

determination that the proposed activities in these permits are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement (516 DM 6 Appendix 1, 1.4C(1)).

Public Availability of Comments

All comments and materials we receive in response to this request will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the address listed in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

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.

Authority

We provide this notice under section 10 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*)

Dated: December 24, 2013.

Dana Roth,

Acting Regional Director, Southwest Region.

[FR Doc. 2014-01005 Filed 1-17-14; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R6-ES-2013-N287;
FXES11130600000D2-123-FF06E00000]

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Recovery Permit Applications

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, invite the public to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered or threatened species. With some exceptions, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), prohibits activities with endangered and threatened species unless a Federal permit allows such activity. The Act requires that we invite public comment before issuing these permits.

DATES: To ensure consideration, please send your written comments by February 20, 2014.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments or requests for copies or more information by any of the following methods. Alternatively, you may use one of the following methods to request hard copies or a CD-ROM of the documents. Please specify the permit you are interested in by number (e.g., Permit No. TE-XXXXXX).

- *Email:* permitsR6ES@fws.gov.

Please refer to the respective permit number (e.g., Permit No. TE-XXXXXX) in the subject line of the message.

- *U.S. Mail:* Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486-DFC, Denver, CO 80225.

- *In-Person Drop-off, Viewing, or Pickup:* Call (303) 236-4212 to make an appointment during regular business hours at 134 Union Blvd., Suite 645, Lakewood, CO 80228.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathy Konishi, Permit Coordinator, Ecological Services, (303) 236-4212 (phone); permitsR6ES@fws.gov (email).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) prohibits activities with endangered and threatened species unless a Federal permit allows such activity. Along with our implementing regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 50 CFR part 17, the Act provides for permits and requires that we invite public comment before issuing these permits.

A permit granted by us under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Act authorizes the permittees to conduct activities with U.S. endangered or threatened species for scientific purposes, enhancement of propagation or survival, or interstate commerce (the latter only in the event that it facilitates scientific purposes or enhancement of propagation or survival). Our regulations implementing section 10(a)(1)(A) for these permits are found at 50 CFR 17.22 for endangered wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.32 for threatened wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.62 for endangered plant species, and 50 CFR 17.72 for threatened plant species.

Applications Available for Review and Comment

We invite local, State, and Federal agencies and the public to comment on the following applications. Documents and other information the applicants have submitted with their applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) and Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

Permit Application Number TE183432

Applicant: Kansas City Zoo, 6800 Zoo Drive, Kansas City, MO.

The applicant requests the renewal of a permit for educational display and propagation of Wyoming toad (*Bufo baxteri*) to preserve genetic diversity and provide individuals for reintroduction into suitable sites identified by the Service for the purpose of enhancing the species' survival.

Permit Application Number TE046929

Applicant: Kansas Department of Transportation, Bureau of Design, Eisenhower State Office Building, 700 SW Harrison St., Topeka, KS.

The applicant requests the renewal of a permit to conduct presence/absence surveys for the American burying beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*) in Kansas to determine range, distribution, and abundance for the purpose of enhancing the species' survival.

Permit Application Number TE081867

Applicant: Otter Tail Environmental, Inc., 10200 W. 44th Ave., Suite 210, Wheat Ridge, CO.

The applicant requests the renewal of an existing permit to conduct presence/absence surveys for the Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) for the purpose of enhancing the species' survival.

Permit Application Number TE0051718

Applicant: Savage and Savage, Inc., 4610 Haystack Drive, Windsor, CO.

The applicant requests the renewal of an existing permit to conduct presence/absence surveys for the Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) for the purpose of enhancing the species' survival.

Permit Application Number TE067486

Applicant: University of Nebraska at Lincoln, 3310 Holdrege St., 402 Hardin Hall, Lincoln, NE.

The applicant requests the renewal of an existing permit to capture, collect, tag, hold, and transport pallid sturgeons (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) for baseline information for the purpose of enhancing the species' survival.

National Environmental Policy Act

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), we have made an initial determination that the proposed activities in these permits are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement (516 DM 6 Appendix 1, 1.4C(1)).

Public Availability of Comments

All comments and materials we receive in response to these requests will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the address listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

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.

Authority

We provide this notice under section 10 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Dated: *January 7, 2014.*

Michael G. Thabault,

Assistant Regional Director, Mountain-Prairie Region.

[FR Doc. 2014-00486 Filed 1-17-14; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R6-R-2013-N223;
FXRS1266066CCP0S3-134-FF06R06000]

Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Great Falls, Montana; Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment (EA) for Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex. In this final CCP, we describe how we intend to manage the refuge complex for the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: You will find the final CCP and the FONSI on the planning Web site: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/planning/ccp/mt/bnl/bnl.html>. A limited number of hard copies are available. You may request one by any of the following methods:

Email: toni_griffin@fws.gov. Include "Benton Lake NWR Complex" in the subject line of the message.

Fax: Attn: Toni Griffin, Planning Team Leader, 303-236-4792.

U.S. Mail: Toni Griffin, Planning Team Leader, Suite 300, 134 Union Boulevard, Lakewood, CO 80228.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Toni Griffin, 303-236-4378 (phone); 303-236-4792 (fax); or toni_griffin@fws.gov (email).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which we began by publishing a notice of intent in the **Federal Register** (73 FR 48237) on August 18, 2008. For more about the initial process and the history of this refuge, see that notice. We released the draft CCP and EA to the public, announcing and requesting comments in a notice of availability (77 FR 19309) on March 30, 2012. The 60-day comment period ended on June 1, 2012. A summary of public comments and the agency responses is included in the final CCP.

Background

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) (Administration Act), requires us to develop a CCP for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose in developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year strategy for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management, conservation, legal mandates, and Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the Administration Act.

Each unit of the NWRS was established for specific purposes. We use these purposes as the foundation for developing and prioritizing the management goals and objectives for each refuge within the NWRS mission, and to determine how the public can use each refuge. The planning process is a way for us and the public to evaluate management goals and objectives that will ensure the best possible approach to wildlife, plant, and habitat

conservation, while providing for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities that are compatible with each refuge's establishing purposes and the mission of the NWRS.

Additional Information

The final CCP may be found at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/planning/ccp/mt/bnl/bnl.html>. The final CCP includes detailed information about the planning process, refuge, issues, and management alternative selected. The Web site also contains the draft CCP, which includes an EA, prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (43 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). The EA/FONSI includes discussion of alternative refuge management options. The Service's selected alternative is reflected in the final CCP.

The selected alternative for the complex focuses on achieving self-sustaining systems with long-term productivity. Management efforts would focus on supporting and restoring ecological processes, including natural communities and the dynamics of the ecosystems of the northern Great Plains and northern Rocky Mountains in relationship to their geomorphic landscape positioning. Conservation of native landscapes would be a high priority, accomplished by protecting habitats from conversion, using a combination of partnerships, easements, and fee-title lands, and through active management and proactive enforcement of easements. Management actions such as prescribed fire, grazing, and invasive species control would be used to support the resiliency and sustainability of Service-owned lands throughout the refuge complex. Whenever possible, habitat conditions would be allowed to fluctuate with climatically driven wet and dry cycles, which are essential for long-term productivity. The success of these efforts and programs would depend on added staff, research, and monitoring programs, operations money, infrastructure, and new and expanded partnerships.

Benton Lake Refuge wetland units will be managed to focus on the importance of restoring the health and long-term sustainability of the wetland basin and include efforts within the Lake Creek and Muddy Creek watersheds. Flexible water management will occur, which will affect the amount, duration, and location of artificially provided water (pumped water) within the wetland basin. Management will strive to provide some waterfowl hunting and fall/spring migration habitat for at least 11 out of 15 years, and basin-wide drawdowns