

Service Field Office. The data and comments must be submitted in writing to be adequately considered in the Service's decision-making process.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ronald Paille, Senior Field Biologist, (see **ADDRESSES** above), telephone: 337/291-3117 or 337/291-3100, facsimile: 337/291-3139.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Grand Bayou/GIWW Freshwater Diversion Project, was funded through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act on the Fifth Priority Project List. The project purpose is to reduce loss of coastal wetlands within the project area through increased introduction of freshwater from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and by reducing canal-induced saltwater intrusion into the project area.

The proposed project would benefit about 42,690 acres of coastal wetlands by the enlargement of Bayou L'Eau Bleu to increase freshwater inflow. The preferred alternative includes water control structures. They would be installed on the Cutoff Canal, just below its junction with Bayou Pointe au Chien, and on the Island Road Borrow Canal, just west of Bayou Pointe au Chien. These water control structures would be operated to reduce canal-induced saltwater intrusion into project area wetlands.

Dated: March 2, 2000.

Judy L. Jones,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 00-5728 Filed 3-8-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of a Final Environmental Impact Statement for Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a Final Environmental Impact Statement for Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem is available for public review. The FEIS evaluates a proposal to establish an experimental population rule and reintroduce grizzly bears into the Bitterroot Ecosystem in east-central Idaho and western Montana. Six alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, are discussed in the FEIS.

The Bitterroot Ecosystem consists of approximately 44,400 square miles in 10 central Idaho and four western Montana counties, of which 76 percent is in Federal surface ownership. A Citizen Management Committee would be tasked with management implementation responsibility for the experimental population.

Reintroduction could result in grizzly bear recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem in a minimum of 50 years. A recovered grizzly bear population (approximately 280 bears) potentially could kill an average of 6 cattle and 25 sheep and up to 504 wild ungulates per year. Nuisance bear incidents could average 37 per year. Economic analyses indicate grizzly bear recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem would lead to total economic benefits of approximately \$40.4 to \$60.6 million per year.

DATES: Copies of the FEIS will be mailed to government offices, local and regional libraries, and interested parties who specifically requested the FEIS. A Summary of the FEIS will be mailed to all parties on the mailing list who did not specifically request the entire FEIS. Those interested persons not on the FEIS mailing list may request a copy from the project leader at the address below. It is anticipated that the Environmental Protection Agency will publish a Notice of Availability for this FEIS in the **Federal Register** on March 24, 2000. Public comments will be accepted from March 24, 2000, through April 24, 2000. Public comment on the FEIS is solicited pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations (40 CFR 1503.1). All agencies and individuals are urged to provide comments and suggestions regarding the FEIS for our review prior to completion of a Record of Decision. All comments received by the end of the comment period will be considered in preparation of the Record of Decision.

All comments received from individuals on our environmental impact statements become part of the official public record. Requests for such comments will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations [40 CFR 1506.6(f)]. When requested, comment letters with the names and addresses of the individuals who wrote the comments will generally be provided. However, the telephone number of the commenting individual will not be provided in response to such requests to the extent permissible by law. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will

honor to the extent allowable by law. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to Dr. Christopher Servheen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Project Leader, Bitterroot Grizzly Bear FEIS, P.O. Box 5127, Missoula, Montana 59806. The document also is available for viewing and downloading at: <http://www.r6.fws.gov/endspp/grizzly/>. Written comments and materials regarding this information should be sent to the Recovery Coordinator at the address given above or can be mailed electronically to FW6_grizzly@fws.gov. 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: Dr. Christopher Servheen, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator (see **ADDRESSES** above), at telephone (406) 243-4903.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Authority

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

Dated: March 1, 2000.

Ralph O. Morgenweck,

Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.

[FR Doc. 00-5729 Filed 3-8-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Issuance of Permit for Marine Mammals

On January 21, 2000, a notice was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol. 65, No. 14, page 3472, that an application had been filed with the Fish and Wildlife Service by Zachary Sharp, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, University of New Mexico for a permit (PRT-021423) to import canine teeth sections from Atlantic walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus rosmarus*) from Canada for the purpose of scientific research at the University of New Mexico.

Notice is hereby given that on February 24, 2000, as authorized by the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) the Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the