

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office

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CONSERVATION EFFORTS TO PROCEED FOR NORTHERN IDAHO GROUND SQUIRREL ON PRIVATE LANDS IN ADAMS COUNTY

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has entered into a Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) for the northern Idaho ground squirrel, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

In the ten-year Agreement, Hixon Properties, Incorporated committed to working with the Service to provide conservation benefits to the squirrel through habitat enhancement, measures to minimize the impacts of land use activities, research, ongoing population monitoring and survey efforts on the Adams County, Idaho property.

A section 10a1A enhancement of survival permit was also issued to Hixon Properties, authorizing limited incidental take of the species, and is effective for 15 years.

Jeff Foss, State Supervisor of the Service's Idaho's Fish and Wildlife Office, said, "This Agreement exemplifies private landowner commitment to species conservation in Idaho. This Safe Harbor Agreement demonstrates that endangered species conservation can occur on private lands while ensuring that private property land use and management practices are retained. We thank the Hixons for committing to help conserve the northern Idaho ground squirrel."

The northern Idaho ground squirrel is found only in Adams and Valley Counties, Idaho. It occurs in forest meadow-grasslands surrounded by ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests. The species was listed as threatened in 2000. Recovery efforts for the northern Idaho ground squirrel have been underway by multiple entities since the publication of the species' Recovery Plan in 2003.

The Safe Harbor Agreement may be found at www.fws.gov/idaho. For more information, contact Kendra Womack, 208-685-6951, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709.

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