### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**[FWS–HQ–R–2017–N183; FXRS8511090000–XXX–FF09R40000]**

**Draft Long-Range Transportation Plans for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lands in Regions 2, 6, and 8**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of three draft long-range transportation plans for public review and comment. These draft long-range transportation plans outline strategies for improving and maintaining transportation assets that provide access to Service-managed lands in Region 2 (Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), Region 6 (Colorado, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming), and Region 8 (California and Nevada) over the next 20 years.

**DATES:** We must receive written comments on or before August 20, 2018.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Introduction**

With this notice, we make the draft long-range transportation plans (LRTPs) for Regions 2, 6, and 8 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service available for public review and comment. When finalized, the LRTPs will apply to Service-managed lands in Region 2 (Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), Region 6 (Colorado, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming), and Region 8 (California and Nevada).

**Background**

The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. 114–94) requires that all Federal land management agencies conduct long-range transportation planning in a manner that is consistent with metropolitan planning organizations and State departments of transportation planning. We initiated these LRTPs to bring the Service into compliance with the FAST Act and to achieve the following goals:

- Establish a defensible structure for sound transportation planning and decision-making;
- Establish a vision, mission, goals, and objectives for transportation planning in each of these three Service Regions;
- Implement coordinated and cooperative transportation partnerships in an effort to improve the Service’s transportation infrastructure;
- Integrate transportation planning and funding for national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries into existing and future Service management plans and strategies;
- Increase awareness of alternative transportation systems and associated benefits;
- Develop best management practices for transportation improvements on Service lands; and
- Serve as a pilot project for the implementation of a region-level transportation planning process within the Service.

**LRTP Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

Through a collaborative effort, the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program, in cooperation with the planning and visitor services programs within these three Regions, have contributed to defining the mission, goals, and objectives presented in this document. The resulting mission, goals, and objectives are intended to provide a systematic approach to guide the process for evaluating and selecting transportation improvement programs for the Service lands in these Regions. These guiding principles have shaped the development, conclusions, and recommendations of these LRTPs. While each Region’s specific mission, vision,
goals, and objectives differ slightly, they are substantively similar.

Mission: To support the Service’s mission by connecting people to fish, wildlife, and their habitats through strategic implementation of transportation programs.

Goals and Objectives: Each of these long-range transportation plans has six substantively similar goals: Safety; access, mobility, and connectivity; asset management; environmental protection; visitor experience; and partnership. Region 8 has an additional seventh goal: Planning. Under each goal, each Region presents distinct objectives that move the Service to the goal. Please see the individual draft LRTPs for more information.

Next Steps

After the comment period ends, the Service will analyze the comments received and consider them in preparation of final LRTPs.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email 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.

Gregory J. Sheehan,
Principal Deputy Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Mendel Stewart, Field Supervisor, at the above street address or telephone number (see ADDRESSES).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
Background

Recovery of endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of our endangered species program and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Recovery means improvement of the status of listed species to the point at which listing is no longer necessary under the criteria specified in section 4(a)(1) of the Act. The Act requires the development of recovery plans for listed species, unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species.

Pursuant to section 4(f) of the Act, a recovery plan must, to the maximum extent practicable, include (1) A description of site-specific management actions as may be necessary to achieve the plan’s goals for the conservation and survival of the species; (2) objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would support a determination under section 4(a)(1) that the species should be removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Species; and (3) estimates of the time and costs required to carry out those measures needed to achieve the plan’s goal and to achieve intermediate steps toward that goal.

The Service has revised its approach to recovery planning; the revised process is called Recovery Planning and Implementation (RPI). The RPI process is intended to reduce the time needed to develop and implement recovery plans, increase recovery plan relevancy over a longer timeframe, and add flexibility to recovery plans so they can be adjusted to new information or circumstances. Under RPI, a recovery plan will include statutorily required elements (objective, measurable criteria, site-specific management actions, and estimates of time and costs), along with a concise introduction and our strategy for how we plan to achieve species recovery. The RPI recovery plan is supported by a separate Species Status Assessment, or in cases such as this one, a species biological report that provides the background information and threat assessment, which are key to recovery plan development. The essential component to flexible implementation under RPI is producing a separate working document called the Recovery Implementation Strategy (implementation strategy). The implementation strategy steps down from the more general description of actions described in the recovery plan to detail the specific, near-term activities needed to implement the recovery plan. The implementation strategy will be adaptable by being able to incorporate new information without having to concurrently revise the recovery plan, unless changes to statutory elements are required.

The Service listed the southern California distinct population segment of mountain yellow-legged frog (Rana muscosa) (hereafter “southern R. muscosa”) as endangered in 2002 (67 FR 44382, July 2, 2002), and critical habitat was designated for the species in 2006 (71 FR 54344, September 14, 2006). Historically, southern R. muscosa was widely distributed in at least 166 known populations in watersheds across four mountain ranges in southern California. Currently, the species is restricted to 10 small, isolated populations in the headwaters of streams or tributaries within the San Gabriel, San Bernardino, and San Jacinto Mountains. Primary habitat for the southern R. muscosa includes streams with permanent (perennial) water that have steep gradients with numerous pools and small waterfalls. The smallest creeks are likely not inhabited by southern R. muscosa.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Draft Recovery Plan for the Southern California Distinct Population Segment of the Mountain Yellow-legged Frog (Rana muscosa)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announce the availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for the Southern California Distinct Population Segment of the Mountain Yellow-legged Frog (Rana muscosa) for public review and comment. The draft recovery plan includes objective, measurable criteria, and site-specific management actions as may be necessary to reclassify the species from endangered to threatened and also for removal from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.

DATES: We must receive any comments on the draft recovery plan on or before September 17, 2018.


Comment submission: If you wish to comment on the draft recovery plan, you may submit your comments in writing by any one of the following methods:

• U.S. mail: Field Supervisor, at the above address;

• Hand-delivery: Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, at the above address; or

• Email: fw8cfwocomments@fws.gov.

For additional information about submitting comments, see the “Public Comments Solicited” section below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Mendel Stewart, Field Supervisor, at the above street address or telephone number (see ADDRESSES).