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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Nevada Fish & Wildlife Office
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News Release



For Immediate Release
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Comment Period Extended On Proposal To Designate Critical Habitat And A Taxonomic Revision For Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced an extension of the comment period on a proposal to designate approximately 417,577 acres as critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for the federally-listed endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis californiana*). The Service is also seeking a taxonomic revision of the species from distinct population segment to subspecies (*Ovis canadensis sierrae*) based on recent published information. Comments on the proposal must now be received by November 23, 2007.

In addition to extending the comment period, informational meetings and a public hearing have been scheduled at the following locations:

October 24, 2007

Memorial Hall
744 N. School Street
Bridgeport, California
Public Informational Open House 1:00-3:00 PM

October 25, 2007

Tri-County Fair Grounds
Sierra Street and Fair Drive
Bishop, California
Public Informational Open House 4:00-5:00 PM (Patio Area)
Formal Hearing 6:00-8:00 PM (Patio Room)

All comments on this proposal must be received by 5:00 PM on November 23, 2007, and can be:

- 1) Electronically mailed to snbighorn@fws.gov;
- 2) Mailed to the Field Supervisor, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234, Reno, NV 89502; or
- 3) Faxed to (775) 861-6301.

Areas proposed as critical habitat include portions of Tuolumne, Mono, Fresno, Inyo and Tulare

counties in California. The acreage includes open upland, montane, and alpine habitats with rocky areas along the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada mountains from about 4,000 feet to approximately 14,500 feet. Of the proposed critical habitat, 416,407 acres occur on federally-managed lands, 1,005 acres are under private ownership, and the remaining 165 acres are managed by local government.

A copy of the proposed rule and other information about Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep is available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada> or by contacting Bob Williams at (775) 861-6300.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.