

occupy roost sites under exfoliating bark of dead trees that retain large, thick slabs of peeling bark. These trees are typically within canopy gaps in a forest, in a fenceline, or along a wooded edge. Habitats in which maternity roosts occur include riparian zones, bottomland and floodplain habitats, wooded wetlands, and upland communities. Indiana bats typically forage in semi-open to closed forested habitats, forest edges, and riparian areas.

Threats to the Indiana bat vary during its annual cycle. At the hibernacula, threats include modifications to caves, mines, and surrounding areas that change airflow and alter microclimate in the hibernacula. Human disturbance and vandalism pose significant threats during hibernation through direct mortality and by inducing arousal and consequent depletion of fat reserves. Natural catastrophes can also have a significant effect during winter because of the concentration of individuals in a relatively few sites. During summer months, possible threats relate to the loss and degradation of forested habitat. Migration pathways and swarming sites may also be affected by habitat loss and degradation. In addition to these threats, significant information gaps remain regarding the species' ecology that hinder sound decision-making on how best to manage and protect the species.

The objective of the recovery plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of Indiana bat so that protection by the Act is no longer necessary. We may consider Indiana bat for classification from Endangered to Threatened status when the likelihood of the species becoming extinct in the foreseeable future has been precluded by achievement of the following criteria: (1) Permanent protection of a minimum of 80 percent of Priority-1 hibernacula in each of four Recovery Units (Ozark-Central, Midwest, Appalachian Mountains, and Northeast), with a minimum of one Priority-1 hibernaculum protected in each unit; (2) A minimum overall population estimate equal to the 2005 population estimate of 457,000; and (3) Documentation that shows important hibernacula within each Recovery Unit have a positive annual population growth rate over the next 10-year period (i.e., five survey periods).

We will consider Indiana bat for delisting when the likelihood of the species becoming threatened in the foreseeable future has been reduced by the achievement of the following criteria: (1) Permanent protection of a minimum of 50 percent of Priority-2 hibernacula in each Recovery Unit; (2) A minimum overall population estimate

equal to the 2005 population estimate of 457,000; and (3) Documentation that shows a positive population growth rate within each Recovery Unit over an additional five sequential survey periods (i.e., 10 years). If research on summer habitat requirements indicates the quality or quantity of maternity habitat is threatening recovery of the species, the Service will amend these criteria. Additional details on reclassification and delisting criteria are available in the recovery plan.

We will meet these criteria through the following actions: (1) Conserving and managing hibernacula and their winter populations, (2) Conserving and managing summer habitat to maximize survival and fecundity, (3) Planning and conducting research essential for recovery, and (4) Developing and implementing a public information and outreach program.

In addition to seeking comments on the content of the entire recovery plan, we request any information on the appropriate scope and breadth of this recovery plan as it relates to the inclusion of available science for summer habitat. Furthermore, we are seeking any information related to hybridization that may be occurring with other bats within the range of Indiana bat. We are interested to know about this, the extent of such hybridization and its potential to affect the Indiana bat as a species. We also request information about the use of records of captured individuals to describe the summer, winter and maternity distribution of the species. In addition to soliciting comment on the recovery plan, we are seeking comment on a draft survey protocol for determining presence or probable absence of Indiana bats at cave portals or abandoned mines that could serve as hibernacula. Our goal is to incorporate comments and finalize the draft survey protocol in time to be included in the approved Indiana Bat Recovery Plan. The draft survey protocol, with instructions for commenting, is available on the Internet (see **ADDRESSES**).

#### Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan and the draft survey protocol. All comments received by the date specified will be considered prior to approval of the plan. Written comments and materials regarding the draft recovery plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor (see **ADDRESSES**). Comments and materials received about the draft recovery plan will be available by appointment for public inspection during normal business hours at the

above address. For information on commenting on the draft survey protocol, see **ADDRESSES**.

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

Dated: April 4, 2007.

**Lynn Lewis,**

*Deputy Assistant Regional Director,  
Ecological Services, Region 3, Fort Snelling,  
Minnesota.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge, Seal Beach, Orange County, CA

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment; announcement of public open house meetings; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, we), intend to gather information necessary to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and associated environmental documents for the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). We furnish this notice in compliance with our CCP policy to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to be considered in the planning process.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments by May 18, 2007. Two public open house meetings will be held during the scoping phase of the comprehensive conservation plan development process. Special mailings, newspaper articles, and other media announcements will be used to inform the public and Tribe, state, and local governments of the dates and opportunities for input throughout the planning process.

**ADDRESSES:** Send your comments or requests for more information to Victoria Touchstone, Refuge Planner, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad, CA 92011; telephone: 760-431-9440 ex. 349; fax: 760-930-0256; or electronic mail: [Victoria\\_Touchstone@fws.gov](mailto:Victoria_Touchstone@fws.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Victoria Touchstone, Refuge Planner, San Diego NWR Complex, 760-431-9440 extension 349.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** With this notice, we initiate the CCP for the Seal Beach NWR with headquarters in Carlsbad, CA. Additional information is available by visiting the Refuge Planning section of the San Diego NWR Complex Web site at <http://sandiegorefuges.fws.gov>.

## Background

### *The CCP Process*

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee), requires the Service to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose of developing a comprehensive conservation plan is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year strategy for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management, conservation, legal mandates, and Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, plans identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, which may include opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

We establish each unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, including the Seal Beach NWR, with specific purposes. We use these purposes to develop and prioritize management goals and objectives within the National Wildlife Refuge System mission, and to guide which public uses will occur on these Refuges. The planning process is a way for us and the public to evaluate management goals and objectives for the best possible conservation efforts of this important wildlife habitat, while providing for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities that are compatible with the Refuge's establishing purposes and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

We will conduct a comprehensive conservation planning process that will provide opportunities for Tribal, State, and local governments; agencies; organizations; and the public to participate in issue scoping and comment. You are encouraged to provide your input on issues, concerns, ideas, and suggestions for the future management of the Seal Beach NWR in Seal Beach, CA. The input provided during the scoping process will help us answer questions such as:

1. What problems or issues should be addressed in the CCP?
2. What changes or additions would improve conditions on the Seal Beach NWR?

Our Planning Team will take into consideration all of the comments it receives as part of the scoping process; however, we will not reference individual comments in our reports.

We will also give the public an opportunity to provide input at the open houses we have scheduled to scope issues and concerns. You may also submit written comments anytime during the planning process by mailing or e-mailing them to the above address.

We will conduct the environmental review of this project in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*); NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508); other appropriate Federal laws and regulations; and our policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations. All comments we receive from individuals on our environmental assessments and environmental impact statements become part of the official public record.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

All information provided voluntarily by mail, phone, or at public meetings becomes part of our official public record (*i.e.*, names, addresses, letters of comment, input recorded during meetings). If a private citizen or organization requests this information under the Freedom of Information Act, we may provide informational copies.

### *Seal Beach NWR*

Seal Beach NWR is located about 25 miles south of downtown Los Angeles in northwestern Orange County, California. The approximately 965-acre Refuge overlays a portion of Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach (NWSSB) and is situated between the City of Seal Beach to the north and west and the City of Huntington Beach to the south and east.

Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Seal Beach NWR in Public Law 92–408 on August 29, 1972. The Secretary of the Interior, with the advice and consent of the

Secretary of the Navy, established the Refuge on July 11, 1974. The Refuge was established to provide for the conservation, protection, and propagation of native species of fish and wildlife, including migratory birds that are threatened with extinction.

Protected within the Refuge is one of the largest remaining salt marshes along the southern California coast. These coastal wetlands support three federally listed species including the endangered California brown pelican, light-footed clapper rail, and California least tern. The state listed endangered Belding's savannah sparrows, along with the light-footed clapper rail and California least tern, nest and raise their young within the boundaries of the Refuge.

As a refuge that overlays a Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach NWR must be managed in a manner that considers both the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the mission of the Naval Weapons Station. To that end, we will be coordinating with the Navy in the development of the CCP for Seal Beach NWR. The Navy has also been coordinating with us in the development of its Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan for NWSSB.

### *Preliminary Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities*

During the initial pre-planning phase of the CCP process, we identified a number of issues, concerns, and opportunities that may be addressed in the CCP. We have briefly summarized these issues below. We will likely identify additional issues as a result of the public scoping process.

**Habitat Management:** Measures necessary to preserve or improve the quality of the Refuge's coastal salt marsh habitat, which is influenced by such factors as subsidence, limited freshwater flows, and sea level rise, should be evaluated during the planning process.

**Endangered Species Recovery:** Listed species that nest on Seal Beach NWR could benefit from an evaluation of the management actions currently implemented to improve reproductive success for these species.

**Erosion:** Appropriate measures for remediating ongoing erosion problems along the banks and tidal channels of restored salt marsh habitat on the Refuge should be evaluated as part of the CCP process.

**Public Use:** Understanding that as an overlay refuge, public uses cannot compromise the mission of the Naval Weapons Station, are there opportunities for improving the current public use program on the Refuge?

Dated: April 10, 2007.  
**Ken McDermond,**  
*Acting Manager, California/Nevada Operations, Sacramento, CA.*  
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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[NM-120-06-1610-AL]

**Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Socorro Draft Resource Management Plan Revision and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DRMPR/DEIS), New Mexico**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) planning regulations, the BLM hereby gives notice that the Socorro DRMPR/DEIS is available for public review and comment.

**DATES:** To ensure that they will be considered, BLM must receive written comments on the DRMPR/DEIS within 90 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its NOA in the **Federal Register**. The BLM will announce future meetings or hearings and any other public involvement activities at least 15 days in advance through public notices, local media, and/or mailings.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments may be mailed to Socorro Field Office, Attention: Brian Bellew, 901 S. Highway 85, Socorro, New Mexico 87801. You

may also comment via e-mail at: *Brian\_Bellew@nm.blm.gov*; or by fax at (505) 835-0223. Comments that are e-mailed or faxed must include "Comments on Draft RMPR/DEIS" in the subject line. You may also hand deliver comments to the address listed above. A minimum of two public meetings will be held during the 90-day public review and comment period during which oral comments will be accepted and recorded. Exact dates, places, and times of public meetings will be posted on the New Mexico BLM web page (*http://www.nm.blm.gov*) and advertised in local media.

Individual respondents may request confidentiality. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Brian Bellew, Planning Team Leader, at the Socorro Field Office (see address above), telephone (505) 838-1273.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The planning area encompasses all lands, regardless of jurisdiction, within Socorro and Catron counties, New Mexico totaling 8.7 million acres. A map of the planning area is available on the Web site (*http://www.nm.blm.gov*). The decision area for the DRMPR/DEIS

includes 1.5 million acres of BLM-administered public lands and 6.1 million acres of Federal mineral estate located in both counties.

The DRMPR/DEIS describes the physical, cultural, historic, and socioeconomic resources in and around the planning area and documents the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of four alternatives for BLM-administered lands and resources within the planning area. The impact analysis focuses on resource issues and concerns identified during scoping and public involvement activities. Issues identified during scoping (not in priority order) include areas of special designation, soil and vegetation conditions, energy development, transportation and access, land use, and recreation and heritage tourism opportunities.

Four alternatives were analyzed in detail. The No-Action Alternative, Alternative A represents the continuation of existing management, which is defined by the 1989 Socorro RMP and subsequent amendments. Alternative B, BLM's preferred alternative, proposes managing the public lands for multiple uses and sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the lands for present and future generations. Alternative C emphasizes resource protection, while Alternative D emphasizes commodity production and use while still complying with applicable law, regulation, and BLM policy. Within all alternatives, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) have been identified to protect resources. These ACECs and associated acreages are listed in the table below. More detailed management prescriptions in these areas are provided in Table 2-2 of the DRMPR/DEIS.

**ACRES OF BLM-MANAGED SURFACE ESTATE PROPOSED TO BE MANAGED AS ACECS UNDER THE ALTERNATIVES IN THE DRMPR/DEIS**

ACEC use limitations	Alternative A	Preferred alternative (Alternative B)	Alternative C	Alternative D
Agua Fria .....	9,571 .....	Incorporate into Cerro Pomo ACEC.	Incorporate into Zuni Salt Lake ACEC.	Eliminate.
Cerro Pomo: Limit motor vehicle travel to designated routes. Exclude ROW. Apply fluid mineral leasing stip. S-VRM-11.	.....	26,284 .....	Incorporate into Zuni Salt Lake ACEC.	449.
Horse Mountain: Limit motor vehicle travel to designated routes. Exclude ROW. Apply fluid mineral leasing stip. S-NSO-W. Exclude vegetative material sales. Exclude grazing on unallotted lands.	7,490 .....	5388 .....	5388 .....	2596.