

Consequently, pursuant to CERCLA Section 105, and 40 CFR 300.425(e), the Site is hereby deleted from the NPL.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 3, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Caroline A. Ziegler, Remedial Project Manager, (214) 665-2178, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, Mail Code: 6SF-LP, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733.

Information on the Site is available at the local information repository located at: Vermilion Parish Public Library, 200 N. Magdalen Square, Abbeville, Louisiana 70511, (318) 893-2674.

Requests for comprehensive copies of documents should be directed formally to the Regional Superfund Management Branch, c/o Steve Wyman, (214) 665-2792, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, Mail Code: 6SF-PO, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The site to be deleted from the NPL is the PAB Oil and Chemical Services, Inc. Superfund Site located near Abbeville in Vermilion Parish, Louisiana. A Notice of Intent to Delete for the Site was published August 31, 1999. The closing date for comments on the Notice of Intent to Delete was September 30, 1999. EPA received no comments and therefore no Responsiveness Summary was prepared.

The EPA identifies sites which present a significant risk to public health, welfare, or the environment and maintains the NPL as the list of those sites. Deletion of a site from the NPL does not affect responsible party liability or impede EPA efforts to recover costs associated with response efforts. Furthermore, § 300.425(e)(3) of the NCP, 40 CFR 300.425(e)(3), states that Fund-financed actions may be taken at sites deleted from the NPL in the unlikely event that conditions at the site warrant such action.

Lists of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 300

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Chemicals, Hazardous substances, Hazardous waste, Intergovernmental relations, Penalties, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Superfund, Water pollution control, Water supply.

Dated: December 21, 1999.

Lynda F. Carroll,

Acting Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA Region 6.

For reasons set out in the preamble, 40 CFR part 300 is amended as follows:

PART 300—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for part 300 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 33 U.S.C. 1321(c)(2); 42 U.S.C. 9601-9657; E.O. 12777, 56 FR 54757, 3 CFR, 1991 Comp., p.351; E.O. 12580, 52 R 2923, 3 CFR, 1987 Comp., p.193.

Appendix B—[Amended]

2. Table 1 of Appendix B to Part 300 is amended by removing the site for PAB Oil & Chemical Service, Inc., Abbeville, Louisiana.

[FR Doc. 99-33952 Filed 12-30-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

RIN 1018-AF59

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule To List the Sierra Nevada Distinct Population Segment of the California Bighorn Sheep as Endangered

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), determine endangered status pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) for the Sierra Nevada distinct population segment of California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis californiana*). This species occupies the Sierra Nevada of California, where it is known from five disjunct subpopulations along the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada, and thought to total no more than 125 animals. All five subpopulations are estimated to be very small and are threatened by mountain lion (*Felis concolor*) predation, disease, naturally occurring environmental events, and genetic problems associated with small population size. We emergency listed this population segment of California bighorn sheep on April 20, 1999. The emergency listing was effective for 240 days. Immediately upon publication, this action continues the protection provided by the temporary emergency listing.

DATES: This final rule is effective on January 3, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carl Benz, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, 2493 Portola Rd. Suite B, Ventura, California 93003, (telephone 805/644-1766; facsimile 805/644-3958).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) is a large mammal (family Bovidae) originally described by Shaw in 1804 (Wilson and Reeder 1993). Several subspecies of bighorn sheep have been recognized on the basis of geography and differences in skull measurements (Cowan 1940; Buechner 1960). These subspecies of bighorn sheep, as described in these early works, include *O. c. cremonobates* (Peninsular bighorn sheep), *O. c. nelsoni* (Nelson bighorn sheep), *O. c. mexicana* (Mexican bighorn sheep), *O. c. weemsi* (Weems bighorn sheep), *O. c. californiana* (California bighorn sheep), and *O. c. canadensis* (Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep). However, recent genetic studies question the validity of some of these subspecies and suggest a need to re-evaluate overall bighorn sheep taxonomy. For example, Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep appear to be more closely related to desert bighorn sheep than the *O. c. californiana* found in British Columbia (Ramey 1991, 1993). Regardless, the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep meets our criteria for consideration as a distinct vertebrate population segment (as discussed below) and is treated as such in this final rule.

The historical range of the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis californiana*) includes the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, and, for at least one subpopulation, a portion of the western slope, from Sonora Pass in Mono County south to Walker Pass in Kern County, a total distance of about 346 kilometers (km) (215 miles (mi)) (Jones 1950; Wehauser 1979, 1980). By the turn of the century, about 10 out of 20 subpopulations survived. The number dropped to five subpopulations at mid-century, and down to two subpopulations in the 1970s, near Mount Baxter and Mount Williamson in Inyo County (Wehauser 1979). Currently, five subpopulations of Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep occur, respectively, at Lee Vining Canyon, Wheeler Crest, Mount Baxter, Mount Williamson, and Mount Langley in Mono and Inyo Counties, three of which have been reintroduced using sheep obtained from the Mount Baxter subpopulation from 1979 to 1986 (Wehauser *et al.* 1987).

The Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep is similar in appearance to other desert associated bighorn sheep. The species' pelage shows a great deal of color variation, ranging from almost white to fairly dark brown, with a white rump. Males and females have permanent horns; the horns are massive and coiled