collection. Agencies administering low income and affordable housing programs subject to maintenance prevailing wage rates use HUD Form 4750 to recommend maintenance wage rates to HUD and use HUD Forms 4751 and 4752 to collect data from local entities that employ personnel performing the same duties as the agency’s maintenance staff. HUD uses the data collected from HUD Forms 4750, 4751, and 4752 to determine or adopt prevailing wage rates for maintenance laborers and mechanics employed in the operation of low income and affordable housing projects subject to Federal prevailing wage rates. HUD and local agencies that administer HUD-assisted projects will no longer be required to use the HUD Form 4230A for additional classification requests. Instead, HUD and local agencies will utilize the form SF–1444 and submit employer additional classification and wage rate requests to DOL when DOL approval is required. The information collection of the SF–1444 is contained in the OMB Control No. 9000–0066.

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B. Solicitation of Public Comment

This notice is soliciting comments from members of the public and affected parties concerning the collection of information described in Section A on the following:

1. Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
2. The accuracy of the agency’s estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information;
3. Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
4. Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

HUD encourages interested parties to submit comment in response to these questions.

C. Authority

Section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35

Krista Mills,
Director, Office of Field Policy and Management.

[FR Doc. 2021–20791 Filed 9–23–21; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4210–67–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service
[Docket No. FWS–R1–ES–2020–0101; FXES1114010000–212–FF01E0000]
Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Habitat Conservation Plan for Thurston County, Washington

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; notice of public meetings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a habitat conservation plan developed by Thurston County, Washington (applicant), in support of an application for an incidental take permit under the Endangered Species Act. The applicant is seeking authorization for the incidental take of six species, expected to result from various County-permitted development activities, as well as construction and maintenance of County-owned or County-managed infrastructure, over the next 30 years. The incidental take and other impacts would occur in Thurston County. This notice also announces the availability of the Service’s draft environmental impact statement and the opening of the public comment period, which is intended to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act requirement to evaluate the impacts of the proposed action on the human environment. We are seeking public comments on the habitat conservation plan and draft environmental impact statement.

DATES:

Submitting Comments: We will accept comments received or postmarked on or before November 8, 2021. Comments submitted online at https://www.regulations.gov/ must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 8, 2021.

Public Meetings: The Service will hold two public meetings during the public comment and review period. To help protect the public and limit the spread of the COVID–19 virus, the public meetings will be held virtually at the following times:

• October 12, 2021 at 6 p.m.
• October 14, 2021, at 6 p.m.

ADDRESSES:

Submitting Comments: You may submit comments by one of the following methods:


We will post all comments on http://www.regulations.gov. This generally means that we will post online any personal information that you provide (see Public Availability of Comments under SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION).
request that you submit comments by
only the methods described above. For
additional information about submitting
comments, see Request for Public
Comments under SUPPLEMENTARY
INFORMATION.

Public Meetings: A link and access
instructions to the virtual meetings will
be posted to https://www.fws.gov/
wafwo/ at least one week prior to the
first public meeting date.

Reviewing U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency (EPA) comments on
the draft HCP and DEIS: See EPA’s Role
in the EIS Process under SUPPLEMENTARY
INFORMATION.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Curtis Tanner, by telephone at 360–753–
9440, or by email at Curtis_Tanner@
fws.gov. Hearing or speech impaired
individuals may call the Federal Relay
Service at 800–877–8339 for TTY
service.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has
prepared a draft Environmental Impact
Statement (DEIS) to evaluate an
application for an incidental take permit
(ITP) received on July 30, 2020, from
Thurston County, Washington
(applicant). In accordance with the
requirements of the Endangered Species
Act, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531
et seq.), the applicant is requesting
authorization of incidental take of the
threatened Yelm pocket gopher (Thomomys
mazama yelmensis), Olympia pocket gopher
(T. mazama pugetensis), Tenino pocket gopher
(T. mazama tumuli), and Oregon spotted
duck (Rana pretiosa); the endangered
Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly
(Euphydryas editha taylori); and the
Oregon vesper sparrow (Pooecetes
gramineus affinis), which is under
review to determine if Federal listing
under the ESA is warranted (hereafter,
covered species). If issued, the ITP
would authorize take of the covered
species that may occur incidental to
various County-permitted development
activities, as well as construction and
maintenance of County-owned or
County-managed infrastructure, for a
period of 30 years. In support of the ITP
application, the applicant prepared the
draft Thurston County habitat
conservation plan (HCP), which
specifies the impacts that will likely
result from the take of covered species
and describes the steps the applicant
will take to avoid, minimize, and
mitigate such impacts.

The Service prepared a DEIS to
evaluate the impacts of the proposed
ITP action on the human environment,
consistent with the purpose and goals of
the National Environmental Policy Act
(NEPA: 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and
pursuant to the Council on
Environmental Quality’s implementing
NEPA regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–
1508. Additionally, this DEIS was
prepared consistent with the
Department of the Interior NEPA
regulations (43 CFR part 46);
longstanding federal judicial and
regulatory interpretations; and
Administration priorities and policies
including Secretary’s Order No. 3399
requiring bureaus and offices to use “the
same application or level of NEPA that
would have been applied to a proposed
action before the 2020 Rule went into
effect.’’

The DEIS will also be used by
Thurston County to satisfy the
requirements of the Washington State
Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) as
provided in Revised Code of
Washington 43.21C and SEPA
implementing regulations found at
Washington Administrative Code 197–
11. We are making the HCP and DEIS
available for public review and
comment.

Background

Thurston County is seeking an ITP,
and intends to implement the Thurston
HCP, to cover a variety of activities for
which the County issues permits or
approvals, or activities the County
otherwise carries out under its
jurisdiction as detailed in the HCP.
These activities include residential
development, development of accessory
structures, installation, repair, or
alteration of septic systems, commercial
and industrial development, public
service facility construction,
transportation projects, transportation
maintenance and other work within
County-owned road rights-of-way,
landfill and solid waste management,
water resources management, and
County parks, trails, and land
management. The covered activities
would not include mining. The
proposed covered activities are
described further in the DEIS and in the
HCP.

The species proposed for coverage
under the Thurston HCP and ITP
include three subspecies of the Mazama
pocket gopher (the Yelm pocket gopher,
Olympia pocket gopher, and the Tenino
pocket gopher), Oregon spotted
duck, Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly, and
the Oregon vesper sparrow. Each of the
proposed covered species is known to
occur in Thurston County. Habitat loss
and fragmentation are primary threats to
all proposed covered species. Habitat
likely to be impacted is already largely
fragmented or degraded, and not
currently managed for the covered
species.

The HCP includes measures to avoid,
minimize, and mitigate impacts to
covered species, along with an analysis
of projected impacts to covered species.
As it is not practical to express the
anticipated take (or to monitor take-
related impacts) in terms of number of
individuals of each species, the HCP
uses habitat, measured as habitat area or
as “functional-acre” values, as a
surrogate for quantifying impacts to
each covered species and related
conservation outcomes. The functional-
acre approach weights habitat acreage
by currently available information on
covered species’ distribution, habitat
condition, and landscape position in
relationship to priority habitat areas.
This approach provides greater weight
to both impacts and mitigation
occurring in or near areas that are a
priority for conservation of the covered
species.

Throughout the HCP, the county would
permit or conduct covered activities that
cause take of covered species, monitor
the amount and extent of take, and
ensure mitigation on permanently
protected sites to fully offset impacts of
the taking on covered species. The HCP
conservation program includes
performance standards for conservation
lands and minimization measures
tailored to the best available information
for each species.

Impacts to Mazama pocket gopher
subspecies would result from HCP-
covered development and maintenance
activities within habitat in their
respective ranges. Due to more limited
exposure to covered activities, impacts
to the Oregon spotted duck, Taylor’s
checkerspot butterfly, and Oregon
vesper sparrow would be caused by a
smaller number of HCP-covered
development and maintenance activities
taking place in respective habitats for
each species, which have relatively
localized ranges in Thurston County.
Measures to minimize impacts of the
taking on covered species are primarily
tied to reducing the extent of habitat
impacts through within-site project
design, along with additional species-
specific measures for each group of
covered activities, described in the HCP.

To mitigate unavoidable impacts to
covered species, Thurston County
proposes to permanently protect and
manage habitat occupied by covered
species by establishing new permanent
habitat reserves, acquiring permanent
conservation easements on working
lands, and enhancing and permanently
maintaining habitat quality on existing
reserves (collectively “conservation
lands”). The addition of conservation
lands would occur incrementally during HCP implementation at a pace that meets or exceeds the amount and extent of impacts to each covered species.

The Thurston HCP includes funding assurances, monitoring, adaptive management, and changed circumstance provisions to help ensure that biological goals for the covered species are achieved. Annual reports would confirm the amount, type, and location of impacts and mitigation, as well as the status of monitoring, adaptive management, changed circumstances, and funding. The proposed conservation program and expected effects of HCP implementation on the covered species and their designated critical habitats are described in greater detail in the Thurston HCP and in the DEIS.

Endangered Species Act

Section 9 of the ESA prohibits “take” of fish and wildlife species listed as endangered under section 4 (16 U.S.C. 1538 and 16 U.S.C. 1533, respectively). The ESA implementing regulations extend, under certain circumstances, the prohibition of take to threatened species (50 CFR 17.31). Under section 3 of the ESA, the term “take” means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct” (16 U.S.C. 1532(19)). The term “harm” is defined by regulation as “an act which actually kills or injures wildlife.” Such act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering” (50 CFR 17.3).

Under section 10(a) of the ESA, the Service may issue permits to authorize incidental take of listed fish and wildlife species. “Incidental take” is defined by the ESA as take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, carrying out an otherwise lawful activity. Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA contains provisions for issuing ITPs to non-Federal entities for the take of endangered and threatened species, provided the following criteria are met:

1. The taking will be incidental;
2. The applicant will, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize and mitigate the impact of such taking;
3. The applicant will ensure that adequate funding for the plan will be provided;
4. The taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild; and
5. The applicant will carry out any other measures that the Service may require as being necessary or appropriate for the purposes of the HCP.

Anticipated Permits and Authorizations

In addition to the requested ITP, Thurston County will manage covered activities to comply with all other applicable laws, including without limitation Washington State endangered and protected species regulations; the Washington State Growth Management Act, which includes State and local protection of historic and cultural resources implemented through the County’s Comprehensive Plan; the Washington State Shoreline Management Act; the Washington State Hydraulic Code; Thurston County Critical Area Ordinances; State and local requirements for administrative procedures; and other regulations. Individual projects conducted under the HCP will undergo individual review by the County for compliance with local codes and further public review, as appropriate, through the Washington SEPA.

National Environmental Policy Act

In compliance with NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Service prepared a DEIS, in which we analyze the proposed action and a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action. The environmental consequences of each alternative, including the effects of those alternatives when combined with reasonably foreseeable future actions and environmental trends, were analyzed to determine if significant impacts to the human environment would occur. Three alternatives are analyzed in detail in the DEIS.

Alternative 1—No-Action Alternative: The Service would not issue incidental take authorization to the County, and the County would not implement the HCP. The County would continue to conduct, permit, and approve activities on a case-by-case basis in compliance with Federal, State, and local requirements, including the Thurston County Critical Areas code. The County and individual project proponents would continue to evaluate each project to ensure unauthorized take of listed species is avoided. The County would not implement a coordinated, County-wide conservation program for ESA-listed species. This alternative is the current situation in Thurston County.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action: The Service would, in accordance with applicable law, issue the requested ITP to Thurston County for the incidental take of covered species by the covered activities. The County would implement the Thurston County HCP and its conservation program, including, without limitation, implementation of minimization measures for covered activities; mitigation measures to fully offset the impacts of the taking on covered species; monitoring and reporting requirements. The County would also provide funding for HCP implementation. Under Alternative 2, mitigation would be achieved, in part, through the execution of conservation easements on working agricultural lands, the enhancement of existing conservation reserves, and the establishment of new conservation reserves.

Alternative 3—Modified HCP: The Service would, in accordance with applicable law, issue an ITP to Thurston County with the same permit area, permit term, covered species, covered activities, and many of the HCP elements described for the Proposed Action. This alternative explores whether the HCP could be modified to provide higher conservation value to covered species by acquiring new habitat reserves and managing them to achieve the highest habitat quality. Conservation easements would not be executed on working agricultural lands, and enhancement of existing conservation reserves would not be part of the mitigation strategy. Under this Alternative, fewer acres of new conserved habitat may be needed to fully offset the impacts of the taking to covered species.

EPA’s Role in the EIS Process

The EPA is charged with reviewing all Federal agencies’ EISs and commenting on the adequacy and acceptability of the environmental impacts of proposed actions. Therefore, EPA is publishing a notice in the Federal Register announcing this DEIS, as required under section 309 of the Clean Air Act. The publication date of EPA’s notice of availability is the official beginning of the public comment period. EPA serves as the repository (EIS database) for EISs prepared by Federal agencies. You may search for EPA comments on EISs, along with EISs themselves, at https://cdxnodengn.epa.gov/cdx-enepa/public/action/eis/search.

Public Comments

You may submit your comments and materials by one of the methods in ADDRESSES. We specifically request information on the following:

1. Biological information, analysis, and relevant data concerning the covered species, other wildlife, and ecosystems.
2. Potential effects that the proposed permit action could have on the covered species, and other endangered or
threatened species, and their habitats, including the interaction of the effects of the project with climate change and other stressors.

3. Adequacy of the proposed actions to minimize and mitigate the impact of the taking on covered species, including but not limited to best management practices, conservation easements, establishment of new reserves, reserve habitat enhancement, and adaptive management procedures.

4. Potential effects that the proposed permit action could have on other aspects of the human environment, including effects on plants and animals, water resources, and aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social, environmental justice, climate change, or health effects.

5. The alternatives analysis conducted by the Service, including the alternatives analyzed, the range of alternatives analyzed, and the alternatives considered but not analyzed in detail.

6. The presence of historic properties—including archaeological sites, buildings and structures, historic events, sacred and traditional areas, and other historic preservation concerns—in the proposed permit area, which are required to be considered in project planning by the National Historic Preservation Act.

7. Reasonably foreseeable environmental trends and planned actions in the plan area and their possible impacts on the affected environment, including the covered species, as well as any connected actions that are closely related and should be discussed in the same DEIS.

8. The alternatives, information, and analyses submitted during the public scoping period and the summary thereof (40 CFR 1502.17), appended to the DEIS.

9. Other information relevant to the Thurston HCP and its impacts on the human environment.

To help protect the public and limit the spread of the COVID–19 virus, two public meetings will be conducted online to accommodate best practices and local guidelines in place at the time this notice was prepared. See DATES and ADDRESSES for the dates and times of the virtual public meetings. The virtual public meetings will provide Thurston County and the Service an opportunity to present information pertinent to the Thurston HCP and for the public to ask questions on the HCP and DEIS. No opportunity for oral comments will be provided. Written comments may be submitted by the methods listed in ADDRESSES.

### ADDRESSES

Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in either of the public meetings should contact the Service’s Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, using one of the methods listed in ADDRESSES as soon as possible. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please make contact no later than one week before the desired public meeting. Information regarding this proposed action is available in alternative formats upon request.

### Public Availability of Comments

You may submit your comments and materials by one of the methods listed in ADDRESSES. Before including your address, phone number, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—might 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. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public disclosure in their entirety.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as references for supporting documentation we used in preparing the DEIS, will be available for public inspection online in Docket No. FWS–R1–ES–2020–0101 at http://www.regulations.gov/ (see FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT).

### Next Steps and Decision To Be Made

After public review and comment, we will evaluate the permit application, associated documents, and any comments received, to determine whether the permit application meets the requirements of section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA. We will also evaluate whether issuance of the requested ITP would comply with section 7 of the ESA. The Service expects to have a Final EIS for publication in the Federal Register by early 2022. At least 30 days after the FEIS is available, we expect the record of decision will be completed in accordance with applicable timeframes established in 40 CFR 1506.11, and the Regional Director will issue a decision on the requested ITP. The current estimate for the issuance of a record of decision is March 2022. This estimate assumes that there are no significant outstanding issues requiring resolution.

### Authority

We provide this notice in accordance with the requirements of section 10(c) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1539(c)) and NEPA and its implementing regulations (40 CFR 1503.1 and 1506.6).

Hugh Morrison,
Deputy Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2021–20493 Filed 9–23–21; 8:45 am]

### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

### [BAC 4331–11]

### Notice of Public Meetings of the Idaho Resource Advisory Council

#### AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

#### ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

#### SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Idaho Resource Advisory Council (RAC) will meet as indicated below.

#### DATES: The BLM Idaho RAC will meet on Wednesday, November 10, 2021. The meeting will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Mountain Standard Time). The RAC will also meet on Wednesday, February 16, 2022. The meeting will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Mountain Standard Time). Public comment periods will be offered during both meetings.

#### ADDRESSES: The November 10, 2021, meeting will be held virtually. The February 11, 2022, meeting will be held at the BLM Twin Falls District Office, 2878 Addison Avenue East, Twin Falls, Idaho 83301. If COVID restrictions remain in place, the February meeting will be held virtually. Virtual participation information will be posted online two weeks in advance of each meeting at https://www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/idaho.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: MJ Byrne, 1387 South Vinnell Way, Boise, Idaho 83709; (208) 373–4006; mbyrne@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339 to contact Ms. Byrne during normal business hours. The FRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above.