

that would be composed of an estimated 46,496 to 46,920 acres that would be permanently preserved, monitored, and managed.

National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

Our proposal to issue an incidental take permit is a Federal action that triggers the need for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). The Service prepared the EIS, which is the Federal portion of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), to analyze the impacts of issuing an incidental take permit based on the Plan. Santa Clara County facilitated the preparation of the EIR portion of the Final EIR/EIS, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), but all applicants share the CEQA Lead Agency role. The California Department of Fish and Game is a CEQA Trustee and Responsible Agency. The Final EIR/EIS was developed to inform the public of the proposed action, alternatives, and associated impacts; address public comments received during the public comment period for the Draft EIR/EIS; and disclose irreversible commitments of resources.

The Final EIR/EIS evaluates the impacts of the proposed action described above (i.e., issuance of the permit and implementation of the Final Plan), as well as the No Action Alternative and Alternative A, which are described below.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Service would not issue an incidental take permit to the applicants, and the Plan would not be implemented. Under this alternative, projects that may adversely affect federally listed species would require project-level consultation with the Service pursuant to section 7 or section 10 of the Act. This project-level approach would preclude landscape-level conservation planning and would not streamline the current permitting process.

Alternative A (Reduced Permit Term)

Under Alternative A, the Service would issue an incidental take permit, and the applicants would implement a habitat conservation plan and natural community conservation plan that is similar to the Plan described in the proposed action; however, the proposed permit term would be reduced to 30 years. The extent of covered activities and the conservation strategy would be subsequently reduced relative to the proposed action.

The Final EIR/EIS includes all comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and our responses to those comments. Following a 30-day review period, we will complete a Record of Decision that announces our decision on the action that will be implemented and discusses all factors leading to the decision.

Public Involvement

We published a notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for this project in the **Federal Register** on September 6, 2007 (72 FR 51247). The NOI announced a public scoping period during which time the public was invited to provide written comments and attend a public scoping meeting held on September 26, 2007, in Morgan Hill, California. On December 17, 2010, we published a notice of availability of the Draft Plan, EIS, and IA in the **Federal Register** (75 FR 79013). Two public meetings were held, the first on February 9, 2011, in Morgan Hill, California, and the second on February 15, 2011, in Palo Alto, California. The Draft documents were available for a 120-day public comment period, which concluded on April 18, 2011.

Public Review

Copies of the Final EIR/EIS, Plan, and IA are available for review (see **ADDRESSES**). Any comments we receive will become part of the administrative record and may be available to the public. If you wish to comment on the Final EIS, Plan, or IA, you may submit your comments to the address listed in **ADDRESSES**. 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 may 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.

We will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act. A permit decision will be made no sooner than 30 days after the publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's Final EIS notice in the **Federal Register** and completion of the Record of Decision.

Authority

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(a) of the Act and pursuant to

implementing regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1506.6).

Dated: August 21, 2012.

Margaret Kolar,

Acting Deputy Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region, Sacramento, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R3-ES-2012-N213;
FXES1113030000F3-123-FF03E00000]

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Permit Applications

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of permit applications; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), invite the public to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered species. With some exceptions, the Endangered Species Act (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: We must receive any written comments on or before October 1, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments by U.S. mail to the Regional Director, Attn: Lisa Mandell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, 5600 American Blvd. West, Suite 990, Bloomington, MN 55437-1458; or by electronic mail to permitsR3ES@fws.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisa Mandell, (612) 713-5343.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

We invite public comment on the following permit applications for certain activities with endangered species authorized by section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and our regulations governing the taking of endangered species in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 50 CFR 17. Submit your written data, comments, or request for a copy of the complete application to the address shown in **ADDRESSES**.

Permit Applications

Permit Application Number: TE82665A

Applicant: Melody Myers-Kinzie,
Commonwealth Biomonitoring,
Brownsburg, IN.

The applicant requests a permit to take (capture and release) the fanshell mussel (*Cyprogenia stegaria*), clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*), northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa*), pink mucket pearlymussel (*Lampsilis abrupta*), snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), and white catspaw (*Epioblasma obliquata perobliquata*) within the States of Indiana and Ohio. Proposed activities are to survey and monitor populations for the recovery and enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE113009

Applicant: Steve A. Ahlstedt, Norris, TN.

The applicant requests a permit renewal to take (capture and release) the white catspaw within the States of Indiana and Ohio. Proposed activities are to survey and monitor populations for the recovery and enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE023666

Applicant: Eric R. Britzke, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—ERDC, Clinton, MS.

The applicant requests a permit renewal, with amendment, to take (capture and release; conduct non-lethal sampling) Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*), gray bats (*Myotis grisescens*), Virginia big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*), Ozark big-eared bat (*C. t. ingens*), and Northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) throughout the range of the species in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Proposed activities are for the recovery of the species through research and population monitoring.

Permit Application Number: TE82666A

Applicant: Justin G. Boyles, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL.

The applicant requests a permit renewal, with amendments, to take (capture and release; conduct non-lethal sampling) Indiana bats and gray bats throughout the range of the species in Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Proposed activities are for the recovery of the species and enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Public Comments

We seek public review and comments on these permit applications. Please refer to the permit number when you submit comments. Comments and materials we receive are available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the address shown in the **ADDRESSES** section. 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.

Dated: August 22, 2012.

Lynn Lewis,

Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Midwest Region.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

[USGS-GX12EE000101000]

Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard

AGENCY: Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey.

ACTION: Notice of endorsement of coastal and marine ecological classification standard.

SUMMARY: The Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) has endorsed the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS) as the first-ever comprehensive federal data standard for classifying and describing coastal and marine ecosystems.

CMECS provides a means of classifying ecological and habitat units using a common terminology. It provides a uniform protocol for identifying, characterizing and naming ecological units in support of monitoring, protection, and restoration of unique biotic assemblages, protected species, critical habitat, and important ecosystem components.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Documentation for the standard is available for download at www.csc.noaa.gov/cmeecs. A searchable

online catalog of CMECS units and their descriptions is available at www.cmeccscatalog.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Rebecca Allee, NOAA Coastal Services Center—Gulf Coast Region, Building 1100, Suite 232, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529, Email: nos.csc.cmeecs_ig@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: CMECS offers a simple standard framework and common terminology for describing natural and human influenced ecosystems, from the upper tidal reaches of estuaries to the deepest portions of the ocean. The framework is organized into two settings, biogeographic and aquatic, and four components, water column, geform, substrate, and biotic. Each describes a separate aspect of the environment and biota. Settings and components can be used in combination or independently to describe ecosystem features. The hierarchical arrangement of units in the settings and components allows users to apply CMECS to the scale and specificity that best suits their needs. Modifiers allow users to customize the classification to meet specific needs.

CMECS is designed to meet the needs of many users, including coastal resource managers and planners, development interests, engineers, mappers, and researchers from government, industry, and academia. The system was also developed to address applications on scales ranging from local and regional to national and beyond.

FGDC member agencies the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Geological Survey, along with NatureServe, worked with over one hundred scientists and coastal managers to develop and test the standard. CMECS has been applied in projects in a variety of geographies. A rigorous four month public and peer review process led to consideration of and response to more than 800 individual comments from 31 individuals and organizations.

The use and application of CMECS will improve our knowledge of marine ecosystems and may bring to light other necessary additions and adjustments to the standard. Users are encouraged to provide suggestions about possible changes to CMECS, which will follow a regular peer review and revision cycle. Protocols and tools for this process are currently in development.

Practical applications for CMECS include:

- Ecosystem inventory and mapping
- Coastal and marine spatial planning