

We estimate that the draft environmental documents will be available in January 2003.

Dated: September 28, 2000

H. Dale Hall,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 00-25680 Filed 10-05-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare Comprehensive Conservation Plans for Reelfoot, Lake Isom, Chickasaw, Lower Hatchie, and Hatchie National Wildlife Refuges, and Sunk Lake Public Use Natural Area in Tennessee

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, intends to gather information necessary to prepare comprehensive conservation plans and associated environmental documents pursuant to the Service's Comprehensive Conservation Planning Policy and the National Environmental Policy Act and implementing regulations to achieve the following:

- (1) Advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and
- (2) Obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the environmental documents.

Public scoping meetings will be held as follows:

Lower Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge, Sunk Lake Public Use Natural Area, Thursday, October 26, 2000, 7 P.M., Community Conference Room, Baptist Memorial Hospital, 1995 Highway 51 South, Covington, Tennessee 38019.

Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge, Thursday, November 2, 2000, 7 P.M., Multi-Purpose Room, Tennessee Technology Center, 127 Industrial Drive, Ripley, Tennessee 38063.

Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge, Monday, November 6, 2000, 7 P.M., Brownsville-Haywood County Chamber of Commerce, 121 West Main, Brownsville, Tennessee 38012.

Reelfoot and Lakes Isom National Wildlife Refuges, Tuesday, November 14, 2000, 7 P.M., Ellington Center, Route 1, Box 2345, Tiptonville, Tennessee 38079, (Located on Highway 21-22, approximately 2 miles east of Tiptonville at the State Park Visitor Center.)

DATES: Written comments should be received within 60 days of this publication.

ADDRESSES: Address comments and requests for more information to the following: Rob Martin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 309 N. Church Street, Room 201, Dyersburg, Tennessee 38024, (901) 287-0650, (901) 286-0468 (Fax).

If you wish to comment, you may submit your comments by any one of several methods. You may mail comments to the above address. You may also comment via the Internet to the following address:

Rob_Martin@fws.gov. Please submit Internet comments as an ASCII file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include your name and return address in your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the system that we have received your Internet message, contact us directly at the above address. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the rulemaking record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the rulemaking record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: By Federal law, all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System are to be managed in accordance with an approved comprehensive conservation plan. These plans will guide management decisions and identify refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. The planning process will consider many elements, including public use management, habitat management, wildlife population management, and cultural resource identification and protection. Alternatives that address the issues and management strategies associated with these topics will be included in the environmental documents.

Pre-planning for each of the above stated national wildlife refuges, as well as the public use natural area, began in January 2000. Reelfoot Refuge was established in 1941 under terms of a 75-

year cooperative agreement with the State of Tennessee. Lake Isom Refuge was established by a Presidential Proclamation in 1938. Chickasaw Refuge was established August 5, 1985, by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as was Lower Hatchie Refuge in 1980, and Hatchie Refuge in 1964. Sunk Lake Public Use Natural Area was purchased in 1986 by the Natural and Cultural Areas Acquisition Fund. Reelfoot, Lake Isom, Chickasaw, and Lower Hatchie Refuges were established for use as inviolate sanctuaries, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds. Hatchie Refuge was established to provide habitat for wintering and migrating waterfowl, particularly dabbling ducks. The Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Sunk Lake Public Use Natural Area in accordance with State Natural Area rules of the Tennessee Department of Conservation.

Dated: September 28, 2000.

H. Dale Hall,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 00-25681 Filed 10-5-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge in Franklin County, FL

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, intends to gather information necessary to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan and associated environmental documents pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and implementing regulations to achieve the following:

- (1) Advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and
- (2) To obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the environmental documents.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before December 5, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Address comments and requests for more information to the following:

Mr. Steve Ovenden, Natural Resource Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 7298 Coastal Highway, Crawfordville, Florida 32327, (850) 925-1497.

If you wish to comment, you may submit your comments by any one of several methods. You may mail comments to the above address. You

may also comment via the Internet to the following address:

Steven_Ovenden@fws.gov. Please submit Internet comments as an ASCII file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include your name and return address in your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the system that we have received your Internet message, contact us directly at the above address. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours.

Individuals respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the rulemaking record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the rulemaking record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: By Federal law, all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System are to be managed in accordance with an approved comprehensive conservation plan. These plans will guide management decisions and identify refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. The planning process will consider many elements, including habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection and acquisition, public use, and cultural resources. Public input into this planning process is essential. The plan will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the refuge and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The Service will solicit information from the public via open houses, meetings, and written comments. Special mailings, newspaper articles, and announcements will inform people in the general refuge area of the time and place of such opportunities for public involvement. Review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act

Regulations (40 C.F.R. 1500–1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, including the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Executive Order 12996, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

We estimate that the draft environmental documents will be available in January 2002.

Dated: September 28, 2000.

H. Dale Hall,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 00–25682 Filed 10–5–00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the Granite Homes, Inc. Development in Riverside County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability and receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Granite Homes, Incorporated (the Applicant) has applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Granite Homes is a managing member of the Elsinore 98, Limited Liability Company. The Service is considering issuance of a 2-year permit to the Applicant that would authorize take of the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*, (gnatcatcher)) incidental to otherwise lawful activities.

Such take would occur during the construction of 99 homes on a previously graded site in the City of Lake Elsinore, in Riverside County, California. This project would permanently eliminate 14 acres of Riversidean sage scrub habitat, resulting in incidental take of three pairs of gnatcatchers. The Applicant proposes to reduce deleterious effects from the proposed construction and to conserve 24 acres of Riversidean sage scrub habitat within an adjacent 80-acre parcel of open space to the north of the project site.

We request comments from the public on the permit application, and an Environmental Assessment, both of which are available for review. The permit application includes the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan) and an accompanying

Implementing Agreement. The Plan describes the proposed action and the measures that the Applicant would undertake to minimize and mitigate take of the gnatcatcher.

DATES: We must receive your written comments on or before December 5, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Please address written comments to Mr. Ken Berg, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2730, Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad, California 92008. You also may send comments by facsimile to (760) 431–5902.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jim Bartel, Assistant Field Supervisor, at the above address or call (760) 431–9440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability of Documents

You may obtain copies of these documents for review by contacting the above office. Documents also will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address and at the Lake Elsinore City Library located at 600 West Graham Street, Lake Elsinore, California.

Background

Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act (Act) and Federal regulations prohibit the “take” of fish or wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened. Take of listed fish or wildlife is defined under the Act to include “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” The Service may, under limited circumstances, issue permits to authorize incidental take (*i.e.* take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity). Regulations governing incidental take permits for threatened and endangered species are found in 50 CFR 17.32 and 17.22.

The Applicant has proposed development of 99 high-density single family homes on 61 acres. The planning area is located within the city of Lake Elsinore, immediately northeast of Interstate 15 at Railroad Canyon Road. Land uses in the area include a graded industrial lot immediately adjacent to Interstate 15 to the southwest, a residential and light commercial district at Railroad Canyon road to the south and southeast, Summerhill Drive to the east, the Tuscany Homes residential community to the northeast, and extensive undeveloped foothills to the north.