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Service reopens comment on designated Canada lynx habitat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Thursday reopened the public comment period for the proposal to designate approximately 18,031 square miles as critical habitat for the federally threatened Canada lynx.

Proposed areas include the northern Rocky Mountains (northwestern Montana and a small portion of northern Idaho), portions of northern Maine, northeastern Minnesota and an area of the northern Cascades in north-central Washington. The notice also provides information -specifically more accurate maps and estimates of area sizes - clarifying the critical habitat proposal that was published in the Federal Register on Nov. 9, 2005.

All proposed areas have recent verified records of lynx occurrence and reproduction and thus are considered occupied. The Montana area proposed includes Flathead, Glacier, Granite, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln, Missoula, Pondera, Powell and Teton counties in Montana.

The FWS is seeking public comments and information on all aspects of the proposal, including data on economic and other potential impacts. Comments and information will be accepted until April 30 and should be sent to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Ecological Services Office 585 Shepard Way, Helena, MT 59601 or e-mailed to fw6_lynx@fws.gov. The Canada lynx was listed in 2000 as a threatened species throughout its range in the contiguous United States. The lynx currently lives in forest habitat all across North America. A copy of the proposed rule and other information is available at <http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/species/mammals/lynx> or by calling the FWS Montana Field Office at (406) 449-5225.