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News Release



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DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PACIFICORP'S HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

KLAMATH FALLS, ORE., — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) that provides an analysis of PacifiCorp's proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for Lost River sucker and shortnose sucker, two endangered fish species in the Upper Klamath Basin of southern Oregon and northern California. These sucker species are referred to as "Covered Species."

In addition, the Service announced that a public meeting will be held on February 20, 2013, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Service's Klamath Falls Office, 1936 California Ave., Klamath Falls, Oregon. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview of the proposed conservation habitat plan and to address questions from the public.

HCPs benefit threatened and endangered species by providing an incentive for business and landowners to integrate conservation measures into the management of their operations. PacifiCorp has applied for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from the Service under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ITP, if issued, would authorize "take" of Covered Species.

Under the terms of the proposed 10-year ITP, PacifiCorp would implement avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures described in the HCP as a part of its Klamath Hydroelectric Project operations. PacifiCorp voluntarily commenced implementing certain of these measures as a part of its Interim Conservation Plan developed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2008.

As a part of its HCP, PacifiCorp proposes to discontinue routine operations at two hydroelectric facilities that are situated at the Link River Dam. In addition, PacifiCorp proposes to fund restoration projects and other activities that will benefit the recovery of both species.

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The EA describes the project effects on all potential resources that could be adversely affected, including water resources (hydrology and water quality); biological resources (Lost River and shortnose suckers, anadromous fishes, and other fishes); socioeconomics (local employment, recreation, renewable energy, land use, and development); environmental justice; and cultural resources.

The EA also includes an analysis of alternatives, and other required analyses such as unavoidable adverse effects, irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources, short-term uses versus long-term productivity and cumulative effects, and the environmentally preferable alternative (the proposed project).

Today's announcement opens a 60-day public comment period. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking comments and information on the proposed habitat conservation plan and draft environmental assessment. Comments will be accepted until March 29, 2013.

An electronic version of the draft EA and HCP is available at www.fws.gov/klamathfallsfwo/. Hard copies can be viewed during regular business hours from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office, located at 1936 California Avenue, Klamath Falls, Ore.

If you wish to comment on these documents, you may submit your comments in writing to Laurie R. Sada, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office, 1936 California Avenue, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601 or by email at FW8KFFWOESComments@fws.gov. Comments submitted in an email will be accepted provided they do not exceed 6 megabytes in size and are virus free. Hypertext email links to other web pages or publications shall not be deemed the equivalent of written comment.

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