

letters of comment, input recorded during meetings). If requested under the Freedom of Information Act by a private citizen or organization, the Service may provide copies of such information.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), NEPA Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, Executive Order 12996, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

We estimate that the draft environmental documents will be available for review in March 1999.

Dated: January 9, 1998.

**Ralph O. Morgenweck,**

*Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.*

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BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Availability of the Technical/ Agency Draft Recovery Plan for the Spruce-Fir Moss Spider for Review and Comment

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Document availability and public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability for public review of the technical/agency draft recovery plan for the spruce-fir moss spider (*Microhexura montivaga*). Historically, at least five different mountain peaks in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee are known to have supported populations of the spruce-fir moss spider. Today, however, only two small relict populations of the spider are known to survive—one on Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina and one on Mount LeConte in Tennessee. The typical habitat of the spruce-fir moss spider is found in well-drained moss mats growing on rocks and boulders in well-shaded situations in mature high-elevation conifer forests dominated by Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*) and scattered red spruce (*Picea rubens*). These factors are deteriorating rapidly, primarily due to infestation and the resulting mortality of the fir by the balsam woolly adelgid (an exotic insect pest) and possibly air population and other factors now yet

fully understood. The spider requires situations of high and constant humidity, and the loss of forest canopy, leading to increased light and decreased moisture on the forest floor (resulting in desiccation of the moss mats), appears to be the major threat to its continued existence. Unless new populations are found or reestablished and existing population are maintained, this species will remain in jeopardy of extinction for the foreseeable future. The Service solicits review and comments from the public on this draft plan.

**DATES:** Comments on this technical/ agency draft recovery plan must be received on or before March 23, 1998 to receive consideration by the Service.

**ADDRESSES:** Persons wishing to review the technical/agency draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the Asheville Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 160 Zillicoa Street, Asheville, North Carolina 28801 (Telephone 704/258-3939). Written comments and materials regarding the plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor at the above address.

Comments and materials received are available on request for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. John Fridell, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the address and telephone number shown in the **ADDRESSES** section (Ext. 225).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establish criteria for recognizing the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) (Act), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that a public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery

plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

The primary species considered in this draft recovery plan is the spruce-fir moss spider (*Microhexura montivaga*). The area of emphasis for recovery actions includes the Southern Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. Habitat protection, reintroduction, and the preservation of genetic material are the major objectives of this recovery plan.

#### Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the final plan.

#### Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: January 6, 1998.

**Brian P. Cole,**

*State Supervisor.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

#### Closure to Collection of Petrified Wood Order Established; Folsom Field Office, California

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

**ACTION:** Establishment of petrified wood collecting closure order within public lands managed by the Folsom Field Office, California.

**SUMMARY:** Certain described public lands administered by the Folsom Field Office in the vicinity of the communities of Dutch Flat and Gold Run are hereby closed to the collection of petrified wood. This closure will be in effect on all the below described public lands:

##### Mount Diablo Meridian, California

T. 15 N., R. 10 E.,

Section 3: Lots 4,5;

Section 4: Lot 19;

Section 9: SWSE; Lots 3,4,5,7,8,9; MS1483;

Section 16: N/2NE, SWNE.

Totaling 320.29 acres, more or less.