

## REGION 4

### INTRA-SERVICE SECTION 7 BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION FORM

[Note: This form provides the outline of information needed for intra-Service consultation. If additional space is needed, attach additional sheets, or set up this form to accommodate your responses.]

**Originating Person:** Dennis Widner, Central Arkansas Refuges

**Telephone Number:** (870) 347-2614 **E-Mail:** Dennis\_Widner@fws.gov

**Date:** June 30, 2005

**PROJECT NAME (Grant Title/Number):** The issuance of Special Use Permits for guided bird watching, wildlife observation and nature photography on the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge.

**I. Service Program:**

**Ecological Services**

**Federal Aid**

**Clean Vessel Act**

**Coastal Wetlands**

**Endangered Species Section 6**

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife**

**Sport Fish Restoration**

**Wildlife Restoration**

**Fisheries**

**Refuges/Wildlife**

**II. State/Agency:**

Arkansas/ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**III. Station Name:**

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge

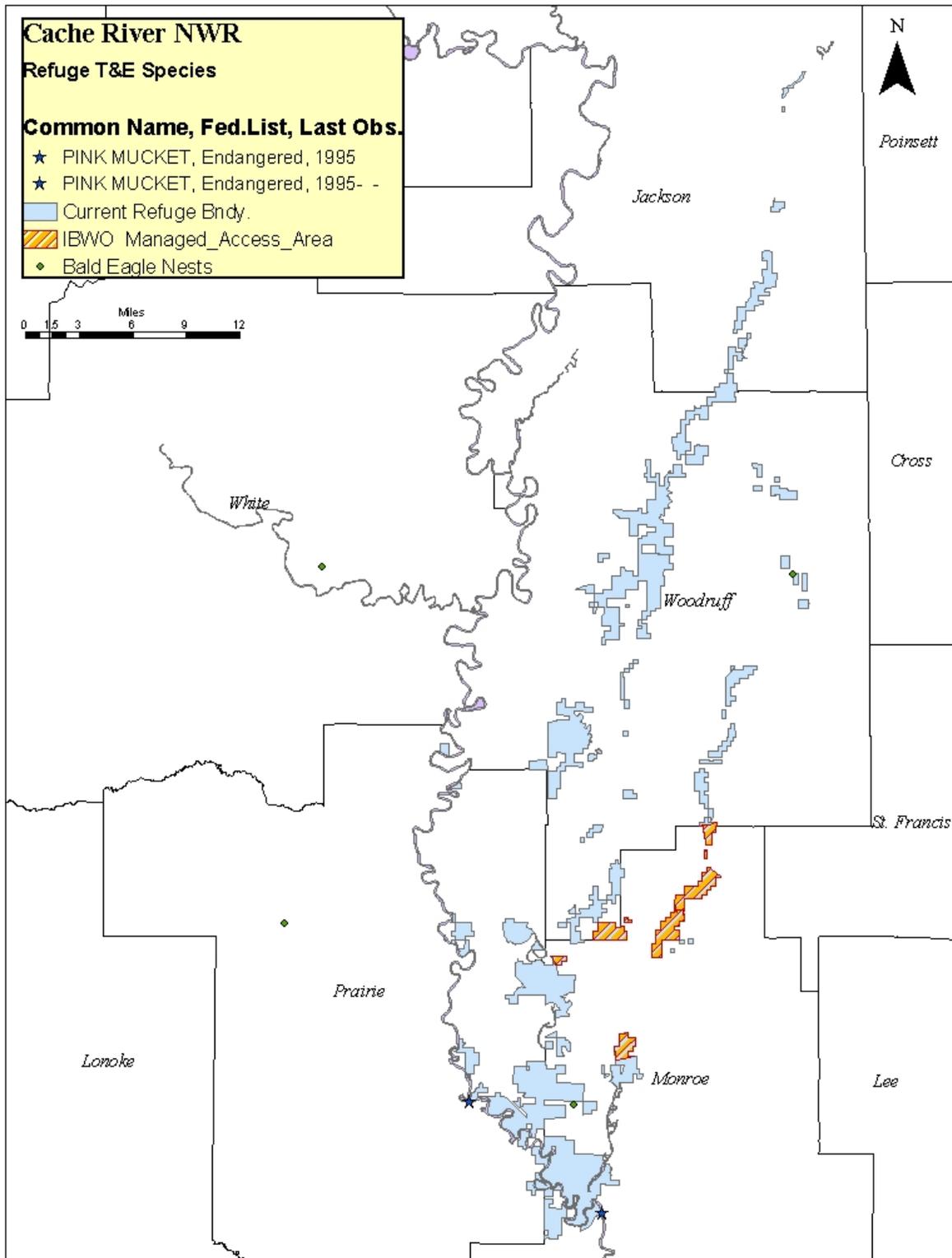
**IV. Description of Proposed Action (attach additional pages as needed):**

To allow guided bird watching, wildlife observation and photography tours by hiking, walking, vehicle, bus, boat, canoe and kayak tours in the unrestricted public access areas of Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, other acts and laws. The following compatible activities: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, interpretation, and education are allowed on the refuge and this proposed commercial guiding program will be allowed to provide access for the specified public use activities to make them available to a broader segment of the public.

Waterfowl sanctuaries and the IBW Managed Access Area will not be open to guided tours. Only refuge lands with unrestricted access by the public for permitted refuge public use activities will be open for guided tours. Waterfowl sanctuaries and the IBW Managed Access Area are shown on hunt and public use brochures and other maps available at the refuge.

**V. Pertinent Species and Habitat:**

**A. Include species/habitat occurrence map:**



B. Complete the following table:

SPECIES/CRITICAL HABITAT	STATUS <sup>1</sup>
Ivory-billed Woodpecker ( <i>Campephilus principalis</i> )	E = Endangered
Bald Eagle ( <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> )	T = Threatened
Pink Mucket ( <i>Lampsilis abrupta</i> )	E = Endangered

<sup>1</sup>STATUS: E=endangered, T=threatened, PE=proposed endangered, PT=proposed threatened, CH=critical habitat, PCH=proposed critical habitat, C=candidate species

**VI. Location (attach map):**

**A. Ecoregion Number and Name:**

Ecosystem Area I, Ecosystem 27: Mississippi Alluvial Valley

**B. County and State:**

Jackson, Woodruff, Prairie, Monroe Counties

**C. Section, township, and range (or latitude and longitude):**

Various holdings in T1N R3W, T1N R4W, T2N R3W, T2N R4W, T3N R2W, T3N R3W, T3N R4W, T4N R2W, T4N R3W, T4N R4W, T5N R2W, T5N R3W, T5N R4W, T6N R2W, T6N R3W, T7N R1W, T7N R2W, T7N R3W, T8N R1W, T8N R2W, T8N R3W, T9N R1W, T9N R2W, T10N R1W, and T11N R1W, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian.

**D. Distance (miles) and direction to nearest town:**

Large holdings of Cache River NWR are 1 mile northwest of Clarendon, 2 miles southeast of Biscoe, 3 miles north of Brasfield, 7 miles southwest of Brinkley, 1 mile east of Dixie, and 4 miles southwest of McCrory, Arkansas.

**E. Species/habitat occurrence:**

Ivory-billed Woodpecker: “Almost all of the Ivory-bill records in the Mississippi Delta occur in the first bottoms outside of the backwater and swamp areas.” (The Ivory-billed Woodpecker, James Tanner, 1942, pg. 15) Tanner (1942, pg. 16) stated that the Ivory-bills tended to utilize sweet gum-oak forests dominated by sweet gum, Nuttall oak and green ash tree species. Tanner (1942, pg. 16) also mentioned that the Ivory-bills were found in Cypress-tupelo swamps in the Mississippi Delta region.

Bald eagle – Two bald eagle nest sites occur on the refuge, near open bodies of water, see map for location. Nest trees are large, flat-topped Bald Cypress. During the winter, eagles are

commonly sighted on the refuges, usually over open areas or bodies of water, searching for prey.

Pink Mucket – The Pink Mucket pearly mussel inhabits the White River and its major tributaries; one specimen was tentatively identified in the Cache River.

**II. Determination of Effects:**

**A. Explanation of effects of the action on species and critical habitats in item V.  
B (attach additional pages as needed):**

SPECIES/ CRITICAL HABITAT	IMPACTS TO SPECIES/CRITICAL HABITAT
Ivory-billed Woodpecker	The utilization of the habitat described above has only been documented in contiguous acres within the delineated managed access area. Approximately a third of the rest of the refuge is restoration acreage (15,000 acres) and open areas (4500 acres), unsuitable habitat for the Ivory-bill. Many of the remaining forested tracts are small, isolated and fragmented. Ivory-bill use of these tracts is not anticipated. Larger forested tracts were “highgraded” by the private forest products companies prior to selling to the refuge, and currently are not considered prime Ivory-bill habitat. Therefore public utilization of the refuge with the exception of the managed access area will continue.
Bald Eagle	Only one nest resides on the refuge and the other is near the refuge boundary on private property. Both of these nest locations are located in remote portions of the refuge with difficult access. Both of these nesting sites have withstood years of farming activity nearby. Public activity will be monitored and managed appropriately.
Pink Mucket	Limited occurrence in White River and possibly in Cache River. No actions proposed would affect aquatic habitat.

**B. Explanation of actions to be implemented to reduce adverse effects:**

SPECIES/ CRITICAL HABITAT	ACTIONS TO MITIGATE/MINIMIZE IMPACTS
Ivory-billed Woodpecker	<p>The refuge has established a “managed access area” which is currently considered the area of utilization by this species. Access to this area is limited to researchers with the appropriate refuge and endangered species permits. The refuge has placed signs around the boundaries of the “managed access area” to inform the public. The refuge has printed a map for the public that illustrates the boundaries of the “managed access area”. Additionally, although presently in the planning stage the AG&amp;FC and FWS plans to launch a public awareness and educational initiative prior to hunting season. Tentative plans currently include woodpecker and duck identification seminars/classes, brochures and identification materials.</p>
Bald Eagle	<p>Guides and visitors will not be allowed access closer than 100 meters to the eagle nesting sites.</p>
Pink Mucket	<p>Areas where Pink Mucket have been documented in the Cache River NWR will not be affected by guides or visitors.</p>

**VIII. Effect Determination and Response Requested:**

SPECIES/ CRITICAL HABITAT	DETERMINATION <sup>1</sup>			RESPONSE <sup>1</sup> REQUESTED
	NE	NA	AA	
Ivory-billed Woodpecker	X			
Bald Eagle	X			
Pink Mucket	X			

<sup>1</sup>DETERMINATION/RESPONSE REQUESTED:

NE = no effect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action will not directly, indirectly, or cumulatively impact, either positively or negatively, any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat. Response Requested is optional but a "Concurrence" is recommended for a complete Administrative Record.

NA = not likely to adversely affect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action is not likely to adversely impact any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat or there may be beneficial effects to these resources. Response Requested is a "Concurrence".

AA = likely to adversely affect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action is likely to adversely impact any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat. Response Requested for listed species is "Formal Consultation". Response Requested for proposed or candidate species is "Conference".

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature (originating station)

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
title

**IX. Reviewing Ecological Services Office Evaluation:**

**A. Concurrence** \_\_\_\_\_ **Non-concurrence** \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Formal consultation required** \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Conference required** \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Informal conference required** \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Remarks (attach additional pages as needed):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
title

\_\_\_\_\_  
office