

within the National Wildlife Refuge System managed in accordance with an approved comprehensive conservation plan. The plan guides management decisions and identifies refuge goals, objectives and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. Public input into this planning process is encouraged. The plan will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions of the refuge and how the Service will implement management strategies. Some of the issues to be addressed in the plan include the including:

- (a) Habitat management;
- (b) Public use management;
- (c) Wildlife population management;
- (d) Wilderness management;
- (e) Industrial facilities management; and
- (f) Cultural resource identification and protection.

The environmental assessment will include several alternatives that address the issues and management strategies with these topics.

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge was established on August 5, 1947, by Public Law 80-361. This Act of Congress transferred certain Federal lands acquired in connection with the Crab Orchard Creek project and the Illinois Ordnance Plant to the Secretary of the Interior. This legislation mandated these lands be administered by the Secretary through the Service "for the conservation of wildlife, and for the development of the agricultural, recreational, industrial, and related purposes specified in this Act."

The 43,890-acre refuge contains three large manmade lakes totaling 8,700 acres; 21,000 acres of forestland, 5,000 acres of cropland, and 2,000 acres of grassland. The refuge supports an extensive variety of plant and animal species, hosts 1.2 million recreational visitors per year, provides facilities for industrial tenants who generate \$100 million in annual revenue, and sponsors cooperative farmers and permittee graziers. The 4,050-Crab Orchard Wilderness, the first wilderness area designed in the State of Illinois, is within the refuge.

Dated: February 15, 2000.

William F. Hartwig,

Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 00-4330 Filed 2-23-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Ouray National Wildlife Refuge, Vernal, UT

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan. This Plan describes how the FWS intends to manage the Ouray NWR for the next 10-15 years.

ADDRESSES: A copy of the Plan may be obtained by writing to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 266 West 100 North, Suite 2, Vernal, UT 84078; or download from <http://www.r6.fws.gov/larp/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Allison Banks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486 DFC, Denver, CO 80225, 303/236-8145 extension 626; fax

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Ouray NWR is located in northeast Utah. Implementation of the Plan will focus on adaptive resource management of wetland, grassland, and semidesert shrubland habitats. restoration and improved management of riparian bottomlands, recovery of endangered fish species of the Upper Colorado River Ecosystem, and opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation. Habitat monitoring and evaluation will be emphasized as the Plan is implemented. Opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation will continue to be provided.

Dated: February 16, 2000.

Terry T. Terell,

Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.

[FR Doc. 00-4332 Filed 2-23-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Endangered and Threatened Species Permit Applications

ACTION: Notice of receipt of applications.

SUMMARY: The following applicants have applied for a permit to conduct certain activities with endangered species. This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*).

PERMIT NO. TE-797466

Applicant: Champion International Corporation, Huntsville, Texas.

Applicant requests authorization to conduct endangered species activities for the red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) and the Houston toad (*Bufo houstonensis*) in Texas.

PERMIT NO. TE-22749

Applicant: SWCA, Phoenix, Arizona.

Applicant requests authorization to conduct presence/absence surveys for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium basilianum cactorum*), and Yuma clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris yumanensis*) in Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal Counties, Arizona.

PERMIT NO. TE-837751

Applicant: Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix Area Office, Phoenix, Arizona.

Applicant requests authorization for recovery purposes to conduct activities for the Pima pineapple cactus (*Coryphantha scheeri* var. *robustispina*) in the San Javier District of the Tohono O'odham Reservation and the Tucson metropolitan area of Arizona.

PERMIT NO. TE-814841

Applicant: Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix, Arizona.

Applicant requests authorization for research and recovery purposes to collect seeds and voucher specimens from the Pima pineapple cactus (*Coryphantha scheeri* var. *robustispina*) in El Paso, Texas.

PERMIT NO. TE-23152

Applicant: Michael Baker Jr., Inc., Midvale, Utah.

Applicant requests authorization to conduct presence/absence surveys for the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum*) in Pima and Maricopa Counties, Arizona.

PERMIT NO. TE-23159

Applicant: Southwestern Ornithological Research and Adventures, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Applicant requests authorization to conduct presence/absence surveys for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) within New Mexico.

PERMIT NO. TE 822998

Applicant: Coronado National Forest, Tucson, Arizona.

Applicant requests authorization to conduct presence/absence surveys for the Yaqui chub (*Gila purpurea*) within lands of the Coronado National Forest.

PERMIT NO. TE 004401

Applicant: Robert Schmalzel, Tucson, Arizona.

Applicant requests authorization for scientific research and recovery purposes to conduct activities with the Pima pineapple cactus (*Coryphantha scheeri* var. *robustispina*) at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Arizona.

DATES: Written comments on these permit applications must be on or before March 27, 2000.

All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, Division of Endangered Species/Permits, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Please refer to the respective permit number for each application when requesting copies of documents. Documents and other information submitted with these applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice, to the address above.

Susan MacMullin,

Programmatic Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Region 2, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

[FR Doc. 00-4370 Filed 2-23-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Geological Survey****A Conversation With Customers on Future Science Directions**

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, DOI.

ACTION: Notice of Customer Meeting.

SUMMARY: The USGS is sponsoring two days of listening sessions to help share its science directions for the year 2002 and beyond. The USGS is sponsoring these sessions as an opportunity for users of earth and life science data and research to share their views on future science directions of the USGS. The sessions will be organized around broad science topics and customers who have registered in advance will have an opportunity to give a brief presentation of their science needs and issues. Attendees are welcome to listen to any or all of the sessions. The purposes of this meeting are: (1) to give

stakeholders, customers, and others who have interest in the earth and life sciences an opportunity to provide input, from their perspectives and needs, on future science directions; (2) to engage in a dialog with stakeholders on their specific interests within broad science categories; and (3) to discuss opportunities for on-going stakeholder involvement in the development of science initiatives within USGS. The meeting is open to all interested stakeholders. Pre-registration, however, is requested, as meeting space is limited. Registration information is provided below.

DATES: March 22 and 23, 2000.

ADDRESSES: USGS National Center Headquarters, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gail Wendt, USGS Office of External Affairs, 703-648-5604 or 703-648-4599 (gwendt@usgs.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**1. Background**

As the nation's science agency for natural resources and the environment, the USGS is committed to meeting the health, safety and knowledge needs of the changing world around us. In order to ensure that the science directions and program development of the USGS is in concert with the needs of the public that it serves, the USGS is creating opportunities to have conversations with its customers and to seek their input. The March 22 and 23, 2000, meeting is the first such "Conversation with Customers" to be sponsored by the USGS.

2. Registration Information

Registration information can be obtained by sending an email message to conversation@usgs.gov. You may also call the USGS Office of External Affairs, 703-648-4599. Registered parties will receive a follow-up packet of information that provides an agenda and topics of the listening sessions for each day and the format for participation. Customers who have registered in advance will give a brief presentation (5-10 minutes) and will then engage in a roundtable discussion with USGS leaders. For anyone who wishes to provide input, but who cannot attend, please submit ideas to the same email address: conversation@usgs.gov.

Registration deadline is March 13, 2000.

Amy L. Holley,

Senior Advisor to the Director.

[FR Doc. 00-4275 Filed 2-23-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-Y7-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Indian Affairs****Grant availability to Federally Recognized Indian Tribes for Projects Implementing Traffic Safety on Indian Reservations**

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) intends to make funds available to federally-recognized Indian tribes on an annual basis for the purpose of implementing traffic safety projects, which are designed to reduce the number of traffic crashes within Indian Country. Due to the limited funding available for this program, all projects will be reviewed and selected on a competitive basis. This notice informs Indian tribes that grant funds are available and that the information packets are forthcoming. Information packets will be distributed by the end of January of each program year to all tribal leaders on the latest Tribal Leaders List.

DATES: Requests for funds must be received by June 1 of each program year. Requests not received in the Office of the Indian Highway Safety Program by close of business on June 1 will not be considered.

ADDRESSES: Each tribe must submit their request to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Safety Management, Attention: Indian Highway Safety Program Coordinator, 505 Marquette Avenue, NW, Suite 1705, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tribes should direct questions concerning the grant program to Larry Archambeau, Indian Highway Safety Program Coordinator or to Charles L. Jaynes, Program Administrator, Telephone: (505) 248-5053.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (Pub. L. 93-87) provides for U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) funding to assist Indian tribes in implementing Highway Safety projects. The projects are designed to reduce the number of traffic crashes and their resulting fatalities, injuries, and property damage within Indian reservations. All federally-recognized Indian tribes on Indian reservations are eligible to receive this assistance. All tribes receiving awards of program funds are reimbursed for costs incurred