

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



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NEWS RELEASE

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Hanford Reach National Monument Draft Management Plan Released

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) today released the *Draft Hanford Reach National Monument Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS)*.

Within the National Wildlife Refuge System, a CCP is the overall land management plan for a national wildlife refuge, in this case the Hanford Reach National Monument (Monument). The final CCP will establish management direction for the Monument for the next 15 years.

“We’re proud of our commitment to an open and transparent process which involved our local Federal Advisory Committee, eleven cooperating agencies, tribal governments, and the public,” said Greg Hughes, Project Leader for the Monument. “Their help was instrumental in producing a draft CCP/EIS that provides a good range of potential management alternatives that seek to balance public use and access with resource protection for the Monument. I’m very interested in hearing what people think about the draft plan.”

The FWS is holding four public open houses. At these open houses, FWS staff will be available to answer specific questions about the CCP/EIS. The times and locations for the open houses are below; directions are available on the FWS web site.

- Tuesday, January 30, 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, in the Mattawa Elementary School gym, 400 North Boundary Road.
- Wednesday, January 31, 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at the Sunnyside Community Center, 1521 South 1st Street.
- Monday, February 5, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, at the Hampton Inn in Richland, 486 Bradley Boulevard.

- Thursday, February 8, 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at the Red Lion Hotel in Pasco, 2525 North 20th Avenue.

The draft CCP/EIS describes and analyzes six alternatives for the Monument.

Alternative A: No Action–Continuation of Existing Management: Alternative A assumes no change from existing management and thus provides a baseline for evaluating impacts in the other alternatives. There would be no major changes in habitat management or public use programs.

Alternative B: Alternative B would provide a greater emphasis on the conservation, protection and monitoring of natural and cultural resources. Public use would be secondary to habitat protection; restoration would be a priority.

Alternative C: Alternative C concentrates on protecting and conserving natural and cultural resources by creating extensive areas that are free of development. Restoration is still a top priority, but large areas are open to public use.

Alternative D: Alternative D emphasizes increasing public access and recreational opportunities. Restoration is de-emphasized, although protection of sensitive natural and cultural resources is continued.

Alternative E: Alternative E combines the public use emphasis of Alternative D with the open space concept of Alternative C. Sensitive natural and cultural resources are still protected.

Alternative F: Alternative F uses the restoration and protection emphasis of Alternative B as a base, although it allows public use in more areas. Protection of natural and cultural resources is accomplished through a user permit system.

The FWS has selected Alternative E as its draft Preferred Alternative.

To maximize public involvement, the FWS is providing an extended comment period on the draft CCP. Comments should be postmarked by February 23, 2007, and can be submitted in several different ways:

- 1) Mail comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Draft CCP Comments, 3250 Port of Benton Boulevard, Richland, Washington 99354 (preferred method).
- 2) Email comments to hanfordreach@fws.gov—be sure to include “Draft CCP Comments” in the subject line.
- 3) Visit hanfordreach.fws.gov/comments.html to submit comments online. The Monument web site (hanfordreach.fws.gov) is also a good place to check for updates, download additional documents, check other background information, etc.
- 4) If time is running short, comments can be faxed to (509) 375-0196, or dropped off during office hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm).

The FWS is asking the public to include a name and address on all comments submitted, regardless of format, to ensure receiving a copy of the final CCP/EIS.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The FWS manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges—including two national monuments—thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid Program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.