

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130
Phone: (702) 515-5450
Fax: (702) 515-5460
<http://fws.gov/desertcomplex>

News Release



For Immediate Release
Date: September 30, 2009

Contact: Dan Balduini
(702) 515-5480

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Prepare Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment to Clark County Habitat Conservation Plan

Scoping Meetings Scheduled to Gather Public Input

LAS VEGAS – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today announced a series of public scoping meetings in Clark County as it prepares an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on a proposed amendment to the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and Incidental Take Permit (ITP). A Notice of Intent associated with the EIS was published today in the *Federal Register*.

Clark County, the cities in the county (Boulder City, Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, and Mesquite), and the Nevada Department of Transportation are proposing an amendment to the MSHCP to extend the life of the ITP, reduce the number of species covered by the permit, and increase the amount of species habitat that is currently authorized under the existing plan and permit. The proposed amendment also expands the conservation program to minimize and mitigate impacts to the additional species habitat.

The parties currently hold a 30-year permit for incidental take of 78 covered species by the development of up to 145,000 acres in the county. The species covered by the permit include the threatened desert tortoise and the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher. The existing permit covers the period from February 1, 2001 to January 31, 2031.

The entities are requesting a 50-year permit for the incidental take of covered species on up to an additional 215,000 acres in Clark County. Uses for this land may include, but are not limited to, residential and commercial development, utility and transportation facilities, flood control, parks and recreation, and other capital improvement and operations activities.

(More)

"Take" is 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.

Four scoping meetings are scheduled to gather input from the public on the issues and alternatives that should be addressed in the EIS. The meetings will provide opportunities for the public to ask questions and provide written comments.

The public scoping meetings are scheduled as follows:

October 19, 2009 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Clark County Library – Jewel Box Theater
1401 East Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

October 21, 2009 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Searchlight Community Center
200 Michael Wendell Way
Searchlight, Nevada 89046

October 22, 2009 6:00pm to 8:00pm

PBS&J
2270 Corporate Circle
Henderson, Nevada 89074

October 26, 2009 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Moapa Valley Community Center
320 North Moapa Valley Boulevard
Overton, Nevada 89040

The meetings will be held in an open house format to allow the public to visit with Service representatives and other participating agencies and governments. Written comments may be submitted to: Robert D. Williams, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89130, facsimile: 702-515-5231. The 30-day public comment period ends on October 30, 2009.

Please contact Ms. Jeri Krueger, Habitat Conservation Planning Coordinator, at 702-515-5230 to request additional information regarding the scoping meetings.