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News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 5, 2007 CONTACT: Steve Miller (256) 848-7085 ext. 3

Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge Sport Hunting Plan and Environmental Assessment is Available for Review and Comment

Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge in Calhoun County, AL has developed a Draft Sport Hunting Plan that would allow hunting of migratory, upland and big game species on the refuge. An Environmental Assessment of the impacts of the proposed and other alternative is also available for public comment. Copies of the Draft Sport Hunting Plan and Environmental Assessment are available for downloading at the Mountain Longleaf NWR website <http://southeast.fws.gov/mountainlongleaf> or by contacting the Refuge Manager at the above-listed phone number. The comment period for the Hunting Plan will begin on March 5th and all comments must be received by April 5th in order to be addressed in the final document. Comments will be accepted via fax, email or regular mail.

In response to a 2003 lawsuit filed by the Fund for Animals, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will amend or rewrite environmental assessments that describe hunting programs at twenty-three national wildlife refuges located in the Southeast Region. The new environmental assessments will address the cumulative impacts of hunting at all refuges which were named in or otherwise affected by the lawsuit. These documents address the hunting programs at Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama.

The Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 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 that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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NOTE: This news release and others can be viewed on either the Service's Southeast Regional home page on the Internet at <http://southeast.fws.gov/news> or the National home page at: <http://news.fws.gov/>. You can also sign up to receive them via e-mail at these sites.