californica) known to occur on this parcel.

The Service has determined that the Bennett Habitat Conservation Plan (Bennett Plan) qualifies as a low effect plan as defined by the Service's Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook (November 1996). The Service has further determined that approval of the Bennett Plan qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act, as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1). This determination is explained in an Environmental Action Statement which is available for public review.

DATES: Written comments on the permit application, Bennett Plan, and Environmental Action Statement should be received on or before April 16, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to the Field Supervisor, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, 2730 Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad, California 92008. Comments may be sent by facsimile to (760) 431–9624.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Kim Marsden, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above address or call (760) 431–9440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability of Documents

Persons may obtain a copy of the permit application, Bennett Plan, and Environmental Action Statement by calling the Service's Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office at the telephone number above. Documents also will be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at that office (see **ADDRESSES**).

Background

Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act and its implementing regulations prohibit the ''taking'' of threatened or endangered species. However, under limited circumstances the Service may issue permits to take endangered and/or threatened species incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Regulations governing permits for endangered and/or threatened species are promulgated at 50 CFR 17.22 and 17.32.

Under the proposed action, construction activities would directly impact one pair of gnatcatchers by removal of 4.2 acres of foraging habitat on a 5-acre parcel. The parcel is bounded on three sides by development and on the fourth by a road. The parcel has been previously graded and revegetated with a mixture of plants that are native to both coastal and desert areas of southern California and with horticultural ornamentals. The revegetated scrub is similar in stature to coastal sage scrub but is not considered to be coastal sage scrub. The applicant has submitted a habitat conservation plan that describes consideration of alternatives to the action and provisions for minimization and mitigation of impacts including off-site acquisition of 4.2 acres of coastal sage scrub within the preserve area of the City of Chula Vista's Multiple Species Conservation Program. The Bennett Plan also provides measures to avoid direct take of the California gnatcatchers if vegetation clearing would occur within the normal California gnatcatcher breeding season.

Two alternatives to the proposed project action were considered: the ''no project'' alternative and the ''partial-clearing'' alternative. Each of these alternatives was rejected because they would not meet the project purpose and were economically unfeasible.

The Service has determined that the Bennett Plan qualifies as a ''low-effect'' plan as defined by the Service's Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook (November 1996). Low-effect plans are those involving (1) minor or negligible effects on federally listed and candidate species and their habitats, and (2) minor or negligible effects on other environmental values or resources. The Bennett Plan qualifies as a low-effect plan for the following reasons:

1. The effects of the plan are minor or negligible on federally listed, proposed, or candidate species and their habitats. The harassment of one pair of California gnatcatchers by removal of 4.2 acres of their foraging habitat is considered a negligible effect because: (a) The project site has been previously graded and revegetated to an assemblage of plants that does not comprise a natural community; and (b) the removal of this vegetation will not appreciably reduce any food resource, or affect reproduction because there is foraging habitat within 50 meters of the project site in naturally-occurring suitable habitat. In addition, the project will not affect any proposed or candidate species or their habitats.

2. The effects of the project are minor or negligible on other environmental resources. The effects on air quality will not be significant because of the small size of the project site and the limited duration of construction. Impacts to geology and soils are negligible because the site has been previously graded. Impacts to water quality are not anticipated as a result of this project because it is small, surrounded by existing development, not located close to any body of water, and ground disturbing activities will be minimal. No known cultural sites exist on the site, therefore, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated. No changes in land use or the socio-economic environment are expected to occur as a result of implementing the Bennett Plan because the project site is located in an existing housing subdivision surrounded by residential development and a paved road.

3. No significant cumulative effects are expected to occur as a result of project implementation. The site was previously graded and revegetated to an unnatural assemblage of plants. The loss of 4.2 acres of non-coastal sage scrub vegetation on previously graded land will not result in significant cumulative effects to the coastal California gnatcatcher.

In addition, none of the exceptions to categorical exclusions (from 516 DM 2.3, Appendix 2) apply to the Bennett Plan. The Service therefore has determined that approval of the Bennett Plan qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act, as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1). No further National Environmental Policy Act documentation will therefore be prepared.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act. The Service will evaluate the permit application, the Bennett Plan, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act. If it is determined that the requirements are met, a permit will be issued. The final permit decision will be made no sooner than 30 days from the date of this notice.

Dated: March 11, 1998.

Thomas Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 98–6807 Filed 3–16–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Klamath Fishery Management Council Meeting

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5

U.S.C. App. I), this notice announces a meeting of the Klamath Fishery Management Council, established under the authority of the Klamath River Basin Fishery Resources Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 460ss *et seq.*). The Klamath Fishery Management Council makes recommendations to agencies that regulate harvest of anadromous fish in the Klamath River Basin. The objective of this meeting is to develop management options for the 1998 Klamath fall chinook salmon season, to be presented to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: The Klamath Fishery Management Council will meet from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 5.

PLACE: The meeting will be held at the Doubletree Hotel Jantzen Beach, 909 N. Hayden Island Drive, Portland, Oregon.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dr. Ronald A. Iverson, Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1006 (1215 South Main), Yreka, California 96097–1006, telephone (530) 842–5763.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: For background information on the Klamath Council, please refer to the notice of their initial meeting that appeared in the **Federal Register** on July 8, 1987 (52 FR 25639).

Dated: March 10, 1998.

Don Weathers,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 98–6812 Filed 3–16–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Gas Pipeline Right-of-Way Permit Application Crossing a Stevens County, Minnesota Waterfowl Production Area, for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Servic, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This Notice advises the public that Alliance Pipeline of Mankato, Minnesota has applied for the installation of a 36-inch diameter natural gas pipeline right-of-way across U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tract 94, Stevens County, Minnesota Waterfowl Production Area.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before April 16, 1998 to receive consideration by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to: Regional Director; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building; 1 Federal Drive; Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111–4056; Attention: Ms. Karen Siegfried, Realty Specialist, Division of Realty.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Siegfried, Realty Specialist, at the above Fort Snelling Regional Office address (612/713–5410).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this Notice is to inform the public that the Service will be proceeding with the processing of this application, the compatibility determination and the approval processing which includes the preparation of the terms and conditions of the permit. The proposed natural gas pipeline crossing the Stevens County, Minnesota waterfowl production area is part of a larger project to deliver western Canadian natural gas to several existing pipelines in the Joliet, Illinois region. The route of the pipeline covers 50 feet in width of parcel 5 of the record plat, ''Stevens County Wildlife Area No. 19'' in the S½SW¼SW¼ of Section 17, Township 125 North, Range 43 West, Fifth Principal Meridian. See attached maps for location of proposed pipeline.

Right-of-way applications for pipelines are to be filed in accordance with Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (30 U.S.C.), as amended by the Act of November 16, 1973 (37 Stat. 576, Pub. L. 93–153).

Dated: January 23, 1998.

Marvin E. Moriarty,

Regional Director, Region 3, Ft. Snelling, MN.

BILLING CODE 4310–55–M