

increases is exacerbated. (140 Cong. Rec. 8659, 8693 (1994)).

IV. How To Find the AAF

As stated, AAF Table 1 and Table 2 are posted on the HUD User website at <http://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/aaf.html>. Both tables provide the Regional and Metropolitan Component Areas to be used in selecting a project's geographic area for the AAF. For projects located in non-metropolitan areas, select the Query Tool, AAF Documentation, State, then county to determine which Metropolitan Component Area to use when selecting the AAF for the project.

There are two numeric columns in each AAF table. The first column is used to adjust contract rent for rental units where the highest cost utility is included in the contract rent, *i.e.*, where the owner pays for the highest cost utility. The second column is used where the highest cost utility is not included in the contract rent, *i.e.*, where the tenant pays for the highest cost utility.

The applicable AAF is selected as follows:

- Determine whether Table 1 or Table 2 is applicable. In Table 1 or Table 2, locate the AAF for the geographic area where the contract unit is located.
- Determine whether the highest cost utility is or is not included in contract rent for the contract unit.
- If highest cost utility is included, select the AAF from the column for "Highest Cost Utility Included." If highest cost utility is not included, select the AAF from the column for "Highest Cost Utility Excluded."

V. Methodology

AAFs are rent inflation factors. Two types of rent inflation factors are calculated for AAFs: gross rent factors and shelter rent factors. The gross rent factor accounts for inflation in the cost of both the rent of the residence and the utilities used by the unit; the shelter rent factor accounts for the inflation in the rent of the residence but does not reflect any change in the cost of utilities. The gross rent inflation factor is designated as "Highest Cost Utility Included" and the shelter rent inflation factor is designated as "Highest Cost Utility Excluded." HUD calculates the AAFs based on the shelter and gross rent inflation factors used in FMR calculations. The source data for AAFs therefore come from the 23 local and 4 regional CPI components (rent of primary residence and household fuels and utilities), depending on the location of the AAF area, and are combined with available measures of private data

sources in calculating a weighted average shelter and gross rent inflation factor. The private measures of rent used by HUD are the RealPage average effective rent per unit, Moody's Analytics REIS average market rent, CoStar Group average effective rent, CoreLogic, Inc. single-family combined three-bedroom median rent, Apartment List Rent Estimate, and Zillow Observed Rent Index.

In calculating the AAF from these data, HUD first takes the annual average of each statistic, then its year-to-year change. HUD then takes the mean of changes from all available sources for each area. Next, HUD takes an average of this private-sector measure of rent inflation with rent inflation as captured by the CPI for the area, where the private-sector measure is weighted at approximately 64 percent and the CPI rent inflation measure is weighted at approximately 36 percent. HUD has determined these weights by comparing the national average of the private rent changes and changes in CPI rent of primary residence to changes in the national average of recent mover rents from the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2018 through 2023. HUD weights the private data averages and overall CPI rent of primary residence in such a way as to minimize the root mean squared error between the resulting average and the ACS recent mover rents. For future AAFs, HUD will update the weights by adding the most recent years of ACS recent mover rents, private rent data, and CPI rent of primary residence to the analysis.

HUD uses a local measure of private rent inflation for markets that are covered by at least three of the six available sources of private rent data. HUD combines this local measure of rent inflation with either the local metropolitan area CPI rent of primary residence for the 23 areas where such data exist or the regional CPI rent in areas without a local index. For areas without at least three of the six private rent data sources available, HUD uses a regional average of private rent inflation factors alongside the regional CPI rent of primary residence. HUD constructs the regional average by taking the rental unit weighted average of the change in rents of each area in a region that does have private rent data coverage. This ensures that smaller areas that are not directly covered by the private sources will still have current rental market conditions taken into account in the calculation of the rent inflation factor for such areas.

The results of the above calculation are the "Highest Cost Utility Excluded" AAF. For the "Highest Cost Utility

Included" AAF, HUD averages the result of this step with the year-to-year change in the CPI housing fuels and utilities index for the area in to make the resulting inflation measure reflective of gross rents.

VI. Area Definitions

To make certain they are using the correct AAFs, users should refer to the Area Definitions Table section at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/aaf.html>. Furthermore, users can also search for AAF area definitions using an online lookup tool available on HUD User at the link in the previous sentence. AAFs are based on the updated metropolitan area definitions published by the Office of Management and Budget on July 21, 2023, and newly incorporated by the Census Bureau into the 2023 ACS data and the corresponding FY 2026 FMRs.

John Gibbs,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2025-1034; FXES1114040000-267-FF04EF4000]

Receipt of Incidental Take Permit Application and Proposed Habitat Conservation Plan for the Sand Skink and Blue-Tailed Mole-Skink; Highlands County, FL; Categorical Exclusion

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comment.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce receipt of an application from Park Square Homes (Avon Park) (applicant) for an incidental take permit (ITP) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The applicant requests the ITP to take the federally listed sand skink and blue-tailed mole skink incidental to the construction of a multi-family housing development in Highlands County, Florida. We request public comment on the application, which includes the applicant's proposed habitat conservation plan (HCP), and on the Service's preliminary determination that the proposed permitting action may be eligible for a categorical exclusion pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Department of the Interior's (DOI) NEPA regulations, and the DOI

Departmental Manual (DM). To make this preliminary determination, we prepared a draft screening form and NEPA statement for HCPs, both of which are available for public review. We invite comment from the public and local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies.

DATES: We must receive your written comments on or before January 8, 2026.

ADDRESSES:

Obtaining Documents: The documents this notice announces, as well as any comments and other materials that we receive, will be available for public inspection online in Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2025-1034 at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

Submitting Comments: If you wish to submit comments on any of the documents, you may do so in writing by one of the following methods:

- *Online:* <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2025-1034.

- *U.S. Mail:* Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2025-1034; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: PRB/3W, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Lindsay Needs, by U.S. mail (see **ADDRESSES**), by telephone at (772) 226-8158 or via email at lindsay_needs@fws.gov. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce receipt of an application from Park Square Homes (applicant) for an ITP, also known as a section 10(a)(1)(B) permit, under the ESA, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). The applicant requests the ITP to take the federally listed threatened sand skink (*Neopseps (=Plestiodon) reynoldsi*) and blue-tailed mole skink (*Eumeces egregius lividus*) (skinks) incidental to the construction of a multi-family housing development in Highlands County, Florida.

We request public comment on the application, which includes the applicant's HCP, and on the Service's preliminary determination that this proposed ITP may qualify for a categorical exclusion pursuant to NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), DOI's NEPA regulations (43 CFR part 46), and DOI's DM (516 DM 1, DOI NEPA Handbook

appendix 2, 8.5 C.(2)). To make this preliminary determination, we prepared a draft screening form and NEPA statement for HCPs, both of which are available for public review.

Proposed Project

The applicant requests a 5-year ITP to take skinks via the conversion of approximately 1.64 acres (ac) of occupied nesting, foraging, and sheltering skink habitat incidental to the construction and operation of a multi-family housing development on 324-ac on Parcel #s A-02-34-28-090-0000-0050, #A-03-34-28-A00-0060-0000, #A-03-34-28-A00-0070-0000, #A-03-34-28-A00-0110-0000, #C-02-34-28-090-0000-0010, #C-02-34-28-A00-0110-0000 and #C-02-34-28-A00-0180-0000 in Section 2, 3, 10 and 11, Township 34S, and Range 28E, in both the City of Avon Park and unincorporated Highlands County, Florida.

The applicant proposes to mitigate for take of the skinks by purchasing credits equivalent to 3.28 ac of skink-occupied habitat within the Lake Wales Ridge Conservation Bank or another Service-approved conservation bank. The Service would require the applicant to purchase the credits prior to engaging in any phase of the project.

Our Preliminary Determination

The Service made a preliminary determination that reasonably foreseeable effects of the applicant's proposed project, including the construction of a multi-family housing development and associated infrastructure, would have a minor effect on the skinks and the human environment, and that extraordinary circumstances in 43 CFR 46.215 do not apply. Reasonably foreseeable effects encompass effects of implementation of the action including effects of the action in addition to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future effects.

Therefore, we have preliminarily determined that the proposed ESA section 10(a)(1)(B) permit would be a low-effect ITP that may qualify for application of a categorical exclusion, pursuant to NEPA, DOI's NEPA regulations, and the DOI DM. A low-effect ITP is one that would result in (1) negligible or minor individual or cumulative effects on species covered in the HCP; (2) no significant effect on the human environment; and (3) reasonably foreseeable effects that would not result in significant effects to the human environment.

Next Steps

The Service will evaluate the application and any comments received resulting from this notice to determine whether to issue the requested ITP. We will also conduct an intra-Service consultation pursuant to section 7 of the ESA to evaluate the effects of the proposed take. After considering the preceding and other matters, we will determine whether the permit issuance criteria of ESA section 10(a)(1)(B) have been met. If met, the Service will issue ITP number PER13883616 to Park Square Homes.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made available to the public. If you submit a comment at <https://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment, including any personal identifying information, will be posted on the website. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, such as your address, phone number, or email address, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Moreover, all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public disclosure in their entirety.

Authority

The Service provides this notice under section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 17.32), and NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and the DOI's implementing regulations (43 CFR part 46).

Jose Rivera,

Manager, Division of Environmental Review, Florida Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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