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News Release



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Multiple-Species Habitat Conservation Plan In Place For Coyote Springs Planned Development

Southern Nevada... The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has issued a 40-year incidental take permit to Coyote Springs Investments, LLC (CSI) under the authority of section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for the Mojave population of the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). The permit will also cover the banded Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum cintum*), and western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) should they become listed in the future.

The CSI Multiple-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) includes a number of conservation measures to minimize and mitigate the effects of development activities on covered species. An MSHCP is a planning document that is a mandatory component of an incidental take permit. The MSHCP must ensure that effects of the authorized incidental take will be adequately minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. “Take” is defined in the ESA as any action that would “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect” any threatened or endangered species.

“The CSI MSHCP was negotiated over several years requiring the permittee and the Service to come together in identifying detailed conservation measures for the covered species. The MSHCP has resulted in outstanding conservation actions and management prescriptions providing protection for both listed and unlisted species. The reconfiguration of the lease and private land will create a reserve that protects habitat for the desert tortoise and other Mojave Desert species and is one of the key components of the plan,” said Bob Williams, Field Supervisor the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Nevada Office.

“We want to thank the Service for its extremely hard work, diligence and expertise. We have cooperatively achieved a really good result for the project and the affected species. Obviously, this is an extraordinary day for us in our continuing efforts to develop this beautiful and special place. We will be a great conservation partner,” said Harvey Whittemore the chairman of Coyote Springs Land the owner of Coyote Springs.

CSI plans a phased development of up to 21,454 acres of private lands in Lincoln County depending on the availability of water. In addition, CSI proposes to manage 13,767 acres of lease lands in Clark and Lincoln counties as the CSI Conservation Lands in partnership with the BLM and Service. The private and lease lands occupy most of the eastern portion of Coyote Spring Valley, straddling the Pahrana

Wash and the Kane Springs Wash. The covered area is located approximately 55 miles northeast of Las Vegas and bordered by the Delamar Mountains to the north, U.S. Highway 93 (US 93) to the west, and the Meadow Valley Mountains to the east.

Mitigation measures included in the MSHCP are as follows:

- Collection of mitigation fees of \$800 per acre of disturbance and an additional fee of \$750,000 for use in recovery and research efforts including: desert tortoise head-starting program; desert tortoise translocation program; fire ecology and post-fire habitat restoration; invasive species management; habitat modeling for banded Gila monster; and surveys for western burrowing owls.
- Permanent conservation of 7,548 acres of habitat
- Designation, management, and restoration of the 13,767-acre CSI Conservation Lands (including the 7,548 acres above)

An Adaptive Management Plan will be implemented to monitor effectiveness of conservation actions and management prescriptions in meeting established biological goals. A phased approach to development (including up to 2,000 acres of disturbance per year for the first eight years) will help ensure there is effective monitoring of implementation of the proposed avoidance, minimization, and conservation measures for the covered species in the MSHCP. Recommendations for alternative conservation actions could be made and implemented through the Adaptive Management Plan if necessary, before the next 2,000 acres are disturbed.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.