

[FR Doc. 98-2563 Filed 2-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Endangered and Threatened Species Permit Applications

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of applications.

The following applicants have applied for permits to conduct certain activities with endangered species. This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*).

PRT-83713

Applicant: Zambrana Engineering, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri; Paul T. Raibley, Senior Aquatic Scientist.

The applicant requests a permit to take (capture and release) pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), fanshell [*Cyprogenia stegaria* (= *irrorata*)], fat pocketbook [*Potamilus* (= *Proptera*) *capax*], and Higgins' eye pearl mussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*) from the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers and their tributaries bordering or occurring in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Activities are proposed to document presence or absence of the species for the purpose of survival and enhancement of the species in the wild.

PRT-838714

Applicant: University of Minnesota, Raptor Center, St. Paul, Minnesota; Patrick Redig, Director.

The applicant requests a permit to take (capture, fit with radio tracking units, and release) bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Activities are proposed for the purpose of scientific research aimed at survival and enhancement of the species in the wild.

PRT-838715

Applicant: The Nature Conservancy, Oak Openings Project Office, Swanton, Ohio; David Weekes, Executive Director.

The applicant requests a permit to take (harass and kill through habitat management) Karner blue butterfly (*Lycia melissa samuelis*) at the Kitty Todd Nature Preserve in Swanton, Ohio. Activities are proposed to maintain and increase habitat for a reintroduced population of the species for the purpose of survival and enhancement of the species in the wild.

Written data or comments should be submitted to the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Operations, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056, and must be received within 30 days of the date of this publication.

Documents and other information submitted with these applications are available for review by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the following office within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Operations, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056. Telephone: (612/713-5332); FAX: (612/713-5292).

Dated: January 26, 1998.

Matthias A. Kerschbaum,

Acting Assistant Regional Director, IL, IN, MO (Ecological Services), Region 3, Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

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BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of a Draft Recovery Plan for the Pawnee Montane Skipper (*Hesperia leonardus montana*) for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service announces the availability for public review of a draft recovery plan for the pawnee montane skipper (*Hesperia leonardus montana*). The pawnee montane skipper currently exists on 38 square miles in the South Platte River drainage system in Colorado. The Service solicits review and comment from the public on this draft recovery plan.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before June 3, 1998 to ensure they receive consideration by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the Partnerships Coordinator, Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486, Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colorado 80225. Written comments and materials regarding this plan should be sent to 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:

Bettina Proctor, Partnerships Coordinator (see **ADDRESSES** above), at (303) 236-8155, extension 259.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem 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 conservation of the species, establish criteria for recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measure needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), 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 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 also will take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

The pawnee montane skipper was listed as threatened on September 25, 1987 (52 FR 36176). The skipper occurs only on the Pikes Peak Granite Formation in the South Platte River drainage system in Colorado involving portions of Jefferson, Douglas, Teller, and Park counties. The total known habitat within the range is estimated to be 37.9 square miles.

At the time of listing, the skipper habitat was threatened with the construction of Two Forks Dam and Reservoir by the Denver Water Department, and associated development. In 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency did not approve the construction of the dam, removing the immediate principal threat to the skipper's habitat. In the long term, plans to develop a reservoir in the South Platte drainage which might negatively affect skipper habitat may resurface.

Because of the limited habitat and range of the Pawnee montane skipper, unexpected environmental, random (stochastic) events could also have a major deleterious effect on the

population. Population biologists (Ehrlich and Murphy 1982) assert that random population changes due to stochastic events are more likely to cause the loss of small populations than are genetic changes.

Recovery Objectives: To protect and maintain through proper vegetation management, all of the defined skipper habitat on public land in the South Platte River drainage so that fragmentation of habitat is avoided and skippers are distributed throughout the range.

Recovery efforts will concentrate on creation of Memoranda of Understanding between land management agencies to provide for maintenance and enhancement of habitat; monitoring skipper presence; monitoring skipper habitat quality and trends, determination of management criteria for habitat maintenance; and education of private landowners and seeking opportunities for conservation agreements to allow enhancement of skipper habitat on private lands.

Public Comments Solicited

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

Authority

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

Dated: January 21, 1998.

Terry Terrell,

Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.
[FR Doc. 98-2159 Filed 2-2-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

North American Wetlands Conservation Act: Request for Small Grants Proposals for 1998

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is currently entertaining proposals that request match funding for wetland conservation projects under the Small Grants Program. Projects must meet the purposes of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989, as amended. Funding priority will be given

to projects from new grant applications with new partners, where the project ensures long-term conservation benefits.

DATES: Proposals must be postmarked no later than Friday, May 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Proposals should be addressed to: North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 110, Arlington, Virginia 22203, Attn: Small Grants Coordinator.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dr. Keith A. Morehouse, Small Grants Coordinator, or Ms. Pat Bond, Secretary, North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, 703/358-1784; facsimile 703/358-2282.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the 1989 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), as amended, is to promote long-term conservation of North American wetland ecosystems and the waterfowl and other migratory birds, fish and wildlife that depend upon such habitat through partnerships. Principal conservation actions supported by NAWCA are acquisition, creation, enhancement and restoration of wetlands and wetlands-associated habitat.

In 1996 and 1997, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Council) initiated a pilot Small Grants program with an allocation of \$250,000 per year. The objective was to promote long-term wetlands conservation activities through encouraging participation by new grantees and partners who may not otherwise be able to complete in the regular grants program. It was also hoped that successful participants in the Small Grants program would be encouraged to participate in the NAWCA-based Regular Grants program. Over the first two years, about 220 proposals requesting a total of approximately \$6.4 million competed for funding. Ultimately, 19 projects were funded. For 1998, with the approval of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, the Council has made the Small Grants program operational with a \$500,000 allocation.

To be considered for funding in 1998, proposals must have a grant request no greater than \$50,000. All wetland conservation proposals will be accepted that meet the requirements of the Act. However, funding priority will be given to projects from new grant applicants (individuals or organizations who have never received a NAWCA grant) with new partners, where the project ensures long-term conservation benefits.

In addition, proposals must represent on-the-ground projects, and any overhead in the project budget may be no greater than 10 percent of the grant amount. The anticipated magnitude of wetlands and wildlife resources benefits that will result from project execution is an important factor to be considered in proposal evaluation, and there should be a reasonable balance between acreages of wetlands and wetland-associated uplands.

Please keep in mind that NAWCA and matching funds may only be used for wetlands acquisition, creation, enhancement, and/or restoration, they may not be used for signage, displays, trails or other education features, materials and equipment, even though the goal of the project may ultimately be to support wetland conservation education curricula. Projects oriented toward education are not ordinarily eligible for NAWCA funding because education is not a primary purpose of the Act. However, useful project outcomes can include educational benefits resulting from conservation actions. Research is also not a primary purpose of the Act, and research proposals will not be considered for funding.

Even though requiring less total information than those submitted for the regular grants program, Small Grant proposals must still be clearly explained and meet the basic purposes given above and the 1:1 or greater non-Federal matching requirements of the NAWCA. Small Grants projects must also be consistent with Council guidelines, objectives and policies. All non-Federal matching funds and proposed expenditures of grant funds must be consistent with Appendix A of the Small Grants instructions, "Eligibility Requirements for Match of NAWCA Grant and Non-Federal Funds."

Small Grants proposals may be submitted at any time prior to the due date but must be postmarked no later than Friday, May 1, 1998. Address submitted proposals as follows: North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 110, Arlington, VA 22203, Attn: Small Grants Coordinator.

It is essential that grant request packages be complete when they are received in the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, including all of the documentation of partners (partner letters) with funding pledge amounts. Information of funding in partner letters, i.e., amounts and description regarding use, must correspond with budget amounts in the