

News Release

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

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U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces 30-day public comment period

PAHRUMP, Nev. — The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today announced it is requesting comments on an incidental take¹ permit application from Spring Mountain Raceway, LLC, and a low-effect Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). A Notice of Availability regarding the permit application and HCP will be published in the *Federal Register* tomorrow — Wednesday, November 28, 2012.

The requested four-year permit would authorize the incidental take of the threatened Mojave desert tortoise on 120 acres of habitat associated with the construction of a raceway expansion project in Pahrump, Nye County, Nevada. The applicant would implement conservation measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate effects of the proposed project's covered activities, as described in the applicant's HCP. The Service's preliminary determination is that the plan qualifies as a "low-effect" HCP because of its minimal potential impacts to listed species and, therefore, is eligible for a categorical exclusion² under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

Written comments on the permit application and the HCP must be received by December 28, 2012. Comments should be addressed to Edward D. Koch, State Supervisor, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1340 Financial Boulevard, Suite 234, Reno, NV 89502. Comments may also be submitted via facsimile to 775-861-6301.

Copies of the HCP, low-effect screening form, and related documents are available on the internet at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada>, or you may request copies of the documents by contacting Jeri Krueger, HCP Coordinator, at 775-861-6300.

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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 <http://www.fws.gov/cno>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).

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1 take — defined in the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect any threatened or endangered species. Harm may include significant habitat modification where it actually kills or injures a listed species through impairment of essential behavior (e.g., nesting or reproduction). “Incidental take” is defined as take that is incidental to, not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful activity.

2 categorical exclusion — a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and which have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a federal agency in implementation of these regulations and for which, therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required.

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