



Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-Tailed Deer Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge

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Planning Documents for Two Southwest Washington Refuges Available for Review

Public comments accepted until April 12, 2010

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is asking the public to comment on a draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge and the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer. The document includes an analysis of proposed management alternatives for both refuges.

The draft plan was developed to provide scientifically grounded guidance for improving the refuges' habitats for the long-term conservation of migratory birds and native plants and animals. It identifies actions for protecting and sustaining the refuges' natural resources, including habitat, migratory bird populations and threatened, endangered or rare species. Priority public use programs – hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography and environmental education and interpretation – also are evaluated.

Two draft alternatives were evaluated for the Lewis and Clark NWR and three were evaluated for the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge.

The preferred alternative for the Lewis and Clark NWR calls for enhancing resource protection and providing improved opportunities for public uses such as wildlife viewing and photography. It also calls for a wilderness study of refuge islands.

Among the actions identified in the preferred alternative for the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge are establishing an experimental up-river population of Columbian white-tailed deer to increase the overall population, developing two new trails, closing a small section of Steamboat Slough to waterfowl hunting for safety reasons and opening Crims and Price islands to waterfowl hunting.

The draft plan is available at the following websites: <http://www.fws.gov/lc>; <http://www.fws.gov/jbh>; and <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning>. It is also at Blanch Bradley Library, Astoria Public Library, Clatskanie Library District, Ilwaco Timberline Regional Library, Longview Public Library and Fort Vancouver Regional Library.

Comments on the draft plan should be mailed, faxed or e-mailed by April 12, 2010, to: Charlie Stenvall, Project Leader, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 3888 SR 101, Ilwaco, WA 98624; fax number (360) 484-3109; or e-mail FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov. Public comments will be addressed in the final Comprehensive Conservation Plan/EIS, scheduled to be completed in December 2010.

The Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer was established in 1972 to protect and manage the endangered Columbian white-tailed deer. The refuge contains over 6,000 acres of pastures, forested tidal swamps, brushy woodlots, marshes and sloughs along the Columbia River in both Washington and Oregon. The refuge's habitat also benefits a large variety of wintering birds, a small herd of Roosevelt elk, river otter, various reptiles and amphibians including painted turtles and red-legged frogs, and several pairs of nesting bald eagles and ospreys.

The Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge includes approximately 20 islands stretching over 27 miles of the Columbia River, from the mouth upstream to close to Skamakowa, Washington. Established in 1972 to preserve the vital fish and wildlife habitat of the Columbia River estuary, the refuge includes tidal sand flats, marshes, forested swamps and upland pasture. This combination supports large numbers of waterfowl, gulls, terns, wading birds, shorebirds, and a surprising variety of raptors and songbirds. The Lewis and Clark islands are only accessible by boat.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.