

All applicants must be citizens of the United States. Members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence by the Secretary of Agriculture. Applicants must be qualified through education, training, knowledge, or experience to give informed advice regarding an industry, discipline, or interest to be represented.

There is no limit to the number of nomination applications which may be submitted for the City of Palm Desert positions. Any individual may nominate himself or herself for appointment. Completed nomination applications should include letters of reference and/or recommendations from the City of Palm Desert, and any other information explaining the nominee's qualifications (e.g., resume, curriculum vitae).

Nomination application packages are available at the address listed in the "ADDRESSES" section, through the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Web site at [http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/santarosa/mac\\_nominations.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/santarosa/mac_nominations.html), via telephone request at (760) 833-7100, or through an e-mail request to [jfoote@ca.blm.gov](mailto:jfoote@ca.blm.gov).

Each application package includes forms from the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture. All submitted nomination applications become the property of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, and Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, and will not be returned. Nomination applications can only be applied to the current open public call for nominations.

**John R. Kalish,**

*Field Manager, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, California Desert District, Bureau of Land Management.*

**Laurie Rosenthal,**

*District Ranger, San Jacinto Ranger District, San Bernardino National Forest, U.S. Forest Service.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

[FWS-R4-ES-2009-N275; 41910-1112-0000-F2]

**Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Permits; Timber Harvest in Williamsburg County, SC**

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of application for an incidental take permit (ITP);

availability of proposed low-effect habitat conservation plan (HCP); request for comment/information.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of an incidental take permit (ITP) application and habitat conservation plan (HCP). Virginia H. McIntosh (applicant) requests a 5-year ITP under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The applicant anticipates taking two red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) (RCW) groups incidental to timber harvesting in Williamsburg County, South Carolina (project). The applicant's HCP describes the mitigation and minimization measures the applicant proposes to address the effects of the project to the RCW.

**DATES:** We must receive any written comments on the ITP application and HCP on or before February 16, 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** If you wish to review the application and HCP, you may write the Field Supervisor at our Jacksonville Field Office, 7915 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200, Jacksonville, FL 32256 or make an appointment to visit during normal business hours. If you wish to comment, you may mail or hand deliver comments to the Jacksonville Field Office, or you may e-mail comments to [paula\\_sisson@fws.gov](mailto:paula_sisson@fws.gov). For more information on reviewing documents and public comments and submitting comments, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paula Sisson, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Jacksonville Field Office (see **ADDRESSES**); telephone: 904/731-3134.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Public Availability of Comments**

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Please reference permit number TE236127-0 for the applicant for all requests or comments. If you do not receive a confirmation from us that we have received your e-mail message, contact us directly at the telephone number listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

**Background**

The RCW is a territorial, nonmigratory species. It is the only North American woodpecker to excavate roost and nest cavities in living pine trees. This species' use of live pines may have evolved in response to living in a fire-maintained ecosystem where frequent fires, primarily in the growing season, eliminated most standing dead pines (snags).

The RCW has declined primarily due to conversion of mature pine forests to young pine plantations, agricultural fields, and residential and commercial development, and also because of hardwood encroachment in existing pine forests due to fire suppression. Presently, the largest known populations occur on federally owned lands such as military installations and national forests.

**Applicant's Proposal**

The applicant is requesting take of two groups of RCWs incidental to the project. The 286-acre (ac) project is located on SC County Road 158, 9.8 miles northwest of the Town of Kingstree, Williamsburg County, South Carolina. The proposed project includes the harvest of 73.8 ac of long leaf pine flatwoods mixed with isolated pond pine wetlands, pine flatwoods, and agricultural fields, which are currently the only remaining foraging habitat for the two groups of RCWs. The applicant proposes to mitigate for the take of the two groups by establishing two new groups at Brookgreen Gardens (Brookgreen), Georgetown County, South Carolina. The applicant will translocate the two existing RCW groups from the project site to Brookgreen after cavity inserts have been installed at the new site. The translocation process will continue until the two groups have been established at Brookgreen. As minimization for impacts to the species, timber harvesting activities will not be conducted until all RCWs have been relocated to Brookgreen.

We have determined that the applicant's proposal, including the proposed mitigation and minimization measures, would have minor or negligible effects on the species covered in the HCP. Therefore, we are making a preliminary determination that the ITP is a "low-effect" project and qualifies for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2 Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6 Appendix 1). We may revise this preliminary determination based on our review of public comments we receive

in response to this notice. A low-effect HCP is one involving (1) Minor or negligible effects on federally listed or candidate species and their habitats, and (2) minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources.

We will evaluate the HCP and comments we receive to determine whether the ITP application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). If we determine that the application meets those requirements, we will issue the ITP for incidental take of the RCW. We will also evaluate whether issuance of the section 10(a)(1)(B) ITP complies with section 7 of the Act by conducting an intra-Service section 7 consultation. We will use the results of this consultation, in combination with the above findings, in our final analysis to determine whether or not to issue the ITP.

#### Authority

We provide this notice under Section 10 of the Act and NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

Dated: January 7, 2010.

**David L. Hankla,**

*Field Supervisor, Jacksonville Field Office.*

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**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R1-R-2009-N241; 12521-1261-0000-N3]

#### Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Pacific Island Territory

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement and announcement of public scoping.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), intend to prepare an environmental impact statement to evaluate eradication of nonnative rats on Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). We provide this notice to advise the public and other agencies of our intent, and obtain public comments, suggestions, and information on the scope of issues to consider in the EIS.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments by March 1, 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** Additional information about the Refuge is available on the Internet at: <http://www.fws.gov/palmyraatoll/>. Send your comments or

requests for information by any of the following methods.

*E-mail:* [palmyra@fws.gov](mailto:palmyra@fws.gov).

*Fax:* Attn: Beth Flint, (808) 792-9586.

*U.S. Mail:* Beth Flint, Acting Project Leader, Pacific Reefs National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 300 Ala Moana Blvd. Suite 5-231, Honolulu, HI 96850.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Beth Flint, Pacific Reefs National Wildlife Refuge Complex, phone (808) 792-9553.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Refuge Overview

The Refuge is located in the Northern Line Islands, approximately 1,000 miles south of Honolulu, HI, in the Central Pacific Ocean. The Refuge was established in 2001 to protect, restore, and enhance migratory birds, coral reefs, and threatened and endangered species in their natural setting. Palmyra Atoll consists of approximately 54 small, heavily vegetated islets surrounding 3 central lagoons. Habitats consist of 680 acres of land and 15,512 acres of lagoons and shallow reefs. The Refuge's boundary extends seaward 12 nautical miles, encompassing 515,232 acres. Palmyra's terrestrial habitats support one of the largest remaining tropical coastal strand forests in the U.S. Pacific Islands. A diverse land crab fauna including the coconut crab, ecologically intact predator-dominated fish assemblages, and large seabird populations are important resources of this Refuge. The Refuge is closed to commercial fishing.

The original configuration of the atoll was significantly modified by the U.S. Navy during World War II. A network of roadways connecting the major islets and the construction of a north-south causeway altered natural water circulation. Introduced rats are severely degrading the terrestrial ecosystem of this important atoll by limiting the reproduction, recruitment, and establishment of several native tree species. Furthermore, the coconut palm, an invasive tree, already dominates 45 percent of Palmyra's forests. The spread of coconut palm is likely aided by rat-related recruitment and limitation of other tree species. Left unchecked, the combined effects of rats and coconut palms could drastically alter forest structure. Introduced rats on islands are also known to prey heavily on seabirds, which is likely preventing six seabird species from successfully nesting on the atoll. The rats also prey on native land crabs and directly compete with them for limited food resources. All of these impacts in turn affect the relationship between land and marine resources, and compromise the Service's ability to achieve Refuge purposes.

We furnish this notice in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as amended, and its implementing regulations; the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) (Refuge Administration Act); and Service policies. The Refuge Administration Act requires all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System to be managed in accordance with achieving the purposes for which a refuge was established. For the Palmyra Atoll Refuge, the eradication of introduced rats would aid in achieving the following Refuge purposes.

- Perpetuate a functioning atoll ecosystem with natural diversity and abundance of fauna and flora.
- Preserve, restore, and enhance all terrestrial species of animals and plants that are endangered or threatened with becoming endangered.
- Provide for conservation of migratory bird resources at the Refuge.

We will prepare an EIS in accordance with NEPA and its implementing regulations. Public input during the EIS planning process is hereby solicited.

#### Preliminary Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

We have identified the following preliminary issues, concerns, and opportunities we may consider during development of the EIS. We may identify additional issues during the public comment period. We will consider public comments during development of the EIS.

- What alternatives should be considered with regard to eradication of rats from Palmyra Refuge?
  - How can we balance cost, efficacy, risks to nontarget species, and other variables?
  - What current or planned island uses including natural resource management activities, public visitation, and scientific research at the atoll should we consider in the Draft EIS?
    - What other island resources, including historic and cultural artifacts, specific biological resources, and physical attributes such as water quality and soils, should we consider in the Draft EIS?
    - To document the effects and effectiveness of our Refuge management actions, what monitoring should the proposal include?

We will evaluate a range of alternatives in the EIS, and their potential effects on the environment and local communities. We estimate that the draft EIS will be available for public review in October 2010. We will