

conservation plan and details their proposed measures to minimize, monitor, and mitigate the impacts of the proposed take on the desert tortoise.

The Applicants propose to expend \$1.35 million per year, and up to \$1.65 million per year for the first 10 years, to minimize and mitigate the potential loss of desert tortoise habitat. It is anticipated that the majority of these funds will be used to implement mitigation measures as described in the CCDCP. In addition, funds will be provided to State and Federal resource managers for implementing desert tortoise recovery measures recommended in the *Desert Tortoise* (Mojave Population) *Recovery Plan*, and for planning and managing lands both within and outside of desert wildlife management areas. The desert tortoise is only part of the desert ecosystem, and unless the various species of plants and animals which co-inhabit that system are likewise preserved, the status of the desert tortoise is likely to decline. Therefore, the needs of other plant and wildlife resources will be addressed, possibly avoiding the need to list these species as threatened or endangered under the Act in the future. The Applicants also propose to purchase a conservation easement that preserves, protects, and assures the management and study of the conservation values, and in particular the habitat of the desert tortoise, of more than 85,000 acres of non-Federal land in Clark County.

To minimize the impacts of take, the Applicants propose to provide a free pick-up and collection service for desert tortoises encountered in harm's way within Clark County. These desert tortoises will be made available for beneficial uses such as translocation studies and programs, research, education, zoos, museums, or other programs approved by the Service and Nevada Division of Wildlife. Sick or injured desert tortoises will be humanely euthanized. NDOT will incorporate specific measures into its operations to avoid or minimize impacts to desert tortoises. Clark County will also implement a public information and education program to benefit the desert tortoise and the desert ecosystem.

Clark County or the cities would approve the issuance of land development permits for otherwise lawful public and private project proponents during the 30-year period in which the proposed Federal permit would be in effect. Clark County or the cities would impose, and NDOT would pay, a fee of \$550 per acre of habitat disturbance to fund the measures to

minimize and mitigate the impacts of the proposed action on desert tortoises.

The underlying purpose or goal of the proposed action is to develop a program designed to ensure the continued existence of the species, while resolving potential conflicts that may arise from otherwise lawful private and public improvement projects.

#### **B. Development of the Final EIS**

This Final EIS has been developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In the development of this Final EIS, the Service initiated action to assure compliance with the purpose and intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). Scoping activities were undertaken preparatory to developing a Draft EIS with a variety of Federal, State, and local entities. A Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft EIS was published February 4, 1994 (59 FR 5439); a public scoping meeting was held February 14, 1994; and a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIS and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for Desert Tortoises in Clark County, Nevada was published February 10, 1995 (60 FR 8058).

Potential consequences, in terms of adverse impacts and benefits associated with the implementation of each alternative selected for detailed analysis, were described in the Draft EIS. The Service received 13 letters of comment on the Draft EIS which focused on the following subject areas: (1) Survey and removal of desert tortoises; (2) translocation of tortoises to a sanctuary; (3) euthanasia of tortoises; (4) measurable criteria for short-term and long-term conservation goals; (5) tortoise adoption; (6) effects to other species and resources; and (7) financing implementation of the CCDCP.

Appendix A of the Final EIS contains copies of all comments received and responses to all comments received. The Final EIS was revised where appropriate based on public comment and review. Issues and potential consequences have remained identical from the draft to the final EIS.

#### **C. Alternatives Analyzed in the Final EIS**

Two alternatives were considered. Issuance of the permit with the mitigating, minimizing, and monitoring measures outlined in the CCDCP is the Service's preferred action and is discussed above. The Draft EIS outlined alternative measures that were considered by the Service prior to issuance of the permit. The other alternative selected for detailed evaluation was a No Action alternative.

The No Action alternative would benefit individual desert tortoises on private lands in the short-term, however, it has been determined that viable populations of desert tortoises will not persist in the urban areas over the long-term. The No Action alternative would, therefore, not provide the benefits of the long-term recovery efforts for the desert tortoise identified in the CCDCP. The No Action alternative was not identified as the preferred alternative because it would diffuse existing regional conservation planning efforts for the desert tortoise and possibly concentrate activity on individual project needs, not meet the purpose and needs of the Applicants, and not provide the long-term benefits to the desert tortoise. Additionally, the No Action alternative could result in adverse impacts to the social environment within Clark County due to constraints on land-use activities that would impact the desert tortoise.

Dated: June 1, 1995.

**Thomas Dwyer,**

*Deputy Regional Director.*

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#### **Finding of No Significant Impact for Incidental Take Permits for the Construction of Single-Family Residences at the Specific Site Locations Indicated Below in Travis County, Texas**

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared an Environmental Assessment for issuance of a Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit for the incidental take of the federally endangered golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) during the construction and operation of single-family residences in Travis County, Texas.

#### **Proposed Action**

The proposed action is the issuance of permits under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act to authorize the incidental take of the golden-cheeked warbler.

The Applicant (Steven G. Madere) plans to construct a single-family residence at the specific site indicated as Lot 22, Block H, Long Canyon Phase IIA, aka 9000 Bell Mountain Drive, Austin, Travis County, Texas (PRT-799859).

The Applicant (Larry Michael Beasley) plans to construct a single-family residence at the specific site