public use program. About a third to half as many new observation facilities (trails, viewing over looks, etc.) would have been added as under Alternative 2, due to staffing and funding resources being directed toward refuge farming activity. The current area closed to public access on all three refuges would have remained closed, in order to provide sanctuary during the wintering waterfowl season, except for the proposed change at Snag Boat Bend as described in Alternative 2 above. Fishing access to the Willamette River would have been provided through a canoe launch at Snag Boat Bend Unit; however, bank fishing access would not have been provided.

Deer hunting, threatened and endangered species management, environmental education, elk management, cultural resources, subsequent land protection planning, and conservation partnership activity would have occurred as under Alternative 2.

Comments

We solicited comments on the draft CCP/EA from May 25, 2011, to June 24, 2011 (76 FR 30382; May 25, 2011). A total of 27 separate communications from 25 different commenters (two commenters submitted two letters each) were received regarding the draft CCP/EA. To address public comments, responsive changes and clarifications were made to the final CCP where appropriate. These changes are summarized in the FONSI.

Selected Alternative

After considering the comments received, we have selected Alternative 2 for implementation. The goals, objectives, and strategies under Alternative 2 best achieve the purpose and need for the CCP while maintaining balance among the varied management needs and programs. Alternative 2 addresses the refuge purposes, issues, and relevant mandates, and is consistent with principles of sound fish and wildlife management.

Dated: October 20, 2011.

Robyn Thorson,

Regional Director, Pacific Region, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 2012–3759 Filed 2–16–12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R1–R–2011–N228; 1265–0000–10137–S3]

Ke'ālia Pond National Wildlife Refuge and Kakahai’a National Wildlife Refuge, Maui County, HI; Final Comprehensive Conservation Plans and Findings of No Significant Impact for the Environmental Assessments

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of our final comprehensive conservation plans (CCPs) and findings of no significant impacts for the environmental assessments for the Keʻalii Pond National Wildlife Refuge (refuge or NWR) and Kakahai’a National Wildlife Refuge. In the final CCPs, we describe how we plan to manage these refuges for the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: You may view or obtain copies of the final CCPs and findings of no significant impacts (FONSIs) and environmental assessments (EAs) by any of the following methods. You may request a hard copy or CD–ROM.

Agency Web Site: Download the documents at www.fws.gov/pacific/planning.

Email: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov.

Include “Keʻalii Pond NWR final CCP” or “Kakahai’a NWR final CCP” in the subject line of the message.

Mail: Glynnis Nakai, Project Leader, Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex, P.O. Box 1042, Kihei, Hawaii 96753.

In-Person Viewing or Pickup: Call (808) 875–1582 to make an appointment during regular business hours at Maui NWR Complex, Milepost 6, Mokulele Highway (Hwy. 311), Kihei, Hawaii 96753.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Glynnis Nakai, Project Leader, Maui NWR Complex, phone number (808) 875–1582.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we announce the completion of the CCP processes for Keʻalii Pond NWR and Kakahai’a NWR. The Service started this process through a notice of intent in the Federal Register on October 20, 2009 (74 FR 53755). We released the draft CCPs/EAs to the public, announcing and requesting comments in a notice of availability in
Implementing Alternative C for the Alternative C for the implementation. 

...any other compliance requirements. Projects include constructing a water control structure, developing new wells, and recontouring topography to maintain water on the flats. We expect an increased capability to dewater and flood the Main Pond will enhance our dust, mide, and tilapia control efforts. New vegetated blinds will provide better wildlife viewing opportunities, and public interpretation and environmental education programs will be expanded. Internships will be provided for up to five students.

Kakahai’a NWR

If funded, we will restore the 15-acre Old Pond and 5.5 acres of New Pond by removing California bulrush and other aggressive nonnative species, dredging accumulated sediment, recontouring topography, removing radial levees, reconstructing perimeter levees, replacing the water control structure, and replacing the pump between the two ponds. A well, pump, water distribution line, and control outlet for New Pond will be constructed, and levees will be rebuilt. All monitoring activities will resume as part of the wetland restoration. A predator-proof fence will be installed to protect wetland habitat and species. The coastal strand will be restored and protected from further erosion to provide a protective barrier to the refuge wetlands and highway. A cultural resources survey will be completed for the entire refuge. Opportunities for visitors to engage in compatible wildlife-dependent recreation may expand with new staffing. At a minimum, a kiosk will be constructed along the refuge entrance road and visitor groups will be developed to assist refuge staff with restoration and maintenance activities.

Dated: November 9, 2011.
Robyn Thorson, Regional Director, Pacific Region, Portland, Oregon.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service

[FR Doc. 2012–3648 Filed 2–16–12; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Amy Thornburg, Planning Team Leader, USFWS, Division of Refuge Planning, P.O. Box 25406, DFC, Denver, CO 80225.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Service established the Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area, which covers all or part of 21 counties in eastern Kansas. Today, less than 4 percent of the once-vast tallgrass prairie remains, most (80 percent) of which lies within the Flint Hills of eastern Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma. The Service will work to conserve tallgrass prairie and the wildlife resources in the conservation area primarily through the purchase of perpetual easements from willing sellers in Kansas. These conservation easements will protect native grassland birds, as well as over 80 species of native fish, and native mollusks that depend on the pristine streams that are found in the Flint Hills region.

The Service recognizes the importance of protecting and fostering traditional cultural values, including ranching lifestyles and economies, in concert with habitat conservation interests. Ranching has historically played a major role in preserving the tallgrass ecoregion—and by extension, conserving valuable fish and wildlife habitat. Based on anticipated levels of landowner participation, objectives for the conservation area are to protect up to 1.1 million acres of tallgrass prairie habitat. The conservation area is a landscape-scale effort to conserve populations of native grassland birds, which are among the most consistently declining species in the United States. Therefore, it is important to incorporate the elements of strategic habitat conservation (SHC) to ensure effective conservation. SHC entails strategic biological planning and conservation design, and integrated conservation delivery, monitoring, and research at ecoregional scales.

This conservation area allows the Service to purchase perpetual conservation easements, using the acquisition authority of the Fish and