

# Summary of Public Comments Received on Draft Map for Coastal Barrier Resources System Units RI-04P, RI-05P, RI-06 and RI-07 and Fish and Wildlife Service Responses and Recommendation

## I. Overview

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) prepared a draft revised map dated September 30, 2009, for four Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) units in Newport County, Rhode Island - Sachuest Point Unit RI-04P, Easton Beach Unit RI-05P, Almy Pond Unit RI-06 and Hazards Beach Unit RI-07. The revised map removes approximately 22 acres from the CBRS and adds approximately 67 acres to the CBRS. The Service provided a 45-day public comment period for this draft map from March 8 through April 23, 2012.

The Service announced the availability of the draft map and the opportunity to provide comments in a notice published in the *Federal Register* on March 8, 2012 (77 FR 14032). The Service sent letters dated March 29, 2012, to 60 stakeholders including members of Congress; Federal, state, and local officials; and non-governmental organizations. The Service also published a public notice in a local paper, *Newport Daily News*, on March 21 and April 4, 2012. The draft map, *Federal Register* notice, and summaries of the proposed boundary changes for each of the four units were posted to the Service's website during the public comment period.

The draft map for Rhode Island makes progress towards fulfilling a mandate in the Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-226) to prepare draft revised maps for all CBRS areas, propose additions

to the CBRS, and solicit public comments on the draft revised maps. The draft map proposes the removal of land from the CBRS, including private properties that were inappropriately included within the CBRS, and also proposes the addition of undeveloped land and associated aquatic habitat that meet the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) criteria for inclusion within the CBRS.

The Service received letters and/or electronic-mail correspondence from the following 11 entities:

- National Park Service (no comment on proposed changes)
- United States Department of Defense (no comment on proposed changes)
- United States Department of Agriculture (supports all proposed changes)
- Natural Resources Defense Council (supports all proposed changes)
- Florida Wildlife Federation (supports all proposed changes)
- Sea Turtle Conservancy (supports all proposed changes)
- 1000 Friends of Florida (supports all proposed changes)
- Treasure Coast Environmental Defense Fund (supports all proposed changes)

- Gulf Restoration Network (supports all proposed changes)
- National Wildlife Federation (supports all proposed changes)
- Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition (supports all proposed changes)

The Service received no comments opposing the proposed changes to Units RI-04P, RI-05P, RI-06 and RI-07. The environmental groups supported the proposed additions to the CBRS and stated that expanding the CBRS is in the best interest of the American taxpayer, the coastal environment, and the safety of the public.

Copies of the comments submitted to the Service concerning the draft map are available to the public upon request. Requests for copies of the public comments should be submitted to the Service's headquarters office or via email to [CBRA@fws.gov](mailto:CBRA@fws.gov).

## II. Summary of Public Comments

The comments received during the public comment period and the Service's responses to these comments are summarized below.

### Expansion of the CBRS along the Rhode Island Coast Makes Sense

*Comments:* Eight environmental groups commented that expanding the CBRS along Rhode Island's coast makes good fiscal, public safety and environmental sense. The groups supported the proposed changes

and additions for three reasons: (1) the proposed changes are based on sound research by the Service; (2) the proposed changes are consistent with the CBRA's mandate that the Service modernize all CBRS maps and develop recommendations for the expansion of the CBRS; and (3) the process used to propose changes to the CBRS complies with public review and comment requirements of the CBRA.

*Service Response:* The Service agrees that expanding the CBRS makes good fiscal, public safety, and environmental sense. The expansions proposed by the Service's final recommended map make progress towards achieving CBRA's goals of minimizing the wasteful expenditure of taxpayer dollars, protecting human life and property, and protecting natural resources.

### **III. Service Recommendation for Final Recommended Map**

The Service has reviewed all comments received on the draft map dated September 30, 2009, and recommends no changes to the map based on the comments that were received, except to replace the 2008 base map imagery with 2011 imagery. The Service's final recommended map is dated September 16, 2013.

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