



News Release



#13-028

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March 20, 2013

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Thurston County to Hold Public Meeting for Prairie Species Habitat Conservation Plan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today announced their intention to conduct a public scoping meeting to gather information to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) related to a permit application from Thurston County, Washington for the incidental take of two species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (Act) three species proposed to be protected under the Act, one candidate species, and 12 non-listed species. The primary purpose of the scoping process is for the public to assist the Service and Thurston County in developing a draft EIS by identifying important issues and alternatives related to the applicant's proposed action or Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

The public meeting will be held Saturday, April 6, 2013 at the Exposition Hall, Thurston County Fairgrounds, 3054 Carpenter Road, Lacey, WA 98503. The first session will be from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The second session will be from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. The sessions will cover identical subject matter; you may attend one or the other.

The Endangered Species Act prohibits the "take" of fish or wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened. "Take" of listed fish or wildlife is defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill,

trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” Under limited circumstances, the Service issues permits to authorize incidental take, take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity. In addition to meeting other criteria, an incidental take permit must not jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed threatened or endangered species.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that federal agencies conduct an environmental analysis of their proposed actions to determine if the actions may significantly affect the human environment. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires equivalent analysis and applies to state agencies and agencies within Washington. Thurston County will meet its SEPA requirements through concurrent participation in the federal NEPA requirements, beginning with the April 6 meeting.

Comments concerning the development of Thurston County’s Prairie HCP and the preparation of the associated EIS may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- *U.S. mail:* Tim Romanski, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 102, Lacey, WA 98503-1263.
- *Email:* WFWOComments@fws.gov. Include “Thurston County Prairie HCP - EIS” in the subject line of the message.
- *Fax:* (360)753-9518.
- *In-Person:* Written comments will be accepted at the public meeting on April 6, 2013 or can be dropped off during regular business hours at the above address.

NOTE: Comments received will be shared and reviewed by both the Service and the County.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Romanski, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, email Tim_Romanski@fws.gov, phone (360) 753-5823 or Andrew Deffobis at deffoba@co.thurston.wa.us , phone (360) 754-3355 ext. 5467.

The Notice of Intent in the Federal Register can be found at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-20/pdf/2013-06374.pdf>

Persons needing reasonable accommodations to attend and participate in the public meeting should contact Tim Romanski (see above) no later than Friday March 29, 2013. After March 29, please call (360) 786-5498, and ask for the ADA Coordinator. Citizens with hearing impairments may call the Thurston County TDD line at (360) 754-2933.

Information regarding the applicant's proposed action is available in alternative formats upon request.