

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Notice of Availability of a Technical Agency Draft Recovery Plan for the Endangered *Catesbaea melanocarpa* for Review and Comment**

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability and public comment period.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service, announce the availability of the technical agency draft recovery plan for *Catesbaea melanocarpa* (no common name). *Catesbaea melanocarpa* is extremely rare and is known from Puerto Rico, St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), Barbuda, Antigua, and Guadeloupe. The technical agency draft recovery plan includes interim recovery objectives and criteria to be met in order to downlist *Catesbaea melanocarpa* to threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). Given the limited information on the current number of individuals throughout the species range and the limited knowledge on biology, habitat requirements and genetic information, we recognize the need to generate scientific information to better address the threats and limiting factors to this species and to develop specific recovery criteria. Therefore, the interim goal of this recovery plan is to protect and enhance existing populations to the point that downlisting to threatened is warranted. We are soliciting review and comment on this technical agency draft recovery plan from local, State, Territorial, and Federal agencies, and the public.

DATES: In order to be considered, we must receive comments on the technical agency draft recovery plan on or before November 26, 2004.

ADDRESSES: If you wish to review this technical agency draft recovery plan, you may obtain a copy by contacting the Boquerón Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 491, Boquerón, Puerto Rico 00622 (telephone 787-851-7297), or by visiting our recovery plan Web site at <http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans>. If you wish to comment, you may submit your comments by one of the following methods:

1. You may submit written comments and materials to the Field Supervisor, at the above address.
2. You may hand-deliver written comments to our Boquerón Field Office,

at the above address, or fax your comments to (787) 851-7440.

Comments and materials received are available for public inspection on request, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marelisa Rivera at the above address (Telephone 787-851-7297, ext. 231).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

We listed *Catesbaea melanocarpa* as endangered on March 17, 1999, under the Act (64 FR 13116). *Catesbaea melanocarpa* is a small spiny shrub of the family Rubiaceae. It belongs to a genus which consists of ten or more species of spiny shrubs. It is a branching shrub which may reach approximately 9.8 feet (ft) (3.0 meters (m)) in height. Spines are borne at every internode (space between nodes) and are from 0.39 to 0.78 inches (in) (1.00 to 2.00 centimeters (cm)) long. Leaves are small, from 0.19 to 1.0 in (5.00 to 25.00 millimeters (mm)) long, and 0.07 to 0.58 in (2.00 to 15.00 mm) wide, often opposite. The flowers are white, solitary or paired, and almost lacking a stalk in the axils. The petals are united in the form of a funnel and measure from 0.31 to 0.39 in (8.00 to 10.00 mm) long. The fruit is black, spherical, and 0.19 to 0.23 in (5.00 to 6.00 mm) in diameter. The two-celled fruit contains five to seven seeds in each cell.

Catesbaea melanocarpa is extremely rare. In the U.S. Caribbean, it is known from only one individual in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico and approximately 100 individuals in one location in St. Croix, USVI. All known individuals in Puerto Rico and the USVI occur on privately-owned lands. The species is also found on the islands of Barbuda, Antigua, and Guadeloupe; however, little is known of their status on these islands.

Because so few individuals of *Catesbaea melanocarpa* are known to occur in limited areas, the risk of extinction is extremely high. Both known locations are privately-owned and subject to pressure for development. The location in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, is currently proposed for a high density residential/tourist development. In St. Croix, the population is subject to impacts from intense grazing activities and the land is also subject to pressure for a golf course development. Catastrophic natural events, such as hurricanes, may dramatically affect forest species composition and structure, felling large trees and creating numerous canopy gaps. The population in St. Croix lost individuals following the passing of Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

Deforestation for residential and tourist development may also pose imminent threats to the survival of the species. Fire may also be a threat to the known population on the island of St. Croix. Fire is not a natural component of subtropical dry forest in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. Species found in this type of forest are not fire adapted.

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the endangered species program. To help guide this recovery effort, we are preparing recovery plans for most listed species. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for downlisting or delisting, and estimate time and cost for implementing recovery measures.

The Act requires the development of recovery plans for listed species, unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act requires us to provide a public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment during recovery plan development. We will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. We and other Federal agencies will take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

Given the limited information on the current number of individuals throughout the species range and the limited knowledge on biology, habitat requirements and genetic information, we recognize the need to generate scientific information to better address the threats and limiting factors to this species and to develop specific recovery criteria. Therefore, the interim goal of this recovery plan is to protect and enhance existing populations to the point that downlisting to threatened is warranted. In order to achieve our interim recovery goal, we believe it will be necessary to protect and enhance habitat known to support existing populations through landowner conservation agreements or easements, enhance existing populations, establish new self-sustaining populations within known range of the species, and conduct research on key biological and genetic issues, including effective propagation techniques, necessary to define recovery criteria. As these interim recovery criteria are met, the status of the species will be reviewed and it will be considered for downlisting to threatened on the Federal List of Endangered and

Threatened Wildlife and Plants (50 CFR part 17).

Public Comments Solicited

We solicit written comments on the recovery plan described. We will consider all comments received by the date specified above prior to final approval of the draft recovery plan.

Our practice is to make all 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 addresses from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. In some circumstances, we would withhold also from the rulemaking record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish for us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. 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.

Authority: The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: August 2, 2004.

Sam D. Hamilton,

Regional Director, Southeast Region.

[FR Doc. 04-21565 Filed 9-24-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-200-0777-XZ-241A]

Notice of Meeting, Front Range Resource Advisory Council (Colorado)

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, 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), Front Range Resource Advisory Council (RAC), will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The meeting will be held November 3, 2004, from 9:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Holy Cross Abbey Community Center, 2951 E. Highway 50, Canon City, Colorado 81212.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ken Smith, (719) 269-8500.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 15 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 the Royal Gorge Field Office and San Luis Valley, Colorado. Planned agenda topics include: Manager updates on current land management issues; San Luis Valley and Arkansas River Travel Management Plan updates/discussion and a discussion on the Simpson and McIntire Property. All meetings are open to the public. The public is encouraged to make oral comments to the Council at 9:15 a.m. or written statements may be submitted for the Councils consideration. Depending on the number of persons wishing to comment and time available, the time for individual oral comments may be limited. Summary minutes for the Council Meeting will be maintained in the Royal Gorge Field Office and will be available for public inspection and reproduction during regular business hours within thirty (30) days following the meeting. Meeting Minutes are also available at: http://www.blm.gov/rac/co/frac/co_fr.htm.

Dated: September 17, 2004.

Linda McGlothlen,

Acting Royal Gorge Field Manager.

[FR Doc. 04-21563 Filed 9-24-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-JB-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-310-0777-XG]

Notice of Public Meeting: Northwest California Resource Advisory Council

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Public Meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Northwest California Resource Advisory Council will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The meeting will be held Thursday and Friday, Nov. 4 and 5, 2004, at the Bureau of Land Management Ukiah Field Office, 2550 North State St., Ukiah, Calif. On Thursday, the council will convene at 10 a.m. and depart immediately for a

field tour to the Hopland Experimental Station in Hopland, Calif. On Friday, the meeting begins at 8 a.m. in the Conference Room of the BLM Ukiah Field Office. Time for public comment has been set aside for 1 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rich Burns, Manager, BLM Ukiah Field Office, (707) 468-4000; or BLM Public Affairs Officer Joseph J. Fontana, (530) 252-5332.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 12-member council advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the BLM, on a variety of planning and management issues associated with public land management in Northwest California. At this meeting, agenda topics will include discussion of a new Resource Management Plan for the Ukiah Field Office, comments on the draft management plan/environmental impact statement for the California Coastal National Monument, discussion of the BLM recreation program in California, and an overview of T-21 legislation. The RAC members will also hear status reports from the Arcata, Redding and Ukiah field office managers. All meetings are open to the public. Members of the public may present written comments to the council. Each formal council meeting will have time allocated for public comments. Depending on the number of persons wishing to speak, and the time available, the time for individual comments may be limited. Members of the public are welcome on field tours, but they must provide their own transportation and lunch. Individuals who plan to attend and need special assistance, such as sign language interpretation and other reasonable accommodations, should contact the BLM as provided above.

Dated: September 20, 2004.

Joseph J. Fontana,

Public Affairs Officer.

[FR Doc. 04-21607 Filed 9-24-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-40-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Notice and Agenda for Meeting of the Royalty Policy Committee

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service (MMS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: At the first meeting of the newly chartered Royalty Policy Committee (RPC), a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and parliamentarian will be elected and bylaws for meeting