housing authorities whose performance most need improvement. It also
provides policy and program managers
with valid measures for tracking
current housing conditions over time.
Agency Form Numbers: None.
Members of the Affected Public:
Households residing in units receiving
assistance from the Housing Choice
Voucher Program.

Estimation of the Total Number of
Hours Needed to Prepare the
Information Collection Including
Number of Respondents, Frequency of
Response, and Hours of Response:
Information will be collected by a
periodic mail survey of 259,000 of the
1.8 million households who live in
housing units assisted through the
Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Based on the first year of data
collection, a 62 percent response rate is
expected. The survey will take
approximately 15 minutes to complete.
This means a total of 40,145 hours of
response time annually is expected for
the information collection.

Status of the Proposed Extension of
Information Collection: Pending
submission to the Office of Management
and Budget (OMB).

Authority: Section 3506 of the Paperwork
Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. chapter 35,
as amended.


Christopher D. Lord,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy
Development.

[FR Doc. 03–12684 Filed 5–20–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4210–62–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the
Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for
Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge
located in Noxubee, Oktibbeha, and
Winston Counties, Mississippi.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service
announces that a Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan and Environmental
Assessment for Noxubee National
Wildlife Refuge are available for review
and comment. These documents have
been prepared pursuant to the National
Wildlife Refuge System Improvement
Act of 1997, and the National
Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and
describe the Service’s proposal for
managing the refuge over the next 15
years. Proposed goals for the refuge
include:

• Perpetuating a diversity of high
  quality, more natural-like communities
  as habitats for trust and resident species;
• Continuing to protect, maintain,
  and enhance native plant and animal
  species;
• Improving conditions for fish,
  wildlife, habitats, special management
  areas, and wilderness through the use
  of current land protection programs, laws,
  policies, and partnerships;
• Developing recreation and
  education opportunities that promote
  fish and wildlife conservation
  consistent with the Service’s mission
  and policies, and the purpose for which
  the refuge was established;
• Protecting the cultural resources of
  the refuge; and
• Developing and maintaining a
  comprehensive refuge facility
  responsive to supporting the
  management of fish and wildlife
  resources, and the safety and experience
  of refuge visitors.

Also available for review are the draft
compatibility determinations for
recreational hunting, recreational
fishing, wildlife observation and
photography, environmental education
and interpretation, forest habitat
management, haying, and research and
collections.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to adopt and
implement a comprehensive
conservation plan for the refuge that
best achieves the refuge’s purpose,
vision, and goals; contributes to the
National Wildlife Refuge System
mission; addresses the significant issues
and relevant mandates; and is consistent
with principles of sound fish and
wildlife management. The Service
analyzed three alternatives for future
management of the refuge and chose
Alternative 2, as the one to best achieve
all of these elements.

Alternatives

The draft comprehensive conservation
plan and environmental assessment
evaluates the three alternatives for
managing the refuge over the next 15
years. These alternatives are briefly
described as follows:

Alternative 1 represents the status
quo; e.g., no changes from current
management of the refuge. The refuge
would continue with its existing forest
management plan that emphasizes older
age classes of trees and late successional
wildlife communities. Waters and
wetlands would be managed under
current policies. Cultural resources
would be protected at current levels.

Under Alternative 2, the Service’s
proposed action, wildlife and habitat
would be managed with emphasis on
old growth forest communities, and
increasing emphasis on education and
recreation programs. Refugee programs
provide the public with an opportunity
to learn about, enjoy, and appreciate
fish and wildlife. These programs
include hunting, fishing, wildlife
observation and photography, and
environmental education and
interpretation. Deer hunting
opportunities would continue in order
to manage the population, and small
game and waterfowl hunting
opportunities would continue as well.
Game fish populations at Bluff and
Loakfoma lakes would be maintained to
support an annual average of 13,000
angler-use days through natural
reproduction, habitat management,
regulated harvest, and stocking when
appropriate. Under this alternative, the
refuge would seek to maintain and
improve overlooks, boardwalks and
trails, and provide special guided and
education program tours each season,
with an objective of increasing
interpretation activities to at least 15
events annually. The refuge would
coordinate with the local school district
and others to share expertise, host
meetings at the environmental
education center, refuge outdoor
classroom, and off-site locations to
support 15,000 students annually. This
alternative emphasizes providing
habitat for forest nesting birds
dependent on mature hardwood forests
and adequate habitat for resident and
migratory waterfowl. Current
partnerships that assist the refuge in
accomplishing its conservation
objectives would continue under this
alternative, as would coordination with
the Service’s private lands’ biologist to
implement the Partners for Fish and
Wildlife Program with local landowners
and other conservation groups.

Communication with local landowners
and community groups would continue
in order to promote wildlife
conservation. A comprehensive cultural
resources’ survey would be conducted,
and protection and interpretation of
 cultural resources would be improved.

Alternative 3 emphasizes providing
early successional forest habitat and
increases in certain education and
recreation programs. Forest management
of pine and pine/hardwood forests
would be directed towards providing
old growth adequate to support the
refuge’s goal for the redcockaded
woodpecker, and for providing early
successional habitat for neotropical
migratory birds and certain game
species. Management of the hardwood forest would also be directed towards providing early successional habitat.

**Actions Common to All Alternatives**

All three alternatives share the following management concepts and techniques for achieving the goals of the refuge:
- Restoring native habitats;
- Establishing, maintaining, and improving partnerships with landowners and local, state, and federal agencies and organizations;
- Coordinating management actions with local and state land and resource management agencies;
- Monitoring breeding red-cockaded woodpecker populations in partnership with others;
- Removing non-native invasive plants;
- Encouraging scientific research on the refuge; and
- Exploring expansion of the refuge boundary.

**DATES:** A meeting will be held at the refuge’s education center to present the plan to the public. Mailings, newspaper articles, and postings on the refuge website will be the avenues to inform the public of the date and time for this meeting. Individuals wishing to comment on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge should do so within 60 days following the date of this notice. Public comments were requested, considered, and incorporated throughout the planning process in numerous ways. Public outreach has included public scoping meetings, technical workgroups, planning updates and a Federal Register notice.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment should be addressed to Refuge Manager, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, 224 Office Road, Brooksville, Mississippi 39739. Comments may also be submitted via electronic mail to Noxubee@fws.gov. If you wish to submit comments by electronic mail, please submit them as an ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please include your name and return address to your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the system that we have received your Internet message, contact us at the phone number or address listed in this notice. Your practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individuals respondents may request that we withhold their home addresses from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, located in east-central Mississippi, consists of 47,959 acres, of which 42,500 acres are in bottomland hardwood, upland hardwood, mixed pine/hardwood, and pine forests. These forests support a variety of upland species including turkey, deer, and quail. The endangered red-cockaded woodpecker is found in the refuge’s old-growth pine habitat. Many neotropical bird species benefit from refuge forests. Greentree reservoirs, natural ponds, and man-made impoundments provide important habitat for other migratory birds, as well as wintering habitat for waterfowl and bald eagles.

Annually, more than 150,000 visitors participate in refuge activities, including fishing, hunting, hiking, wildlife photography, wildlife observation, and environmental education and interpretation.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Refuge Manager, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge at 662/323–5548; fax 662/323–5806, or by writing to the Refuge Manager at the above address.

**Authority:** This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105–57.

**Dated:** May 14, 2003.

J. Mitch King,
Acting Regional Director.

**BILLING CODE**

4310–55–M

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the Harley John Reservoir Replacement in Riverside County, CA**

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability and receipt of application.

**SUMMARY:** Western Municipal Water District (Applicant) has applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended. The Service is considering issuing a 3-year permit to the Applicant that would authorize take of the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica,* “gnatcatcher”) incidental to otherwise lawful activities associated with the replacement of an existing 300,000 gallon water tank reservoir with a 4 million gallon reservoir on 2.7 acres in Riverside County, California. The project would result in the incidental take of one pair of gnatcatchers on the project site through permanent removal of approximately 2.3 acres of habitat.

We request comments from the public on the permit application and an Environmental Assessment, both of which are available for review. The permit application includes the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and an accompanying Implementing Agreement. The HCP describes the proposed action and the measures that the Applicant will undertake to minimize and mitigate take of the gnatcatcher. To review the permit application or Environmental Assessment, see “Availability of Documents” in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

**DATES:** We must receive your written comments on or before July 21, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Please address written comments to Mr. Jim Bartel, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad, California 92009. You also may send comments by facsimile to (760) 918–0638.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Karen Evans, Assistant Field Supervisor, at the above address or call (760) 431–9440.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Availability of Documents**

You may obtain copies of these documents for review by contacting the Assistant Field Supervisor (FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT). Documents also will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address (see ADDRESSES) and at the Woodcrest Library, Riverside County Library System, 17024 Van Buren Blvd., Riverside, California.

**Background**

Section 9 of the Act and federal regulations prohibit the “take” of fish and wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened. Take of federally listed fish and wildlife is defined under the Act as including to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” The Service may, under limited circumstances, issue permits to