

Islands Ecoregion at the Honolulu address given above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Rosa, Assistant Field Supervisor-Endangered Species, at the Honolulu address given above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States, its Territories and Commonwealths. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that a public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. Substantive technical comments will result in changes to the 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. Individualized responses to comments will not be provided.

The species being considered in this recovery plan is *Kokia cookei*. Known only from the island of Molokai, *Kokia cookei* has been described as the rarest plant in the world. When first discovered in the 1860s, three trees of this species were known. By the twentieth century, only a single wild tree remained. The species became extirpated from the wild in 1918. Currently, only 28 cloned individuals of *Kokia cookei* exist. These individuals were produced by grafting to root stocks of the two related *Kokia* species, *Kokia kauaiensis* and *Kokia drynarioides*. Seven individuals are in artificial

cultivation facilities on the islands of Maui and Oahu. The remaining 21 individuals are in small (10,000 square feet or less) outplanting sites on privately owned Molokai Ranch lands, at Puu Nana, about 365 meters (1200 feet) elevation.

The destruction of dryland habitats throughout the Hawaiian Islands, which began 1,500 years ago with the coming of the Polynesians to Hawaii and increased greatly with the arrival of the Europeans a little over 200 years ago, has led to the elimination of *Kokia cookei* in the wild. *Kokia cookei* was directly impacted by browsing, bark stripping, and soil trampling by domestic and feral cattle, goats, and sheep. Currently, this species is most threatened by the extremely low number of individuals remaining, the lack of naturally rooted plants, and the lack of viable seed production by the remaining individuals.

The objective of this plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of *Kokia cookei* so that its protection by the Act is no longer necessary. Recovery efforts will focus on increasing the numbers of cloned individuals while pursuing research into other methods, such as embryo culture methodology, for the production of individuals capable of setting viable seed. Suitable sites for outplanting of individuals on Molokai, Maui, and Lanai will be located and steps taken to manage these lands for the perpetuity of *Kokia cookei* and other native components of the dryland forest.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval 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: August 8, 1997.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

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

[FR Doc. 97-21545 Filed 8-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Issuance of Permits for Marine Mammals

On June 5, 1997, a notice was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol.

62, No. 108, Page 30876, that an application had been filed with the Fish and Wildlife Service by Jon Ziegler, Rapid City, SD (PRT-830065) for a permit to import a sport-hunted polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) from Canada for personal use.

Notice is hereby given that on July 21, 1997, as authorized by the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) the Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the requested permit subject to certain conditions set forth therein.

Documents and other information submitted for these applications are available for review by any party who submits a written request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Rm 430, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Phone (703) 358-2104 or Fax (703) 358-2281.

Dated: August 8, 1997.

Mary Ellen Amtower,

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

[FR Doc. 97-21449 Filed 8-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NM-030-7122-03-821G]

Proposed Expansion of the Santa Rita Pit and Land Exchange in Grant County, New Mexico

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and notice of scoping meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Las Cruces District Office, will be directing the preparation of an EIS to be prepared by a third party contractor. The EIS will describe the potential impacts of the Phelps Dodge Corporation-Chino Mines Company (CMC) proposed Santa Rita Pit Expansion and Land Exchange Project, located approximately 7 miles north-northeast of the town of Hurley, in Grant County, New Mexico. The proposed development would occur partially on patented CMC land and partially on Federal land administered by the BLM.

The public is invited to participate in the planning process. A public scoping meeting will be held at the following time and location:

Time/Date

Location

7:00 p.m. September 3, 1997 Bayard Community Center, 300 Hurley Avenue, Bayard, New Mexico.

DATES: Written comments on the scoping process will be accepted through September 15, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Tom Custer, Bureau of Land Management, 1800 Marquess, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Custer, BLM Las Cruces District Office, at (505) 525-4328.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: CMC is proposing to expand its current copper mining operation at the Santa Rita Mine onto land administered by the BLM. An economic ore deposit lies within the southeastern end of the mine pit on patented land. Removing the overburden and extracting the ore safely will require constructing access roads and laying the pit walls back onto BLM land. It will also include expanding existing stockpiles and locating new stockpiles.

In 1995, BLM required CMC to prepare an amendment to a 1981 Plan of Operations (POO) for the Santa Rita Mine for certain proposed new activities on public land. The amended POO described proposed mining activities for 1995 through 1998 that would be necessary to meet ore production schedules. The amendment was submitted to the BLM in November 1995. The BLM determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the potential environmental impacts associated with activities proposed in the amendment (the Proposed Action) was required. The EA was completed, and the BLM provided a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in November 1996. Additionally, as a prerequisite to allowing the interim amendment, the BLM required development of a new long-term POO and preparation of an EIS. The long-term POO describes future expansion of the mine onto BLM land, from 1999 to 2018.

The Santa Rita Mine is an open pit copper mine owned by the CMC, a partnership between Phelps Dodge Mining Company and Heisei Minerals Company, a subsidiary of Mitsubishi

Corporation. CMC also owns and operates a copper concentrator, solution extraction and electrowinning facility, copper smelter, and ancillary support facilities near the Santa Rita Mine. Phelps Dodge owns a two-thirds interest and is the operator of the property, and Heisei owns a one-third interest. In 1995, CMC produced a total of 168,700 tons of copper metal along with by-products molybdenum, gold, and silver. Chino ranks fifth largest in the United States and sixteenth largest in the world in terms of annual copper production. In 1995, Chino mined a total of 116 million tons of rock from the Santa Rita open pit.

The Proposed Action considered in the POO describes mining activities related to continuing the advance of the open pit and rock stockpiles to the south of existing operations onto Federal land administered by the BLM.

The Santa Rita open pit mine presently covers an area of approximately one square mile at the perimeter, with additional areas on the perimeter used as rock stockpiles. The upper most level in the pit is located on the east side at the 6,750 foot elevation and the lowest level in the pit is currently at the 5,400 foot elevation. Mining takes place on a 3-shift-per-day, 7-day-per-week basis at a rate of about 290,000 tons per day. Up to 60,000 tons of ore per day are delivered to the crusher.

Blasthole drilling is about 8,430 feet per day, approximately 130 holes per day. Drill hole cuttings are sampled and assayed for determination of material type. Material is designated as sulfide ore, leach ore, or low-grade leach ore. Blasting is done only during day-shift on a 5-day-per-week basis. Blasting agents in use at Chino include emulsions, ANFO (ammonium nitrate and fuel oil), and aluminized ANFO. Loading of the materials in the Santa Rita Pit is accomplished with electric shovels varying from 17 cubic yard to 56 cubic yard dipper capacity. The size of dipper used is dependent on whether the shovel is operating in high or low density material.

The existing haulage truck fleet moves approximately 60,000 tons per day of ore, 151,000 tons per day of leach rock, and 228,000 tons per day of waste rock. A fleet of 190- to 240-ton haul trucks is utilized to move this material. Ore is delivered to the concentrator primary crusher; leach ore and no-leach rock are delivered to stockpiles on the perimeter of the pit. Haul distances are currently averaging about 13,000 feet with 600 feet of lift.

The POO provides detailed descriptions of the CMC facility including ancillary facilities, supporting structures, and proposed action.

Reclamation bonding and analyses will be determined through the development of a reclamation plan with the New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division (MMD). The goal of reclamation of the Santa Rita Mine will be to effectively mitigate impacts to the natural, human, and cultural environment. Implementation of the Reclamation Plan will require that CMC comply with all applicable rules and standards set forth by the BLM and the New Mexico Mining Act. A Closeout Plan will be submitted to the New Mexico MMD as part of the mine permitting process. The Closeout Plan will include a description of the reclamation plan and specific mitigation measures that CMC will commit to research and development. These mitigation measures will serve to reduce short-term and long-term environmental impacts associated with the implementation of one of the action alternatives. The intent of the reclamation plan and its implementation will be to satisfy both BLM and State of New Mexico guidelines.

The proposed land exchange will involve approximately 5,390 acres of Federal land in Grant County managed by the BLM (Selected Land) and approximately 463 acres of land owned by CMC (Offered Land). In exchange for the Federal land, CMC is offering land in the Organ Mountains about 14 miles northeast of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Township	Range	Section	Acres
Selected Land			
17 South	12 West	Portions of Sections 22, 26, 28, 34, 35	7.66
18 South	11 West	Portions of Sections 7, 18, 19, 20	722.68
18 South	12 West	Portions of Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 17, 20, 21	2,579.24
19 South	11 West	Section 7	86.02

Township	Range	Section	Acres
19 South	12 West:	Section 12	160
21 South	12 West:	Sections 13, 14, 23, 24	1,520
21 South	11 West	Section 19	314.44
Offered Land			
22 South	4 East	Section 5	463

The EIS will address water resources, geology and minerals, air quality, soils, vegetation resources, wildlife resources, special-status species, range resources, land use and access, recreation, visual resources, social and economic values, cultural resources, transportation, noise, climate and reclamation.

The BLM has identified the following resources as requiring emphasis during analysis:

Mimbres Figwort

Although this plant is not protected by Federal or State endangered species laws, it is sufficiently rare (State of New Mexico List 2, R-E-D code 2-1-3) that impacts to the local population could decrease genetic variability in the species.

Peregrine Falcon

Two peregrine falcons and a peregrine falcon eyrie were identified near the Santa Rita pit in July 1996.

Visual Resources

Scenic resources near the Santa Rita pit include the Kneeling Nun and Kneeling Nun ridge. The Kneeling Nun is a rock monolith which is a well-known local landmark. (The Kneeling Nun will be retained in Federal ownership.)

Air Quality

Potential impacts to air quality will need to be emphasized during analysis.

Water Resources

Potential impact to ground water and surface water quality and quantity, including acid rock drainage, will need to be emphasized during analysis.

Cumulative Impacts

Mining in the region has occurred since the late 1880's. Analysis of cumulative impacts related to past mining activity, present activity, and planned future expansions will need to be emphasized.

BLM's scoping process for the EIS will include: (1) Identification of issues to be addressed; (2) identification of viable alternatives, and (3) notifying interested groups, individuals, and agencies so that additional information concerning these issues can be obtained.

The scoping will consist of a news release announcing the start of the EIS process; letters of invitation to participate in the scoping process; and a scoping packet which further clarifies the proposed action and significant issues being considered to be distributed to those on the mailing list and made available upon request.

Dated: August 6, 1997.

Richard T. Watts,

Acting District Manager.

[FR Doc. 97-21542 Filed 8-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-VC-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Changes in Military Warning Areas for the Western Gulf of Mexico

ACTION: Notice of changes in Military Warning Areas for the Western Gulf of Mexico.

SUMMARY: The Department of Defense (DOD) has recently issued a document describing changes in Military Warning Areas in the Gulf of Mexico. The MMS is giving notice of these changes to existing lessees and to potential bidders in Outer Continental Shelf Lease Sale 168, Western Gulf of Mexico.

CONTACT: Charles Hill, Gulf of Mexico Regional Office (504) 736-2795.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. General

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) is giving notice to lessees and to potential bidders in Sale 168, Western Gulf of Mexico, of the existence of Military Warning Areas. The Department of Defense (DOD) established these Warning Areas in the Flight Information Publication "Area Planning—Special Use Airspace—North and South America" (NIMA reference number PLANXAP1A). This document is published by the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, 3200 South Second Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63118-3399. The DOD published the most recent version of this document on July 17, 1997; the next issue is expected to be published on June 18, 1998. The

DOD will reissue it from time to time in the future.

Three Warning Areas currently are established in the Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Area: W-147, W-228, and W-602. W-147 is newly established by this July 17, 1997, issue of the document; the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) controls this airspace (a portion of this warning area extends into the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area). W-228 has long been in existence and the July 7, 1997, document did not change it; the Navy controls this airspace. W-602 is also a long-established area, but the DOD changed it significantly; the Navy also controls this airspace.

Certain restrictions on flights and radio communications in the Warning Areas will require close coordination between lessees (and their operators and agents) and the appropriate military commander or the FAA in charge of the specific Warning Area. It is the responsibility of lessees to establish and maintain contact and coordination with the military commander(s) or the FAA in any Warning Area in which operations or flights would be expected in the course of occupying and developing any leases; this could include flights through a Warning Area traveling to a leased block which is not in a Warning Area.

Lessees should establish and maintain contact and coordination with the appropriate military commander(s) or the FAA whether or not there is a military stipulation in their lease(s).

II. Oil and Gas Lease Sale 168

Potential bidders in Oil and Gas Lease Sale 168 in the Western Gulf of Mexico (to be held in New Orleans on August 27, 1997) should note that in the July 17, 1997, document DOD changed the area of W-602. Therefore, the map referred to in Stipulation No. 2—Military Areas, paragraph 13 of the Final Notice of Sale for Oil and Gas Lease Sale 168 (62 FR 39863-39871), is outdated. MMS is advising potential bidders of the newly configured W-602. The blocks in W-602 are listed in Appendix 1 of this notice, and a revised map showing the Warning Areas is available as noted below. The area to