DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service


Proposed Low Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Maintenance and Operations on the Calnev 8-Inch and 14-Inch Pipelines, Cajon and Lytle Creek Wash, San Bernardino County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: Calnev Pipeline Company LLC (applicant) has applied to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for a 5-year incidental take permit for one covered species pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The applicant is seeking a permit for a 5-year incidental take permit for one covered species pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The application addresses the potential for “take” of the endangered San Bernardino kangaroo rat (Dipodomys merriami parvus) associated with the proposed pipeline inspection and repair projects in the City of Rialto and unincorporated San Bernardino County, California. A conservation program to minimize and mitigate for the project activities would be implemented as described in the proposed Maintenance and Operations on the Calnev 8-inch and 14-inch Pipelines, Cajon and Lytle Creek Wash, San Bernardino County, California Habitat Conservation Plan (proposed HCP), which would be implemented by the applicant.

We are requesting comments on the permit application and on the preliminary determination that the proposed HCP qualifies as a “Low-effect” Habitat Conservation Plan, eligible for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Background

Section 9 of the Act and its implementing Federal regulations prohibit the take of animal species listed as endangered or threatened. Take is defined under the Act as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect listed animal species, or attempt to engage in such conduct (16 U.S.C. 1538). However, under section 10(a) of the Act, the Service may issue permits to authorize incidental take of listed species. “Incidental take” is defined by the Act as that which is incidental to, and not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful activity. Regulations governing incidental take permits for threatened and endangered species, respectively, are found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 50 CFR 17.22 and 50 CFR 17.32.

The applicant is seeking a permit for take of the San Bernardino kangaroo rat during the life of the permit. This species is referred to as the “SBKR” in the proposed HCP. The SBKR is restricted western San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The applicant proposes to perform routine inspection and repair work along 8-inch and 14-inch petroleum product pipelines within the Lytle and Cajon Creek Wash in the City of Rialto and unincorporated San Bernardino County, California. The purpose of the project is to ensure safe and effective transfer of petroleum products within these pipelines. The applicant proposes to expose, inspect and repair pipelines as necessary to ensure safe and effective operations. Each dig will impact approximately 0.02 acre of land, and this permit would authorize a maximum of 0.5 acre of impact in total. We anticipate that some SBKR may be lost within the 0.5 acre of SBKR occupied habitat. The project is within designated critical habitat for the SBKR.

The applicant proposes to minimize and mitigate the effects to the SBKR associated with the covered activities by fully implementing the HCP. The purpose of the proposed HCP’s conservation program is to promote the biological conservation of the SBKR. The HCP includes measures to minimize impacts to SBKR by containing the project footprint, minimizing activities that may directly impact individual SBKR, and promoting recovery of impacted habitat. Impacts would be confined to previously impacted areas, and exposed areas would be replaced with the original soils and associated seed bank. The applicant proposes to mitigate impacts to the SBKR through purchase of 1 credit within the Cajon Creek Conservation Bank in San Bernardino County, California. For each individual repair project, the applicant would subtract from the credit at a 2:1 ratio such that no more than 0.5 acre of impact would be authorized by this permit.

The Proposed Action consists of the issuance of an incidental take permit and implementation of the proposed HCP, which includes measures to minimize and mitigate impacts of the project on the SBKR. One alternative to the taking of the listed species under the Proposed Action is considered in the proposed HCP. Under the No Action Alternative, no permit would be issued, and no maintenance or conservation would occur. This Alternative was not chosen because it would result in no repairs or necessary maintenance to
existing pipelines, which would increase the risk of impacts to the public, property, and environment.

The Service has made a preliminary determination that approval of the proposed HCP qualifies as a categorical exclusion under NEPA, as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2 Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6 Appendix 1) and as a “low-effect” plan as defined by the Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook (November 1996). Determination of Low-effect Habitat Conservation Plans is based on the following three criteria: (1) Implementation of the proposed HCP would result in minor or negligible effects on federally listed, proposed, and candidate species and their habitats; (2) Implementation of the proposed HCP would result in minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources; and (3) Impacts of the proposed HCP, considered together with the impacts of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable similarly situated projects, would not result, over time, in cumulative effects to environmental values or resources which would be considered significant.

Based upon this preliminary determination, we do not intend to prepare further NEPA documentation. We will consider public comments in making the final determination on whether to prepare such additional documentation.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment— including your personal identifying information— may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Act. We will evaluate the permit application, the proposed HCP, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act. If the requirements are met, we will issue a permit to Calnev Pipeline Company, LLC for the incidental take of the San Bernardino kangaroo rat from petroleum pipeline repair and maintenance in the City of Rialto and unincorporated San Bernardino County, California.

Dated: May 21, 2008.

Jim A. Bartel,
Field Supervisor, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, Carlsbad, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Notice of Submission of Information Collection to the Office of Management and Budget for Reinstatement

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Interior is submitting the information collection, titled the Bureau of Indian Education Higher Education Grant Application Form, OMB Control #1076–0101, for reinstatement. The Higher Education Grant Application Form needs to be reinstated because it expired during the renewal process.

DATES: Submit comments on or before June 30, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments on the information collection to the Desk Officer for the Department of the Interior, by facsimile at (202) 395–6566 or you may send an e-mail to: OIRA.DOCKET@omb.eop.gov. Send copies of comments to the Bureau of Indian Education, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW., MS 3609 MIB, Washington, DC 20240.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: You may request further information or obtain copies of the information collection request submission from Keith Neves, Bureau of Indian Education, 1849 C Street, NW., MS 3609 MIB, Washington, DC 20240, 202–208–3601.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Bureau of Indian Education Higher Education Grant Program Annual Report Form (OMB #1076–0106) was published in a 60 day comment notice which included the Higher Education Grant Application Form, OMB #1076–0101 on October 16, 2007 (72 FR 58680). A review of the Higher Education Grant Program Annual Report Form (OMB #1076–0106) determined the information collected no longer needs clearance because it is information already gathered under Higher Education Grant Application Form, OMB #1076–0101. Tribal employees, under Pub. L. 93–638 acting as Federal agents, prepared the report. The information collection under 1076–0101 is mandatory to be considered for a benefit.

Request for Comments: The Bureau of Indian Education requests you to send your comments on this collection of information to the locations listed in the ADDRESSES section. Your comments should address: (a) The necessity of this collection of information for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the collection of information will have practical utility; (b) The accuracy of the agency’s estimate of the burden (hours and costs) of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Ways we could enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Ways we could minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, such as through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Please note that an agency may not sponsor nor request, and an individual need not respond to, a collection of information unless it has a valid OMB Control Number.

It is our policy to make all comments available to the public for review at the Bureau of Indian Education location listed in the ADDRESSES section, room 3609, during the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. EDT, Monday through Friday except for legal holidays. Before including your address, telephone number, e-mail address or other personally identifiable information, be advised that your entire comment including your personally identifiable information may be made public at any time. While you may request that we withhold your personally identifiable information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We do not consider anonymous comments. All comments from representatives of businesses or organizations will be made available for review. We may withhold comments from review for other reasons.

OMB has up to 60 days to make a decision on the submission for renewal, but may make the decision after 30 days. Therefore, to receive the best consideration of your comments, you should submit them closer to 30 days than 60 days.

Title of the Collection of Information: Bureau of Indian Education Higher Education Grant Application, 25 CFR 40.

OMB Control Number: 1076–0101.

Type of Review: Reinstatement.

Brief Description of the Collection of Information: Respondents receiving a benefit must annually complete the