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Dated: June 12, 1998.

MaryEllen Amtower,

Acting Chief, Branch of Permits, Office of Management Authority.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior

Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the Bonny Doon Quarries, Santa Cruz County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: RMC Lonestar of Pleasanton, California, has applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The proposed 10-year permit would authorize the incidental take of the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), federally listed as threatened, during operation and maintenance of settlement ponds in the Bonny Doon Quarries in Santa Cruz County, California.

This notice announces the availability of the permit application and the environmental assessment for public comment. The permit application includes a habitat conservation plan for the Bonny Doon Quarries' settlement ponds and an implementation agreement. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be made available to the public.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before July 20, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Diane K. Noda, Field Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003. Written comments also may be sent by facsimile to (805) 644-3958.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Pereksta, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above address (805-644-1766).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability of Documents

Individuals wishing copies of the documents should immediately contact the Service's Ventura Fish and Wildlife

Office at the above referenced address or telephone. Documents will also be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

Background Information

RMC Lonestar proposes to continue operation and maintenance of five of seven settlement ponds and associated culverts and open drains that serve active and formerly active operational areas, including both quarrying and waste disposal areas, at the Bonny Doon Quarries. The site is known to support populations of the California red-legged frog. As a component of recent environmental review conducted by the County of Santa Cruz (County) for RMC Lonestar's operations and as a condition of RMC Lonestar's mining permit, the County now requires regular cleaning of an engineered drainage system that includes the five settlement ponds and associated culverts and open drains noted above. Operational areas are either owned or leased by RMC Lonestar and covered by the mining permit. The County may add these maintenance requirements to two additional ponds and their associated culverts and drains.

At a minimum, each settlement pond must have adequate capacity to hold run-off from a 10-year, 2-hour rainfall event falling in its catchment area. To maintain this pond capacity, RMC Lonestar must perform general maintenance and remove accumulated sediment each year from at least some of the ponds in the late summer or early fall. The pond maintenance cannot begin before April 15 and must be completed by October 15 to satisfy the County's objectives for the protection of water quality.

RMC Lonestar needs an incidental take permit from the Service because listed wildlife species are protected against "take" pursuant to section 9 of the Endangered Species Act. That is, no one may harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect listed animal species, or attempt to engage in such conduct (16 USC 1538). The Service, however, may issue permits to take listed animal species if such taking is incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for threatened species are found at 50 CFR 17.32.

The Service proposes to issue a 10-year permit to RMC Lonestar for incidental take of California red-legged frogs during operation and maintenance of settlement ponds, associated culverts, and open drains at the Bonny Doon Quarries. The proposed project would result in the loss of California red-legged

frogs and their habitat within the settlement ponds, associated culverts, and open drains as the natural vegetation communities in which they are found and the hydrological conditions that provide suitable habitat are removed or altered during operation and maintenance activities.

The proposed action would authorize the incidental take of California red-legged frogs within the 5-acre area of the settlement ponds serving the 455-acre Bonny Doon Quarries. During 1997, California red-legged frogs were found in three of the seven settlement ponds; breeding occurred within two of those three. California red-legged frogs also were found along Liddell Creek and at RMC Lonestar's mitigation ponds along Liddell Creek.

RMC Lonestar's habitat conservation plan contains the following measures to minimize and mitigate impacts to the California red-legged frog and its habitat from the operation and maintenance of the settlement ponds and to further the conservation of the species: (1) training programs to familiarize employees and subcontractors of RMC Lonestar with the biology of the species and the protection provided to the frog under the Endangered Species Act; (2) a community outreach program for distribution to local schools and community associations in Davenport and Bonny Doon; (3) annual breeding surveys at all settlement ponds and mitigation ponds; (4) pre-maintenance activity surveys for California red-legged frogs; (5) avoidance of impacts to or removal from harm's way of juvenile or adult California red-legged frogs to the greatest extent possible; (6) timing of water releases to minimize impacts to breeding populations of California red-legged frogs; (7) the use of speed limits, trash control, and predator control as necessary to protect California red-legged frogs; (8) minimization of disturbance to and enhancement of habitat within Settlement Pond 1, consistent with other regulatory objectives; (9) deepening and maintaining the depth of the mitigation ponds to provide benefits to the California red-legged frog; (10) monitoring of project impacts and success of mitigation measures for the term of this habitat conservation plan and for 5 years following the term of the permit; and (11) submission of an annual report of the activities conducted under this habitat conservation plan during the previous year.

Environmental Assessment

The environmental assessment considers the environmental consequences of the proposed action

and no-action alternatives. The proposed action alternative is issuance of the incidental take permit and implementation of the habitat conservation plan as submitted by RMC Lonestar. Two other alternatives were considered, but were not advanced for detailed analysis because they were neither technically nor economically feasible.

Under the no-action alternative, the Service would not issue an incidental take permit to RMC Lonestar and a habitat conservation plan would not be implemented. No maintenance activities would be performed on the ponds, and the incidental take associated with those activities would be avoided. Therefore, no permit would be needed. This alternative is not being used because RMC Lonestar is under a legal obligation to carry out these maintenance activities by the County and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. These objectives are in place to protect water quality in the streams below the quarry areas. If the ponds were allowed to fill with sediment, the protection to water quality provided by the ponds would be lost and increased sedimentation of downstream areas would result. California red-legged frogs inhabiting downstream habitat would likely be adversely affected. For these reasons, this alternative was rejected.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act and Service regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (40 CFR 1506.6). The Service will evaluate the application, associated documents, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of law. If the Service determines that the requirements are met, a permit will be issued for the incidental take of the listed species. A final decision on permit issuance will be made no sooner than 30 days from the date of this notice.

Dated: June 11, 1998.

David L. McMullen,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[WO-420-1050-01 24 1A]

Notice of New Information Collection

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces its intention to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to collect certain information from Alaska natives, groups of Alaska natives, or associations or corporations of Alaska natives who want to graze reindeer on public lands in Alaska that are vacant and unappropriated. This information allows BLM to determine whether or not applicants are qualified to receive a reindeer grazing permit. BLM also collects information from permittees to determine whether or not they are using their permits according to the terms and conditions.

DATES: BLM must receive comments on the proposed information collection by August 17, 1998 to assure consideration of them.

ADDRESSES: Mail comments to: Director (630), Bureau of Land Management, 1849 C St., NW, Mail Stop 401LS, Washington, DC 20240. Send comments via Internet to:

WoComment@wo.blm.gov. Please include "Attn: 1004-NEW" and your name and return address in the Internet message.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frances Watson, (202) 452-5006.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with 5 CFR 1320.12(a), BLM is required to provide a 60-day notice in the **Federal Register** concerning a collection of information from 10 or more people who are not Federal employees on (a) whether a proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of collecting the information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology. BLM will receive and analyze any comments sent in response to this notice and include them with its request for approval from OMB.

BLM conducts the reindeer grazing program under the authority of the Act of September 1, 1937, which authorizes

the Secretary of the Interior to manage the reindeer industry in Alaska to maintain a self-sustaining industry for natives of Alaska. The Act also authorizes the Secretary to issue permits to those natives for grazing reindeer on public lands.

BLM uses the information on the Grazing Permit Application to determine an individual or group's qualifications to receive a grazing lease or permit. The information requested on the form includes: the applicant's name and address; a legal description of the land applied for; whether or not the applicant is an Alaska native, citizen of the United States, or a qualified corporation; whether or not the applicant has examined the land and whether there are any improvements on the land, in which case a list of the owners; whether or not the applicant has previously used the land; how many acres of adjoining land, if any, the applicant controls; whether or not the applicant can furnish a statement of financial responsibility; and the types and numbers of livestock the applicant intends to graze on the land.

The Reindeer Grazing Permit requires permittees to file a report describing his or her grazing operations for the preceding year. The report is filed annually with BLM before April 1.

There is an average of six applicants annually for grazing permits, and six permittees file annual reports with BLM. The estimated time for collecting the information, filling out and filing each permit application is 1 hour, for a total of 6 burden hours. The estimated time for collecting the information and providing it for the annual report is 15 minutes, for a total of 1.5 burden hours. The total number of respondents for this collection is therefore six respondents and 7.5 burden hours annually.

Dated: June 11, 1998.

Carole Smith,

Bureau of Land Management, Information Collection Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-078-98-1310-00]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on Oil and Gas Leasing in the Glenwood Springs Resource Area

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management.

ACTION: Notice of availability.