

on Canada for recovery of the grizzly bear.

On September 10, 1997, we published a Notice of Availability (62 FR 47677, Sept. 10, 1997) for the draft supplemental information on the five remanded issues. We provided our final finding on the issues to the court on May 15, 1999, and a notice of availability of that document will be published in the **Federal Register** in the near future.

Under the provisions of the Act we approved the revised Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan on September 10, 1993. Task 423 in the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993) states: "Establish a threshold of minimal habitat values to be maintained within each Cumulative Effects Analysis Unit in order to ensure that sufficient habitat is available to support a viable population." This task, developing habitat-based recovery criteria, is specific to each ecosystem, as the habitat necessary to support a viable grizzly bear population will vary between ecosystems due to differences in foods, vegetation, habitat, and human activities.

As part of a 1997 court settlement on the Recovery Plan, all parties agreed that:

1. Prior to our release of the draft habitat-based recovery criteria for the grizzly bear in Yellowstone, plaintiffs could submit comments to us and such comments would be considered as part of the administrative record. We would convene a workshop during the public comment period on the draft habitat-based recovery criteria where all interested parties could present their ideas on the habitat needs for grizzly bear recovery and discuss proposals for habitat-based recovery criteria. This workshop was held in Bozeman, Montana, on June 17, 1997.

2. The information and views presented at the workshop, together with all other information submitted to us during the public comment period on the draft habitat criteria would be considered by us before the habitat-based recovery criteria are finalized. When we finalize the habitat-based recovery criteria, we will address significant public comments in writing, including those significant public comments offered at the workshop.

We received 1,167 comments at or in response to the grizzly bear habitat workshop. Of these, 132 were letters, 3 were form letters, 923 were postcards with preprinted form comments, 44 were postcards with preprinted form comments and written comments, and 65 were written remarks delivered at the workshop. Major issues identified in the

comments included: using science and data to the best extent possible, using cumulative effects modeling, maintaining habitat security, identifying important seasonal foods and ensuring their monitoring and availability, the role of private lands and impacts of private land development, road densities and access management, maintaining roadless habitat and habitat security in such areas, ensuring effective road closures, minimizing human development and activities that result in human-bear conflicts, and minimizing actions that result in nuisance bears. The comments were carefully considered, reviewed, and discussed by a team of specialists from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Geological Survey, Forest Service, Park Service, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. This group of agency specialists developed these draft habitat criteria using the information and ideas in the public comments from the workshop, as well as the best available scientific information on the grizzly bear habitat and population in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. We will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. We and other Federal land management agencies also will take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

We now seek public comment on the draft habitat-based recovery criteria for the Yellowstone ecosystem to both address Task 423 in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan and the lawsuit settlement agreement.

Public Comments Solicited

We solicit written comments on the information described above. All comments received by the date specified in the DATES section above will be considered prior to finalization of the habitat-based recovery criteria. Appropriate portions of these criteria will be appended to, and become part of, the Plan.

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

Dated: July 9, 1999.

Terry T. Terrell,

Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.
[FR Doc. 99-18137 Filed 7-15-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of Supplemental Information Regarding the Recovery Plan for the Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of our finding on supplemental information relative to the recovery plan for the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*). Portions of the information will be added to the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan after appropriate public notice and comment.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to receive a copy of the supplemental information finding may obtain a copy by contacting the Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, University Hall, Room 309, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana 59812. Comments and materials received are available on request for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Christopher Servheen, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator (see ADDRESSES above), at telephone (406) 243-4903.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The primary goal of our endangered species program is to restore endangered or threatened animals or plants to the point where they are secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystem. To help guide the recovery effort, we prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The grizzly bear was listed under the Act as a threatened species in the 48 conterminous States on July 28, 1995 (40 FR 31734). Threats to grizzly bear populations come primarily from habitat modification caused by human activities and from direct bear/human conflicts resulting from recreational and resource use activities, highway and railroad corridors, and illegal mortality.

Under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act) as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), we approved the revised Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan on September 10, 1993.

In May 1994 The Fund For Animals, Inc., and 22 other organizations and individuals filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia over the adequacy of the Plan approved in 1993. Later in May 1994 the National Audubon Society and 19 other organizations and individuals also filed suit in the same court. The two cases were eventually consolidated. In September 1995 the court issued an opinion. The motions for summary judgment of both the plaintiffs and the defendants were granted in part and denied in part. The court ordered us to reconsider certain portions of the Plan, and to provide supplemental information. The court remanded five issues that might affect grizzly bear recovery for our reconsideration. Those issues were: disease and parasites; livestock interactions and mortality; the effects of genetic isolation; population monitoring methods; and our reliance on Canada for recovery of the grizzly bear.

On September 10, 1997, we published a Notice of Availability (62 FR 47677, Sept. 10, 1997) for the draft supplemental information on the five remanded issues. We provided our final finding on the issues to the court on May 15, 1999, and this notice announces that the document is available for public distribution.

We are also in the process of developing draft grizzly bear habitat-based recovery criteria, which are being made available for public review and comment under a separate notice of availability.

Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. We will provide a public comment period prior to approval of each new amendment to the recovery plan. We and other Federal land management agencies also will take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

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

Dated: July 9, 1999.

Terry T. Terrell,

Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.
[FR Doc. 99-18138 Filed 7-15-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge Historic Preservation Plan

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge Historic Preservation Plan as part of its responsibilities for the long-term management of historic properties on Midway Atoll. This plan defines a program to integrate historic preservation planning with the wildlife conservation mission of the Service. By this notice, the public is informed that the plan is available and that copies may be obtained on request to the Service.

ADDRESSES: Written requests for copies should be addressed to: U.S.A. Fish and Wildlife Service—Pacific Islands Ecoregion, Box 50088, Honolulu, HI 96850.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert P. Smith, Pacific Islands Manager, telephone (808) 541-2749.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Midway's historically important buildings and structures are primarily associated with World War II. Nine structures specifically associated with the June 1942 Battle of Midway were designated as National Historic Landmarks in 1986. Archaeological and architectural studies conducted in 1993 and 1994 identified and evaluated buildings, structures, and objects on the atoll's two main islands and determined that an additional 69 properties were eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-510, as amended, led to the closure of Midway's Naval Air Facility on October 1, 1993 and transfer of the property to the Service on October 31, 1996. Transition from a Naval Air Facility to a wildlife refuge necessitated a reduction in personnel and operational facilities. Therefore, identifying excess property was accomplished by the U.S. Navy and the Service in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council), the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Officer, and interested parties. Treatment of Midway's 78 historic properties during the Base Closure and transfer led to a Programmatic Agreement in 1996. One of the stipulations in the agreement was for the Service to prepare a Historic

Preservation Plan for the long-term management of historic properties.

Midway and Midway's Historic Preservation Plan are unique in several respects: first, the plan focuses on treatment of properties that have been previously identified and evaluated; second, some treatment options for Midway were determined by the Programmatic Agreement and implemented, with adverse effects mitigated by completion of documentation for all historic properties; third, the mission statement and primary goals of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge include preservation of historic resources. This Historic Preservation Plan focuses on long-term management conditions and goals for preserving and stabilizing historic properties, and recommends procedures for treating new discoveries, caring for museum collections, and implementing a public outreach program that includes historic preservation.

Dated: July 9, 1999.

Thomas Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Pacific Region.

[FR Doc. 99-18158 Filed 7-15-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[FES-99-18]

Notice of Availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Colorado Sodium Products Development Project (Project), located in Rio Blanco County and Garfield County, Colorado. Written comments and recommendations on this Final EIS should be received on or before September 13, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments concerning this EIS to Mr. Larry Shults, Natural Resources Specialist, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, White River Field Office, 73544 Highway 64, Meeker, CO 81641.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Larry Shults, (970) 878-3601.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: American Soda, L.L.P. (American Soda) intends to construct and operate a commercial nahcolite solution mining operation in the northcentral portion of the Piceance Creek Basin in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Nahcolite is naturally