

for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will analyze options for issuing permits to numerous landowners to potentially take federally listed species, under the provisions of section 10(a)(1)(B) and/or 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The EIS will address the impacts associated with the proposed action, and other alternatives for forest management by nonindustrial private landowners.

The Services are furnishing this notice to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions and to announce the scheduling of public meetings for scoping. The public is encouraged to attend a public meeting or provide written comments on the scope of the issues and potential alternatives to be included in the EIS.

DATES: Written comments regarding the scope of the EIS should be received on or before October 25, 1999. Public meetings will be held on September 22, and 23, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to Mark Ostwald, FWS Habitat Conservation Planning Program, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 101, Lacey, Washington 98503. Comments received will be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) at the address above. Public meetings are scheduled to be held at the following locations and times: Lacey, Washington, on September 22, 1999, at the FWS/NMFS office on the St. Martins Campus at 510 Desmond Dr. SE (Sawyer Hall) from 3:00–5:00 pm and 6:30–8:30 pm; and in Chehalis, Washington on September 23, 1999, at Meeting Room #2, Lewis County Courthouse Annex, 345 West Main Street from 3:00–5:00 pm and 6:30–8:30 pm.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Ostwald, FWS Habitat Conservation Planning Program, (360) 534-9330.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This multi-party planning effort would result in one Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan) and an EIS that addresses effects of issuing numerous permits to landowners engaged in forest management activities. The Plan is expected to include several options available for landowners toward achieving a specified desired future condition in Lewis County. It is expected that the Plan and the EIS would address these actions within the constraints of: (1) A specified portion of Lewis County; (2) a restricted number of individual permits; (3) a limited amount of total acreage included under each

permit; (4) a limited time frame; and (5) addressing a biologically based number of listed and unlisted species.

The Plan will evaluate the potential incidental take of several listed species, such as the northern spotted owl (*occidentalis caurina*) and bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), which could occur as a result of timber harvest and related activities. The Plan will also likely address other unlisted fish and wildlife species. This effort is considered to be a pilot project to test the feasibility of addressing long term forest management practices and alternatives for many small landowners in Lewis County, relative to ESA regulations.

The Services are considering the use of incidental take permits under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA, as well as potential use of Safe Harbor and/or Candidate Conservation Agreements under section 10(a)(1)(A). Options to link the Federal permit to State forest practices permitting processes will be explored. It is also intended that this Plan could be used in association with other incentives to encourage and retain sound stewardship of forest land for the long term.

This notice is provided pursuant to ESA and NEPA regulations. Through development of a joint EIS, this process would comply with the requirements of the Washington State Environmental Policy Act. The Services are soliciting public comments on this proposal and a full range of alternatives. As a further opportunity for interested persons to comment on these and other issues associated with this planning effort, scoping workshops have been scheduled (see **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**). Interested parties may contact FWS at the address listed to receive additional information, including maps for the workshop locations.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act Regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and policies and procedures of the Services for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: August 27, 1999.

Thomas Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dated: September 17, 1999.

Wanda L. Cain,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[I.D. 091799E]

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement Regarding Proposed Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for All Activities in the State of Washington Associated with Their Hydraulic Project Approval Program.

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Conduct Public Scoping and Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) (collectively, the Services) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) related to the proposed issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (Permit) to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for all activities in the State of Washington associated with their Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program. The proposed Permit would authorize take of Federally listed fish and shellfish species in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA) and certain other unlisted fish and shellfish species should they be listed in the future. As required by the ESA, the applicant is preparing a Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan). The Permit application is related to the state-wide issuance of HPAs for activities that will alter the natural flow or bed of any salt or fresh waters of the State. The Services, with WDFW, are preparing the EIS as a joint document in

accordance with NEPA and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act.

The Services are furnishing this notice to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions and to announce the initiation of a 60-day public scoping period during which other agencies and the public are invited to provide written comments on the scope of issues and potential alternatives to be included in the EIS.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before November 22, 1999. Public hearings have been scheduled (see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for dates, times, and locations).

ADDRESSES: Comments and requests for additional information should be sent to the HPA HCP Project, WDFW Habitat Program, 600 Capitol Way North, MS 43200, Olympia, Washington 98501-1091, E-mailed to HPAHCPComments@dfw.wa.gov or submitted on-line via the WDFW web site, <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/>. From this site, click on "Habitat Sciences," then to the HPA/HCP Project under "Permits and Regulations." Select the draft document to which your comments refer, then follow the directions to complete and send the on-screen response form.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Romanski, FWS, 510 Desmond Drive, SE, Suite 102, Lacey, Washington 98503-1273, telephone (360) 753-5823, facsimile (360) 534-9331; or Gordon Zillges, NMFS, 510 Desmond Drive, SE, Suite 103, Lacey, Washington 98503-1273, telephone (360) 753-9090, facsimile (360) 453-9517.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: WDFW is responsible under State law for the protection of Washington State's fish and wildlife resources. Chapter 75.20 Revised Code of Washington directs WDFW to review, and approve as appropriate, hydraulic projects or other work that will use, divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or bed of any of the salt or fresh waters of the State, to ensure the proper protection of fish and shellfish life. The authority under which HPAs are written only applies to fish and shellfish. Standards for fish protection by specific project type are set in Chapter 220-110 Washington Administrative Code. WDFW issues 6,000 to 8,000 HPAs in a typical year.

Each project conducted pursuant to a HPA has the potential to impact fish or shellfish species that are subject to protection under the ESA. Section 10(a)(2)(B) of the ESA contains provisions for the issuance of permits to non-Federal entities for the take of

endangered and threatened species, provided the take is incidental to otherwise lawful activities and will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild. An applicant for a permit under Section 10 of the ESA must prepare and submit to the Services for approval a Plan containing a strategy for minimizing and mitigating, to the maximum extent practicable, all take associated with the proposed activities. The applicant must also ensure that adequate funding for the proposed Plan will be provided.

WDFW has initiated discussions with the Services regarding the possibility of a permit and associated programmatic Plan for the activities associated with HPA issuance throughout the State. The proposed Plan is expected to encompass all HPA types and forms issued by WDFW and will address impacts to all Federal proposed or listed fish or shellfish species in Washington State waters.

The Services will conduct an environmental review of the Plan and prepare an EIS. The environmental review will analyze the proposal as well as a full range of reasonable alternatives and the associated impacts of each. The Services and WDFW are currently in the process of developing alternatives for analysis. Alternatives thus far include a No Action Alternative and one Plan Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, WDFW would not have incidental take coverage for HPAs issued. The applicant's Plan Alternative proposes that WDFW implement the proposed Plan throughout the State and the Services issue incidental take permits. The scoping process will be used to develop additional alternatives.

Comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties to ensure that the full range of issues related to these proposed actions are addressed and that all significant issues are identified. Comments, questions or requests for additional information concerning this proposed action and the environmental review should be directed to the HPA HCP Project, WDFW (see **ADDRESSES**).

Public meetings are scheduled to be held at the following times and locations: October 6, 1999, from 7:00-9:30 p.m., Washington State Capitol Campus, General Administration Building Auditorium, 210 11th Avenue South, Olympia, Washington; October 7, 1999, from 7:00-9:30 p.m., Central Washington University Student Union Building, Yakima Room, Ellensburg, Washington; October 12, 1999 from 7:00-9:30 p.m., at the Cowlitz County Public Utility District, 961 12th Avenue, Longview, Washington; October 14,

1999, from 7:00-9:30 p.m., at the Everett Community College, Jackson Center, JCR Room, 801 Wetmore Avenue, Everett, Washington; October 19, 1999, from 7:00-9:30 p.m., at the Spokane Falls Community College, Student Union Building in Lounge Rooms A and B, 3410 West Fort George Wright Drive, Spokane, Washington; and October 20, 1999, from 7:00-9:30 p.m., Okanogan Public Utility District, 1331 2nd Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), the requirements of the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 197-11 WAC and Chapter 43.21C RCW) and of other appropriate Federal laws and regulations and policies and procedures of the Services for compliance with those regulations. We estimate the draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available for public review during December of 2000.

Dated: September 16, 1999.

Cynthia U. Barry,

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

Dated: September 17, 1999.

Wanda L. Cain,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 091399E]

Marine Mammals; File No. 987 (File No. P598)

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Receipt of application for amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Jim Darling, Box 384, Tofino, B.C., Canada VO4 2Z0, has requested an amendment to scientific research Permit No. 987.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before October 25, 1999.

ADDRESSES: The amendment request and related documents are available for