

inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

Background Information

Under section 9 of the Act and its implementing regulations, "taking" of threatened or endangered wildlife species is prohibited. 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 such species if the taking is incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing such permits are in 50 CFR 17.32 for threatened species and 50 CFR 17.22 for endangered species.

The permit requested by the Partners would allow incidental take of up to 61 species in connection with direct and indirect effects of development and management activities identified in the Plan. The area covered by the proposed permit includes approximately 997 acres within a Specific Plan area and 23 acres along the road providing access to the site. It is estimated that 1 pair of California gnatcatchers, 1 acre of potential least Bell's vireo habitat, and 220 acres of Stephens' kangaroo rat habitat would be harmed. Take of other species covered by the Plan is estimated in terms of habitat removal and would range from 1 to 621 acres depending on the habitat of the species. To avoid, minimize, and mitigate the effects of take, the Partners propose to limit direct harm to species, conserve 511 acres of natural habitats (including 340 acres of coastal sage scrub and 19 acres of riparian/wetland habitats), provide for the ongoing management of onsite conserved habitat, and maintain wildlife corridors and habitat connections across the property and to other protected lands. Approximately 411 acres would be conserved onsite (including 36.6 acres revegetated with coastal sage scrub and 11 acres of created/enhanced riparian and wetland habitats). Onsite conserved habitat would include 1 coastal California gnatcatcher use area, 6 acres of least Bell's vireo habitat, and 290 acres providing regionally significant habitat connections for Stephens' kangaroo rat. Two parcels totaling 100 acres would be dedicated to existing wildlife reserves in the region.

The Environmental Assessment considers six alternatives, including No Action. The first alternative considers the effects of the development project on the species of concern assuming implementation of the Plan as proposed by the Applicant. The second alternative considers reduced habitat

impacts and increased onsite conservation in the master planned community through elimination of one of two proposed golf courses. The third alternative considers preservation of the area proposed for the master planned community under a mitigation banking agreement. Two variations of the third alternative are presented: one that covers the plan area identified in the Partner's Plan, and one that would conserve an additional 773 acres in the Specific Plan area as part of the mitigation bank. The 773 acres that would be added under the second variation have already been proposed by the Partners as a mitigation bank. The fourth alternative considers additional residential development instead of two golf courses in the master planned community. The fifth alternative considers development and onsite conservation as proposed in the 1991 Specific Plan for the property. The sixth alternative (No Action) considers a continuation of existing conditions in the plan area.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10 (a) of the 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: March 10, 1999.

Elizabeth H. Stevens,

*Deputy Manager, California/Nevada
Operation Office, Region 1, Sacramento,
California.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Notice of Fund Availability and Distribution Process of the FY 1999 Housing Improvement Program Appropriation

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs,
Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Fiscal Year (FY) 1999 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (Bureau), Housing Improvement Program (HIP)

appropriation is \$18,780,383. This Notice of Fund Availability describes the process by which this appropriation will be distributed to Bureau Area Offices and subsequently for individual eligible grantees through Indian tribal governments for FY 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: June Henkel, Office of Tribal Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, MS-4603-MIB, Washington, D.C. 20240. Telephone 202-208-3667, Fax 202-208-2648.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this notice is to identify the methodology that will be used to distribute the Housing Improvement Program FY 1999 Appropriation.

Background

The HIP provides housing services to individuals, in the form of a grant, and is available to the neediest of the needy Indian applicants residing on Indian reservations or within "approved service areas." An Indian reservation means any federally recognized Indian tribe's reservation, Pueblo, or Colony, including former reservations in Oklahoma, Alaska Native regions established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, Pub. L. 92-203, and Indian allotments. Eligible individual Indian applicants are those with limited resources who do not qualify for or otherwise cannot receive assistance from other housing programs. The HIP provides a non-duplicative service and differs from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Indian housing programs specifically because the recipients of HIP grants are unable to meet HUD's minimum income requirements.

Revised HIP regulations, published in the **Federal Register** on March 2, 1998, and effective on April 1, 1998 (63 FR 10134), establish the Bureau's housing policy that every American Indian family should have the opportunity for a decent home and suitable living environment. To the extent possible, the program will serve the neediest of the needy Indian applicants. Accordingly, the Bureau defines the HIP as a secondary safety net program which provides assistance to Indian applicants who have no other recourse for housing assistance.

The limited availability of funds for this program require the continued use of a needs based distribution methodology. Funds are made available to tribal governments based upon the submission of: (1) viable, annual work plans, containing (a) the identification of eligible applicants; (b) identification

of the category of assistance needed; and, (c) the estimated project costs for each eligible applicant; and, (2) a report of prior year accomplishments.

Basis for Distribution of the FY 1999 HIP Appropriation

Area Offices will distribute FY 1999 HIP funds to the tribes within their respective areas who: (1) Have eligible applicants as defined under the revised rule in 25 CFR 256, effective April 1, 1998; (2) have submitted their FY 1997 inventory of housing needs; (3) have viable work plans; (4) are in compliance with the intent of the program; (5) have an approved service area; and, (6) provide a report of prior year accomplishments.

A viable work plan means that planned work projects fall within the scope and framework of the HIP and that the tribe has eligible HIP applicants. Funds will be distributed only to tribes with eligible HIP applicants.

The HIP funds identified for the Office of Self-Governance (OSG) tribes with an annual funding agreement are provided under the same general guidance as for other tribes. HIP funding should only be made available to tribes with eligible HIP applicants and in accordance with the payment provision, Pub. L. 103-413, Sec. 403(g)(3), which requires the Secretary to “* * * provide funds to the tribe under an agreement under this title for programs, services, functions, and activities, or portions thereof, in an amount equal to the amount that the tribe would have been eligible to receive under contracts and grants under the Act.”

Area Offices are to ensure that distributed amounts are sufficient to fund at least one complete project. Therefore, Area Offices must devise or follow a previously established plan to rotate funds between tribes with projects requiring two or more years funding. (The intention is to fund as many HIP projects as possible, while curtailing the amount of unexpended funds, to enable the Bureau to attain performance goals as outlined in the FY 1998 strategic plan). Accordingly, Area Offices are authorized to redistribute funds from those tribes unable to expend some or all of their FY 1998 funding, to other tribes capable of expending the funds. Area Offices must notify Central Office of such actions. In addition, the areas and the OSG will be required to submit a report to Central Office in May 1999, identifying the funds obligated/expended and the funds available to be withdrawn for reallocation to other locations because of the lack of HIP eligible applicants.

Reprogramming of HIP funds to other Tribal Priority Allocation (TPA) programs is prohibited; however, tribes may supplement their HIP funds from other funding within their TPA.

This Notice of Fund Availability and the Distribution Process for the FY 1999 Housing Improvement Program Appropriation does not include FY 1998 TPA funds that were prioritized by tribes to be used for HIP.

Dated: February 18, 1999.

Kevin Gover,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR-010-1430-00; GP9-0119]

Call for Nominations for the Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council

AGENCY: Lakeview District, Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management Oregon State Office is calling for nominations to fill two unexpired terms in the Group I category on the Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council. The Southeast Oregon Council currently provides advice and recommendations to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service (FS). The nomination period will close on Monday, April 26, 1999.

The purpose of Resource Advisory Councils is to enable State residents and local citizens to have a meaningful say in how federal lands are managed. The Councils, which were established in August, 1995, provide advice on the broad array of resource issues that face federal land managers.

The Southeast Oregon RAC advises federal officials on the management of federal lands in Southeast Oregon. The area covers most of Malheur, Harney, and Lake Counties and small portions of Klamath, Deschutes, Crook, Grant, and Baker Counties.

The Southeast Oregon RAC operates on principles of collaboration and consensus. Council members are sought who are committed to working with other interests for the long term benefit of public lands and national forests.

The Southeast Oregon RAC worked with the BLM on the development of draft standards for rangeland health and guidelines for grazing management and has been providing the BLM with

recommendations on the development of a Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan.

Council members serve without monetary compensation, but are reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses. Prospective members are advised that membership on a Council calls for a substantial commitment of time and energy.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others. Council members may be renominated upon the expiration of their terms. The Southeast Oregon RAC is composed of 15 members who serve 3-year terms with one-third of the terms expiring each year. This provides an experienced panel of members at any given time. Nominees must be residents of the State of Oregon.

Nominees are being sought to fill the vacant Transportation/Right-of-Way representative and the Energy/Minerals representative positions, for terms which expire in August 2000 and September 1999, respectively. Nominees will be evaluated based on their experience working with the interest area they choose to represent, and their knowledge of the geographic area covered by the Council. Nominees must also have demonstrated a commitment to collaborative resource decision making. All nominations must be accompanied by letters of reference from represented interests or organizations, a completed background information nomination form, as well as any other information that speaks to the nominee's qualification. To obtain a nomination form or additional information, please contact Public Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State Office, P.O. Box 2965, Portland, OR 97208 (503) 952-6027, or your local BLM District Office.

Completed nomination forms and letters of reference should be sent to Elaine Zielinski, State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State Office, P.O. Box 2965, Portland, OR 97208. The BLM State Director, the Forest Service Regional Forester, and the Governor's Office will forward these nominations to the Secretary of Interior, who will make the appointments to the Council.

Dated: February 26, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Sonya Hickman, Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District Office, HC 10 Box 337, Lakeview, OR 97630 (Telephone: 541/947-2177).

Joe Tague,

Acting Designated Federal Official.

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