South, Suite 310, Jacksonville, Florida 32216–0912, (telephone 904/232–2580, fax 904/232–2404).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dawn Zattau at the Jacksonville, Florida, Field Office, or Rick G. Gooch at the Atlanta, Georgia, Regional Office. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The redcockaded woodpecker (RCW) is a territorial, non-migratory cooperative breeding bird species. RCWs live in social units called groups which generally consist of a breeding pair, the current year's offspring, and one or more helpers (normally adult male offspring of the breeding pair from previous years). Groups maintain yearround territories near their roost and nest trees. The RCW is unique among North American woodpeckers in that it is the only woodpecker that excavates its roost and nest cavities in living pine trees. Each group member has its own cavity, although there may be multiple cavities in a single pine tree. The aggregate of cavity trees used by a breeding group is called a cluster. RCWs forage almost exclusively on pine trees and they generally prefer pines greater than 10 inches diameter at breast height. Foraging habitat is contiguous with the cluster. The number of acres required to supply adequate foraging habitat depends on the quantity and quality of the pine stems available.

The RCW is endemic to the pine forests of the Southeastern United States and was once widely distributed across 16 States. The species evolved in a mature, fire-maintained, ecosystem. The RCW has declined primarily due to the conversion of mature pine forests to young pine plantations, agricultural fields, residential and commercial developments, and to hardwood encroachment in existing pine forests due to fire suppression. The species is still widely distributed (presently occurs in 13 southeastern States), but remaining populations are highly fragmented and isolated. Presently, the largest populations occur on federally owned lands such as military installations and national forests. Continued development of the two tracts may result in death of, or harm to, any remaining RCWs through the loss of nesting and foraging habitat. The Service's EA outlines two alternatives in response to this application. The first alternative is a no-action alternative, which would result in the Service's denial of the request for incidental take. The second alternative is to accept the application as sufficient and issue an incidental take permit. Under Alternative 2, the applicants' HCP proposes to offset the anticipated level

of incidental take, by implementing the following mitigation/minimization measures, including providing adequate funding to ensure their success:

1. For Pineda Crossing, temporary restrictions on construction activities at the project site will continue during the proposed period of 3 to 5 years of reproductive monitoring and translocations. This will provide temporary foraging, nesting, and roosting habitat. Construction within RCW habitat will not occur until translocations success is noted at the mitigation site or for 3 years, whichever comes first. If young birds are not available for 3 years, the HCP period will be extended to 5 years.

2. Three new cluster sites will be created at the Hal Scott Preserve in Orange County. Each cluster site will con-sist of three completed cavities and two start holes. New cavities will be caged and inspected for 6 months for sap leakage. Any trees leaking sap will not be opened for use by RCW.

3. Annual monitoring of nesting and roosting activity will be conducted at the project sites. During nesting season, weekly visits to occupied cavity trees will be conducted.

4. At Windover Farms, the single male RCW will be relocated to the newly created clusters at Hal Scott Preserve, along with a young female from Pineda Crossing (if available), or from the Big Econlockhatchee population, of which the RCWs occupying Hal Scott are a part.

5. The young birds from Pineda Crossing will be translocated to the newly created clusters at Hal Scott Preserve. Weekly visits will be conducted to the mitigation site once a week for 1 month after translocation to inspect the cavity and the surrounding area for the presence of these birds. Checks of the cluster sites will also be made four times during the following nesting season to monitor reproductive status and success.

6. Young birds from the surrounding population in the Big Econ River area will be used, if necessary, to augment these created cluster sites during years of no reproduction on the Pineda Crossing site.

7. At the mitigation site, inspections will be conducted in the fall and winter to locate the roost sites.

Dated: December 1, 1995.

Noreen K. Clough,

Regional Director.

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Availability of an Environmental Assessment/Habitat Conservation Plan and Receipt of Application for Incidental Take Permit for Construction and Operation of a Residential and Commercial Development in Wimberely, Hays County, Texas

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Douglas J. Barclay (Applicant) has applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act (Act). The Applicant has been assigned permit number PRT-808691. The requested permit, which is for a period of 30 years, would authorize the incidental take of the endangered golden-cheeked warbler (Dendroica chrysoparia). The proposed take would occur as a result of the construction and operation of 164 acres of residential and commercial development in Wimberely, Hays County, Texas.

The Service has prepared the Environmental Assessment/Habitat Conservation Plan (EA/HCP) for the incidental take applications. A determination of jeopardy to the species or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will not be made before 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Act and National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

**DATES:** Written comments on the application should be received on or before January 8, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the application and EA/HCP may obtain a copy by contacting Joseph E. Johnston or Sybil Vosler, Ecological Services Field Office, 10711 Burnet Road, suite 200, Austin, Texas 78758 (512/490-0063). Documents will be available for public inspection during normal business hours (9 to 4:30) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Austin, Texas. Written data or comments concerning the application(s) and EA/HCPs should be submitted to the Acting Field Supervisor, Ecological Field Office, Austin, Texas (see ADDRESS above). Please refer to permit number PRT-808691 when submitting comments. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph E. Johnston or Sybil Vosler at the

above Austin Ecological Service Field Office.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 9 of the Act prohibits the "taking" of endangered species such as the goldencheeked warbler. However, the Service, under limited circumstances, may issue permits to take endangered wildlife species incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for endangered species are at 50 CFR 17.22. APPLICANT: Douglas J. Barclay plans to construct and operate residential and commercial development on 164 acres in Wimberely, Hays County, Texas. This action will eliminate the habitat for one to two pairs of golden-cheeked warblers.