

## About the Document:

**Title:** Development of a Recovery Plan for Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*)

**Type of Review:** Influential

## Timeline of the Peer review:

**Draft document disseminated:** April 11, 2016

**Peer review initiated:** May 19, 2016

**Peer review to be completed by:** June 10, 2015

**Final determination regarding proposed rule expected:** October 2016

## About the Peer Review Process:

In accordance with our July 1, 1994 peer review policy (59 FR 34270) and the Office of Management and Budget's December 16, 2004 Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to subject this proposal to peer review. The Service will nominate potential peer reviewers. This review will occur concurrently with the public comment period for the proposed action.

We will consider the following criteria for any potential nomination:

- **Expertise:** The reviewer should have knowledge of or experience with Preble's meadow jumping mouse or similar species biology.
- **Independence:** The reviewer should not be employed by the Service, or any State fish and game agency in Wyoming or Colorado. academic, consulting or government scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service if the government supports their work.
- **Objectivity:** The reviewer should be recognized by his or her peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. In addition, the reviewer should be comfortable sharing his or her knowledge and perspectives and openly identifying his or her knowledge gaps.
- **Conflict of Interest:** The reviewer should not have any financial or other interest that conflicts or that could impair his or her objectivity or create an unfair competitive

advantage. If an otherwise qualified reviewer has an unavoidable conflict of interest, the Service may publicly disclose the conflict.

While expertise is the primary consideration, we will select peer reviewers (considering, but not limited to, these nominations) that add to a diversity of scientific perspectives relevant to the proposed Recovery Plan for Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse in Colorado and Wyoming. Peer reviewer responses will be requested by the close of the comment period. We will not be providing financial compensation to peer reviewers. We will solicit reviews from at least three qualified experts.

We will provide each peer reviewer with information explaining their role and instructions for fulfilling that role, the proposed rule, and a list of citations as necessary. The purpose of seeking independent peer review is to ensure use of the best scientific and commercial information available and to ensure and to maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of the information upon which the proposed action is based, as well as to ensure that reviews by recognized experts are incorporated into the rulemaking process. Peer reviewers will be advised to not provide advice on policy. Rather, they should focus their review on identifying and characterizing scientific soundness and interpretations of the draft plan. Peer reviewers will be asked to consider the following questions and provide any other relevant comments, critiques, or thoughts. Specific areas in need of peer review input include the following:

- 1) Is our description and analysis of the biology, habitat, population trends, historic, and current distribution of the species accurate?
- 2) Does our document provide accurate and adequate review and analysis of the factors affecting the species?
- 3) Are our assumptions and definitions of suitable habitat logical and adequate?
- 4) Are there any significant oversights, omissions, or inconsistencies in our recovery plan, including our recovery criteria?
- 5) Are our recovery actions logical and supported by the evidence we provide?
- 6) Did we include all necessary and pertinent literature to support our assumptions and conclusions?

Peer reviewers will provide individual, written responses to the Service. Peer reviewers will be advised that their reviews, including their names and affiliations, will (1) be included in the administrative record of our final determination regarding this proposal (i.e., a final rule or a withdrawal), and (2) be available to the public upon request once all reviews are completed. We will summarize and respond to the issues raised by the peer reviewers in the record supporting our final rulemaking determination. Because this peer review process is running concurrently with public review of the proposed action, peer reviewers will not be provided public comments (although comments may be viewed through <http://www.regulations.gov>). A final determination regarding the proposed action is expected October 2016.

### **About Public Participation**

The peer review process is initiated. We will accept comments on the peer review plan through the normal comment process associated with the proposed recovery plan. Public comments on the proposed plan and associated documents are scheduled to be accepted until June 10, 2016.

You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for

submitting comments.

- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R6-ES-2013-0081; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

We will not accept e-mail and faxes. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us.

### **Contact**

For more information, contact Lynn Gemlo, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office, at 307-772-2374 x228.