

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Office of the Secretary****Final Report and Recommendations of the Working Group on the Endangered Species Act and Indian Water Rights**

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Interior is making available to the public and seeking comments on the Final Report and Recommendations of the Working Group on the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Indian Water Rights. This Working Group of five agency employees within the Department was appointed in 1997 to look at implementation of the ESA in relation to the exercise of Indian water rights in the West.

DATES: Comments on the Final Report and Recommendations should be submitted by October 4, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted to S. Elizabeth Birnbaum, Special Assistant to the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Room 6352, Washington, DC 20240.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: S. Elizabeth Birnbaum at (202) 208-4423 or Timothy A. Vollmann at (505) 346-2700.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 1997 the Secretary of the Interior asked the Department's Solicitor to put together a Working Group, chaired by Southwest Regional Solicitor Tim Vollmann, to examine the issue of the implementation of the ESA in relation to the exercise of Indian water rights in the West, and evaluate the process and criteria for the development of environmental baselines pursuant to section 7 of the ESA and existing regulations. The Working Group was also asked to prepare a case study of this issue in the upper Colorado River Basin. Beginning in August 1999, a draft of the Working Group's Report and Recommendations and the draft case study were released to Indian tribes, state officials, and members of the public, and comments were solicited. The Working Group has now completed its Final Report and Recommendations and submitted them to the Secretary.

The Department is seeking public comment on this Final Report and Recommendations. The case study on the upper Colorado River Basin is an

appendix to the Report. A 90-day period is established for the transmittal of written comments to the above address. No action will be taken to implement any of the Recommendations of the Working Group until all comments have been received and analyzed.

Copies of the Final Report and Recommendations are being mailed to western Indian tribes, State Attorneys General, and the heads of western State water resource departments, in addition to all persons who submitted written comments on the Working Group's draft Report and Recommendations.

Additional copies may be requested from S. Elizabeth Birnbaum, Special Assistant to the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Room 6352, Washington, DC 20240. These documents have also been made available on the U.S. Department of the Interior website at http://www.doi.gov/feature/es_wr/index1.html.

John D. Leshy,
Solicitor.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Information Collection To Be Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Approval Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)**

ACTION: Information Collection Renewal.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) plans to submit the collection of information requirement described below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). You may obtain copies of the collection requirement and related forms and explanatory material by contacting the Service's Information Collection Clearance Officer at the phone number listed below. The Service is soliciting comment and suggestions on the requirement as described below.

DATES: Interested parties must submit comments on or before September 5, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Interested parties should send comments and suggestions on the requirement to Rebecca A. Mullin, Information Collection Clearance

Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203, (703) 358-2278 or Rebecca_Mullin@fws.gov E-mail.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jack Hicks, (703) 358-1851, fax (703) 358-1837, or Jack_Hicks@fws.gov E-mail.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Forms: Summary Information for Ranking National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program Proposals.

Description and Use: The Service administers the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant program authorized by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act. The Service uses the information collected to evaluate proposals under this program. This includes summarized information on habitat, coastal barriers, levels of conservation, watershed management, threatened and/or endangered species potentially involved, benefits of the restoration proposed, partners, cost sharing, education/outreach impact, impact on wildlife-oriented recreation and other benefits and determining if the estimated cost is reasonable.

Service Form Numbers: 3-2179 (Summary Information for Ranking National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program Proposals).

Supplementary Information: The service plans to submit the following information collection requirements to OMB for review and approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments are invited on (1) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimates of burden of the collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and, (4) ways to minimize the burden of collection of information on respondents, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Frequency: Generally annually.

Description of Respondents: States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

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