DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment; and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intend to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). We will also prepare an environmental assessment (EA) evaluating the potential effects of various CCP alternatives. The Refuge is located within Boundary County, Idaho. We are furnishing this notice to advise the public and other government agencies and Tribes of our intentions, and to obtain public comments, suggestions, and information on the scope of issues to be considered during the planning process.

DATES: We request your written comments on the scope of the CCP by March 25, 2009. All comments received during scoping will be considered during development of the Draft CCP and EA.

ADDRESSES: Address comments, questions, and requests for information to: Dianna Ellis, Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge, 287 Westside Road, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805. Comments may be faxed to the Refuge at (208) 267–5570, or e-mailed to FWIPlanningComments@fws.gov. Include “Kootenai Refuge CCP” in the subject line of your message. Additional information about the Refuge is available on the Internet at http://www.fws.gov/kootenai/. Additional information about the CCP planning process is available on the Internet at: http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning/.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dianna Ellis, Refuge Manager, Kootenai Refuge, phone (208) 267–3888.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee), requires all lands within the NWRS to be managed in accordance with an approved CCP. A CCP guides refuge management decisions, and identifies long-range goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving the purposes for which the refuge was established.

During the CCP planning process for Kootenai Refuge many elements will be considered, including wildlife and habitat protection and management, public use opportunities, and cultural resource protection.

Public input during the planning process is essential. To initiate the public scoping phase of the CCP planning process we held two public open house meetings in Bonners Ferry, Idaho, on January 23, 2009. We announced the meetings in a press release and in a planning update mailed to 239 addressees, including refuge neighbors, interested individuals and organizations, elected officials, Tribes, and local, State, and Federal government and nongovernment stakeholders. Approximately 30 people attended the meetings. Public scoping will continue until March 25, 2009.

The Refuge’s CCP will describe desired Refuge conditions and the long-term goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving those conditions. To evaluate potential impacts of CCP alternatives, we will prepare an EA in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.)

Background

The Refuge was established in 1964 under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds” with emphasis on providing migration and breeding habitat for migratory waterfowl. The Refuge’s habitats include wetlands, mixed moist deciduous and coniferous forest, riparian woodland, riverine, and dry forest. Managed grasslands and croplands are also present on the Refuge.

The Refuge supports tens of thousands of migrating waterfowl, especially during fall migration. The Refuge also provides important stopover habitat for spring migratory swans that winter in southeastern Oregon and nest in northeastern British Columbia and northwestern Alberta. Habitat for the federally listed bull trout; winter habitat for deer and elk; and occasionally, habitat and/or travel corridors for wide-ranging species such as woodland caribou, grizzly bear, and gray wolves is also provided on the Refuge.

Preliminary Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

We identified the following categories of preliminary issues for consideration in the planning process: water and wetland management, including dike maintenance and water rights; cropland management; integrated pest management; deer and elk management; maintenance and restoration of riparian, upland forest, and instream habitats; the Refuge’s role in recovery of rare and listed fish species; providing sustainable wildlife-dependent recreation with a small staff and land base; reducing visitor conflicts and law enforcement violations; and managing on-going Refuge programs and commitments in an era of tight budgets. Additional issues may be identified during public scoping.

Public Availability of Comments

All comments we receive become part of the public record. Requests for comments will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, NEPA, and Service and Department of the Interior policies and procedures. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold it from public review, we cannot guarantee we will be able to do so.

An estimate of the total public burden (in hours) associated with the collection: 438,980 annual burden hours.

If additional information is required contact: USCIS, Regulatory Management Division, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 3008, Washington, DC 20529–2210, (202) 272–8377.

DATED: February 17, 2009.

Stephen Tarragon,
Deputy Chief, Regulatory Management Division, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

[FR Doc. E9–3800 Filed 2–20–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 9111–97–P
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service


Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee; Announcement of Public Teleconference and Webcast

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public teleconference and Webcast.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), will host an optional Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee (Committee) meeting via Webcast and teleconference, on March 13, 2009. This meeting is open to the public but will be limited to 75 public participants. The meeting agenda will include a brief summary of the Committee's activities, a discussion of the draft guidelines that are contained in the Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee Report (Draft Report), and a brief discussion of alternative guidelines. We will solicit public comments at the meeting and request Committee members to provide input regarding the draft guidelines.

DATES: Meeting: The meeting will take place on March 13, 2009, from 12 to 2 p.m. Eastern Time.

Pre-meeting Public Registration: If you are a member of the public wishing to participate in the March 13, 2009, meeting, you must register online by March 6, 2009 (see “Meeting Participation Information” in SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rachel London, Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee Alternate Designated Federal Officer. [FR Doc. E9–3748 Filed 2–20–09; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service


Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge, Sussex, NJ

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability: final comprehensive conservation plan and finding of no significant impact for environmental assessment.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of our final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment (EA) for Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Sussex County, New Jersey. In that final CCP, we describe how we will manage this refuge for the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: You may view or obtain copies of the final CCP and FONSI by any of the following methods. You may request a hard copy or CD-ROM.

Agency Web Site: Download a copy of the document(s) at http://library.fws.gov/ccps.htm.

E-mail: northeastplanning@fws.gov. Include the words “Wallkill River final CCP” in the subject line of your message.

U.S. Mail: Edward Henry, Refuge Manager, Wallkill River NWR, 1547 County Route 565, Sussex, New Jersey 07461.

In-Person Viewing or Pickup: Call Wallkill River NWR at 973–702–7266 to make an appointment during regular business hours at 1547 County Route 565, Sussex, New Jersey. The final document is also available at the library listed under SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION, below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beth Goldstein, Refuge Planner, by phone at 413–253–8564, or by electronic mail at Beth_Goldstein@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we finalize the CCP process for Wallkill River NWR. We started that process by publishing a notice of intent in the Federal Register (64 FR 30; February 16, 1999). For more information about the process, see that notice. We announced the release of the draft CCP/EA to the public and requested their comments in a notice of availability in the Federal Register (73 FR 23; February 4, 2008).

Congress established the Wallkill River NWR by law on November 16, 1990, (Section 107 of H.R. 3338; Public Law 101–593) with the following purposes: (1) To preserve and enhance the refuge’s lands and waters in a manner that will conserve the natural diversity of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for present and future generations, (2) to conserve and enhance populations of fish, wildlife, and plants within the refuge, including populations of black ducks and other waterfowl, raptors, passerines, and marsh and water birds, (3) to protect and enhance the water quality of aquatic habitats within the refuge, (4) to fulfill international treaty obligation of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats, and (5) to provide opportunities for compatible scientific research, environmental education, and fish and wildlife-oriented recreation (104 Stat. 2955).