

between northern and southern sea otters.

*Response:* As noted in our response to Comment 8, we do not believe that the SAR is the appropriate document in which to discuss threats to the species in comprehensive detail. However, we have added text that references our most recent 5-year review (Service 2015). We have also added text clarifying that a formal determination of OSP will be developed with reference to the entire historic range of the subspecies.

*Comment 10:* "Habitat issues" should be revised to include (1) the spatial structure of southern sea otter habitat and its contribution in preventing recovery of the species and (2) a detailed discussion of the risk posed by oil spills.

*Response:* We have added text clarifying the relationship between the pace of range expansion, the spatial structure of sea otter habitat, and oil spill risk. However, as noted in our response to Comments 8 and 9, we do not believe that the SAR is the appropriate document in which to discuss threats to the species in comprehensive detail. We address oil spill risk and the effects of the spatial structure of sea otter habitat on population growth in our most recent 5-year review (Service 2015). We will update our assessment of these and other factors in the next 5-year review.

*Comment 11:* There are recent reports of what appear to be increasing rates of shooting-related incidents. For example, in 2016 alone there were reports of at least three sea otters being shot. In 2015, a California man was sentenced for shooting an air rifle at sea otters. While these incidents are more recent than the time period of the SAR, which is largely through 2014, they do represent the most recent available information and should be considered for inclusion since the Service provided information on some deaths as recently as 2016.

*Response:* We have added text stating that three sea otters died of gunshot wounds in 2016. However, we do not include these mortalities in the current calculation of mean annual mortality because they occurred outside the 5-year analysis window (2011–2015).

**Additional References Cited**

Chinn, S.M., M.A. Miller, M.T. Tinker, M.M. Staedler, F.I. Batac, E.M. Dodd, L.A. Henkel. 2016. The high cost of motherhood: end-lactation syndrome in southern sea otters. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 52:307–318. doi: 10.7589/2015-06-158.

Lafferty, K.D. M.T. and Tinker. 2014. Sea otters are recolonizing southern California in fits and starts. *Ecosphere* 5:50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1890/ES13-00394.1>.

Tinker, M.T. 2014. Models and sea otter conservation. Pp. 257–300 in Larson, S., G. VanBlaricom and J. Bodkin, eds., *Sea Otter Conservation*. New York: Elsevier.

Tinker, M.T., and B.B. Hatfield. 2016. California sea otter (*Enhydra lutris nereis*) census results, spring 2016. U.S. Geological Survey Data Series 1018. 10 pp. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3133/ds1018>.

**Authority**

The authority for this action is the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*)

Dated: July 26, 2017.

**Gregory Sheehan,**

*Acting Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

[Docket No. FWS-HQ-IA-2017-0054; FXIA1671090000-156-FF09A30000]

**Foreign Endangered Species and Marine Mammals Issuance of Permits**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of issuance of permits.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), have issued the following permits to conduct certain activities with endangered species, marine mammals, or both. We issue these permits under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

**ADDRESSES:** Documents and other information submitted with these applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Management Authority, Branch of Permits, MS: IA, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041; fax (703) 358-2281. To locate the **Federal Register** notice that announced our receipt of the application for each permit listed in this document, go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and search on the permit number provided in the tables in **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joyce Russell, (703) 358-2023 (telephone); (703) 358-2281 (fax); or [DMAFR@fws.gov](mailto:DMAFR@fws.gov) (email).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On the dates below, as authorized by the provisions of the ESA, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), we issued requested permits subject to certain conditions set forth therein. For each permit for an endangered species, we found that (1) the application was filed in good faith, (2) the granted permit would not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species, and (3) the granted permit would be consistent with the purposes and policy set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

| Permit No.                | Applicant  | Receipt of application <b>Federal Register</b> notice | Permit issuance date |
|---------------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| <b>Endangered Species</b> |  |   |                      |
| 50819A .....              | Zoological Society of San Diego/San Diego Zoo Global ..... | 82 FR 24381; May 26, 2017 .....                       | June 30, 2017.       |
| 18137C .....              | University of Wisconsin-Madison .....                      | 82 FR 24381; May 26, 2017 .....                       | July 3, 2017.        |
| 75285A .....              | Michael Ryckamn .....                                      | 82 FR 24381; May 26, 2017 .....                       | June 29, 2017.       |
| 14745C .....              | Cleveland Metroparks Zoo .....                             | 82 FR 24381; May 26, 2017 .....                       | July 11, 2017.       |
| 06369C .....              | Indiana Purdue University .....                            | 82 FR 14742, March 22, 2017 .....                     | July 3, 2017.        |
| <b>Marine Mammals</b>     |  |   |                      |
| 80164B .....              | North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management ...  | 81 FR 95628; December 28, 2016 .....                  | July 3, 2017.        |

**Authority:** We issue this notice under the authority of the ESA, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the MMPA, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*).

**Joyce Russell,**

*Government Information Specialist, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority.*

[FR Doc. 2017-18209 Filed 8-25-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4333-15-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[16XL LLWY920000.L51010000.ER0000.LVRWK09K0990.241A.0 4500106832]

**Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment To Reconsider the January 19, 2017, Record of Decision Approving Segments 8 and 9 for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project, Idaho**

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), and the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) Boundary Modification Act of 2017 (Modification Act), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is reconsidering the decision to approve a Right-of-Way (ROW) application for Segments 8 and 9 of the Gateway West 500-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Project (Project). By this Notice the BLM announces the beginning of scoping to solicit public comments and identify issues associated with such reconsideration, including the potential amendment of several Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and Management Framework Plans (MFPs) in the project area. The BLM analyzed the impacts of the alternative that it is reconsidering in the 2016 Gateway West Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The BLM will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to reconsider the January 19, 2017 Decision, including the land use plan amendments associated with a specific action alternative identified in the Supplemental EIS.

**DATES:** Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until September 27, 2017. In order to be included in the analysis, all comments must be postmarked prior to the close of the 30-day scoping period.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related

to this EA by any of the following methods:

- **Web site:** <https://www.blm.gov/gatewaywest>
- **Email:** [blm\\_id\\_gateway\\_west@blm.gov](mailto:blm_id_gateway_west@blm.gov)
- **Fax:** 208-384-3326
- **Mail:** BLM Boise District Office, 3948 Development Ave., Boise, ID 83705

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the BLM Boise District Office, 3948 Development Ave., Boise, ID 83705.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:** Contact Courtney Busse by calling 208-373-3872 or emailing at [cbusse@blm.gov](mailto:cbusse@blm.gov). You can also contact Ms. Busse to have your name added to the BLM mailing list for the Project. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact Ms. Busse. The FRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with Ms. Busse. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** PacifiCorp, dba Rocky Mountain Power, and Idaho Power (Proponents) submitted an initial ROW application under FLPMA in 2007 to locate 500-kV electric transmission lines on Federal lands as part of the Project. The original Project comprised 10 transmission line segments originating at the Windstar Substation near Glenrock, Wyoming, and terminating at the Hemingway Substation near Melba, Idaho.

After completing NEPA analysis in an EIS, the BLM issued a Record of Decision (ROD) in November 2013 that authorized routes and associated land use plan amendments on Federal lands for Segments 1 through 7, and Segment 10, but the BLM deferred a Decision for Segments 8 and 9 in southwestern Idaho.

In August 2014, the BLM received from the Proponents a revised ROW application for Segments 8 and 9 and a revised Plan of Development for the Project, which the BLM determined required additional NEPA analysis through a Supplemental EIS. On October 7, 2016, the BLM released a Final Supplemental EIS that analyzed seven alternative ROW routes for Segments 8 and 9 and the land use plan amendments needed to accommodate each alternative route pair. The BLM issued a ROD on January 19, 2017, selecting the route described as Alternative 5 in the Final Supplemental EIS.

Following the Decision, several environmental organizations, the State of Idaho, and Owyhee County, Idaho, appealed the ROW Decision to the

Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA). In a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, the Governor of Idaho requested that the BLM reconsider the January 19, 2017, Decision and select an alternative with fewer impacts to State and county resources and communities. The Proponents also requested that the BLM reconsider the January Decision and possibly select the alternative proposed in their revised application, as more cost-effective and providing greater system reliability. On April 18, 2017, the IBLA granted BLM's Motion to Remand the January 19, 2017, Decision for reconsideration. The BLM's Motion was unopposed.

On May 4, 2017, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (H.R. 244), which incorporated the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Boundary Modification Act (Modification Act) by reference (Division G, Title IV, Sec. 431(a)).

The President signed the Appropriations Act into law on May 5, 2017. The Modification Act directed the BLM to issue a ROW grant for the lands described in Sec. (b)(2) of the Modification Act for portions of Gateway West Segments 8 and 9, which represent the portions of Alternative 1 from the Final Supplemental EIS within the boundaries of the NCA. The Modification Act also removed the lands for this ROW from NCA status and stipulated that the mitigation framework presented in the Final Supplemental EIS will apply to the authorized segments. The Modification Act (Sec. (c)(1)) requires the BLM to issue the ROW (that portion in the NCA) within 90 days of the enactment of the Appropriations Act, or by August 2, 2017.

In light of the Modification Act's non-discretionary direction to issue the statutory ROW, the BLM's reconsideration of the January 19, 2017, Decision will consider the alternative(s) from the Supplemental EIS that align with the statutory ROW, so as to meet the agency's purpose and need for action, *i.e.*, to respond to the Proponents' ROW application and the direction of the Modification Act, and the no-action alternative.

Because the route pairing described as Alternative 1 (routes described as Revised Proposed 8 and Revised Proposed 9) in the Supplemental EIS is the only alternative that meets these criteria, it will be analyzed as the action alternative for reconsideration.

Furthermore, because the statutory ROW directed the BLM to issue a ROW grant for certain portions of the routes within the NCA boundaries previously analyzed in Alternative 1 in the Supplemental EIS, the EA and