

any instrument or document relinquishing or transferring any right, title, or interest of the Department in real or personal property.

Authority: Section 7(d) of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (42 U.S.C. 3535(d)).

Dated: September 9, 2003.

Mel Martinez,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03-23514 Filed 9-15-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4210-32-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

Central Utah Project Completion Act

AGENCY: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to negotiate an agreement among the Forest Service, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, the Duchesne County Water Conservancy District, the Moon Lake Water Users Association, and Department of the Interior to Implement the Uinta Basin Replacement Project, Duchesne County, Utah.

SUMMARY: Public Law 102-575, Central Utah Project Completion Act, Section 203(a) authorized the construction of the Uinta Basin Replacement Project. Responsibilities for the construction and operation of the project are described in four contracts executed by the Department of the Interior and the other parties on November 15, 2001. The purpose of the proposed implementation agreement is to identify the entity or entities responsible for monitoring environmental mitigation, to allocate funds, and to delineate and assign any remaining tasks and obligations (not included in previous agreements). The terms of the implementation agreement are to be publicly negotiated among the Forest Service, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, the Duchesne County Water Conservancy District, the Moon Lake Water Users Association, and Department of the Interior.

DATES: Dates for public negotiation sessions will be announced in local newspapers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Additional information on matters related to this **Federal Register** notice

can be obtained by contacting Mr. Wayne Pullan, Program Coordinator, CUP Completion Act Office, Department of the Interior, 302 East 1860 South, Provo, UT 84606-6154, (801) 379-1194, wpullan@uc.usbr.gov.

Dated: September 10, 2003.

Ronald Johnston,

Program Director, Department of the Interior.
[FR Doc. 03-23543 Filed 9-15-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Approved Recovery Plan for the Great Lakes Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability of the approved recovery plan for the Great Lakes piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), a species that is federally listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). This species occurs or may occur on public and private land in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Texas. Actions identified for recovery of the Great Lakes piping plover seek to increase population numbers throughout its range and to protect essential breeding and wintering habitat.

ADDRESSES: This recovery plan is available from the following addresses:

1. Fish and Wildlife Reference Service, 5430 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 110, Bethesda, Maryland 20814 (the fee for the plan varies depending on the number of pages).
2. Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, East Lansing Ecological Services Field Office, 2651 Coolidge Road, East Lansing, Michigan 48823.
3. The World Wide Web at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/RECOVERY/index.html#plans>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jack Dingleline, East Lansing Ecological Services Field Office (see **ADDRESSES** section No. 2 above), telephone (517) 351-6320. The Fish and Wildlife Reference Service may be reached at (301) 492-6403 or (800) 582-3421. TTY users may contact Mr. Dingleline and

the Fish and Wildlife Reference Service through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Recovery of endangered or threatened animals or plants is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. A species is considered recovered when the species' ecosystem is restored and/or threats to the species are removed so that self-sustaining and self-regulating populations of the species can be supported as persistent members of native biotic communities. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establish criteria for reclassification to threatened status or delisting listed species, and estimate time and cost for implementing the measures needed for recovery.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, requires that recovery plans be developed for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that during recovery plan development, we provide public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment. Information presented during the comment period has been considered in the preparation of the approved recovery plan, and is summarized in an appendix to the recovery plan. We will forward substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation to appropriate Federal agencies and other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions.

The Great Lakes piping plover, a sand-colored shorebird, was listed as an endangered species under the Act in 1985. It inhabits beaches on the Great Lakes during the breeding season of April through September, and winters on Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coast beaches. Nesting occurs on wide, sand and cobble beaches with little vegetation and disturbance. In its wintering range, the Great Lakes piping plover roosts and forages along beaches, dunes, sandy and muddy flats of the Atlantic and gulf coasts. Destruction of habitat, disturbance, and increased predation rates due to elevated predator densities in its habitat are described as the main reasons for this species' endangered status and continue to be the primary threats to its recovery. Fifty-one nesting pairs were recorded in 2002, all in Michigan and Wisconsin. Breeding has not occurred outside of Michigan and Wisconsin for over a

decade, although occurrence during migration has been recorded in other Great Lakes States.

The objective of this plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of the Great Lakes piping plover so that protection by the Act is no longer necessary. As recovery criteria are met, the status of the species will be reviewed, and it will be considered for removal from the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (50 CFR part 17). The Great Lakes piping plover will be considered for reclassification to threatened when the following occurs: (1) The population has increased to at least 150 pairs (300 individuals) for at least 5 consecutive years, with at least 100 breeding pairs (200 individuals) in Michigan and 50 breeding pairs (100 individuals) distributed among sites in other Great Lakes States; (2) 5-year average fecundity is within the range of 1.5–2.0 fledglings each pair, per year, across the breeding distribution, and 10-year projections indicate the population is stable, or continuing to grow, above the recovery goal; (3) protection and long-term maintenance of essential breeding and wintering habitat are ensured, sufficient in quantity, quality and distribution to support the recovery goal of 150 pairs (300 individuals); and (4) genetic diversity within the population is deemed adequate for population persistence and can be maintained over the long-term. It will be considered for delisting when the following are achieved: (1) The reclassification criteria are met, and (2) agreements and funding mechanisms are in place for long-term protection and management activities in essential breeding and wintering habitats.

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

Dated: August 21, 2003.

Charles M. Wooley,

Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Region 3, Fort Snelling, Minnesota.
[FR Doc. 03–23535 Filed 9–15–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of the Recovery Plan for the Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus brunneus brunneus*)

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (“we”), announce the

availability of the final Recovery Plan for the Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus brunneus brunneus*), a subspecies that is federally listed as threatened. This subspecies is known to exist only in Adams and Valley Counties of western Idaho and numbers about 500 individuals.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the recovery plan are available by written request addressed to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, Idaho 83709 (telephone: 208–378–5243). An electronic version of this recovery plan is also available at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rich Howard or Ray Vizgirdas at the above Boise address (telephone: 208–378–5243).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Recovery of endangered or threatened animals and plants is a primary goal of our endangered species program and the Endangered Species Act (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 appropriate under the criteria set out in section 4(a)(1) of the Act. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establish criteria for downlisting or delisting listed species, and estimate time and cost for implementing the measures needed for recovery.

The Act requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The draft recovery plan for the northern Idaho ground squirrel was available for public comment from July 15, 2002, through September 13, 2002 (67 FR 46440). Information presented during the public comment period has been considered in the preparation of this final recovery plan, and is summarized in an appendix to the recovery plan. We will forward substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation to appropriate Federal or other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions.

The northern Idaho ground squirrel was listed as threatened on April 5, 2000 (65 FR 17779). This subspecies is

known to exist only in Adams and Valley Counties of western-central Idaho. The entire range of this subspecies is about 32 by 108 kilometers (20 by 61 miles), and as of 2002, the subspecies existed at 29 of 42 known population sites (colonies). The northern Idaho ground squirrel is known to occur in shallow, dry, rocky meadows usually associated with deeper, well-drained soils and surrounded by ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests at elevations of about 915 to 1,650 meters (3,000 to 5,400 feet). The primary threat to this subspecies is habitat loss due to forest encroachment into former suitable meadow habitat. Forest encroachment results in habitat fragmentation, eliminates dispersal corridors, and confines the northern Idaho ground squirrel populations into small, isolated habitat islands that eventually can result in local extirpation.

The objective of this plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of the northern Idaho ground squirrel so that protection by the Act is no longer necessary. Recovery is contingent upon protecting and managing present northern Idaho ground squirrel habitat, modifying adjacent habitats to make them favorable for population increases, and to provide adequate corridors for exchange between populations.

The recovery objectives for the northern Idaho ground squirrel are: (1) At least 10 functioning metapopulations, each with an effective population size that is greater than 500 individuals for 5 consecutive years, throughout the probable historical distribution in Adams and Valley Counties; (2) the area occupied by each potential metapopulation is protected; (3) plans have been completed for the continued ecological management of habitats for all potential metapopulation sites; and (4) a post-delisting monitoring plan covering all potential metapopulation sites has been completed and is ready for implementation.

Authority

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

Dated: August 1, 2003.

Carolyn A. Bohan,

Regional Director, Region 1, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 03–23536 Filed 9–15–03; 8:45 am]

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