

News Release



Pacific Region

Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex

715 Holgerson Road

Sequim WA 98382

Phone : 360-457-8451; Fax : 360-457-9778

www.fws.gov/washingtonmaritime/dungeness/

Date: January 3, 2012

12-004

Contact: Kevin Ryan, Project Leader

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Schedules Additional Public Open Houses Regarding the Future Management of Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge

Public comments are requested by February 18, 2012

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking public comments on the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) preliminary draft alternatives. The CCP will guide refuge management during the next 15 years. Comments on the preliminary draft alternatives will be considered as the Service develops the draft CCP/Environmental Assessment (EA).

During the CCP planning process, many elements are considered, including wildlife and habitat protection and management, and public use opportunities. The preliminary draft alternatives were designed to achieve the purposes for which the refuge was established, the National Wildlife Refuge System mission, and to meet policy requirements while addressing issues and ideas raised this past fall during the public scoping process. The Service is considering active management of habitats, increased inventory and monitoring, enhancement of visitor experiences through increased outreach, interpretation and environmental education, and changes to boat landings at the New Dungeness Light Station, jogging, and horseback riding.

To provide information and answer questions about the preliminary draft alternatives and CCP process, the Service is hosting public open house meetings at the Dungeness Schoolhouse (2781 Towne Road, Sequim) on February 2nd from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The objectives for each meeting are to present preliminary draft versions of three management alternatives and to discuss your ideas or concerns.

We need your input to complete our analysis and proceed with the development of our 15-year comprehensive conservation plan. You can share your ideas by attending one of the public meetings and/or by submitting written comments. Comments on the alternatives should be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed by February 18, 2012, to Kevin Ryan, Project Leader, Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 715 Holgerson Road, Sequim, WA 98362; fax number (360) 457-9778; or e-mail FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov. Please include "Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge" in the subject line. For more information please call the Refuge Complex office at (360) 457-8451, or go to <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning/main/docs/wa/docsdungeness.htm>.

The Draft CCP/EA is expected to be available for public review and comment in the summer of 2012. The final CCP, expected to be completed in fall/winter 2012, will guide the next 15 years of Refuge management.

When Congress amended the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (Act) in 1997, it incorporated an underlying philosophy that "wildlife comes first" on refuges. The Act provided the Service with guidance for managing refuges to ensure the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. It also established six priority public uses on National Wildlife Refuges: wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, interpretation, and environmental education. The Act also requires all lands within the Refuge System to be managed in accordance with a CCP to ensure that the management of each refuge reflects the purposes of that refuge and the mission, policies, and goals of the Refuge System.

Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established by Executive Order on January 20, 1915 for the purpose of "...a refuge, preserve, and breeding ground for native birds..." under the management of the Federal Government. On May 29, 1943, the State of Washington granted a Use Deed to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for all of the second class tidelands associated with Dungeness NWR. On March 6, 1973 Mr. Cecil Dawley donated 125 acres on Sequim Bay to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service which is included as part of Dungeness NWR. The Refuge currently consists of 772.52 acres, including a sand spit, second-class tidelands and bay area, and forested upland areas. Dungeness Spit, which has approximately twenty miles of undisturbed sandy beach, is one of only a few such geological formations in the world.

Dungeness NWR provides habitat for many wildlife species. The spit provides resting and feeding habitat for shorebirds, nesting habitat for black oystercatchers, glaucous-winged gulls and Caspian terns, and pupping and haulout habitat for harbor seals. The eelgrass beds provide feeding and rearing grounds for a large number of marine organisms and waterfowl including brant. Upland forests are used by breeding song birds, amphibians and bats.

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

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