



News Release

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For Immediate Release
October 24, 2011

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Lower Colorado River Authority Transmissions Services Corporation Requests Incidental Take Permit for Two Federally Listed Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today in the *Federal Register* the notice of availability of the draft Environmental Assessment (dEA) and an incidental take permit application for the Lower Colorado River Authority Transmissions Services Corporation (LCRA TSC) that includes a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (dHCP). This announcement begins a 60-day public comment period.

LCRA TSC has developed a draft habitat conservation plan that describes the measures they agree to undertake to minimize and mitigate the effects of incidental take of two federally listed species – the golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) and the black-capped vireo (*Vireo atricapilla*) - that would result from activities associated with construction, maintenance, operation and repair of two Competitive Renewable Energy Zones (CREZ) transmission lines and their associated access roads. LCRA TSC's proposed incidental take would occur in nine Texas counties. The purpose of the requested permit is to allow LCRA TSC to maintain the efficiency of its operations, while preserving protected species and their habitat.

The scope of LCRA TSC's activities under their proposed incidental take permit are significantly reduced from the area that was anticipated to be covered when the Service published the Notice of Intent (NOI) on March 19, 2010. If the permit is approved, it would be in effect for a period of 30 years.

The Service issued a draft Environmental Assessment that evaluates the impacts of, and alternatives to, possible issuance of an incidental take permit covering LCRA's service area.

The Service is requesting public comments on the application, dHCP, and dEA. To ensure consideration, we must receive written comments on or before close of business (4:30 p.m. CST) on December 23, 2011. The Service will accept comments at two public meetings that will be located within LCRA's proposed transmission line development area during the comment period. The dates and locations of the meetings will be noticed in local newspapers, on LCRA TSC's website (http://www.lcra.org/energy/trans/crez/fed_envrio_compliance.html), and on the Austin Ecological

Services Office website (<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/AustinTexas/>) at least 2 weeks prior to each event.

You may obtain copies of the dEA and dHCP on LCRA TSC's website (http://www.lcra.org/energy/trans/crez/fed_envrio_compliance.html) and on the Austin Ecological Services Office website (<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/AustinTexas/>). For further information on how to obtain or review copies of these documents, or how to provide comments, see the *Federal Register* notice at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/index.html>.

America's fish, wildlife, and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We're working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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