

2. Applicant will to the maximum extent practicable, minimize, and mitigate the impacts of such taking.

3. Applicant will ensure that adequate funding for the HCP and procedures to deal with unforeseen circumstances will be provided.

4. The taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the species in the wild.

5. Applicant will ensure that other measures that the Service may require as being necessary or appropriate will be provided.

6. The Service has received such other assurances as may be required that the HCP will be implemented.

The HCP describes measures by the Applicant to avoid and mitigate "take" that would occur as a result of the project. To minimize impacts, the Applicant will ensure that clearing of vegetation within 150 feet of active nests will not take place during the nesting season for Florida scrub-jays (March 1 through July 1). To mitigate for the up to 0.134 acres of occupied habitat that would be eliminated on-site, the Applicant will contribute \$1,688.00 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Fund for the conservation and management of the Florida scrub-jay. This money will be used, along with other funds received from Section 10(a)(1)(B) permits, to purchase scrub-jay habitat in Volusia County, Florida. This amount is based on replacement at a rate of 2:1 (0.268 acre purchased to replace 0.134 acre at a current cost of \$5,000.00 per acre for a final cost of \$1,340.00), provides a \$1,000 per acre (\$268.00) management endowment for perpetual management, and includes a five percent fee (\$84.00) for the administration of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation account. Once purchased, the land will be transferred to a third party land management organization along with the \$1,000 per acre management endowment. This management will be accomplished through the use of a conservation easement specifying that the land be left undeveloped and managed into perpetuity. It is believed that ensuring the protection and viability of quality, occupied habitat in a large contiguous preserve such as that which will be purchased in Volusia County, is more beneficial to the scrub-jay than any on-site mitigation plan could offer.

As stated above, we have determined that the HCP is a low-effect plan that is categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis, and does not require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. This preliminary information may be revised due to public comment

received in response to this notice. Low-effect HCPs are those involving: (1) Minor or negligible effects on federally listed or candidate species and their habitats, and (2) minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources. The Applicant's HCP qualifies for the following reasons:

1. Approval of the HCP would result in minor or negligible effects on the Florida scrub-jay population as a whole. The Service does not anticipate significant direct or cumulative effects to the Florida scrub-jay population as a result of the construction project.

2. Approval of the HCP would not have adverse effects on known unique geographic, historic or cultural sites, or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

3. Approval of the HCP would not result in any significant adverse effects on public health or safety.

4. The project does not require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, nor does it threaten to violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

5. Approval of the Plan would not establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

The Service has therefore determined that approval of the Plan qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the NEPA, as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1). Therefore, no further NEPA documentation will be prepared.

The Service will evaluate the HCP and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act. If it is determined that those requirements are met, the ITP will be issued for the incidental take of the Florida scrub-jay. The Service will also evaluate whether issuance of the section 10(a)(1)(B) ITP complies with section 7 of the Act by conducting an intra-Service section 7 consultation. The results of this consultation, in combination with the above findings, will be used in the final analysis to determine whether or not to issue the ITP.

Dated: May 8, 2003.

Christine E. Eustis,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 03-13970 Filed 6-3-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of a Draft National Management Plan for the European Green Crab

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of a draft Management Plan for the European Green Crab, *Carcinus maenas*, for public review and comment. Comments received will be considered in preparing the final Management Plan for *C. maenas*, which will become the basis for cooperative and integrated management of the European Green Crab, *C. maenas*, with the involvement of Federal, State, Tribal, and local resource agencies.

DATES: Comments on the draft Management Plan for the European Green Crab should be received by July 31, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Mail written responses and requests for copies of the draft management plan to Fred Kern, Chair, Green Crab Control Working Group, NOAA National Ocean Service, Cooperative Oxford Laboratory, 904 South Morris Street, Oxford, MD 21654. The draft Management Plan for the European Green Crab is also available on the ANS Task Force Web site (<http://www.anstaskforce.gov>). You may also request copies of the draft plan by calling or writing the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Fred Kern, Chair, Green Crab Control Working Group, at 410-226-5193 or by e-mail at fred.kern@noaa.gov or Sharon Gross, Executive Secretary, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force at 703-358-2308 or by e-mail at sharon_gross@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The European green crab, *Carcinus maenas*, is one of the most ecologically and economically damaging predators in nearshore coastal communities of both eastern and western North America. Native of northern Europe, green crabs colonized eastern North America in the early 19th century and now occur abundantly from Nova Scotia to Maryland. In contrast, green crabs are a recent arrival to western North America, where they successfully colonized San Francisco Bay, CA, in 1989-90. Their impacts on both natural ecosystems and commercial fisheries are well

established, as is their ability to rapidly expand their range.

The western North America invasion has undergone a rapid range expansion, with green crabs expanding their range by more than 750 km in less than ten years since their initial invasion. Green crabs are now firmly established in every significant bay and estuary from Monterey Bay, CA, to Gray's Harbor, WA, and have the potential become established from the Gulf of Alaska to Baja, California. The uniformity of the green crab distribution strongly suggests that green crabs can rapidly expand their range once they are established. In 2000 they continued to expand their northern range in eastern North America by invading the Gulf of St. Lawrence at Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Green crabs are both eurythermic and euhaline and can survive a temperature range from freezing to 30 °C while utilizing a broad range of habitat types. They exploit a wide range of prey types, including molluscs (clams and snails), crustaceans, annelids, fish, and algae. Several native species have declined significantly as a direct result of green crab predation in western North America. Green crabs have had substantial impacts on some commercially important clam species, *Mya arenaria*, and *Mercenaria mercenaria*, and on the scallop species, *Argopecten irradians*. Green crab predation in invaded communities may indirectly affect feeding rates and foraging efficiency of shorebirds.

Recognizing the ecological and economic impacts, as well as expanding geographic range of the green crabs in North America, *Carcinus maenas* was the first marine organism to be designated as an aquatic nuisance species in 1998 by the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force. In 2000, the Green Crab Control Working Group was appointed by the ANS Task Force to develop a Management Plan. The management strategies available in the plan to limit the impact of the European green crab, as well as that of other invaders, include a combination of prevention, eradication, and control measures. This plan is the result of several years of planning and research and has identified the following management options for prevention, eradication, and control of *Carcinus maenas* in the United States:

- Prevention and Containment
- Detection and Forecasting
- Eradication, Control, and Mitigation
- Information Access and Data Management

Prevention and Containment

This option provides a detailed description of the priority activities that the Working Group has identified to prevent further spread of the green crab. The goals of prevention and containment are to:

- Identify pathways of invasion and quantify the risk of each pathway; and
- Identify management options available for reducing the risk associated with each pathway.

The Management Plan also discusses the types of information needed to accomplish this management option, as well as the strategies that may be most effective.

Detection and Forecasting

This option provides a detailed description of the priority activities to be undertaken as soon as possible to implement a comprehensive program to detect new invasions and range expansions of the European green crab and to forecast pollution irruptions at invaded sites. The goals for this option are to do the following:

- Outline specific procedures for detecting the presence of juvenile green crabs in previously uninvaded areas. This will provide an "early warning" of new invasions and provide additional time for restricting activities that would potentially delay further spread. It also allows time to develop local education/outreach efforts or other activities aimed at heightening public awareness in order to minimize the probability of unintentional movement of green crabs;
- Track the approximate abundances of green crab populations in previously invaded areas to allow forecasting of "outbreak" years. The ecological and economic impacts of green crabs are directly related to their abundance, so if outbreak years can be forecasted, this would provide an important warning for resource managers, production fisheries, aquaculture, and others that may be negatively affected by a large year class of green crabs. This would also provide additional time to jumpstart necessary management activities, and increase education and outreach efforts that might ameliorate the impacts of these species in years of high abundance;
- Monitor uninvaded areas to detect new invasions and range expansions. This would most effectively be accomplished by detecting the presence of postlarval green crabs and/or the presence of young-of-the-year (YOY) juvenile green crabs. To detect the presence of green crab postlarvae, biweekly to monthly sampling between April and June would be involved. Postlarvae can be sampled by deploying

bag collectors attached to docks, moorings, and buoys at replicate sites in harbors and bays. Bags are exchanged at the desired interval, and collected organisms are rinsed off the collectors, sorted, preserved, and counted. Young-of-the-year (YOY) juvenile green crabs are best sampled by deploying baited minnow traps in intertidal areas at replicate sites in harbors and bays in August and September; and

- Monitor invaded areas to forecast "outbreak" years. This is most effectively accomplished through monitoring the abundance of postlarval green crabs, including juvenile as well as adult crab populations.

Eradication, Control, and Mitigation

The Management Plan has identified and discussed various actions for this option. These actions are dependent upon the data, population abundance, and control tools currently available. Just as crab abundance differs by location, so too may the tools available for controlling the population be different. For example, early detection of new invasions may permit successful rapid response and extirpation at a local level. Small populations with no local recruitment may be easy to eradicate by selective harvest, chemical control, biological control, or genetic control measures, while population established with local recruitment may need control and containment in addition to selective harvest, chemical control, biological control, or genetic control measures. However, if the invasion has proceeded to the point that achieving population control on a broad scale is either perceived to be insurmountable or is not presently being addressed, mitigative control measures may be used in concert with broader regional or local control. Cooperative research on the seasonal dynamic of green crab recruitment and predation, along with field tests on the efficacy of various mitigation measures, should be conducted in those areas where green crab are abundant.

Information Access and Data Management

The objective for this component of the management plan is to share the information source(s) and data management needed to efficiently implement the national management plan. The objectives for this component of the plan are to:

- Provide current information on the research and management activities being conducted under the plan;
- describe standardized research and management protocols that allow others

to participate and contribute to full implementation of the plan;

- sustain a current synthesis of regional, national, and international results in the areas of research and management activities;
- create a directory of relevant contacts, activities, and information in support of the plan at the local, state, and regional levels; and
- develop educational outreach components in support of the plan.

The following three elements are discussed in detail in the Management Plan to meet the objectives for this component: (1) A system for information management and dissemination, (2) an advisory committee to guide development of the information system, and (3) a core group of scientists to provide syntheses of current research and management information. The implementation section of the plan has identified possible funding source(s), lead organization(s), and estimated cost to implement each task element identified and discussed in the plan.

This document was prepared by the Green Crab Control Working Group of the ANS Task Force, as authorized by section 4722(c) of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 4701 *et seq.*).

Dated: May 7, 2003.

Everett Wilson,

Acting Co-Chair, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, Acting Assistant Director—Fisheries and Habitat Conservation.

[FR Doc. 03–13995 Filed 6–3–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AK–910–1410–PG]

Notice of Public Meeting, Alaska Resource Advisory Council

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska Resource Advisory Council will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The meeting will be held July 10, 2003, 1–4 p.m., at the Wiseman Community Center, near milepost 188 of the Dalton Highway. The council will

conduct a brief meeting in conjunction with a field tour of the Dalton Highway, visit with area residents, and hear public comment.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Teresa McPherson, Alaska State Office, 222 W. 7th Avenue #13, Anchorage, AK 99513. Telephone (907) 271–3322 or e-mail Teresa_McPherson@ak.blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 13-member Council advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, on a variety of planning and management issues associated with public land management in Alaska. At this meeting, topics we plan to discuss include:

- Management of the Dalton Highway Utility Corridor
- Status of planning in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR–A)
- Other topics the Council may raise

All meetings are open to the public. The public may present written comments to the Council. Each formal Council meeting will also have time allotted for hearing public comments. Depending on the number of persons wishing to comment and time available, the time for individual oral comments may be limited. Individuals who plan to attend and need special assistance, such as sign language interpretation, transportation, or other reasonable accommodations, should contact BLM.

Dated: May 28, 2003.

Henri R. Bisson,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 03–13971 Filed 6–3–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–JA–M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AZ030–1020–00–241A; AZA 31042]

Notice of Realty Action; Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act Classification

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of realty action.

SUMMARY: The following public lands in Mohave County, Arizona have been examined and found suitable for classification for lease or conveyance to Mohave County Board of Supervisors under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 869 *et seq.*). The Mohave County Board of Supervisors proposes to use the land for a Library Station.

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Mohave County, Arizona

Township 21 N., R. 18 W., Sec 8,
N½SE¼SE¼NE¼NE¼.
Containing 2.5 acres, more or less.

The lands are not needed for Federal purposes. 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 reservations.

1. Provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes 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.

4. Those rights for road purposes granted to the Mohave County Board of Supervisors by permit number AZA–17931.

5. Those rights for the purposes granted to the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce permit number AZA–24652.

6. Subject to other valid existing rights.

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 86401.

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 proposed lease/conveyance or classification of the land to the Kingman Field Manager, 2475 Beverly Avenue, Kingman, Arizona 86401. 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Janna Paronto, Realty Specialist, Kingman Field Office, 2475 Beverly Avenue, Kingman, Arizona 86401, Telephone (928) 692–4449.