

Dated: April 20, 2006.

Jayson P. Ahern,

Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Draft Recovery Plan for Two Plants From Rota (*Nesogenes rotensis* and *Osmoxylon mariannense*)

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability for review and comment.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announce the availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for Two Plants from Rota (*Nesogenes rotensis* and *Osmoxylon mariannense*) (no common names) for public review and comment.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before June 26, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the draft recovery plan are available by request from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (telephone: 808-792-9400). An electronic copy of the draft recovery plan is also available at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Field Supervisor, at the above Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of our endangered species program. The Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (ESA) requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Recovery plans help guide the recovery effort by describing actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establishing criteria for downlisting or delisting listed species, and estimating time and cost for implementing the measures needed for recovery.

Section 4(f) of the ESA 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 the public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. Substantive comments on the recovery needs of the species or other aspects of recovery plan development may result in changes to the recovery plan. Substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation may not necessarily result in changes to the recovery plan, but will be forwarded to appropriate Federal or other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions. Individual responses to comments will not be provided.

Nesogenes rotensis and *Osmoxylon mariannense* are found only on the island of Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Both species were federally listed as endangered in 2004 (69 FR 18499), and *O. mariannense* is also protected by the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Currently, there are 2 known populations of *N. rotensis* consisting of 15 to 20 plants each. There are 10 known individuals of *O. mariannense* scattered through the Sabana (the cloudswep plateau that dominates the western half of Rota), including 2 individuals outplanted from past controlled propagation efforts.

Nesogenes rotensis is found on exposed, raised limestone flats in non-forested strand habitat. *Osmoxylon mariannense* is found in limestone forests on the Sabana, a raised plateau unique in the Mariana archipelago, that are often shrouded in clouds and mist.

Human activities are believed to be the primary factors leading to the small population sizes and limited distribution of *Nesogenes rotensis* and *Osmoxylon mariannense*, and include: agriculture, ranching, non-native plant and animal introductions, resort and beach park development in the coastal habitat of *N. rotensis*, and road construction and maintenance in the Sabana habitat of *O. mariannense*. In the last decade, several major typhoons have made landfall on Rota, severely impacting individuals of both species. Another factor that may affect the recovery of these two species is their vulnerability to extinction from reduced reproductive vigor due to their small population sizes.

The objective of this recovery plan is to restore and maintain multiple naturally reproducing populations of *Nesogenes rotensis* and *Osmoxylon mariannense* on the island of Rota. The

draft recovery plan for these two plants focuses on the following actions: (1) Coordinating and monitoring recovery efforts; (2) addressing factors affecting viability of the wild populations; (3) monitoring *N. rotensis* and *O. mariannense* populations, establishing new populations, and augmenting existing populations; and (4) providing educational informational opportunities to build public support for conservation.

Public Comments Solicited

We solicit written comments on the draft recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered in the finalization of this plan.

Authority

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

Dated: February 17, 2006.

David J. Wesley,

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

[FR Doc. E6-6143 Filed 4-24-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

U.S. Geological Survey

National Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Public Law 96-472, the National Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council (NEPEC) will hold a meeting. The meeting location is the U.S. Geological Survey, Building 3, Conference Room C, 345 Middlefield Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025. The Committee is comprised of members from academia and the Federal government. The Committee shall advise the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) on proposed earthquake predictions, on the completeness and scientific validity of the available data related to earthquake predictions, and on related matters as assigned by the Director.

The Committee, which was recently reconstituted following a period of dormancy, will review past findings rendered by the NEPEC and by the California Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council. They will also discuss recent trends in earthquake research that bear on the predictability of earthquake occurrence.

Meetings of the National Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council are open to the public.

DATES: May 4, 2006, commencing at 1 p.m. and adjourning at 4 p.m. on May 5, 2006.

Contact: Dr. Michael Blanpied, U.S. Geological Survey, MS 905, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 20192, (703) 648-6696, mblanpied@usgs.gov.

Dated: April 17, 2006.

Peter T. Lyttle,

Acting Associate Director for Geology.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[UT-920-1320-EL, UTU-81893]

Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessments, Determination of NEPA Adequacy, and Public Hearing for Coal Lease Application UTU-81893, Utah

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of the Kenilworth Tract Coal Lease By Application UTU-81893 and Federal Coal Notice of Public Hearing, and Request for Environmental Assessment, Determination of NEPA Adequacy, Maximum Economic Recovery and Fair Market Value Comments.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 43 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 3425.4, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Utah State Office, held a public meeting on March 30, 2006 on the environmental assessment and Documentation of NEPA Adequacy (DNA), the proposed sale and requests public comment on the fair market value of the certain coal resources it proposes to offer for competitive lease sale. The EA/DNA analyzes and discloses direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of issuing a Federal coal lease competitively for 1,760.00 acres in Carbon County, Utah. The purpose of the public hearing was to solicit comments from the public on (1) the proposal to issue a Federal coal lease; (2) the proposed competitive lease sale; (3) the Fair Market Value (FMV) of the Federal coal; and (4) Maximum Economic Recovery (MER) of the Federal coal included in the tract.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On October 24, 2004 Andalex Resources, Inc. applied for a Federal coal lease. The

Federal tract was assigned case number UTU-81893. The lands included in the delineated Federal coal lease tract ("Kenilworth") are located approximately eight miles northeast of Helper, Utah on private lands with federally administered minerals and are described as follows:

T. 12 S., R. 10 E., SLM, Carbon County, Utah
 sec. 26, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
 sec. 27, S $\frac{1}{2}$;
 sec. 34, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$.
 sec. 35, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$;

Containing approximately 1,760.00 acres in Carbon County, Utah.

The Kenilworth coal tract has one or more minable coal beds. The minable portions of the Castlegate A coal bed in this area are around six to twelve feet in thickness. The Castlegate A bed contains more than 16.3 million tons of recoverable high-volatile A bituminous coal. The Kenilworth coal bed may be recoverable but further analysis will be required though. The coal quality in the Castlegate A coal bed on an "as received basis" is as follows: 13,060 Btu/lb., 2.92 percent moisture, 7.61 percent ash, 41.82 percent volatile matter, 47.83 percent fixed carbon and 0.41 percent sulfur.

BLM requests public comment on the fair market value and environmental effects of this tract. The BLM signed a Decision Notice/ Finding of No Significant Impact dated February 10, 2006 that discusses the environmental effects of mining this tract. The Notice of Decision was posted in the Price Field Office and the Utah State Office on February 10, 2006. Comments should address, but not necessarily be limited to the following information.

1. The quality of the coal resource;
2. The mining methods or methods which would achieve maximum economic recovery of the coal, including specifications of seams to be mined and the most desirable timing and rate of production;
3. Whether this tract is likely to be mined as part of an existing mine and therefore should be evaluated on a realistic incremental basis, in relation to the existing mine to which it has the greatest value;
4. Whether the tract should be evaluated as part of a potential larger mining unit and reevaluated as a portion of a new potential mine (i.e., a tract which does not in itself form a logical mining unit);
5. Restrictions to mining that may affect coal recovery;
6. The price that the mined coal would bring when sold;

7. Costs, including mining and reclamation, of producing the coal and the time of production;

8. The percentage rate at which anticipated income streams should be discounted, either with inflation or in the absence of inflation, in which case the anticipated rate of inflation should be given;

9. Depreciation, depletion, amortization and other tax accounting factors;

10. The value of any surface estate where held privately;

11. Documented information on the terms and conditions of recent and similar coal land transactions in the lease sale area;

12. Any comparable sales data of similar coal lands; and coal quantities and the FMV of the coal developed by BLM may or may not change as a result of comments received from the public and changes in the market conditions between now and when final economic evaluations are completed.

DATES: The public hearing was held at 7 p.m. on Thursday March 30, 2006 in the Price Field Office, 125 South 600 West, Price, Utah 84501 where copies of the EA/DNA are available for inspection or copies provided upon request. If the public wishes to have an additional meeting on the subject, please submit a request in writing to the Utah State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office, Division of Lands and Minerals, P.O. Box 45155, Salt Lake City, Utah 84145.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Steve Rigby, Mining Engineer at the Price Field Office address above or by telephone at 435-636-3604. Written comments on the Fair Market Value and Maximum Economic Recovery should be addressed to James F. Kohler, and must be received by June 1, 2006, Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office, Division of Lands and Minerals, P.O. Box 45155, Salt Lake City, Utah 84145. As provided in 43 CFR 3422.1(a), proprietary data marked as confidential may be submitted to the Bureau of Land Management in response to this solicitation of public comments. Data so marked shall be treated in accordance with the laws and regulations governing confidentiality of such information. A copy of the comments submitted by the public on FMV and MER, except those portions identified as proprietary by the author and meeting exemptions stated in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), will be available for public inspection at the BLM, Utah State Office during the regular business hours (7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) Monday through Friday. If you wish to withhold your name or