

population levels, the agreed upon baseline for the property is 714 acres and the applicant would be allowed to return his property to this baseline condition at the end of the permit term.

This proposed SHA is intended to result in a net conservation benefit by maintaining northern Idaho ground squirrel habitat within a 714-ac (289-ha) baseline area, allowing access to researchers affiliated with the Service or Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG); requiring notification of the Service and IDFG prior to activities that will result in "take" of the species so that they may capture and relocate affected individuals if appropriate; allowing the Service and IDFG personnel access to the property to conduct ground squirrel conservation activities approved by the applicant such as habitat maintenance and enhancement, ground squirrel surveys, and translocation of ground squirrels; and establishing some limits on the conduct of chemical rodent control in the squirrel management area. In addition, the applicant may also work with the Service and others to implement timber-related habitat enhancement measures that will potentially increase habitat for squirrels within the covered area.

The biological goal of ground squirrel conservation measures in the SHA is to expand the northern Idaho ground squirrel population at this site within and beyond the 714-ac (289-ha) baseline area by reducing threats and enhancing habitat for the species. The proposed SHA is intended to contribute to the recovery of the northern Idaho ground squirrel by reducing threats, expanding and increasing the viability of the ground squirrel population at this site, improving habitat conditions, and potentially facilitating translocation of ground squirrels to other sites in need of population supplementation, as appropriate.

Consistent with the Service's Safe Harbor policy, under the proposed SHA and the proposed Permit, we would authorize incidental take of northern Idaho ground squirrels as a result of the following covered activities within the Covered Area provided they are carried out in accordance with the terms of the SHA: livestock husbandry; farming operations; logging; recreation; construction of buildings and roads that does not diminish the baseline area; existing residential use; and fire management activities.

We provide this notice pursuant to section 10(c) of the Act and the implementing regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1506.6). We will evaluate the Permit application, associated

documents, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the Permit application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act and to ensure adequate NEPA compliance. If we determine that all of these requirements are met, we will sign the proposed SHA and issue an enhancement of survival permit under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Act to the applicant for take of northern Idaho ground squirrels incidental to otherwise lawful activities in accordance with the terms of the SHA. We will not make our final decision until after the end of the 30-day public comment period and will fully consider all comments received during the public comment period.

Dated: December 19, 2008.

Jeffery L. Foss,

Field Supervisor, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office, Boise, Idaho.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

Notice of an Open Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI)

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of a meeting of the ACWI. This meeting is to discuss broad policy-related topics relating to national water initiatives, and the development and dissemination of water information, through reports from ACWI subgroups. The agenda will include status of a proposal from the ACWI Subcommittee on Ground Water; discussion of a new Extreme Storms subgroup proposed within the Subcommittee on Hydrology; status of the National Monitoring Network for U.S. Coastal Waters and their Tributaries; request for ACWI approval of an update to the Water Quality Data Elements User Guide that would include physical habitat elements; discussion of ACWI participation in the National Environmental Status and Trends indicators project; and updates on recent activities of the Methods and Data Comparability Board.

The ACWI was established under the authority of the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M92-01 and the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The purpose of the ACWI is to provide a forum for water information users and professionals to advise the Federal Government on activities and plans that may improve the effectiveness of meeting the Nation's water information needs. Member organizations help to foster communications between the

Federal and non-Federal sectors on sharing water information.

Membership, limited to 35 organizations, represents a wide range of water resources interests and functions. Representation on the ACWI includes all levels of government, academia, private industry, and professional and technical societies. For more information on the ACWI, its membership, subgroups, meetings and activities, please see the Web site at: <http://ACWI.gov>.

DATES: The formal meeting will convene at 9 a.m. on February 10, 2009, and will adjourn at 12 noon on February 11, 2009. The meeting will be followed by a public forum on the National Environmental Status and Trends Indicators project, which will begin at 1 p.m. on February 11, 2009 and adjourn at 12 noon on February 12, 2009.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Reston, Virginia, area, within a few miles of Dulles International Airport. Information on the exact location can be obtained from Ms. Wendy E. Norton, ACWI Executive Secretary, whose contact information is shown below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Wendy E. Norton, ACWI Executive Secretary and Chief, Water Information Coordination Program, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 417, Reston, VA 20192. *Telephone:* 703-648-6810; *Fax:* 703-648-5644; *e-mail:* wenorton@usgs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This meeting is open to the public. Up to a half hour will be set aside for public comment. Persons wishing to make a brief presentation (up to 5 minutes) are asked to provide a written request with a description of the general subject to Ms. Norton at the above address no later than February 3, 2009. It is requested that 65 copies of a written statement be submitted at the time of the meeting for distribution to members of the ACWI and placement in the official file. Any member of the public may submit written information and (or) comments to Ms. Norton for distribution at the ACWI meeting.

Dated: January 16, 2009.

Katherine Lins,

Chief, Office of Water Information.

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