

management within Houston toad habitat.

Geoffrey L. Haskett,

Regional Director, Region 2.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Issuance of Permit for Incidental Take of Threatened Species for the Lefever Property, El Paso County, CO

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of issuance of permit for incidental take of endangered species.

SUMMARY: On July 8, 2002, a notice was published in the **Federal Register** (Vol. 67 No. 130 FR 45142), that an application had been filed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) by Thomas Lefever, El Paso County, Colorado, for a permit to incidentally take Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*), pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1539), as amended. The "Environmental Assessment/Habitat Conservation Plan for Issuance of an Endangered Species Section 10(a)(1)(B) Permit for the Incidental Take of the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) for the Construction of a Single Family Residence at the Lefever Property in El Paso County, Colorado," accompanied the permit application.

Notice is hereby given that on December 19, 2002, as authorized by the provisions of the Act, the Service issued a permit (TE-059261) to the above-named party subject to certain conditions set forth therein. The permit was granted only after the Service determined that it was applied for in good faith, that granting the permit will not be to the disadvantage of the threatened species, and that it will be consistent with the purposes and policy set forth in the Act, as amended.

Additional information on this permit action may be requested by contacting the Colorado Field Office, 755 Parfet Street, Suite 361, Lakewood, Colorado 80215, telephone (303) 275-2370, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

Dated: December 19, 2002.

John A. Blankenship,

Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AK-931-1310-DP-NPRA]

Notice of Availability and Announcement of Public Subsistence-Related Hearing Schedule; Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Draft Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Draft Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS). The planning area is roughly bounded by the Ikpikpuk River to the east. The southern boundary extends along a portion of the Colville River and then proceeds along township and sections lines generally in a north and west direction to the west to the boundary of the NPR-A. It then proceeds due north to Icy Cape on the Arctic Ocean and proceeds east along the Arctic coastline encompassing the bays, lagoons, inlets, and tidal waters between the NPR-A's outlying islands and the mainland.

The IAP/EIS contains four alternatives for a land management plan within the 8.8 million-acre planning area and assessments of each plan's impacts on the surface resources present there. These alternatives provide varying answers to three primary questions. First, will the BLM conduct oil and gas lease sales in the planning area and, if so, what lands will be made available for leasing? Second, what measures should we develop to protect important surface resources during oil and gas activities? Third, what non-oil and gas land allocations should we consider for this portion of the NPR-A?

The no action alternative calls for no change from the status quo, and under it no leasing would occur. Alternatives A through C make progressively less land, especially environmentally sensitive land, available to possible leasing. Alternative A makes 100 percent available, Alternative B makes 96 percent available, Alternative C makes 47 percent available. Stipulations would provide protection for natural and cultural resources under all alternatives, but their nature, number and scope would vary between alternatives.

Alternative A contains the fewest stipulations and many of them are performance based and reliant on

subsequent NEPA analysis. Alternative B's stipulations are similar to those in Alternative A, but some surface occupancy protections are tied to areas of sensitive resources. Alternative C has more prescriptive stipulations, many of which are tied to areas associated with sensitive resources.

The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to identify specific lands in the NPR-A as "Special Areas," and there are small parts of two previously designated Special Areas within the planning area. Alternative B recommends that the Kasegaluk Lagoon, an area that is rich in wildlife and that features marine tidal flats which are rare on the North Slope, as an additional Special Area.

Alternative C recommends that Congress designate three wilderness areas within the planning area. The first is the Kasegaluk Lagoon. The second and third areas are located in the hills and mountains in the southern part of the planning area and have special values, are particularly remote, and feature good hiking and scenic vistas in high terrain. Alternative C also recommends Congressional designation of the part of the Colville River in the planning area as a Wild river and that 21 other rivers in the unit be designated as Scenic.

Section 810 of the Alaska National Lands Conservation Act requires BLM to evaluate the effects of the alternative plans presented in this IAP/EIS on subsistence activities in the planning area, and to hold public hearings if it finds that any alternative might significantly restrict subsistence activities. Appendix 5 of the document indicates that alternatives A and B may significantly restrict subsistence activities. In addition, all alternatives may significantly restrict subsistence in the cumulative case. Therefore, the BLM is holding public hearings on subsistence in conjunction with the public meetings discussed below.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to the NPR-A Planning Team, Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office (931), 222 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599. Comments can also be submitted at the project Web site at www.ak.blm.gov/nwnpra or sent via e-mail to nwnpracomment@ak.blm.gov. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by