

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE February 16, 2012 Contacts: Michael Johnson, 270/527-5770
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Photos available at: <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/news/>

Details Announced for Proposed Expansion of Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge and Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced details of the proposed expansion of Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and the release of the draft 15-year management plan (CCP).

The proposed expansion would seek land protection partnerships to achieve congressionally authorized Refuge boundary expansion of 34,269 acres within the Clarks River Floodplain to ensure wildlife conservation and public recreational opportunities are more readily achievable. Public access, inclusion of upland habitat, protection of intact forested wetlands and improvement of water quality are the primary factors of consideration for the proposal. The draft CCP would guide refuge management over the next 15 years.

The refuge currently has fee title ownership of about 8,634 acres with an approved acquisition boundary of approximately 19,605 acres. Fee title lands are distributed as follows; Graves County (56 acres), Marshall County (5,970 acres) and McCracken County (2,608 acres). Lands are purchased on a willing-seller basis only. The proposed expansion of 34,269 acres would bring the total refuge acquisition boundary to approximately 53,874 acres and would protect lands along the east and west fork of the Clarks River. Details of the proposal, CCP, and proposed compatible uses, including maps, are in the Draft CCP/Land Protection Plan and Environmental Assessment that can be viewed at <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/planning/CCP/ClarksRiverDraftsinglePgDoc.html>.

For more information, visit <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/news/>

During the four-week public review and comment period that ends March 15, the Service will host three public meetings to answer questions and gather comments. The first half hour of each meeting will be a presentation in which the Service and its partners will present information and answer questions. Following that, the meetings will be held in a town-hall format, where the public can provide comments.

The schedule is:

Where:	Gospel Mission Worship Center, 6905 Benton Road, Paducah, KY 42003
When:	Tuesday, February 21, 2012, 6:30 – 8:30 pm.
Where:	Symsonia Elementary School, 11730 State Route 131, Symsonia, KY 42082
When:	Wednesday, February 22, 2012, 6:30 – 8:30 pm.
Where:	Marshall County High School Cafeteria, 416 High School Road, Benton, KY 42025
When:	Thursday, February 23, 2012, 6:30 – 8:30 pm.

Comments may also be submitted in writing to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Proposed Expansion of Clarks River NWR and CCP:

By email to tina_chouinard@fws.gov

By mail to 49 Plainsbrook Place, Jackson, TN 38305;

By fax to 731-664-1566.

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. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov/southeast.

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