management.
- Public education.
- Integrated management of introduced weeds (e.g., through biological control), in cooperation with other agencies.

We invite comments on these topics. We also welcome ideas as to different approaches we might take to improve our weed programs. In responding to the questions posed in this notice, commenters are urged to include economic reasons and data supporting their positions, whenever possible.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2803 and 2809; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.2(c).

Done in Washington, DC, this 15th day of March 2000.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00-6825 Filed 3-17-00; 8:45 am]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 52

[NM-26-1-6944b; FRL-6561-7]

Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plan for New Mexico: Transportation Conformity Rule

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The EPA is proposing to approve a revision to the New Mexico State Implementation Plan (SIP) that contains the transportation conformity rule. If EPA approves this transportation conformity SIP revision, the New Mexico Environment Department will be able to implement and enforce the Federal transportation conformity requirements at the State level per regulations on Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects Developed, Funded or Approved Under Title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Laws. This proposed action would streamline the conformity process and allow direct consultation among agencies at the local levels. The proposed approval is limited to regulations on Transportation Conformity. The EPA approved the SIP revision for conformity of general Federal actions on September 9, 1998 (61 FR 48407).

The EPA is proposing to approve this SIP revision under sections 110(k) and 176 of the Federal Clean Air Act. The EPA has given its rationale for the

proposed approval and other information in the Final Rules section of this **Federal Register**.

In the "Rules and Regulations" section of **Federal Register**, EPA is approving the State's SIP revision as a direct final rule without prior proposal because EPA views this as a noncontroversial revision and anticipate no adverse comment. The EPA has explained its reasons for this approval in the preamble to the direct final rule. If EPA receives no adverse comment, EPA will not take further action on this proposed rule. If EPA receives adverse comment, EPA will withdraw the direct final rule and it will not take effect. The EPA will address all public comments in a subsequent final rule based on this proposed rule. The EPA will not institute a second comment period on this action. Any parties interested in commenting must do so at this time.

DATES: We must receive your comments on this proposed rule in writing, by April 19, 2000. If we do not receive any adverse comment, then the direct final rule will be effective on May 19, 2000.

ADDRESSES: You should send your written comments to Mr. Thomas H. Diggs, Chief, Air Planning Section (6PDL) at the address given below. You may inspect copies of the State's SIP revision and other relevant information during normal business hours at the following locations. If you wish to examine these documents, you should make an appointment with the appropriate office at least 24 hours before the visiting day.

Air Planning Section (6PDL), Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202, telephone: (214) 665-7214.

New Mexico Environment Department, Harold Runnels Building, 1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Drawer 226110, Santa Fe, New Mexico, telephone: (505) 827-4200.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. J. Behnam, P.E. or Mr. Ken Boyce; Air Planning Section (6PDL), Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202, Telephone (214) 665-7247 or (214) 665-7259, respectively. behnam.jahanbakhsh@epamail.epa.gov or boyce.kenneth@epamail.epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: If you wish to obtain additional information, you should read the Direct Final rule which is located in the Rules section of this **Federal Register**.

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 52

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Carbon monoxide, Hydrocarbons, Intergovernmental relations, Nitrogen dioxide, Ozone, Particulate matter, Transportation conformity, Transportation-air quality planning, Volatile organic compounds.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7401-7671 *et seq.*

Dated: March 8, 2000.

Lynda F. Carroll,

Acting Regional Administrator, Region 6.

[FR Doc. 00-6564 Filed 3-17-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; 12-Month Finding for a Petition To List the Great Basin Redband Trout as Threatened or Endangered

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of 12-month petition finding.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a 12-month finding for a petition to list the Great Basin redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss* ssp.) as threatened or endangered pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). Great Basin redband trout maintain viable and self-sustaining populations in the Catlow, Fort Rock, Harney, Goose Lake, Warner, and Chewaucan Basins that make up Oregon's Great Basin. Great Basin redband trout densities are moderate to high in each of these basins. After review of all available scientific and commercial information, we find that listing the Great Basin redband trout is not warranted at this time.

DATES: The finding announced in this document was made on March 13, 2000.

ADDRESSES: You may submit questions concerning this petition finding to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon State Office, 2600 SE. 98th Ave., Suite 100, Portland, Oregon 97266. You may obtain copies of the status review for Great Basin redband trout from the above address. The complete administrative file for this finding is also available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Antonio Bentivoglio, at the above address, or telephone (503) 231-6179.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 4(b)(3)(B) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires that we make a finding on whether a petition to list, delist, or reclassify a species presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action is: (a) Not warranted, (b) warranted, or (c) warranted but precluded from immediate proposal by other pending listing proposals of higher priority. Such 12-month findings are to be published promptly in the **Federal Register**.

The processing of this petition finding conforms with our Listing Priority Guidance published in the **Federal Register** on October 22, 1999 (64 FR 57114). The guidance clarifies the order in which we will process rulemakings. Highest priority is processing emergency listing rules for any species determined to face a significant and imminent risk to its well-being (Priority 1). Second priority (Priority 2) is processing final determinations on proposed additions to the lists of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants. Third priority is processing new proposals to add species to the lists. The processing of administrative petition findings (petitions filed under section 4 of the Act) is the fourth priority. The processing of this petition finding is a Priority 4 action and is being completed in accordance with the current Listing Priority Guidance.

On September 8, 1997, we received a formal petition to list the Great Basin redband trout as threatened or endangered throughout its range in southeastern Oregon, northeastern California, and northwestern Nevada. Specifically the petition addressed the redband trout populations in Catlow, Fort Rock, Harney, Goose Lake, Warner, and Chewaucan Basins (together these six closed basins make up the Great Basin as described in the petition). The petition also requested the designation of critical habitat concurrent with listing. Petitioners included the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA), Oregon Trout, Native Fish Society, and the Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited.

At the time the petition was received, we were operating under the final listing priority guidance for fiscal year 1997, published December 5, 1996 (61 FR 64475), and an extension of that listing priority guidance published October 23, 1997 (62 FR 55268). Based on biological considerations, the guidance established a "multi-tiered approach that assigned relative priorities, on a descending basis, to