

appropriately managing their habitat; and (2) to ensure the long-term conservation of the three candidates and additional 20 species of concern by protecting, enhancing, restoring, and appropriately managing their habitat.

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: September 24, 1997.

Michael J. Spear,

Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.
[FR Doc. 97-25846 Filed 9-29-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of a Draft Big Island II: Addendum to the Recovery Plan for the Big Island Plant Cluster (USFWS 1996)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces the availability for public review of a draft Big Island II: Addendum to the Recovery Plan for the Big Island Plant Cluster (USFWS 1996). There are 13 taxa of plants included in this plan, all are listed as endangered. All 13 are known only from the island of Hawaii (Big Island).

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan received by December 29, 1997 will be considered by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the draft recovery plan are available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the following locations: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, room 3108, P.O. Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (phone 808/541-3441); Kailua-Kona Public Library 75-138 Hualalai Rd., Kailua-Kona, HI 96740; Hilo Public Library, 300 Waiānūenue Ave., Hilo, HI 96720. Requests for copies of the draft recovery plan and written comments and materials regarding this plan should be addressed to, Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, at the above Honolulu address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen "Kitti" Jensen, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above Honolulu address.

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 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. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for the 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, 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 public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during the public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised Recovery Plan. Substantive technical comments will result in changes to the plans. Substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation may not necessarily result in changes to the recovery plans, 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.

This addendum to the Recovery Plan for the Big Island Plant Cluster covers 13 plant taxa, all are listed as endangered. All of these taxa are endemic to the island of Hawaii (Big Island), Hawaiian Islands. The plants included in the plan are: *Clermontia drepanomorpha* (oha wai), *Cyanea platyphylla* (haha), *Hibiscadelphus giffardianus* (hau kuahiwi), *Hibiscadelphus hualalaiensis* (hau kuahiwi), *Melicope zahlbruckneri* (alani), *Neraudia ovata* (no common name (NCN)), *Phyllostegia racemosa* (kiponapona), *Phyllostegia velutina* (NCN), *Phyllostegia warshaueri* (NCN), *Pleomele hawaiiensis* (hala pepe), *Pritchardia schattaueri* (loulou), *Sicyos*

alba (anunu), and *Zanthoxylum dipetalum* var. *tomentosum* (ae).

The 13 taxa included in this addendum grow in a variety of vegetation communities (shrublands, forests, and mixed communities), elevational zones (lowland to montane), and moisture regimes (dry to wet). These taxa and their habitats have been variously affected or are currently threatened by one or more of the following: competition for space, light, water, and nutrients by introduced vegetation; habitat degradation by feral or domestic animals (goats, pigs, sheep and cattle); agricultural and recreational activities; habitat loss and damage to plants from fires; predation by rats and insects; and natural disasters such as volcanic activity. In addition, due to the small number of existing individuals and their very narrow distributions, these taxa are subject to an increased likelihood of extinction and/or reduced reproductive vigor from stochastic events.

The objective of the Addendum to the Recovery Plan for the Big Island Plant Cluster (USFWS 1996) is to provide a framework for the recovery of these 13 taxa so that their protection by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is no longer necessary. The interim objective is to stabilize all existing populations of the Big Island II taxa. To be considered stable, each taxon must be managed to control threats (e.g., fenced) and be represented in an *ex situ* (such as a nursery or arboretum) collection. In addition, a minimum total of three populations of each taxon should be documented on the Big Island, where they now occur or occurred historically. Each of these populations must be naturally reproducing and increasing in number, with a minimum of 25 mature individuals per population for long-lived perennials (*Hibiscadelphus giffardianus*, *Hibiscadelphus hualalaiensis*, *Melicope zahlbruckneri*, *Pritchardia schattaueri*, and *Zanthoxylum tomentosum* var. *dipetalum* and a minimum of 50 mature individuals per population for short-lived perennials (*Clermontia drepanomorpha*, *Cyanea platyphylla*, *Neraudia ovata*, *Pleomele hawaiiensis*, *Phyllostegia racemosa*, *Phyllostegia velutina*, and *Phyllostegia warshaueri*) and a minimum of 100 mature individuals per population for the annual taxon *Sicyos alba*. For downlisting, a total of five to seven populations of each taxon should be documented on the Big Island where they now occur or occurred historically. Each of these populations must be naturally reproducing, stable or increasing in number, and secure from

threats, with a minimum of 100 mature individuals per population for long-lived perennials, a minimum of 300 mature individuals per population for short-lived perennials, a minimum of 500 mature individuals per population for the annual taxon. Each population should persist at this level for a minimum of 5 consecutive years before downlisting is considered. For delisting, a total of 8 to 10 populations of each taxon should be documented on Kauai where they now occur or occurred historically. Each of these populations must be naturally reproducing, stable or increasing in number, and secure from threats, with a minimum of 100 mature individuals per population for long-lived perennials, a minimum of 300 mature individuals per population for short-lived perennials, and a minimum of 500 mature individuals per population for the annual taxon. Each population should persist at this level for a minimum of 5 consecutive years.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the Addendum to the Recovery Plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of this addendum.

Authority

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

Dated: September 24, 1997.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

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

[FR Doc. 97-25847 Filed 9-29-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact, and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for a Residential Development Proposal called Tidewater Condominiums, in the City of Orange Beach, Baldwin County, Alabama

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

Tidewater Associates, L.L.C. (Applicant), seeks an incidental take permit (ITP) from the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), pursuant to Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), as

amended (Act). The ITP would authorize for a period of 30 years the incidental take of an endangered species, the Alabama beach mouse, *Peromyscus polionotus ammobates* (ABM). While surveys did not confirm the presence of ABM on the Applicant's 4.3-acre tract, ABM have been trapped on land adjacent to the Applicant's in Orange Beach, Alabama. It was the Applicant's decision to go forward with the Section 10 process. The project would be called Tidewater Condominiums and consists of 102 residential units. The residential component will include a single, 12-story condominium complex with 102 units. Associated landscaped grounds and parking areas, recreational amenities, and a dune walkover structure would also be constructed. A more detailed description of the mitigation and minimization measures to address the effects of the Project to the protected species are outlined the Applicant's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

The Service also announces the availability of an environmental assessment (EA) and HCP for the incidental take application. Copies of the EA and/or HCP may be obtained by making a request to the Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). Requests must be in writing to be processed. This notice also advises the public that the Service has made a preliminary determination that issuing the ITP is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on information contained in the EA and HCP. The final determination will be made no sooner than 30 days from the date of this notice. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 10 of the Act and NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1506.6). The Service specifically requests comment on the appropriateness of the "No Surprises" assurances should the Service determine that an ITP will be granted and based upon the submitted HCP. Although not explicitly stated in the HCP, the Service has, since August 1994, announced its intention to honor a "No Surprises" Policy for applicants seeking ITPs. Copies of the Service's "No Surprises" Policy may be obtained by making a written request to the Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). The Service is soliciting public comments and review of the applicability of the

"No Surprises" Policy to this application and HCP.

DATES: Written comments on the ITP application, EA, and HCP should be sent to the Service's Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**) and should be received on or before October 30, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the application, HCP, and EA may obtain a copy by writing the Service's Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia. Documents will also be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the Regional Office, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30345 (Attn: Endangered Species Permits), or Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Post Office Drawer 1190, Daphne, Alabama 36526. Written data or comments concerning the application, EA, or HCP should be submitted to the Regional Office. Requests for the documentation must be in writing to be processed. Comments must be submitted in writing to be processed. Please reference permit number PRT-832539 in such comments, or in requests of the documents discussed herein.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Rick G. Gooch, Regional Permit Coordinator, (see **ADDRESSES** above), telephone: 404/679-7110; or Ms. Celeste South, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Daphne, Alabama, Field Office (see **ADDRESSES** above), telephone: 334/441-5181.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Alabama beach mouse (ABM), *Peromyscus polionotus ammobates*, is a subspecies of the common oldfield mouse, *Peromyscus polionotus*, and is restricted to the dune systems of the Gulf Coast of Alabama. The known current range of ABM extends from Fort Morgan eastward to the western terminus of Alabama Highway 182, including the Perdue Unit on the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge. The sand dune systems inhabited by this species are not uniform; several habitat types are distinguishable. The species inhabits primary dunes, interdune areas, secondary dunes, and scrub dunes. The depth and area of these habitats from the beach inland varies. Population surveys indicate that this subspecies is usually more abundant in primary dunes than in secondary dunes, and usually more abundant in secondary dunes than in scrub dunes. Optimal habitat consists of dune systems with all dune types. Though fewer ABM inhabit scrub dunes, these high dunes can serve as refugia during devastating hurricanes that overwash, flood, and destroy or alter secondary and frontal dunes. ABM