

process by which landowners can comply with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act in a more efficient manner. The Service has divided the 45 subdivisions into two categories, those in low/marginal quality Houston toad habitat, and those in medium quality Houston toad habitat. The EA/HCP requires the same avoidance, minimization, and mitigation efforts from every lot owner, within their respective category. This negates the need and cost in both time and money to prepare individual HCPs and go through separate public review processes. Since this EA/HCP will have already gone out for public review and comment (through this Notice in the **Federal Register**), and been finalized, it would cover 8,476 undeveloped lots, covering a maximum of 4,238 acres of sub-optimal Houston toad habitat, as noted in the EA/HCP in the 45 listed subdivisions, and endangered species permits could be issued in a matter of days as opposed to months under the current permitting process.

The EA/HCP has been assigned permit number TE-025997-0. The requested permit issuance, which will be for a period of 5 years, would authorize the incidental take of the endangered Houston toad (*Bufo houstonensis*). The proposed take would occur as a result of the possible construction and occupation on 8,476 remaining undeveloped lots, covering a maximum of 4,238 acres of sub-optimal Houston toad habitat, in 45 subdivisions in Bastrop County, Texas.

A determination of jeopardy to the species or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will not be made until at least 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 10(c) of the Act and National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

DATES: Written comments on the application should be received on or before July 26, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the EA/HCP may obtain a copy by contacting: Austin Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 10711 Burnet Road, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78758 (512/490-0057). Documents will be available for public inspection by written request, or by appointment only, during normal business hours (8 to 4:30) at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Austin, Texas. Written data or comments concerning the EA/HCP should be submitted to the Field Supervisor, Austin Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at the above address. Please refer to permit

number TE-025997-0 when submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact the Austin Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the above address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 9 of the Act prohibits the "taking" of endangered species such as the Houston toad. However, the Service, under limited circumstances, may issue permits to take endangered wildlife species incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for endangered species are at 50 CFR 17.22.

Applicant

This action will permanently disturb a maximum of 0.5 acres of Houston toad habitat within each eligible lot and result in indirect impacts within the subdivision. Each applicant will compensate for this incidental take of the Houston toad by providing mitigation funds to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the specific purpose of land acquisition, protection, and management within Houston toad habitat, as identified by the Service.

Bryan Arroyo,

*Acting Regional Director, Region 2,
Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

Technology Transfer Act of 1986; Cooperative Research and Development Agreement With Rio Algom Exploration

AGENCY: Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of proposed cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA) negotiations.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is contemplating entering into a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with Rio Algom Exploration to conduct aerial surveys in Alaska.

INQUIRIES: If any other parties are interested in studying other areas with the USGS, please contact: Fredric Wilson, USGS-Alaska Section, 4200 University Dr., Anchorage, AK 99508-4667.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is to meet the USGS requirement stipulated in the Survey Manual.

Dated: May 23, 2000.

Linda C. Gundersen,

*Associate Chief Geologist for Program
Operations.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AZ-040-00-1040-AE]

Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area Advisory Committee; Meeting Notice

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area Advisory Committee Meeting.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to announce the next meeting of the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area Advisory Committee Meeting. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide informed advice to the Safford Field Office Manager on Management of public lands in the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area (RNCA). The committee meets as needed, generally between two and four times a year.

The meeting will take place at the Bureau of Land Management, Safford Field Office on September 15, 2000 commencing at 9 a.m. and ending at 4 p.m. The meeting's agenda will consist of updates on livestock management, transportation system, public affairs, monitoring, and Lee Trail Headquarters relocation within the Gila Box RNCA. In addition, the meeting will include a update on the National Landscape Conservation System as it relates to the Gila Box RNCA. A public comment period will be provided from 9:45 a.m. to 10 a.m. for the public to address the committee on management of the Gila Box RNCA.

DATES: Meeting will be held on September 15, 2000 starting at 9 a.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jon Collins, Gila Box NCA Project Coordinator, Safford Field Office, 711 14th Avenue, Safford, Arizona 85546; telephone number (520) 384-4400.

Dated: June 15, 2000.

William T. Civish,

Field Office Manager.

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