

County would likely be sold to individual landowners, who would be responsible for obtaining individual incidental take permits pursuant to section 10 under ESA and individual section 404 permits under the Clean Water Act. Leased lands would remain an island within the privately-owned land. Land leased by CSI from BLM in Lincoln County (7,548 acres) would continue to be available for the full suite of activities authorized in the Land Lease Agreement.

Alternative 1—Full and Immediate Development of a New Town Consisting of a Planned Community without Resource Management Features: This alternative would result in the issuance of an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10 of the ESA by the Service and a section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act by the Corps that would allow development of the entire CSI-owned private and leased lands in Lincoln County. The Applicant's private land would be available for development, while lands leased by the Applicant from BLM would be available for activities specified in the Land Lease Agreement. All land owned and leased by the Applicant would be available for development activities immediately upon issuance of an incidental take permit and other required regulatory permits.

Public Involvement

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the **Federal Register** for this project on December 4, 2001 (66 FR 63065). The Plan described in the 2001 NOI included privately-owned, developable lands and leased land in Lincoln and Clark counties, Nevada. A second notice was published on September 12, 2006 (71 FR 53704) because the amount of land included in the Plan was modified. The Plan described in the second NOI includes private, developable lands in Lincoln County only, as well as leased land to be used for conservation in Clark and Lincoln counties. Public scoping meetings were held on September 26 and 27, 2006, in Alamo and Moapa, Nevada, respectively. A NOI to reopen the public comment period and to correct inaccurate contact information provided in the September 12, 2006 notice was published on November 2, 2006 (71 FR 64555).

Public Comments

The Service and Applicant invite the public to comment on the draft Plan, draft IA, and draft EIS during a 60-day public comment period beginning on the date of this notice. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail

address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The Service will evaluate the application, associated documents, and comments submitted to them to prepare a final EIS. A permit decision will be made no sooner than 30 days after the publication of the final EIS and completion of the Record of Decision.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(a) of the Federal ESA and Service regulations for implementing NEPA, as amended (40 CFR 1506.6).

Dated: October 17, 2007.

Ken McDermond,

Deputy Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office, Sacramento, CA.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Interagency Florida Panther Response Plan

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability: plan and environmental assessment (EA); request for public comment.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce an EA for our Interagency Florida Panther Response Plan. Our EA considers alternatives for managing conflicts between humans and the endangered Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*).

DATES: We must receive any written comments on the EA at the Service's Field or Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**) on or before December 3, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Layne Hamilton, Refuge Manager, Florida Panther and Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuges, 3860 Tollgate Blvd., Suite 300, Naples, FL 34114, or Southeast Regional Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 420, Atlanta, GA 30345 (Attn: Elizabeth Souheaver).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Layne Hamilton, Refuge Manager, Florida Panther and Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuges (see **ADDRESSES**), at 239/353-8442, extension 227 (telephone), or Ms. Elizabeth Souheaver, Area IV Supervisor (see

ADDRESSES), at 404/679-7163 (telephone) or 404/679-4082 (facsimile). For information on how to request documents for review or to submit your comments, see "Public Document Review and Comment."

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We announce an EA for our Interagency Florida Panther Response Plan. Our EA considers alternatives for managing conflicts between humans and the endangered Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*). One of the rarest large mammals in the United States, this species is protected as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; Act), and Florida statutes. Because of the panther's potential for extinction, conflicts with humans raise issues that require careful consideration and action to conserve the species and protect the public.

Florida panthers occur primarily in southern Florida, with most individuals residing south of Lake Okeechobee. Recovery actions over the past 25 years, particularly genetic augmentation initiated in 1995, enabled the population to grow from 30-50 animals in 1995 to 80-100 animals in 2005. At the same time, the human population of Collier County, where most panthers reside, more than doubled in 14 years (1990-2004), from 152,000 to 306,000. Because of increases in numbers of both people and panthers, urban-suburban areas now interface with panther habitat, increasing the possibility of human-panther interactions. Management guidelines are needed to provide more definitive guidance to respond and manage panther and human interactions and to educate the public about appropriate behavior when living and recreating in panther habitat.

In accordance with mandates established under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we are required to consider a full range of reasonable alternatives for addressing and responding to major public issues, management concerns, and resource conservation opportunities associated with issues arising from human-panther interactions.

We analyzed three alternatives. Alternative A (Preferred Action) proposes managing human-panther interactions with an interagency response team and an established plan that prioritizes public safety and evaluates each situation by analyzing panther behavior and human activity. Alternative B (No Action) does not utilize an interagency team or a response plan, but responds to human-panther interactions on a case-by-case

basis without established protocols or guidelines. Alternative C includes a response team and plan that differs from Alternative A by providing rigid protocols based on frequency of panther sightings and proximity to human-occupied structures, without considering panther behavior or influences of human activity on panther behavior.

We have coordinated this proposal with the National Park Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and local Indian tribes. We announced the availability of our draft EA in the May 25, 2006, **Federal Register** (71 FR 30156). We invited the public to submit written comments on the draft guidelines and response plan by July 24, 2006. Additionally, to improve the quality and credibility of the scientific information, we conducted a formal peer review process for the draft plan. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, NPS, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Indian Tribe, and the Service provided lists of possible peer reviewers, from which we selected six peer reviewers. All but one peer reviewer provided comments. We received five letters from the public and/or environmental community and one letter from a tribe. We have included responses to specific comments in the EA appendices.

Tribal and public comments; peer reviews; and discussions between us, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, and NPS helped us identify several issues and concerns. Our revisions to the EA and plan include the following: (1) Discussion of cultural resource impacts to the local tribes; (2) elimination of the first two chapters of the Response Plan (Chapter 1: Florida Panther—Status, Biology and Recovery; Chapter 2: Living with Florida Panthers); (3) reorganization of the plan to reduce redundancy and clarify management actions; (4) separation of the section on depredation from the other human-panther interaction classifications (sighting(s), encounter(s), incidents, threat, attack), because depredations are distinctly different from direct human-panther interactions; and (5) inclusion of risk factor with each classification.

Public Document Review and Comment

If you wish to review the EA, you may obtain a copy on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/verobeach>. You may also obtain a copy by writing the Service's Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta (see **ADDRESSES**.) Please reference the EA associated with the Interagency Florida Panther Response

Plan in such requests. Documents will also be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the Regional Office in Atlanta (see **ADDRESSES**.)

If you wish to comment, you may submit comments by any one of several methods. Please reference the EA associated with the Interagency Florida Panther Response Plan in such comments. You may mail comments to the Service's Regional Office in Atlanta (see **ADDRESSES**), or you may comment via electronic mail (e-mail) to pantherresponseplan@fws.gov. Please also include your name and return address in your e-mail message. If you do not receive a confirmation from us that we have received your e-mail message, contact us directly at either telephone number listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Finally, you may hand deliver comments to either Service office listed under **ADDRESSES**.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware 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 your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority: We provide this notice under NEPA regulations at 40 CFR 1506.6.

Dated: September 7, 2007.

Cynthia Dohner,

Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region.
[FR Doc. E7-21579 Filed 11-1-07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Alternatives Workgroup

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a meeting of the Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Alternatives Workgroup (Workgroup). The Workgroup's purpose is to provide, in an advisory capacity, recommendations and advice on research and implementation of sea lamprey control techniques alternative to lampricide that are technically feasible, cost effective, and environmentally safe. The primary

objective of the meeting will be to discuss potential research initiatives that may enhance alternative sea lamprey control techniques. The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: The Workgroup will meet on Wednesday, December 5, 2007, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., with an alternate date of Monday, December 10, 2007, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, should the meeting need to be cancelled due to inclement weather. Any member of the public who wants to find out whether the meeting has been postponed may contact Stefi Flanders of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 802-872-0629 ext. 10 (telephone); or Stefi_Flanders@fws.gov (electronic mail) during regular business hours on the primary meeting date.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory, Room 207, 1 College Street, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT; telephone 802-859-3086.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave Tilton, Designated Federal Officer, Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Alternatives Workgroup, Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Resources Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 11 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452 (U.S. mail); 802-872-0629 (telephone); or Dave_Tilton@fws.gov (electronic mail).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We publish this notice under section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.). The Workgroup's specific responsibilities are to provide advice regarding the implementation of sea lamprey control methods alternative to lampricides, to recommend priorities for research to be conducted by cooperating organizations and demonstration projects to be developed and funded by State and Federal agencies, and to assist Federal and State agencies with the coordination of alternative sea lamprey control research to advance the state of the science in Lake Champlain and the Great Lakes.

Dated: October 5, 2007.

Thomas J. Healy,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.

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