The Service has determined that the Applicant’s proposal, including the proposed mitigation and minimization measures, will have a minor or negligible effect on the species covered in the HCP. Therefore, the ITP is a “low-effect” project and qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2 Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6 Appendix 1). This preliminary information may be revised based on our review of public comments that we receive in response to this notice. Low-effect HCPs are those involving (1) minor or negligible effects on federally listed or candidate species and their habitats, and (2) minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources.

The Service will evaluate the HCP and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). If it is determined that those requirements are met, the ITP will be issued for the incidental take of the Florida scrub-jay. The Service will also evaluate whether issuance of the ITP complies with section 7 of the Act by conducting an intra-Service section 7 consultation. The results of this consultation, in combination with the above findings, will be used in the final analysis to determine whether or not to issue the ITP.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service

Proposed Holland Properties Safe Harbor Agreement, Orange County, FL

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

This notice advises the public that Holland Properties Inc. (Applicant), has applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an enhancement of survival permit (permit) pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1539 et seq.). The permit application includes a proposed Safe Harbor Agreement (Agreement) for the endangered red-cocked woodpecker (Picoides borealis) (Woodpecker) for a period of 30 years.

We (the Service) announce the opening of a 30-day comment period and request comments from the public on the Applicant’s enhancement of survival permit application and the accompanying proposed Agreement. All comments we receive, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be released to the public. For further information and instructions on reviewing and commenting on this application, see the ADDRESSES section, below.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before December 8, 2006. ADDRESSES: You may obtain a copy of the information available by contacting the Service’s Regional Safe Harbor Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30345, or Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 6620 Southpoint Drive S., Suite 310, Jacksonville, Florida 32216. Alternatively, you may set up an appointment to view these documents at either location during normal business hours. Written data or comments should be submitted to the Atlanta, Georgia, Regional Office. Requests for the documentation must be in writing to be processed, and comments must be written to be considered.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under a safe harbor agreement, a participating property owner voluntarily undertakes management activities on its property to enhance, restore, or maintain habitat benefiting species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Agreements encourage private and other non-Federal property owners to implement conservation efforts for listed species by assuring them they will not be subjected to increased property use restrictions if their efforts attract listed species to their property or increase the numbers of listed species already on their property. Application requirements and issuance criteria for enhancement of survival permits through safe harbor agreements are found in 50 CFR 17.22 and 17.32. We have worked with the Applicant to design conservation measures intended to benefit the Woodpecker on about 3,863 acres of pine-dominated forest in southern Orange County. Under the Agreement, the Applicant
will undertake the following actions: (1) implement a prescribed fire program designed to maintain and enhance pine stand characteristics suitable for the Woodpecker; (2) implement forest management actions to enhance existing pine stocking densities and reduce hardwood canopies; (3) enhance future pine stocking densities by planting; (4) enhance existing Woodpecker clusters through construction of artificial cavities; (5) create potential new cluster sites using artificial cavity inserts; and (6) translocate individual Woodpeckers within the enrolled property to enhance pair-bond formation and establish new groups.

The Applicant’s property currently supports seven clusters of Woodpeckers. Conservation measures proposed by the Applicant will enhance existing habitat conditions and contribute to the continued survival of the seven Woodpecker clusters currently residing on the property. In addition, the Applicant intends to similarly manage unoccupied habitat in a similar manner that will create suitable habitat for Woodpeckers. The Applicant anticipates that the proposed conservation measures will lead to additional groups of Woodpeckers inhabiting the enrolled property. Without the proposed Agreement, it would not be possible for the Applicant to undertake the proposed conservation measures and receive regulatory assurances from the Service through the Endangered Species Act.

Consistent with the Service’s Safe Harbor policy and implementing regulations, we propose to issue a permit to the Applicant authorizing the incidental take of Woodpeckers, that occur on the enrolled lands through lawful activities on the enrolled land, as long as baseline conditions are maintained and terms of the Agreement are implemented. Future activities of the Applicant could result in a return to the baseline condition, but the Applicant has indicated that a return to baseline condition is not anticipated.

This Notice also advises the public that the Service has made a preliminary determination that issuance of the enhancement of survival permit will not result in significant impacts to the human environment and is, therefore, categorically excluded from review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4331 et seq.) (NEPA), pursuant to 516 Departmental Manual 2, Appendix 1 and 516 Departmental Manual 6, Appendix 1. This Notice is provided pursuant to Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act. The Service specifically requests information, views, and opinions from the public.

We will evaluate the proposed Agreement, associated documents, and comments submitted by the public to determine whether the requirements of Section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act and NEPA regulations have been met. If we determine that the requirements are met, we will issue an enhancement of survival permit under Section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act to the Applicant in accordance with the terms of the Agreement and specific terms and conditions of the authorizing permit. We will not make our final decision until the end of the 30-day comment period and will fully consider all comments received during the comment period.

Dated: October 18, 2006.

Jeffrey M. Fleming,
Southeast Region, Acting Regional Director.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service
Meeting Announcement: Sporting Conservation Council
AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.
ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a meeting of the Sporting Conservation Council (Council). This meeting is designed to review wildlife conservation endeavors that benefit recreational hunting and wildlife resources and that encourage partnerships among the public, the sporting conservation community, wildlife conservation groups, and State and Federal governments. This meeting is open to the public, and will include a session for the public to comment.

DATES: We will hold the meeting on November 28, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on November 29, 2006, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. From 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on November 29, we will host a public comment session.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Riviera Room at the Omni Corpus Christi Hotel Marina, 707 North Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi, Texas 78401.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Phyllis T. Seitts, 9828 North 31st Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85051-2517; 602–906–5603 (phone); or Twinkle_Thompson-Seitts@blm.gov (email).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Secretary of the Interior established the Council in February 2006 (71 FR 11220, March 6, 2006). The Council’s mission is to provide advice and guidance to the Federal Government through the Department of the Interior on how to increase public awareness of: (1) The importance of wildlife resources, (2) the social and economic benefits of recreational hunting, and (3) wildlife conservation efforts that benefit recreational hunting and wildlife resources.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture signed an amended charter for the Council in June 2006 and July 2006, respectively. The revised charter states that the Council will provide advice and guidance to the Federal Government through the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture.

The Council will hold a meeting on the dates shown in the DATES section at the address shown in the ADDRESSES section. The meeting will include a session for the public to comment.

Dated: November 2, 2006.

Phyllis T. Seitts,
Designated Federal Officer, Sporting Conservation Council.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
[AK–910–1310PP–ARAC]
Notice of Public Meeting, Alaska Resource Advisory Council
AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Interior.
ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska Resource Advisory Council will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The meeting will be held December 13–14, 2006, at the University of Alaska—Anchorage campus, Library Building, Third Floor, Anchorage, Alaska. The December 13 meeting starts at 1 p.m. in Room 302A. The December 14 meeting begins at 8 a.m. in Room 307 with a public comment period starting at 1 p.m.