

## Appendix D

### Finding of No Significant Impact The Jersey Coast Refuges (Edwin B. Forsythe and Cape May National Wildlife Refuges, including the Two Mile Beach Unit) Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

Three management alternatives for the Jersey Coast Refuges were presented and evaluated as to their effectiveness in achieving Refuge purposes and their impact on the human environment in the Environmental Assessment. Based on this analysis, I have selected Alternative B (the Service's Proposed Action) to be enacted on the Refuges.

One of the actions the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will take under this Alternative is to close all lands above mean high tide in the Holgate Unit of the Brigantine Wilderness Area to motor vehicles year-round in compliance with the Wilderness Act. The year-round closure of the Holgate Unit will be fully implemented October 1, 2002.

The following modifications will be made to Alternative B:

1. Given the fact that the mean high tide line is difficult to identify on the ground, we will use the berm crest and/or wet sand/dry sand lines, which are more readily identifiable, as proxies on the beach at the Holgate Unit for the Wilderness boundary. All motorized vehicles will need to stay below the berm crest and wet sand/dry sand lines while they are on the Holgate Unit to avoid violating the Brigantine Wilderness Area. Educational efforts to familiarize anglers and refuge visitors with this new policy will be implemented beginning October 1, 2002.
2. We will investigate the possibility of establishing an experimental shuttle service which would take anglers and other refuge visitors from a convenient location to the tip of the Holgate Unit from September through mid-November.
3. The land protection efforts for both Refuges will be implemented in accordance with the Forsythe and Cape May Refuge Land Protection Plans (LPPs) which have been reviewed and commented on by the affected land owners, and have been approved in compliance with Service policy and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

For Forsythe Refuge, the Revised Draft CCP/EA identified Land Protection Focus Areas encompassing approximately 17,000 acre, of which the Service proposed to acquire 11,500 acres. In preparing the Refuge LPP we removed all lands that were either being developed or had already been developed, reducing our acquisition target to 3,348 acres.

For Cape May Refuge, the Revised Draft CCP/EA identified Land Protection Focus Areas encompassing approximately 4,900 acre, of which the Service proposed to acquire 3,600 acres. In preparing the Refuge LPP we reevaluated our acquisition target within the Focus Areas and decreased it to 3,591 acres. This was done to insure that we provided long-term protection to the numerous species of shorebirds, neotropical migratory landbirds, waterfowl, long-legged waders, woodcock, raptors, finfish, shellfish, and threatened and endangered species that use Cape May Peninsula.

These new land protection acreage figures are reflected in the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan for each Refuge. Accordingly, 3,348 acres have been added to the approved boundary of Forsythe Refuge and 3,591 acres have been added to the approved boundary of Cape May Refuge.

Alternative B was selected because it best achieves Refuge purposes, vision and goals; helps fulfill the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; maintains and, where appropriate, restores the ecological integrity of both Refuges and the Refuge System; addresses the significant issues and mandates; and is consistent with the principles of sound fish and wildlife management.

I find that the implementation of Alternative B will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment in accordance with Section 102 (2) (c) of NEPA and conclude that an environmental impact statement is not required.

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Regional Director, Region 5  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Hadley, Massachusetts

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Date