



# United States Department of the Interior

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## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Seeks Public Comment on Sierra Pacific Industries Conservation Plan for West Coast Fisher Populations in 16 California Counties**

YREKA, Calif.—The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced that it has received an application from Sierra Pacific Industries, a California-based timber company, for an enhancement of survival permit covering the West Coast Distinct Population Segment (West Coast DPS) of fishers. About the size of a house cat, fishers are members of the weasel family and are related to marten, otter and mink.

The permit application is part of a proposed conservation plan, known as the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), which would result in benefits to the species.

The term of the permit is for 10 years and would authorize take of fisher, resulting from certain land use and conservation activities should the species be listed in the future as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

If the Service approves the permit, the applicant anticipates taking fishers as a result of forestry operations and support activities primarily involving harvesting and transporting timber periodically on about 1.5 million acres of land where fishers are either known to occur or could reasonably be expected to occur in the future.

To enhance the survival of fishers on the enrolled lands, the applicant proposes to implement conservation actions that limit the removal or degradation of currently suitable fisher habitat and to maintain and recruit habitat elements important to fishers.

Other conservation benefits include limits on the timing of operations during critical denning periods and efforts to remove or reduce threats associated with the illegal use of toxic substances by trespassers cultivating marijuana. Another threat to fishers exists from water storage tanks used to store water needed for forestry operations, generally watering road surfaces to reduce dust and to provide a source of water in case of fire. The use of tanks to store water reduces the need for forestry operations to draw water directly from streams and provides a water source later into the dry season. However, fishers and other wildlife have been known to become trapped in water tanks and drown. The conservation plan also calls for efforts to reduce the risk of fishers drowning in water tanks owned or used by SPI during forestry operations.

The Service has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act for the applicant's permit application and the proposed CCAA.

If approved, the permit would authorize incidental take for the federal candidate fisher within the West Coast DPS, during forestry operations including commercial timber harvesting on SPI's property in 16 counties in northern California.

The Service is requesting comment on the permit application, draft environmental assessment, and proposed conservation plan through April 1, 2016, 30-days from publication date in *Federal Register*.

For more information or to download copies of documents related to this application, please visit: [www.fws.gov/yreka](http://www.fws.gov/yreka).

Comments may be submitted to the Service via email at [yreka@fws.gov](mailto:yreka@fws.gov). Include "SPI CCAA for fishers" in the subject line of the email. Instructions for submitting comments via fax, through the mail and other means are described in the Federal Register Notice, also available on the web.

*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 <http://www.fws.gov/cno>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).*

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