**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**


**Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for The Terrace of Scotts Valley in the City of Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz County, California**

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have received an application from Mr. Chris Perri of Apple Homes Development for a 5-year incidental take permit under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The application addresses the potential for “take” of the federally endangered Mount Hermon June beetle likely to occur incidental to the construction of 20 new townhomes, garages, and associated landscaping and infrastructure at two existing legal parcels in Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz County, California. We invite comments from the public on the application package, which includes the Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for The Terrace of Scotts Valley.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, please send your written comments by May 5, 2016.

**ADDRESSES:** You may download a copy of the Habitat Conservation Plan, draft Environmental Action Statement and Low-Effect Screening Form, and related documents on the Internet at http://www.fws.gov/ventura/, or you may request copies of the documents by U.S. mail to our Ventura office or by phone (see FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT). Please address written comments to Stephen P. Henry, Field Supervisor, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, CA 93003. You may alternatively send comments by facsimile to (805) 644–3958.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Chad Mitcham, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, by U.S. mail to the Ventura office, or by telephone at (831) 768–7794.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** We have received an application from Mr. Chris Perri for a 5-year incidental take permit under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The application addresses the potential for “take” of the federally endangered Mount Hermon June beetle (*Polyphylla barbata*) likely to occur incidental to the construction of 20 new townhomes, garages, and associated landscaping and infrastructure at two existing legal parcels in Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz County, California. The applicant would develop 20 new townhomes, garages, and associated landscaping and infrastructure at two existing legal parcels in Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz County, California.

**DETAILED SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) listed the Mount Hermon June beetle as endangered on January 24, 1997 (62 FR 3616). Section 9 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and its implementing regulations prohibit the take of fish or wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened. “Take” is defined under the Act to include the following activities: “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct” (16 U.S.C. 1532); however, under section...
10(a)(1)(B) of the Act, we may issue permits to authorize incidental take of listed species. The Act defines “Incidental Take” as take that is not the purpose of carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity. Regulations governing incidental take permits for threatened and endangered species are provided at 50 CFR 17.32 and 17.22, respectively. Issuance of an incidental take permit must not jeopardize the existence of federally listed fish, wildlife, or plant species.

Take of listed plants is not prohibited under the Act unless such take would violate State law. As such, take of plants cannot be authorized under an incidental take permit. Plant species may be included on a permit in recognition of the conservation benefits provided them under a habitat conservation plan. All species, including plants, covered by the incidental take permit receive assurances under our “No Surprises” regulations (50 CFR 17.22(b)(55) and 17.32(b)(5)). In addition to meeting other specific criteria, actions undertaken through implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) must not jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed animal or plant species.

Applicant’s Proposal

Mr. Chris Perri (hereafter, the applicant) has submitted a Low-Effect HCP in support of his application for an incidental take permit (ITP) to address take of Mount Hermon June beetle that is likely to occur as the result of direct impacts to up to 2.62 acres (ac) (114,214 square feet (sf)) of degraded sandhills habitat occupied by the species. Take would be associated with the construction of the residential development on two existing parcels legally described as Assessor Parcel Number’s 022-162-69 and 022-162-74. The current site address is 400 Glen Canyon Road in Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz County, California. The applicant is requesting a permit for take of Mount Hermon June beetle that would result from “covered activities” that are related to the construction of 20 townhomes, garages and associated landscaping/infrastructure.

The applicant proposes to avoid, minimize, and mitigate take of Mount Hermon June beetle associated with the covered activities by fully implementing the HCP. The following measures will be implemented: (1) Temporary fencing and signs will be installed to clearly delineate the boundaries of the project; (2) if construction occurs during the flight season (considered to be between May and October, annually), exposed soils will be covered with erosion control fabric or other impervious materials to prevent any dispersing Mount Hermon June beetles from burrowing into exposed soil at the construction site; (3) employment of a Service-approved entomologist to capture and relocate into suitable habitat and out of harm’s way any Mount Hermon June beetle larvae unearthed during construction activities; (4) all outdoor night lighting will use light bulbs certified not to attract nocturnally active insects, in order to minimize disruption of Mount Hermon June beetle breeding behavior during the adult flight season; and (5) secure off-site mitigation at a ratio of 1:1 to mitigate for permanent habitat impacts through the acquisition of 2.62 ac [114,214 sf] of conservation credits at the Zayante Sandhills Conservation Bank. The applicant will fund up to $733,284 to ensure implementation of all minimization measures, monitoring, and reporting requirements identified in the HCP.

In the proposed HCP, the applicant considers two alternatives to the proposed action: “No Action” and “Redesigned Project.” Under the “No Action” alternative, an ITP for the Terrace at Scotts Valley would not be issued. The Terrace at Scotts Valley would not be built, and the purchase of conservation credits would not be provided to effect recovery actions for Mount Hermon June beetle. Additionally, since the property is privately owned, there are ongoing economic considerations associated with continued ownership without use, which includes payment of associated taxes. The sale of this property for economic considerations associated with tax consequences would not result in a significant reduction in take.

Our Preliminary Determination

We are requesting comments on our preliminary determination that the applicant’s proposal will have a minor or negligible effect on the Mount Hermon June beetle and that the plan qualifies as a low-effect HCP as defined by our Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook (November 1996). We base our determinations on three criteria: (1) Implementation of the proposed project as described in the HCP would result in minor or negligible effects on federally listed, proposed, and/or candidate species and their habitats; (2) implementation of the HCP would result in minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources; and (3) HCP impacts, considered together with those of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, would not result in cumulatively significant effects. In our analysis of these criteria, we have made a preliminary determination that the approval of the HCP and issuance of an ITP qualify for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), as provided by the Department of Interior implementing regulations in part 46 of title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 46.205, 46.210, and 46.215).

However, based upon our review of public comments that we receive in response to this notice, this preliminary determination may be revised.

Next Steps

We will evaluate the permit application, including the plan and comments we receive, to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act. We will also evaluate whether issuance of the ITP would comply with section 7(a)(2) of the Act by conducting an intra-Service Section 7 consultation.

Public Review

We provide this notice under section 10(c) of the Act and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), NEPA’s public involvement regulations (40 CFR 1500.1(b), 1500.2(d), and 1506.6). We are requesting comments on our determination that the applicant’s proposal will have a minor or negligible effect on the Mount Hermon June beetle and that the plan qualifies as a low-effect HCP as defined by our 1996 Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook. We will evaluate the permit application, including the plan and
comments, we receive, to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act. We will use the results of our internal Service consultation, in combination with the above findings, in our final analysis to determine whether to issue the permits. If the requirements are met, we will issue an ITP to the applicant for the incidental take of Mount Hermon June beetle. We will make the final permit decision no sooner than 30 days after the date of this notice.

Public Comments

If you wish to comment on the permit applications, plans, and associated documents, you may submit comments by any one of the methods in ADDRESSES.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email 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 view, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority

We provide this notice under section 10 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

Dated: March 29, 2016.

Stephen P. Henry,
Field Supervisor, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, Ventura, California.

[FR Doc. 2016–07795 Filed 4–4–16; 8:45 am]

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) proposes to amend an enhancement of survival (EOS) permit issued to itself on May 26, 2009, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA). The EOS permit is associated with a programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) developed for the conservation of the federally-listed endangered Fender's blue butterfly within the Willamette Valley in Oregon. The proposed amendment would extend the term of the SHA and the permit for an additional 11 years. The amendment includes adding Washington County, Oregon, to the geographical area covered by the SHA and the permit. The amended permit would continue to authorize the Service to extend incidental take coverage to eligible landowners who are willing to carry out habitat management actions that benefit the Fender’s blue butterfly by enrolling landowners under the SHA through Certificates of Inclusion. We request comments from the public on the proposed amendment of the EOS permit and the SHA, and a draft environmental action statement (EAS) prepared pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

DATES: Written comments on the permit amendment, SHA amendment, and the EAS for the NEPA categorical exclusion determination must be received from interested parties no later than May 5, 2016.

ADDRESSES: To request further information or submit written comments, please use one of the following methods, and note that your information request or comments are in reference to the Service Agreement Amendment.

- Internet: Documents may be viewed on the Internet at http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/articles.cfm?id=149489462.
- Email: WVAmendmentcomments@fws.gov. Include “Willamette Valley SHA Amendment” in the subject line of the message or comments.
- U.S. Mail: State Supervisor, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 2600 SE 98th Avenue, Suite 100; Portland, OR 97266.
- Fax: 503–231–6195, Attn: Willamette Valley SHA Amendment.
- In-Person Viewing, Pickup or Drop-off: Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2600 SE 98th Avenue, Suite 100, Portland, OR 97266. Written comments can be dropped off during regular business hours at the above address on or before the closing date of the public comment period (see DATES).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On May 26, 2009, the Service issued an EOS permit to the Service’s Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office (OFWO) pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA. The EOS permit is associated with a programmatic SHA developed for the conservation of the federally-listed endangered Fender’s blue butterfly (Icaricia icarioides fenderi) within the Willamette Valley in Oregon. The SHA is administered and implemented by the OFWO and the Service’s Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex (WV Refuge Complex). The OFWO serves as the “permittee.” The WV Refuge Complex is a signatory to the SHA and works jointly with the OFWO on all aspects of the SHA. The OFWO may enroll eligible interested non-Federal landowners (cooperators) through Certificates of Inclusion under the SHA. The WV Refuge Complex can also develop and administer Certificates of Inclusion where they are involved in activities on the cooperator’s enrolled lands as a project partner.

The geographic area covered by the current SHA and permit includes the originally known and potential range of the Fender’s blue butterfly, which includes prairie habitat within Benton, Lane, Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties of Oregon. Properties that are eligible for enrollment are non-Federal lands where the Fender’s blue butterfly occurs or could occur through colonization, translocation, or reintroduction. Activities under the SHA may also benefit the federally-listed threatened Kincaid’s lupine (Lupinus sulphureus ssp. kincaidii), which is a larval host plant for Fender’s blue butterfly. However, Kincaid’s lupine is not included as a “covered species.”

The current term of the SHA is 15 years and expires on May 25, 2024. The current term of the permit is 25 years and expires on May 25, 2034. Since the permit was issued on May 26, 2009, the Service has enrolled a number of eligible landowners under Certificates of Inclusion for an average period of 10 years each.

Proposed Amendment

In order to continue issuing new 10-year Certificates of Inclusion, the