Appendix A. Glossary

Adaptive Management: Refers to a process in which policy decisions are implemented within a framework of scientifically driven experiments to test predictions and assumptions inherent in a management plan. Analysis of results helps managers determine whether current management should continue as is or whether it should be modified to achieve desired conditions.

Alluvial: Sediment transported and deposited in a delta or riverbed by flowing water.

Alternative: 1. A reasonable way to fix the identified problem or satisfy the stated need (40 CFR 1500.2). 2. Alternatives are different sets of objectives and strategies or means of achieving refuge purposes and goals, helping fulfill the Refuge System mission, and resolving issues (Service Manual 602 FW 1.6B).

Anadromous: Migratory fishes that spend most of their lives in the sea and migrate to fresh water to breed.

Biological Diversity: The variety of life and its processes, including the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur (Service Manual 052 FW 1. 12B). The System's focus is on indigenous species, biotic communities, and ecological processes. Also referred to as biodiversity.

Carrying Capacity: The maximum population of a species able to be supported by a habitat or area.

Categorical Exclusion: A category of actions that does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a federal agency pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1508.4).

CFR: Code of Federal Regulations.

Compatible Use: A proposed or existing wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a national wildlife refuge that, based on sound professional judgment, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System mission or the purpose(s) of the national wildlife refuge [50 CFR 25.12 (a)]. A compatibility determination supports the selection of compatible uses and identifies stipulations or limits necessary to ensure compatibility.

Comprehensive Conservation Plan: A document that describes the desired future conditions of a refuge or planning unit and provides long-range guidance and management direction to achieve the purposes of the refuge; helps fulfill the mission of the Refuge System; maintains and, where appropriate, restores the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; helps achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and meets other mandates (Service Manual 602 FW 1.6 E).

Concern: See Issue

Cover Type: The present vegetation of an area.

Cultural Resource Inventory: A professionally conducted study designed to locate and evaluate evidence of cultural resources present within a defined geographic area. Inventories may involve various levels, including background literature search, comprehensive field examination to identify all exposed physical manifestations of cultural resources, or sample inventory to project site distribution and density over a larger area. Evaluation of identified cultural resources to determine eligibility for the National Register follows the criteria found in 36 CFR 60.4 (Service Manual 614 FW 1.7).

Cultural Resource Overview: A comprehensive document prepared for a field office that discusses, among other things, its prehistory and cultural history, the nature and extent of known cultural resources, previous research, management objectives, resource management conflicts or issues, and a general statement on how program objectives should be met and conflicts resolved. An overview should reference or incorporate information from a field office's background or literature search described in Section VIII of the Cultural Resource Management Handbook (Service Manual 614 FW 1.7).

Cultural Resources: The remains of sites, structures, or objects used by people in the past.

Designated Wilderness Area: An area designated by the U.S. Congress to be managed as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System (Draft Service Manual 610 FW 1.5).

Disturbance: Significant alteration of habitat structure or composition. May be natural (e.g., fire) or human-caused events (e.g., aircraft overflight).

Ecosystem: A dynamic and interrelating complex of plant and animal communities and their associated non-living environment.

Ecosystem Management: Management of natural resources using system-wide concepts to ensure that all plants and animals in ecosystems are maintained at viable levels in native habitats and basic ecosystem processes are perpetuated indefinitely.

Endangered Species (Federal):	A plant or animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Endangered Species (State):	A plant or animal species in danger of becoming extinct or extirpated in the state within the near future if factors contributing to its decline continue. Populations of these species are at critically low levels or their habitats have been degraded or depleted to a significant degree.
Environmental Assessment (EA):	A concise public document, prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, that briefly discusses the purpose and need for an action, alternatives to such action, and provides sufficient evidence and analysis of impacts to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9).
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):	A detailed written statement required by section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act, analyzing the environmental impacts of a proposed action, adverse effects of the project that cannot be avoided, alternative courses of action, short-term uses of the environment versus the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources (40 CFR 1508.11).
Estuary:	The wide lower course of a river into which the tides flow. The area where the tide meets a river current.
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):	A document prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, supported by an environmental assessment, that briefly presents why a federal action will have no significant effect on the human environment and for which an environmental impact statement, therefore, will not be prepared (40 CFR 1508.13).
Goal:	Descriptive, open-ended, and often broad statement of desired future conditions that conveys a purpose but does not define measurable units (Service Manual 620 FW 1.6J).
Habitat:	Suite of existing environmental conditions required by an organism for survival and reproduction. The place where an organism typically lives.
Habitat Restoration:	Management emphasis designed to move ecosystems to desired conditions and processes, and/or to healthy ecosystems.
Habitat Type:	See Vegetation Type.
Improvement Act:	The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.
Informed Consent:	The grudging willingness of opponents to “go along” with a course of action that they actually oppose (Bleiker).

Issue:	Any unsettled matter that requires a management decision [e.g., an initiative, opportunity, resource management problem, threat to the resources of the unit, conflict in uses, public concern, or other presence of an undesirable resource condition (Service Manual 602 FW 1.6K)].
Management Alternative:	See Alternative
Management Concern:	See Issue
Management Opportunity:	See Issue
Migration:	The seasonal movement from one area to another and back.
Mission Statement:	Succinct statement of the unit's purpose and reason for being.
Monitoring:	The process of collecting information to track changes of selected parameters over time.
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA):	Requires all agencies, including the Service, to examine the environmental impacts of their actions, incorporate environmental information, and use public participation in the planning and implementation of all actions. Federal agencies must integrate NEPA with other planning requirements, and prepare appropriate NEPA documents to facilitate better environmental decision-making (40 CFR 1500).
National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-57):	Under the Refuge Improvement Act, the Fish and Wildlife Service is required to develop 15-year comprehensive conservation plans for all national wildlife refuges outside Alaska. The Act also describes the six public uses given priority status within the Refuge System (i.e., hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation).
National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:	The mission is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.
National Wildlife Refuge System:	Various categories of areas administered by the Secretary of the Interior for the conservation of fish and wildlife, including species threatened with extinction; all lands, waters, and interests therein administered by the Secretary as wildlife refuges; areas for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife that are threatened with extinction; wildlife ranges; game ranges; wildlife management areas; or waterfowl production areas.

National Wildlife Refuge:	A designated area of land, water, or an interest in land or water within the Refuge System.
Native Species:	Species that normally live and thrive in a particular ecosystem.
Noxious Weed:	A plant species designated by federal or state law as generally possessing one or more of the following characteristics: aggressive or difficult to manage; parasitic; a carrier or host of serious insect or disease; or non-native, new, or not common to the United States. According to the Federal Noxious Weed Act (P.L. 93-639), a noxious weed is one that causes disease or had adverse effects on man or his environment and therefore is detrimental to the agriculture and commerce of the Untied States and to the public health.
Objective:	A concise statement of what we want to achieve, how much we want to achieve, when and where we want to achieve it, and who is responsible for the work. Objectives derive from goals and provide the basis for determining strategies, monitoring refuge accomplishments, and evaluating the success of strategies. Making objectives attainable, time-specific, and measurable (Service Manual 602 FW 1.6N).
Plant Association:	A classification of plant communities based on the similarity in dominants of all layers of vascular species in a climax community.
Plant Community:	An assemblage of plant species unique in its composition; occurs in particular locations under particular influences; a reflection or integration of the environmental influences on the site such as soils, temperature, elevation, solar radiation, slope, aspect, and rainfall; denotes a general kind of climax plant community.
Preferred Alternative:	This is the alternative determined (by the decision-maker) to best achieve the refuge purpose, vision, and goals; contributes to the Refuge System mission, addresses the significant issues; and is consistent with principles of sound fish and wildlife management.
Prescribed Fire:	The application of fire to wildland fuels to achieve identified land use objectives (Service Manual 621 FW 1.7). May occur from natural ignition or intentional ignition.
Priority Species:	Fish and wildlife species that require protective measures and/or management guidelines to ensure their perpetuation. Priority species include the following: (1) State-listed and candidate species; (2) species or groups of animals susceptible to significant population declines within a specific area or statewide by virtue of their inclination to aggregate (e.g., seabird colonies); and (3) species of recreation, commercial, and/or tribal importance.
Public Involvement Plan:	Broad long-term guidance for involving the public in the comprehensive conservation planning process.

Public Involvement:	A process that offers impacted and interested individuals and organizations an opportunity to become informed about, and to express their opinions on Service actions and policies. In the process, these views are studied thoroughly and thoughtful consideration of public views is given in shaping decisions for refuge management.
Public:	Individuals, organizations, and groups; officials of federal, state, and local government agencies; Indian tribes; and foreign nations. It may include anyone outside the core planning team. It includes those who may or may not have indicated an interest in service issues and those who do or do not realize that Service decisions may affect them.
Purposes of the Refuge:	"The purposes specified in or derived from the law, proclamation, executive order, agreement, public land order, donation document, or administrative memorandum establishing, authorizing, or expanding a refuge, refuge unit, or refuge sub-unit." For refuges that encompass congressionally designated wilderness, the purposes of the Wilderness Act are additional purposes of the refuge (Service Manual 602 FW 106 S).
Recommended Wilderness:	Areas studied and found suitable for wilderness designation by both the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, and recommended for designation by the President to Congress. These areas await only legislative action by Congress in order to become part of the Wilderness System. Such areas are also referred to as "pending in Congress" (Draft Service Manual 610 FW 1.5).
Record of Decision (ROD):	A concise public record of decision prepared by the federal agency, pursuant to NEPA, that contains a statement of the decision, identification of all alternatives considered, identification of the environmentally preferable alternative, a statement as to whether all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted (and if not, why they were not), and a summary of monitoring and enforcement where applicable for any mitigation (40 CFR 1505.2).
Refuge Goal:	See Goal
Refuge Purposes:	See Purposes of the Refuge
Songbirds: (Also Passerines)	A category of birds that is medium to small, perching landbirds. Most are territorial singers and migratory.
Step-down Management Plan:	A plan that provides specific guidance on management subjects (e.g., habitat, public use, fire, and safety) or groups of related subjects. It describes strategies and implementation schedules for meeting CCP goals and objectives (Service Manual 602 FW 1.6 U).

Strategy:	A specific action, tool, technique, or combination of actions, tools, and techniques used to meet unit objectives (Service Manual 602 FW 1.6 U).
Study Area:	The area reviewed in detail for wildlife, habitat, and public use potential. For purposes of this CCP, the study area includes the lands within the currently approved refuge boundary and potential refuge expansion areas.
Threatened Species (Federal):	Species listed under the Endangered Species Act that are likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.
Threatened Species (State):	A plant or animal species likely to become endangered in the state within the near future if factors contributing to population decline or habitat degradation or loss continue.
Tiering:	The coverage of general matters in broader environmental impact statements with subsequent narrower statements of environmental analysis, incorporating by reference, the general discussions and concentrating on specific issues (40 CFR 1508.28).
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mission:	The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.
Unit Objective:	See Objective
Vegetation Type, Habitat Type, Forest Cover Type:	A land classification system based upon the concept of distinct plant associations.
Vision Statement:	A concise statement of what the planning unit should be, or what we hope to do, based primarily upon the Refuge System mission and specific refuge purposes, and other mandates. We will tie the vision statement for the refuge to the mission of the Refuge System; the purpose(s) of the refuge; the maintenance or restoration of the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; and other mandates (Service Manual 602 FW 1.6 Z).

Wilderness Study Areas: Lands and waters identified through inventory as meeting the definition of wilderness and undergoing evaluation for recommendation for inclusion in the Wilderness System. A study area must meet the following criteria:

- Generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable;
- Has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; and
- Has at least 5,000 contiguous roadless acres or is sufficient in size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition (Draft Service Manual 610 FW 1.5).

Wilderness: See Designated Wilderness

Wildfire: A free-burning fire; all fire other than prescribed fire that occurs on wildlands (Service Manual 621 FW 1.7).

Wildland Fire: Every wildland fire is either a wildfire or a prescribed fire (Service Manual 621 FW 1.3

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AQI	Air Quality Index
ADA	Americans with Disability Act
BRT	Biological Review Team
BCC	Birds of Conservation Concern
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CCP	Comprehensive Conservation Plan
cfs	cubic feet per second
DRP	Department of Recreation and Parks
DOI	Department of the Interior
DU	Ducks Unlimited
EA	Environmental Assessment
EE	environmental education
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EKA	Egmont Key Alliance
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FR	Federal Register
FY	Fiscal Year
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FGFWFC	Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission
FPS	Florida Park Service
FTBNWR	Friends of Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuge
FTE	full-time equivalent
GIS	Global Information System
MSL	Mean Sea Level
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NAMS	National Ambient Monitoring Stations
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
NWRS	National Wildlife Refuge System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CAMA	Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas
PFT	Permanent Full Time
PUNA	Public Use Natural Area
ROD	Record of Decision
RM	Refuge Manual
RNA	Research Natural Area
RONS	Refuge Operating Needs System
RRP	Refuge Roads Program
SMC	Save the Manatee Club
SLAMM	Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model
SLAMS	State and Local Ambient Monitoring Stations
SPAS	St. Petersburg Audubon Society
SWIM	Surface Water Improvement and Management Program

TBPA	Tampa Bay Pilots Association
TFT	Temporary Full Time
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (also Service)
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (also Service)
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USC	United States Code
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WSA	Wilderness Study Area

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Appendix C. Relevant Legal Mandates and Executive Orders

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Administrative Procedures Act (1946)	Outlines administrative procedures to be followed by federal agencies with respect to identification of information to be made public; publication of material in the Federal Register; maintenance of records; attendance and notification requirements for specific meetings and hearings; issuance of licenses; and review of agency actions.
American Antiquities Act of 1906	Provides penalties for unauthorized collection, excavation, or destruction of historic or prehistoric ruins, monuments, or objects of antiquity on lands owned or controlled by the United States. The Act authorizes the President to designate as national monuments objects or areas of historic or scientific interest on lands owned or controlled by the Unites States.
American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978	Protects the inherent right of Native Americans to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions, including access to important sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites.
Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990	Intended to prevent discrimination of and make American society more accessible to people with disabilities. The Act requires reasonable accommodations to be made in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications for persons with disabilities.
Anadromous Fish Conservation Act of 1965, as amended	Authorizes the Secretaries of Interior and Commerce to enter into cooperative agreements with states and other non-federal interests for conservation, development, and enhancement of anadromous fish and contribute up to 50 percent as the federal share of the cost of carrying out such agreements. Reclamation construction programs for water resource projects needed solely for such fish are also authorized.
Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended.	This Act strengthens and expands the protective provisions of the Antiquities Act of 1906 regarding archaeological resources. It also revised the permitting process for archaeological research.
Architectural Barriers Act of 1968	Requires that buildings and facilities designed, constructed, or altered with federal funds, or leased by a federal agency, must comply with standards for physical accessibility.
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, as amended	Prohibits the possession, sale or transport of any bald or golden eagle, alive or dead, or part, nest, or egg except as permitted by the Secretary of the Interior for scientific or exhibition purposes, or for the religious purposes of Indians.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937	Directs the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a program of land conservation and utilization in order to correct maladjustments in land use and thus assist in such things as control of soil erosion, reforestation, conservation of natural resources and protection of fish and wildlife. Some early refuges and hatcheries were established under authority of this Act.
Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988	Established requirements for the management and protection of caves and their resources on federal lands, including allowing the land managing agencies to withhold the location of caves from the public, and requiring permits for any removal or collecting activities in caves on federal lands.
Clean Air Act of 1970	Regulates air emissions from area, stationary, and mobile sources. This Act and its amendments charge federal land managers with direct responsibility to protect the "air quality and related values" of land under their control. These values include fish, wildlife, and their habitats.
Clean Water Act of 1974, as amended	This Act and its amendments have as its objective the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. Section 401 of the Act requires that federally permitted activities comply with the Clean Water Act standards, state water quality laws, and any other appropriate state laws. Section 404 charges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with regulating discharge of dredge or fill materials into waters of the United States, including wetlands.
Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982 (CBRA)	Identifies undeveloped coastal barriers along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and included them in the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS). The objectives of the act are to minimize loss of human life, reduce wasteful federal expenditures, and minimize the damage to natural resources by restricting most federal expenditures that encourage development within the CBRS.
Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990	Reauthorized the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA), expanded the CBRS to include undeveloped coastal barriers along the Great Lakes and in the Caribbean, and established "Otherwise Protected Areas (OPAs)." The Service is responsible for maintaining official maps, consulting with federal agencies that propose spending federal funds within the CBRS and OPAs, and making recommendations to Congress about proposed boundary revisions.
Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration (1990)	Authorizes the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service to participate in the development of a Louisiana coastal wetlands restoration program, participate in the development and oversight of a coastal wetlands conservation program, and lead in the implementation and administration of a national coastal wetlands grant program.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended	Established a voluntary national program within the Department of Commerce to encourage coastal states to develop and implement coastal zone management plans and requires that "any federal activity within or outside of the coastal zone that affects any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone" shall be "consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies" of a state's coastal zone management plan. The law includes an Enhancement Grants Program for protecting, restoring, or enhancing existing coastal wetlands or creating new coastal wetlands. It also established the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, guidelines for estuarine research, and financial assistance for land acquisition.
Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986	This Act authorized the purchase of wetlands from Land and Water Conservation Fund moneys, removing a prior prohibition on such acquisitions. The Act requires the Secretary to establish a National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, required the states to include wetlands in their Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, and transfers to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund amounts equal to import duties on arms and ammunition. It also established entrance fees at national wildlife refuges.
Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended	Provides for the conservation of threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife, and plants by federal action and by encouraging the establishment of state programs. It provides for the determination and listing of threatened and endangered species and the designation of critical habitats. Section 7 requires refuge managers to perform internal consultation before initiating projects that affect or may affect endangered species.
Environmental Education Act of 1990	This Act established the Office of Environmental Education within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop and administer a federal environmental education program in consultation with other federal natural resource management agencies, including the Fish and Wildlife Service.
Estuary Protection Act of 1968	Authorized the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with other federal agencies and the states, to study and inventory estuaries of the United States, including land and water of the Great Lakes, and to determine whether such areas should be acquired for protection. The Secretary is also required to encourage state and local governments to consider the importance of estuaries in their planning activities relative to federal natural resource grants. In approving any state grants for acquisition of estuaries, the Secretary was required to establish conditions to ensure the permanent protection of estuaries.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Estuaries and Clean Waters Act of 2000	This law creates a federal interagency council that includes the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Administrator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The council is charged with developing a national estuary habitat restoration strategy and providing grants to entities to restore and protect estuary habitat to promote the strategy.
Food Security Act of 1985, as amended (Farm Bill)	The Act contains several provisions that contribute to wetland conservation. The Swampbuster provisions state that farmers who convert wetlands for the purpose of planting after enactment of the law are ineligible for most farmer program subsidies. It also established the Wetland Reserve Program to restore and protect wetlands through easements and restoration of the functions and values of wetlands on such easement areas.
Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981, as amended	The purpose of this law is to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. Federal programs include construction projects and the management of federal lands.
Federal Advisory Committee Act (1972), as amended	Governs the establishment of and procedures for committees that provide advice to the federal government. Advisory committees may be established only if they will serve a necessary, nonduplicative function. Committees must be strictly advisory unless otherwise specified and meetings must be open to the public.
Federal Coal Leasing Amendment Act of 1976	Provided that nothing in the Mining Act, the Mineral Leasing Act, or the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands authorized mining coal on refuges.
Federal-Aid Highways Act of 1968	Established requirements for approval of federal highways through national wildlife refuges and other designated areas to preserve the natural beauty of such areas. The Secretary of Transportation is directed to consult with the Secretary of the Interior and other federal agencies before approving any program or project requiring the use of land under their jurisdiction.
Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1990, as amended	The Secretary of Agriculture was given the authority to designate plants as noxious weeds and to cooperate with other federal, State and local agencies, farmers' associations, and private individuals in measures to control, eradicate, prevent, or retard the spread of such weeds. The Act requires each Federal land-managing agency, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, to designate an office or person to coordinate a program to control such plants on the agency's land and implement cooperative agreements with the states, including integrated management systems to control undesirable plants.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956	Establishes a comprehensive national fish, shellfish, and wildlife resources policy with emphasis on the commercial fishing industry but also includes the inherent right of every citizen and resident to fish for pleasure, enjoyment, and betterment and to maintain and increase public opportunities for recreational use of fish and wildlife resources. Among other things, it authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take such steps as may be required for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources including, but not limited to, research, development of existing facilities, and acquisition by purchase or exchange of land and water or interests therein.
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980, as amended	Requires the Service to monitor non-gamebird species, identify species of management concern, and implement conservation measures to preclude the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act.
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958	Promotes equal consideration and coordination of wildlife conservation with other water resource development programs by requiring consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the state fish and wildlife agencies where the “waters of a stream or other body of water are proposed or authorized, permitted or licensed to be impounded, diverted…or otherwise controlled or modified” by any agency under federal permit or license.
Improvement Act of 1978	This act was passed to improve the administration of fish and wildlife programs and amends several earlier laws, including the Refuge Recreation Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, and the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956. It authorizes the Secretary to accept gifts and bequests of real and personal property on behalf of the United States. It also authorizes the use of volunteers on Service projects and appropriations to carry out volunteer programs.
Fishery (Magnuson) Conservation and Management Act of 1976	Established Regional Fishery Management Councils comprised of federal and state officials, including the Fish and Wildlife Service. It provides for regulation of foreign fishing and vessel fishing permits.
Freedom of Information Act, 1966	Requires all federal agencies to make available to the public for inspection and copying administrative staff manuals and staff instructions; official, published and unpublished policy statements; final orders deciding case adjudication; and other documents. Special exemptions have been reserved for nine categories of privileged material. The Act requires the party seeking the information to pay reasonable search and duplication costs.
Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, as amended	Authorizes and governs the lease of geothermal steam and related resources on public lands. Section 15 c of the Act prohibits issuing geothermal leases on virtually all Service-administrative lands.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Lacey Act of 1900, as amended	Originally designed to help states protect their native game animals and to safeguard U.S. crop production from harmful foreign species, this Act prohibits interstate and international transport and commerce of fish, wildlife or plants taken in violation of domestic or foreign laws. It regulates the introduction to America of foreign species.
Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1948	This Act provides funding through receipts from the sale of surplus federal land, appropriations from oil and gas receipts from the outer continental shelf, and other sources for land acquisition under several authorities. Appropriations from the fund may be used for matching grants to states for outdoor recreation projects and for land acquisition by various federal agencies, including the Fish and Wildlife Service.
Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended	The 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act established a federal responsibility to conserve marine mammals with management vested in the Department of the Interior for sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee. The Department of Commerce is responsible for cetaceans and pinnipeds, other than the walrus. With certain specified exceptions, the Act establishes a moratorium on the taking and importation of marine mammals, as well as products taken from them.
Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929	Established a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to approve areas recommended by the Secretary of the Interior for acquisition with Migratory Bird Conservation Funds. The role of the commission was expanded by the North American Wetland Conservation Act to include approving wetlands acquisition, restoration, and enhancement proposals recommended by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council.
Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of 1934	Also commonly referred to as the “Duck Stamp Act,” requires waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older to possess a valid federal hunting stamp. Receipts from the sale of the stamp are deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund for the acquisition of migratory bird refuges.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended	This Act implements various treaties and conventions between the United States and Canada, Japan, Mexico, and the former Soviet Union for the protection of migratory birds. Except as allowed by special regulations, this Act makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, barter, export or import any migratory bird, part, nest, egg, or product.
Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands (1947), as amended	Authorizes and governs mineral leasing on acquired public lands.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Minerals Leasing Act of 1920, as amended	Authorizes and governs leasing of public lands for development of deposits of coal, oil, gas, and other hydrocarbons; sulphur; phosphate; potassium; and sodium. Section 185 of this title contains provisions relating to granting rights-of-way over federal lands for pipelines.
Mining Act of 1872, as amended	Authorizes and governs prospecting and mining for the so-called "hardrock" minerals (i.e., gold and silver) on public lands.
National and Community Service Act of 1990	Authorizes several programs to engage citizens of the U.S. in full- and/or part-time projects designed to combat illiteracy and poverty, provide job skills, enhance educational skills, and fulfill environmental needs. Among other things, this law establishes the American Conservation and Youth Service Corps to engage young adults in approved human and natural resource projects, which will benefit the public or are carried out on federal or Indian lands.
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969	Requires analysis, public comment, and reporting for environmental impacts of federal actions. It stipulates the factors to be considered in environmental impact statements, and requires that federal agencies employ an interdisciplinary approach in related decision-making and develop means to ensure that unqualified environmental values are given appropriate consideration, along with economic and technical considerations.
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended	It establishes a National Register of Historic Places and a program of matching grants for preservation of significant historical features. Federal agencies are directed to take into account the effects of their actions on items or sites listed or eligible for listing in the National Register.
National Trails System Act (1968), as amended	Established the National Trails System to protect the recreational, scenic, and historic values of some important trails. National recreation trails may be established by the Secretaries of Interior or Agriculture on land wholly or partly within their jurisdiction, with the consent of the involved state(s), and other land managing agencies, if any. National scenic and national historic trails may only be designated by Congress. Several national trails cross units of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966	Prior to 1966, there was no single federal law that governed the administration of the various national wildlife refuges that had been established. This Act defines the National Wildlife Refuge System and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to permit any use of a refuge provided such use is compatible with the major purposes(s) for which the refuge was established.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997	This Act amends the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966. This Act defines the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, establishes the legitimacy and appropriateness of six priority wildlife-dependent public uses, establishes a formal process for determining compatible uses of Refuge System lands, identifies the Secretary of the Interior as responsible for managing and protecting the Refuge System, and requires the development of a comprehensive conservation plan for all refuges outside of Alaska.
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990	Requires federal agencies and museums to inventory, determine ownership of, and repatriate certain cultural items and human remains under their control or possession. The Act also addresses the repatriation of cultural items inadvertently discovered by construction activities on lands managed by the agency.
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 2000	Establishes a matching grant program to fund projects that promote the conservation of neotropical migratory birds in the united States, Latin America, and the Caribbean.
North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989	Provides funding and administrative direction for implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the Tripartite Agreement on wetlands between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The North American Wetlands Conservation Council was created to recommend projects to be funded under the Act to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. Available funds may be expended for up to 50 percent of the United States' share cost of wetlands conservation projects in Canada, Mexico, or the United States (or 100 percent of the cost of projects on federal lands).
Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, as amended	This Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use, when such uses do not interfere with the area's primary purposes. It authorizes construction and maintenance of recreational facilities and the acquisition of land for incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development or protection of natural resources. It also authorizes the charging of fees for public uses.
Partnerships for Wildlife Act of 1992	Establishes a Wildlife Conservation and Appreciation Fund to receive appropriated funds and donations from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and other private sources to assist the state fish and game agencies in carrying out their responsibilities for conservation of non-game species. The funding formula is no more that 1/3 federal funds, at least 1/3 foundation funds, and at least 1/3 state funds.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Refuge Revenue Sharing Act of 1935, as amended	Provided for payments to counties in lieu of taxes from areas administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Counties are required to pass payments along to other units of local government within the county, which suffer losses in tax revenues due to the establishment of Service areas.
Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Requires nondiscrimination in the employment practices of federal agencies of the executive branch and contractors. It also requires all federally assisted programs, services, and activities to be available to people with disabilities.
Rivers and Harbors Appropriations Act of 1899, as amended	Requires the authorization by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) prior to any work in, on, over, or under a navigable water of the United States. The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act provides authority for the Service to review and comment on the effects on fish and wildlife activities proposed to be undertaken or permitted by the USACE. Service concerns include contaminated sediments associated with dredge or fill projects in navigable waters.
Sikes Act (1960), as amended	Provides for the cooperation by the Departments of Interior and Defense with state agencies in planning, development, and maintenance of fish and wildlife resources and outdoor recreation facilities on military reservations throughout the United States. It requires the Secretary of each military department to use trained professionals to manage the wildlife and fishery resource under his jurisdiction, and requires that federal and state fish and wildlife agencies be given priority in management of fish and wildlife activities on military reservations.
Transfer of Certain Real Property for Wildlife Conservation Purposes Act of 1948	This Act provides that upon determination by the Administrator of the General Services Administration, real property no longer needed by a federal agency can be transferred, without reimbursement, to the Secretary of the Interior if the land has particular value for migratory birds, or to a state agency for other wildlife conservation purposes.
Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)	Established the Refuge Roads Program, requires transportation planning that includes public involvement, and provides funding for approved public use roads and trails and associated parking lots, comfort stations, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.
Uniform Relocation and Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (1970), as amended	Provides for uniform and equitable treatment of persons who sell their homes, businesses, or farms to the Service. The Act requires that any purchase offer be no less than the fair market value of the property.

STATUE	DESCRIPTION
Water Resources Planning Act of 1965	Established Water Resources Council to be composed of Cabinet representatives including the Secretary of the Interior. The Council reviews river basin plans with respect to agricultural, urban, energy, industrial, recreational and fish and wildlife needs. The act also established a grant program to assist States in participating in the development of related comprehensive water and land use plans.
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended	This Act selects certain rivers of the nation possessing remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values; preserves them in a free-flowing condition; and protects their local environments.
Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended	This Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to review every roadless area of 5,000 acres or more and every roadless island regardless of size within the National Wildlife Refuge System and to recommend suitability of each such area. The Act permits certain activities within designated wilderness areas that do not alter natural processes. Wilderness values are preserved through a “minimum tool” management approach, which requires refuge managers to use the least intrusive methods, equipment, and facilities necessary for administering the areas.
Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970	Established a permanent Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program within the Departments of Interior and Agriculture. Within the Service, YCC participants perform many tasks on refuges, fish hatcheries, and research stations.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS	DESCRIPTIONS
EO 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment (1971)	States that if the Service proposes any development activities that may affect the archaeological or historic sites, the Service will consult with Federal and State Historic Preservation Officers to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.
EO 11644, Use of Off-road Vehicles on Public Land (1972)	Established policies and procedures to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.
EO 11988, Floodplain Management (1977)	The purpose of this Executive Order is to prevent federal agencies from contributing to the "adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains" and the "direct or indirect support of floodplain development." In the course of fulfilling their respective authorities, federal agencies "shall take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains."
EO 11989 (1977), Amends Section 2 of EO 11644	Directs agencies to close areas negatively impacted by off-road vehicles.
EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands (1977)	Federal agencies are directed to provide leadership and take action to minimize the destruction, loss of degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.
EO 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs (1982)	Seeks to foster intergovernmental partnerships by requiring federal agencies to use the state process to determine and address concerns of state and local elected officials with proposed federal assistance and development programs.
EO 12898, Environmental Justice (1994)	Requires federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS	DESCRIPTIONS
EO 12906, Coordinating Geographical Data Acquisition and Access (1994), Amended by EO 13286 (2003). Amendment of EOs and other actions in connection with transfer of certain functions to Secretary of DHS.	Recommended that the executive branch develop, in cooperation with state, local, and tribal governments, and the private sector, a coordinated National Spatial Data Infrastructure to support public and private sector applications of geospatial data. Of particular importance to comprehensive conservation planning is the National Vegetation Classification System (NVCS), which is the adopted standard for vegetation mapping. Using NVCS facilitates the compilation of regional and national summaries, which in turn, can provide an ecosystem context for individual refuges.
EO 12962, Recreational Fisheries (1995)	Federal agencies are directed to improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities in cooperation with states and tribes.
EO 13007, Native American Religious Practices (1996)	Provides for access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on federal lands used by Indian religious practitioners and direction to avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sites.
EO 13061, Federal Support of Community Efforts Along American Heritage Rivers (1997)	Established the American Heritage Rivers initiative for the purpose of natural resource and environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. The Act directs Federal agencies to preserve, protect, and restore rivers and their associated resources important to our history, culture, and natural heritage.
EO 13084, Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments (2000)	Provides a mechanism for establishing regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have tribal implications.
EO 13112, Invasive Species (1999)	Federal agencies are directed to prevent the introduction of invasive species, detect and respond rapidly to and control populations of such species in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner, accurately monitor invasive species, provide for restoration of native species and habitat conditions, conduct research to prevent introductions and to control invasive species, and promote public education on invasive species and the means to address them. This EO replaces and rescinds EO 11987, Exotic Organisms (1977).

EXECUTIVE ORDERS	DESCRIPTIONS
EO 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds. (2001)	Instructs federal agencies to conserve migratory birds by several means, including the incorporation of strategies and recommendations found in Partners in Flight Bird Conservation plans, the North American Waterfowl Plan, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan, into agency management plans and guidance documents.

Appendix D. Public Involvement

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENTS

The Service conducted three public meetings in February 2006 for the purpose of accepting public comments on issues to be addressed in the Tampa Bay CCP. The public meetings included an informal workshop where the public was invited to talk with refuge staff and review maps and information on the three refuges, a presentation on the refuges and the CCP process, and an open comment period during which the public was invited to raise issues and topics of concern and to ask questions.

The Service published announcements for the public meetings in the *Federal Register* and legal notices in the local newspapers. News releases were sent to local newspapers and public service announcements were sent to television and radio stations.

The first public meeting was held on February 8 in Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida, and was attended by 13 members of the public, including representatives from the state and county governments and a representative from Senator Mel Martinez's office. The second meeting was held on February 9 in St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida, and was attended by 26 members of the public, including representatives of state and county governments. The third public meeting was held on February 13 in Palmetto, Manatee County, Florida, and was attended by 12 members of the public, including representatives from the state government.

The planning team expanded its list of issues and concerns to include those generated by the agencies, organizations, businesses, and citizens from the local communities. These issues and concerns formed the basis for the development and comparison of objectives in the three alternatives described in the environmental assessment. The following paragraphs present a summary of comments from the three public meetings:

Public uses in wildlife refuges:

- Install mooring balls (buoys) to limit the number of visitors.

CCP Process:

- Long-term ecological monitoring needs to be conducted.
- The Egmont Key State Park Unit Management Plan and the CCP should be in sync with each other.

Species Management and Habitat Protection:

- A long-term solution to beach erosion needs to be determined.

Refuge Administration:

- The Service should keep a permanent staff presence in Tampa Bay.

Summary of Public comments on the Draft CCP

The notice that the Draft CCP was available was published in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2009. The public review and comment period for the Draft CCP was from April 26, 2009 through May 26, 2009. At least 57 persons attended two public meetings held to present the Draft CCP during the open comment period. Table 1 shows the locations and details of the public meetings.

Location	County	Date	Attendees	Speakers
Tampa Bay Watch Tierra Verde, Florida	Pinellas	5-08-09	13	5
Regional Planning Council, Agency on Bay Management Meeting Pinellas Park, Florida	Pinellas	5-14-09	44	1
		Totals	**57**	**6**

Refuge staff and other participants at the meetings included the following individuals:

*Richard Meyers – Assistant Refuge Manager (Primary Speaker)
Keith Ramos – Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
Joyce Kleen – Wildlife Biologist
Ivan Vicente – Public Use Specialist
Craig Cavanna – Refuge Law Enforcement Officer
*denotes attendance on May 14th at Pinellas Park

This section summarizes all comments that were received on the Draft CCP/EA for Tampa Bay Refuges. Public comments on this Draft CCP/EA were accepted from April 26, 2009 to May 26, 2009.

Several speakers identified themselves as representing the following organizations: The Friends of Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges (FTBNWR), The Egmont Key Alliance (EKA), and St. Petersburg Audubon Society (SPAS).

Notices of the Draft CCP/EA's availability and public meetings were sent to over 180 persons on the CCP mailing list, including representatives of the following Indian tribes: The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Tribe of Florida, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Poarch Band of Creek Indians of Alabama, and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma. A total of 23 comment letters were received by mail or e-mail from 12 persons and the following 8 organizations: The FTBNWR, EKA, Tampa Bay Ferry, St. Petersburg Audubon (SPAS), Save the Manatee Club (SMC), Tampa Bay Watch, Friends of the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex, Inc., and Audubon of Florida. Additionally, comments were received from the following government agencies: the FWC, FDEP, Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) and FDEP, Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas (CAMA).

The Draft CCP/EA was circulated through the Florida State Clearinghouse to state, regional, and local governments: The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, Florida Department of Community Affairs, FWC, Florida Departments of State, Transportation, FDEP-DRP, and the Southwest Florida

Water Management District. The clearinghouse agencies review documents pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 12372, Gubernatorial Executive Order 95-359, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. FWC replied that the agency had no comments on the Draft CCP/EA. The FDEP-DRP had commented on the Service's Internal Review Draft and all appropriate comments were incorporated into or addressed within the Draft CCP/EA. The Florida State Clearinghouse issued a letter dated June 11, 2009 and signed by Sally B. Mann, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Programs, DEP. It states that the Draft CCP/EA for the Tampa Bay Refuges is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Service must respond to substantive comments received during the open comment period. This includes both written comments and oral statements made at public meetings. For purposes of this CCP, a substantive comment is one that is: (1) within the scope of the proposed action and the alternatives that were considered under the EA; (2) is specific to the proposed action; or (3) is directly related to the proposed action. The Service does not reply directly to each commenter. Instead, the comments submitted during the open comment period were evaluated, summarized, and grouped into the following categories:

Habitat Management
Fish and Wildlife Population Management
Visitor Services
Resource Protection
Refuge Administration
Other

The Service's responses to the comments are provided below by category, as are the related goals and objectives in the CCP. Editorial comments on text or grammar were incorporated in the revision of the CCP document as applicable.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Comment: Objective 3 proposes to protect and conserve manatee seagrass feeding habitat on the east side of Egmont Key NWR by working with the state and other partners to enforce the vessel exclusion zone around the seagrass beds on the east side of Egmont Key NWR, expand the vessel exclusion zone out from shore, and clarify the boundary by creating a straight border. SMC supports these measures, which would result in greater protection for manatees and their food source.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Regarding Egmont Key NWR, note the dune stabilization and wildlife food source benefits of strangler figs and coin vine.

Service Response: The CCP has been revised.

Comment: Egmont Key is not adjacent to an aquatic preserve, but a recent study of biotic factors affecting island plant distributions included transects on Egmont Key. Based on observations during that study, CAMA strongly encourages an active fire management program on the island. In addition to preempting potential gopher tortoise foraging areas, the large amounts of fuel on the ground may pose a public safety threat.

Service Response: A Fire Management Plan for Egmont Key NWR was approved in January 2009. This plan will institute a regular cycle of prescribed fire to reduce the island's hazardous fuel loads to minimize wildfire threats to public safety and wildlife. Prescribed fire will also be used as a tool to accomplish habitat management goals to benefit native plant and animal communities on Egmont Key NWR.

Comment: FDEP-CAMA investigators working on a plant study are currently analyzing data, and they should be working on a manuscript soon. Hopefully, the data from that study can help in selecting optimal elevations, soil salinities, etc., for any plant restoration that may be done on the island of Egmont Key.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Several comments received oppose the provisions in Alternatives B and C to restore Passage Key: Remove the section regarding restoration and maintenance of Passage Key. The birds have now moved to Egmont Key and resources would be better utilized in keeping Egmont Key a suitable habitat. The restoration of Passage Key should be revisited in the next CCP in 15 years. Passage Key has eroded away then reappeared in the past and will possibly do so again.

Service Response: Passage Key's is an intermittent island with a changing footprint. An interpretation of the Wilderness Act may be required to determine the "minimum tool necessary" for this task to be accomplished. The erosion of Passage Key is caused in some part by human activity in the Tampa Bay (heavy boat traffic and dredging), as well as by storms. The proposed alternative's Goal 1, Objective 4, is intended to serve the purpose of the refuge to provide habitat for birds. The strategies listed in Chapter IV provide information on what actions may be taken to meet the objectives. Details on specific location and timing of actions will be developed and described in relevant step-down management plans and annual operating plans, and further assessed for environmental impacts through Intra-Service Section 7 Biological Consultations. The CCP is only meant to provide broad guidance for a 15-year timeframe; whereas all strategies will be prioritized, implemented, and evaluated in an adaptive management approach within the constraint of limited fiscal resources, environmental conditions at the time, project feasibilities, and other relevant factors.

FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATION MANAGEMENT

Comment: Regarding Egmont Key NWR, update the state listing for gopher tortoises to "threatened." Table 7, *Gopherus polyphemus* State Protection Status is listed as LS (Species of Special Concern). Correct State Status to LT (Listed as Threatened) with FWC or FL Chap 68A.27.004.

Service Response: The change in State Protection Status has been noted in the CCP.

Comment: In addition to regular bird counts on the Tampa Bay Refuges, migratory bird surveys should be conducted at appropriate times of the year to document the critical importance of the refuges to passerine bird species.

Service Response: The Service concurs with this suggestion and will work with partners to improve survey methodology and frequency.

Comment: The status of Passage Key indicates “hundreds ... nest annually"--while historically correct, that is not the current status. The continuing viability of Passage Key is a major concern and 'routine' (as used in the EA) surveys of Passage Key should be performed to monitor re-emergence and vegetative status, resting and feeding bird status, and verification of 'no public access' condition.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Add a water source for migrating birds, especially during the fall and spring.

Service Response: During typical weather cycles, Egmont Key receives enough rainfall to provide island biota ample freshwater. During times of extreme drought, the Service will consider adding artificial water sources for the benefit of resident wildlife and migrating birds. Additionally, artificially adding water sources to the island would increase standing water sources that could potentially escalate mosquito breeding and thus public disease concerns.

Comment: The National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida support the "Cats Indoors" program, and do not support allowing any domestic or feral cats to roam on Egmont Key. Any cats kept on Egmont Key should be harnessed and leashed if they are outdoors.

Service Response: The Service as a rule does not allow pets on Egmont Key NWR. All exotic animal species including feral cats found within the refuge boundary will be subject to removal or eradication as specified in the step-down predator control plan for Egmont Key scheduled to be completed in 2011. The Service will also work to educate island partners and the visiting public on the potential impacts of mammalian predator species on Egmont Key’s resident wildlife and migratory birds.

VISITOR SERVICES

Visitor Center Facilities

Comment: A couple of comments were received regarding Egmont Key NWR, to initiate a cooperative effort to determine the best use of the Fort Dade Guard House for public information and education. Open the renovated guard house with a visitor center. The best methods of preserving the refuges are public awareness and education. If the visitor center was just opened summer weekends and holidays, it would have an impact. The addition of a nature shop will raise funds to help meet the expenses of the refuges. At least, get the kiosks already made in place on Egmont Key.

Service Response: The Service will collaborate with State Park partners to determine the best use of the Guard House Visitor Center. The Service is currently in the design and construction phase of indoor exhibits for the Visitor Center and hopes to open the facility on a limited basis in the near future.

Comment: Many comments expressed the need for visitor’s center on the mainland in the future. Entertain the idea that the mainland office/storage space be found at a location that would also have room for a small visitor center for the Tampa Bay Refuges. This would give the refuges exposure to the public who may not be able to make it out to the actual refuges. When people come and visit the Tampa Bay area, they can see what our refuges have to offer, even though they might not have the time, physical ability, or money to get out to Egmont. We also encourage a partnership with Pinellas County Park System, being extremely starved for money right now, would welcome your money and your presence at Fort De Soto Park.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Many comments expressed the immediate need for restroom facilities on Egmont Key. Restrooms on Egmont Key should be a top priority with 165,000 visitors each year and growing. Expedite construction of restroom facilities, self-composting toilets might be ideal, but may not be feasible due to the possibility of tropical storm or hurricane tidal surges.

Service Response: The Service agrees that restroom facilities are needed on Egmont Key. The Final CCP covers a time span of 15 years during which proposed projects will be implemented only as feasible and necessary, based on the availability of limited fiscal resources, unforeseen events, and adaptive management principles that include monitoring and evaluation.

Comment: Several comments expressed that all Service facilities, new and existing, should be constructed or retrofitted with green energy (e.g., solar panels for electricity, hot water, desalination, etc.). Facilities on the refuge should work towards being carbon neutral. Vehicles and motors should be purchased from American companies and the greenest technology available.

Service Response: Comment noted.

New Service Facilities

Comment: Build the dock with boat lifts for exclusive use by USFWS. Build the bunkhouse to create independency from the pilot's association and to be able to implement Alternative C quickly as suggested by the Friends Group if the Florida State Park is pulled out of Egmont. The new facility should make use of environmental technology available for the generation of power, as well as be built to withstand hurricanes; something that the current structures on Egmont Key are not capable of.

Service Response: Comment noted. The Final CCP covers a time span of 15 years during which proposed projects will be implemented only as feasible and necessary, based on the availability of limited fiscal resources, unforeseen events, and adaptive management principles that include monitoring and evaluation.

Comment: Pinellas NWR needs a huge educational promotion about the problems with monofilament fishing line to lessen the number of birds killed each year from entanglement.

Service Response: The Service will work with Tampa Bay partners to increase awareness of the hazard associated with monofilament fishing line.

Comment: Although specific manatee habitats may be outside refuge jurisdiction, manatees may come into close contact with refuge visitors, particularly on Egmont Key. Therefore, enhanced manatee educational opportunities are needed. With regard to manatee education, SMC would like to offer the use of our various education and outreach materials, which can be viewed online and requested by contacting SMC.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Several comments expressed the desire that the refuge complex public use specialist should provide interpretive/educational tours open to the public on Egmont Key NWR at least 4 times per year.

Service Response: Comment noted. The Service will make an effort to increase interpretive/ educational tours on Egmont Key.

Comment: Several comments were received regarding user fees: User fees should be implemented on Egmont Key. Duck Stamps could also be honored. Stickers for boats can be sold and ferry operators (concessionaires) could collect the fee from their passengers. It should be specified that tour operators (ferryboats) be approved by the Service. Private boats can purchase a decal for the year and concessionaire boats can charge a daily rate. This will bring in much needed funds to help the refuges. User fees would defray construction and operation costs.

Service Response: The Service will work with State Park partners to evaluate the need of a user fee demonstration program on Egmont Key. The refuge manager will make the final determination of the suitability and feasibility of a fee program at Egmont Key.

Comment: Several comments expressed that concessionaires could provide photo opportunities around the south end of Egmont Key during nesting season. The concessionaire concept in Alternative C would provide USFWS with income and better control.

Service Response: The Service will need to determine the suitability of the concessionaire concept for Egmont Key. All commercial operators will need to operate with Service regulations and guidelines as specified by annual special use permits and the step-down Commercial Use Plan.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

Erosion Control

Comment: Several comments expressed the wish for the Service to work with the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regarding erosion control.

Service Response: The Service will work with partners including the Corps to implement feasible erosion control measures on Egmont Key. The re-nourishment alternatives outlined in the Corps' Egmont Key Feasibility Study will be reviewed and used to guide the Service decision-making process to determine which option will serve the purposes of the refuge best, but remain economically feasible.

Comment: On Pinellas NWR, oyster bar construction should be used judiciously as a means of stabilizing shorelines. Often, oyster bars constructed to reduce erosion are placed in locations and orientations that would not be natural for oyster bar growth. When possible, *Spartina* spp. or other means should be used to stabilize island shorelines.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Cultural Resources

Comment: The CCP refers to the Cultural Resources Management Unit which would be at the north end of the island, and I was interested in what that might reflect. Is that something that would be specifically devoted to the historic artifacts up there including the gun batteries, the lighthouse, etc.?

Service Response: The CCP describes the establishment of a Cultural Resources Management Unit. This management unit will be specified by the step-down Cultural Resource Protection Plan scheduled for completion in 2013. The Cultural Resourced Management Unit will describe, document, and detail maintenance/management of specific cultural resources located on the refuge for interpretation to the public. Additional cultural resources will be added to the management unit as the Service acquires additional lands in the refuge boundary.

Comment: Regarding Egmont Key NWR, create a separate objective to deal with the stabilization and preservation of the various structures on Egmont Key.

Service Response: Project 5 listed under Habitat Management for Erosion Monitoring and Beach Restoration would indirectly benefit the historical structures by restoring habitat for the beach-nesting birds and sea turtles and would provide needed sand to prevent the destruction of historical structures. Project 9 listed under Cultural Resources Protection states that the structures will be protected from vandalism and encroaching native and exotic plants.

REFUGE ADMINISTRATION

Comment: I am concerned about the jurisdictional issues that exist on the management of the island. Under Plan B, you are, in effect, keeping the state park, but it's not clear whether you would have all the land managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, except the pilot station. It is going to take a while for this plan to be put into effect, if it is put into effect, are the things you would do in the future going to eliminate jurisdictional issues?

Service Response: The Service has a cooperative management agreement with FDEP-DRP Park and Recreation to manage all Service-owned lands as part of Egmont Key State Park. The State Park's jurisdiction will mirror the Service's jurisdiction, regardless of acquisitions. The Service and the State Park will still face jurisdictional issues in the waters surrounding the island of Egmont Key.

Comment: The CCP specifies an amount of $6 million for land acquisition and I was curious as to just what that was for. I don't know whether that's on Egmont or elsewhere. But if the land that the Coast Guard manages is taken over by the Service to manage, I would think that is just an intergovernmental transfer and there wouldn't be any capital or land acquisition investment.

Service Response: The Service has provided a rough estimate of cost of purchase based on 2008 market values for the 5.5 acres owned by Hillsborough County and occupied by the Tampa Bay Pilots Association. The north end of Egmont Key would be acquired as an inter-agency land transfer from the Bureau of Land Management, which is a sister agency within the Department of the Interior.

Comment: With regard to the 55-acre expansion, Table 14, page 106 "Summary of proposed projects and costs (in 2008 dollars)" is misleading. It could be understood to assign all or most of the $6 million costs of proposed land acquisition to the 55-acre tract, when, in fact, the tract is owned by the government and would be transferred at no cost. The $6 million figure applies to a 5-acre parcel under a 99-year lease to Hillsborough County. Clarification should be noted in the Draft CCP, both on page 106 under "project 10," and on page 107 under "Grand Totals" and "Grand Total without Land Acquisition."

Service Response: The suggested changes have been made to the CCP.

Comment: The Cooperative Agreement between the FDEP-DRP and the USFWS (dated 12/4/89) requires the FDEP-DRP to develop an Egmont Key Unit Management Plan (UMP) subject to the approval of the USFWS. Since a mutually acceptable UMP has not yet been finalized, staff recommends that the agencies work together to complete the UMP. FDEP-DRP staff requests that the CCP address regulatory and law enforcement authority on Egmont Key and the waters immediately surrounding the island. Suggestion for the final CCP regarding Egmont Key NWR would include providing a more detailed proposal to regulate public traffic.

Service Response: The Service will work with FDEP-DRP to finalize an Egmont Key Unit Management Plan.

Comment: Several comments expressed the following opinion: The federal lands located at the north end of Egmont Key should be transferred from the Coast Guard to the Service.

Service Response: The Service has a documented interest since 1973 in acquisition of all the federally owned lands on the island of Egmont Key. The Service concurs with the comments and will coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management to acquire non-refuge lands as they become available for transfer.

Comment: Under goal 5, objective 3, under the sub-heading "Strategies," the first strategy recommends: "Facilitate the transfer of the USCG property (approx. 10 acres) to the Service." It should be noted that the Coast Guard relinquished its interest in the approximately 55 acres on the northern tip of Egmont Key in 2000. Since the USCG's relinquishment, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has been holding the U.S. interest pending reassignment to a federal agency. References throughout the Draft CCP to the 55-acre tract as belonging to the Coast Guard do not accurately reflect its current status. Also, the approximate acreage is 55 rather than 10.

Proposed Projects, Project 10, page 102, refers to a minor expansion plan incorporating 2 parcels of land into the Egmont Key NWR. Of these 2 parcels, the critical acquisition is the incorporation of the 55-acre tract at the northern end of Egmont Key. In 2004, Representatives Ginny Brown-Waite and Jim Davis jointly requested then-Secretary of Interior Norton to accomplish this incorporation. Responding on behalf of the Secretary, the Service stated that "…because of its value to the wildlife that use the island, the Service has, on multiple occasions expressed interest in the property." The letter further noted that in 2000 the Coast Guard formally relinquished the 55 acres and GSA forwarded the relinquishment to BLM. Finally, the letter concluded by observing that, "The Service is in the process of developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Egmont Key NWR. We believe this is the appropriate vehicle for evaluating alternatives for the future use of the island."

Since 1973, the Service has placed numerous requests with BLM for the formal inclusion of the 55 acres into the refuge. The desirability of the action is once more validated by the above conclusions of the Draft CCP. The Service signaled approval of this part of the Draft CCP in the above congressional correspondence. Our research has uncovered no recorded objection to the obvious advantages of placing the tract under the administrative authority of the USFWS. We therefore respectfully request that the CCP recommend to the Department of the Interior that the administrative authority over the tract be expeditiously transferred to FWS.

Service Response: The CCP has been corrected for the noted acreage errors.

Comment: Continue excellent partnership with the State Park overlay of Egmont Key. The state has tried to remove the State Park from Egmont Key a few times now and USFWS needs to be prepared to jump in with equal or better manpower at short notice. For this reason, I prefer plan C now. With the continued economic downturn impacts which likely will provide even less of a tax base for the State of Florida into 2010, I worry that the Start Park overlay will be abandoned in 2010.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Currently, there are organizations that are aligned with your goals, and to actually start those relationships now rather than waiting until all this comes to fruition. They already exist with the same goals you have. So it would make a lot of sense to implement those partnerships and perhaps define

them in the plan a little bit more between the different organizations. For example, the guardhouse is built and the state has a lot of directions or is doing a lot of the objectives that you mentioned, so you have two government organizations going in the same direction on the same goals, on the same island, but not working together; and regarding the Visitor Services section, the Dock and Ferry terminal, there are currently many commercial operations going on out there, so there should be some plan in this document for commercial services, ferry terminals, and carrying capacity. That's something that was mentioned in the plan but it didn't really identify that there would be a study on how much public use the island can sustain, and then put it forward with a plan for commercial services.

Service Response: The CCP is a general plan, but the step-down plans will fully expand on the details of refuge management. The Service will complete a step-down Visitor Services Plan that is scheduled to be completed by 2012. In 2013, a step-down Commercial Use Plan will be completed as well. Both plans will dictate how the Service will manage commercial operations.

Comment: Partnerships/Volunteer Opportunities (page 105) - I have heard concerns expressed that volunteer groups have not been mentioned specifically by name in this section or within the CCP. I do not believe the CCP needs to be changed to do so, and can stand as is since it does explain that the Service uses such in partnerships. To attempt to name all and inadvertently leave one or two off a list might cause some ill feelings.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Need continued Federal/State partnership on Egmont.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Several comments expressed that tour boat operators should be under contract as concessionaires for better control and income for the refuge and USFWS.

Service Response: The refuge manager will make determinations on the suitability of an island concessionaire program.

Comment: The FTBNWR would like to acknowledge the work that went into creating the Draft CCP/EA document. It was well thought out and has provided invaluable background information. The proposed actions in Alternatives B and C to manage the Tampa Bay Refuges are positive steps in conserving and managing the fish and wildlife resources of these refuges. The three alternatives are well-defined.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Audubon of Florida congratulates the Service staff on preparing a very comprehensive plan. We value our longstanding partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in managing wildlife resources on the Tampa Bay Refuges and support preparation of this Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

Service Response: The Service values the partnership with Audubon as well.

Comment: Several comments expressed the satisfaction that Alternative B includes: 300-foot buffer zone around Egmont Key for law enforcement and other Tampa Bay Refuges; restrooms for Egmont Key; slow speed zone by Little Bird Key for erosion; transfer of property on the north end of Egmont from USCG (or DoD) to USFWS; Federal/State partnership on Egmont; and an improved number of personnel to focus on the refuges.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: If the USFWS/FL State Park agreement ends, then Alternative C should be immediately put into place for Egmont Key NWR.

Service Response: The Service will evaluate the need to modify the CCP in response to major changes on the island including the loss of Egmont Key State Park staff due to state budget constraints.

Comment: After reviewing the CCP documents I have come to believe that while Alternative C is the best plan for the Tampa Bay Refuges, I recognize the fact that the possibility of Alternative C coming to fruition is not realistic in the current economy. I do strongly believe within the next 15 years, the refuges of Tampa Bay should become their own complex operating independently of the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex. The distance between headquarters and the location of Tampa Bay Refuges hinder the progression of meeting the needs and development of the refuges.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: There is an assumption made in Alternative B that the Florida Park Service (FPS) will remain on Egmont Key. Recent activity by the Florida legislature indicates that there is no guarantee that funding will continue to support the FPS commitment to Egmont Key. FPS currently provides many services that FWS does not. Therefore, Alternative B must include a statement that if FPS is no longer present on Egmont Key (at least at its current commitment), then, Alternative C regarding Egmont Key should be put in place immediately.

Service Response: The Service will evaluate the need to modify the CCP in response to major changes on the island including the loss of Egmont Key State Park staff due to state budget constraints.

Comment: Management Direction/Goal 6 (page 96) - Objective 1 does not seem to be timely; staff resources are needed currently. The "Strategies' appear to have pre-selected Alternative B from the Environmental Assessment. This is predicated on the State of Florida continuing its support for Egmont Key. Should that not happen, much of the Visitor Services and refuge staffing will need to be revisited.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Much of the data appears to have been collected in 2004 with some updates in 2006. This will make the data almost five years old when the CCP is approved and almost 20 years old at the end of the CCP interval. It is recommended that the CCP state a commitment to a periodic (e.g., 5-year) review of updated data, particularly recreational usage and wildlife surveys, for continuing validity and identification of adverse trends. Projected utilization of the refuges has not been well-defined. Formal utilization assessments should be conducted periodically (e.g., every 5 years) to determine any changes in resource requirements that are needed.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Alternative A heavily depends on volunteers and partners to support the Service in Tampa Bay. This alternative is not a positive step forward in conserving and managing the wildlife and cultural resources and should not be considered. Variability in both volunteer availability and partner commitments may exist over the next 15 years. FTBNWR does not recommend this alternative.

Service Response: The Service concurs and chooses Alternative B, which will provide a slow- to-moderate growth in refuge resources. Alternative B also promotes the continued partnership with Egmont Key State Park.

Comment: Background/Fish and Wildlife Service (page 2) - The description of the overall Service mission should include a brief discussion of Hunting Permit (Duck) Stamps as major source of funds for land acquisition.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Refuge Overview/Introduction (page 13) - The first paragraph states all 7 mangrove islands of Pinellas NWR are within the city limits of St. Petersburg. I don't believe this is correct.

Service Response: The CCP has been corrected to accurately state that only the mangrove island of Indian Key is within the city limits of St. Petersburg.

Comment: Refuge Overview/Wildlife (page 52 et seq.) - Although listed without comment, the text should address the potential use of appropriate habitat on the NWRs by other nearby species, particularly red knot (petition for listing submitted to the Service and of moderate occurrence both north and south of Egmont Key), snowy plover, Wilson's plover (possibly the rarest unlisted North American plover), and caspian tern. The discussion of these species related to Passage Key should also reference Egmont Key.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Refuge Overview/Visitor Services (page 77) - The estimate of 130,000-170,000 visitors annually seems to be a state park number, but is not indexed to year. This is a vitally important statistic along with carrying capacity of Egmont Key. Yearly data needs to be provided, especially following Pinellas County's approval of the Shell Key Management Plan, and projections for future use should be provided. This is an essential item in determining future staff and law enforcement needs.

Service Response: FDEP-DRP is responsible for public use activities on the island of Egmont as detailed by cooperative agreement with the Service. The Service received monthly and annual visitation statistics from park management.

Comment: Clarify: Page 84 notes 60,000 commercial visitors, but page 94 indicates 70,000 visitors annually.

Service Response: The CCP has been corrected to clarify that 70,000 commercial visitors come to Egmont Key.

Comment: On page 23, Figure 12 - the base map does not accurately show the location and size of the Richard T. Paul Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary, one of the most important bird colonies in Florida, at the mouth of the Alafia River Shipping Channel, Tampa Port Authority Spoil Island 2D, Tampa Port Authority Spoil Island 3D, and Tampa Port Authority Fishhook Spoil Island, all of which are posted bird colonies in Hillsborough Bay.

Service Response: Figure 12 - Conservation areas in the Tampa Bay Region does not accurately show the location of the Florida Coastal Island Sanctuaries. These maps were produced under contract in 2005. If feasible before publication, the map will be updated.

Law Enforcement

Comment: Many comments expressed the need for the Service to establish additional restrictions on the public use and consumption of alcohol and dogs on the refuge via codification of these restrictions above what is already applicable.

There is no mention in the plan about banning alcohol on the island and in the waterway around it. I think if we don't put that in there we're going to end up with drunks coming there to party. And we need that cooperating agreement with whoever owns the waterway around our island. Even to get cooperating agreement for the waterways surrounding Egmont Key to equal what Egmont Key State Park has now (400 feet).

The recent new restrictions in Pinellas County on Shell Key have driven many of those recreational boaters to other places like Egmont Key. Since Egmont Key is in Hillsborough County, it is a new "ball game." Do the current Federal regulations give/have sufficient teeth to protect the refuge not only on the land above the water line; but off the shoreline where these recreational boaters could be out of the Service's jurisdiction from any enforcement action? This action needs to be implemented now, because it is most likely a long process.

The CCP should state that no alcohol is allowed on the refuge islands or in the surrounding waters. This will make it easier to avoid the problems that neighboring Shell Key Preserve had with excessive drinking, nudity, fights, noise, and litter. Those same boaters who are now not allowed near Shell Key are still in the Tampa Bay area looking for a new place to party. The current rule for disorderly behavior is more difficult to enforce and very dangerous for law enforcement personnel. Currently, many boaters come out to Egmont Key to get drunk on the weekends.

Service Response: Pets are not permitted on Egmont Key and signs have been posted throughout the island informing visitors that pets are not allowed. Alcohol is not permitted within state parks. The brochure for Egmont Key State Park and the tear sheet for Egmont Key NWR both state that pets and intoxicants are not permitted. The Service currently has no refuge regulation or policy banning the use of alcohol on Egmont Key NWR. The Service can enforce state regulations that prohibit alcohol. The refuge manager has the authority to initiate new refuge regulations that address the use of alcohol on refuge lands if the need for refuge specific regulations is determined.

Comment: Many comments have expressed the need for additional law enforcement jurisdiction on the islands, USFWS should have jurisdiction up to 300 feet from shore (buffer zone):

One piece to really emphasize is the jurisdiction in the water for law enforcement. I've been out on that island many times and I've seen a lot of activity out in the water that I really understand that we can't do much with right now. So it would be good to enforce some rules out in the water. Jurisdictional control over the waterway is needed. Cooperative law enforcement agreements with other jurisdictions would be a big help. It would be nice to have an agreement with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Department or the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department so that if they see a violation, they would be able to enforce as well as you. Why not give them the authority to act?

Page 36 discusses that manatee foraging areas need to be protected from recreational/boating disturbances, and suggests that a 30- to 300-foot submerged land buffer zone is needed to protect bird nesting and seagrass foraging areas, particularly around Egmont and Whale Keys. SMC supports the creation of such a buffer zone and proposes that a larger zone (i.e., 300-foot) will be most effective for resource protection.

The state currently has a cooperative agreement for a 300-foot buffer zone in the water for law enforcement purposes. The USFWS needs to immediately implement the same cooperative agreement with the agency that controls the waters surrounding Egmont Key NWR.

Service Response: The Service will work with partners and the Tampa Port Authority to improve the law enforcement jurisdiction and agreements around Egmont Key based on a determination of need and feasibility by the refuge manager.

Comment: Chronic and acute disturbance of nesting colonial waterbirds, colonial and solitary shorebirds is one of the major causes of reproductive failure on the Tampa Bay Refuges. We encourage the USFWS to maintain a high profile law enforcement presence at all refuges. At all refuges and particularly at Egmont Key, disturbance from boaters, fishermen, and the public approaching the refuge beaches from the water causes nesting birds to leave their nests and leave their eggs or young unprotected. Even during a short disturbance incident, eggs or chicks can die from either weather exposure or sudden predation from fish crows or other avian predators that can occur in the few moments that birds are off their nests. During longer disturbance incidents the risk of egg or chick loss increases significantly. We recommend that the Service establish a law enforcement buffer zone and maintain a buffer closure during the nesting season to improve nesting success for beach-nesting birds and colonial waterbirds. The buffer should equal or exceed (needed near historical facilities) the existing State Park Service buffer of 500 feet, and in no case should be less than 300 feet - the buffer distance recommended by the FWC to protect nesting birds.

Service Response: The Service will work with partners and the Tampa Port Authority to improve the law enforcement jurisdiction and agreements around Egmont Key based on a determination of need and feasibility by the refuge manager.

Comment: Hire staff for the Tampa Bay Refuges such as but not limited to: full-time law enforcement, public use technician, and assistant manager. Need an improved number of personnel to focus on the refuges.

Service Response: The Service proposes to add 3.5 additional staff to manage Tampa Bay NWRs over the next 15 years.

Comment: Park ranger presence should be increased to guard against illegal access by the public and to provide predator control to protect nesting birds on the keys.

Service Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Additional law enforcement personnel should be assigned to Tampa Bay Refuges seasonally (in addition to the permanent law enforcement officers assigned to Tampa Bay) (i.e., during busy holiday weekends or when heavy visitation is expected). Ideally, one full-time law enforcement officer should live on Egmont Key NWR.

Service Response: Currently, the Service has no housing facilities available to provide residence for a full-time law enforcement or any other staff.

Comment: Several comments expressed the need for Pinellas NWR's Little Bird Key to have a no-wake zone. The waves from boaters blasting through the channel are eroding the island. Even a slow speed zone by Little Bird Key would reduce erosion of the island.

Service Response: The Service will work Pinellas County waterway officials to evaluate the need of implementing a no-wake or slow-speed zone to minimize wake action impacts to Little Bird Key.

Comment: On page 35 of the draft CCP, it is stated that entanglement is a serious problem within the Pinellas NWR. Perhaps the Service could partner with nearby cities and counties to increase the number of monofilament recycling bins available at boat ramps and other locations used by shoreline anglers. More information about the monofilament recycling program and acquiring recycling bins is available at the following website: http://www.fishinglinerecycling.org/index.asp

Service Response: The Service currently partners with organizations like Tampa Bay Watch and the FTBNWR to increase awareness and promote the use of monofilament recycling bins.

Appendix E. Appropriate Use Determinations

Tampa Bay Refuges Appropriate Use Determinations

An appropriate use determination is the initial decision process a refuge manager follows when first considering whether or not to allow a proposed use on a refuge. The refuge manager must find that a use is appropriate before undertaking a compatibility review of the use. This process clarifies and expands on the compatibility determination process by describing when refuge managers should deny a proposed use without determining compatibility. If a proposed use is not appropriate, it will not be allowed and a compatibility determination will not be undertaken.

Except for the uses noted below, the refuge manager must decide if a new or existing use is an appropriate refuge use. If an existing use is not appropriate, the refuge manager will eliminate or modify the use as expeditiously as practicable. If a new use is not appropriate, the refuge manager will deny the use without determining compatibility. Uses that have been administratively determined to be appropriate are:

- Six wildlife-dependent recreational uses - As defined by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the six wildlife-dependent recreational uses (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation) are determined to be appropriate. However, the refuge manager must still determine if these uses are compatible.

- Take of fish and wildlife under state regulations - States have regulations concerning take of wildlife that includes hunting, fishing, and trapping. The Service considers take of wildlife under such regulations appropriate. However, the refuge manager must determine if the activity is compatible before allowing it on a refuge.

Statutory Authorities for this policy:

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, 16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee. This law provides the authority for establishing policies and regulations governing refuge uses, including the authority to prohibit certain harmful activities. The Act does not authorize any particular use, but rather authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to allow uses only when they are compatible and "under such regulations as he may prescribe." This law specifically identifies certain public uses that, when compatible, are legitimate and appropriate uses within the Refuge System. The law states ". . . it is the policy of the United States that . . .compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate general public use of the System . . .compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are the priority general public uses of the System and shall receive priority consideration in refuge planning and management; and . . . when the Secretary determines that a proposed wildlife-dependent recreational use is a compatible use within a refuge, that activity should be facilitated . . . the Secretary shall . . . ensure that priority general public uses of the System receive enhanced consideration over other general public uses in planning and management within the System . . . ." The law also states "in administering the System, the Secretary is authorized to take the following actions: . . . issue regulations to carry out this Act." This policy implements the standards set in the Act by providing enhanced consideration of priority general public uses and ensuring other public uses do not interfere with our ability to provide quality, wildlife-dependent recreational uses.

Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, 16 U.S.C. 460k. The Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to administer refuges, hatcheries, and other conservation areas for recreational use, when such uses do not interfere with the area's primary purposes. It authorizes construction and maintenance of recreational facilities and the acquisition of land for incidental fish and wildlife dependent recreational development or protection of natural resources. It also authorizes the charging of fees for public uses.

Other Statutes that Establish Refuges, including the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 410hh - 410hh-5, 460 mm - 460mm-4, 539-539e, and 3101 - 3233; 43 U.S.C. 1631 et seq.).

Executive Orders. The Service must comply with Executive Order 11644 when allowing use of off-highway vehicles on refuges. This order requires the Service to designate areas as open or closed to off-highway vehicles in order to protect refuge resources, promote safety, and minimize conflict among the various refuge users; monitor the effects of these uses once they are allowed; and amend or rescind any area designation as necessary based on the information gathered. Furthermore, Executive Order 11989 requires the Service to close areas to off-highway vehicles when it is determined that the use causes or will cause considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, habitat, or cultural or historic resources. Statutes, such as ANILCA, take precedence over executive orders.

Definitions:

Appropriate Use
A proposed or existing use on a refuge that meets at least one of the following four conditions.

1) The use is a wildlife-dependent recreational use as identified in the Improvement Act.
2) The use contributes to fulfilling the refuge purpose(s), the Refuge System mission, or goals or objectives described in a refuge management plan approved after October 9, 1997, the date the Improvement Act was signed into law.
3) The use involves the take of fish and wildlife under state regulations.
4) The use has been found to be appropriate as specified in section 1.11.

*Native American***.** American Indians in the conterminous United States and Alaska Natives (including Aleuts, Eskimos, and Indians) who are members of federally recognized tribes.

Priority General Public Use. A compatible wildlife-dependent recreational use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

Quality. The criteria used to determine a quality recreational experience include:

- Promotes safety of participants, other visitors, and facilities.
- Promotes compliance with applicable laws and regulations and responsible behavior.
- Minimizes or eliminates conflicts with fish and wildlife population or habitat goals or objectives in a plan approved after 1997.
- Minimizes or eliminates conflicts with other compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.
- Minimizes conflicts with neighboring landowners.
- Promotes accessibility and availability to a broad spectrum of the American people.
- Promotes resource stewardship and conservation.

- Promotes public understanding and increases public appreciation of America's natural resources and the Service's role in managing and protecting these resources.
- Provides reliable/reasonable opportunities to experience wildlife.
- Uses facilities that are accessible and blend into the natural setting.
- Uses visitor satisfaction to help define and evaluate programs.

Wildlife-Dependent Recreational Use. As defined by the Improvement Act, a use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay Refuges

Use: Mosquito Management (Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas National Wildlife Refuges)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will **generally** not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. **Yes** X **No** ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate_____ **Appropriate** X

Refuge Manager: Signed Date: 3/22/2010

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed Date: 4/20/2010

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Photography, video, filming, or audio recording (commercial, news and educational) (all refuges)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes X No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate ____ Appropriate X

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 03/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Research and surveys (all refuges)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.8D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate_____ Appropriate_X_

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 09/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Beach uses - shelling and fossil collecting (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate_____ Appropriate_X_

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 02/20/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 02/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Beach uses-sunbathing and swimming from shore (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes X No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate____ Appropriate X

Refuge Manager: Signed Date: 09/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed Date: 09/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Concessions (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate_____ Appropriate_X_

Signed

Refuge Manager_____ Date: 09/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Signed

Refuge Supervisor_____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Hiking/walking (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate_____ Appropriate_X_

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 09/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Picnicking (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes X No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate ____ Appropriate X

Refuge Manager: Signed Date: 09/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay Refuges

Use: Snorkeling (Skin Diving)/SCUBA Diving (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will **generally** not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. **Yes** X **No** ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate ____ **Appropriate** X

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 3/22/2010

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 4/20/2010

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Boating-non-motorized/human powered (Pinellas)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate____ Appropriate_X_

Refuge Manager: Signed Date: 09/20/2009

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay Refuges

Use: Wildlife Observation and Photography (noncommercial) (Egmont Key and Pinellas NWRs)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?	X	
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?	X	
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?	X	
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?	X	
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?	X	
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?	X	

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will **generally** not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. **Yes** X **No** ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate_____ **Appropriate** X

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 4/5/2010

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: _____

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges .

Use: Bicycling (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?		X
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?		
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?		
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?		
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?		
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?		
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?		

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate __X__ Appropriate _____

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 09/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Camping (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?		X
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?		
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?		
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?		
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?		
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?		

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate _X_ Appropriate ____

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 05/20/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Competitive sporting events (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?		X
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?		X
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?		
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?		
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?		
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?		
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?		

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes ___ No X

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate X Appropriate ____

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 05/30/2008

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use. If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence. If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/05

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Geocaching (Egmont Key)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?		X
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?		
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?		
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?		
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?		
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?		
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?		
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?		

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate __X__ Appropriate ____

Refuge Manager: Signed Date: 9/13/2009

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay Refuges

Use: Boating – Overnight Mooring (Egmont Key and Pinellas National Wildlife Refuges)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?		X
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?		X
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?		
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?		
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?		
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?		
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?		

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will **generally** not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. **Yes** __ **No** X

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate X **Appropriate** ____

Refuge Manager: Signed Date: 3/22/2010

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use. If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence. If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed Date: 4/20/2010

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Military uses (all refuges)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?		X
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?		X
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?		
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?		
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?		
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?		
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?		

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, **we will generally not allow the use.**

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. **Yes** _X_ **No** ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate __X__ **Appropriate** ____

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 09/30/2009

If found to be **Not Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found **Not Appropriate** outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be **Appropriate**, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

FINDING OF APPROPRIATENESS OF A REFUGE USE

Refuge Name: Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Use: Boating-other: vessel landings (all refuges)

This form is not required for wildlife-dependent recreational uses, take regulated by the State, or uses already described in a refuge CCP or step-down management plan approved after October 9, 1997.

Decision Criteria:	YES	NO
(a) Do we have jurisdiction over the use?	X	
(b) Does the use comply with applicable laws and regulations (Federal, State, tribal, and local)?	X	
(c) Is the use consistent with applicable executive orders and Department and Service policies?	X	
(d) Is the use consistent with public safety?	X	
(e) Is the use consistent with goals and objectives in an approved management plan or other document?		X
(f) Has an earlier documented analysis not denied the use or is this the first time the use has been proposed?		
(g) Is the use manageable within available budget and staff?		
(h) Will this be manageable in the future within existing resources?		
(i) Does the use contribute to the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuge's natural or cultural resources, or is the use beneficial to the refuge's natural or cultural resources?		
(j) Can the use be accommodated without impairing existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses or reducing the potential to provide quality (see section 1.6D, 603 FW 1, for description), compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation into the future?		

Where we do not have jurisdiction over the use ["no" to (a)], there is no need to evaluate it further as we cannot control the use. Uses that are illegal, inconsistent with existing policy, or unsafe ["no" to (b), (c), or (d)] may not be found appropriate. If the answer is "no" to any of the other questions above, we will generally not allow the use.

If indicated, the refuge manager has consulted with State fish and wildlife agencies. Yes _X_ No ___

When the refuge manager finds the use appropriate based on sound professional judgment, the refuge manager must justify the use in writing on an attached sheet and obtain the refuge supervisor's concurrence.

Based on an overall assessment of these factors, my summary conclusion is that the proposed use is:

Not Appropriate _X_ Appropriate ____

Refuge Manager: Signed _____ Date: 09/30/2008

If found to be Not Appropriate, the refuge supervisor does not need to sign concurrence if the use is a new use.
If an existing use is found Not Appropriate outside the CCP process, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.
If found to be Appropriate, the refuge supervisor must sign concurrence.

Refuge Supervisor: Signed _____ Date: 9/14/09

A compatibility determination is required before the use may be allowed.

Appendix F. Compatibility Determinations

Tampa Bay Refuges (Egmont and Passage Keys and Pinellas National Wildlife Refuges) Compatibility Determination

Uses: The following uses were evaluated and determined to be compatible with the Refuge System's mission and the purpose of the refuges:

Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas NWRs

- Mosquito Management
- Photography, Video, Filming, or Audio Recording (Commercial, News, and Educational)
- Research/Surveys

Egmont Key NWR

- Beach Use (Shelling and Fossil Collecting)
- Beach Use (Sunbathing and Swimming from Shore)
- Concessions
- Hiking/Walking
- Picnicking
- Snorkeling (Skin Diving)/SCUBA Diving

Pinellas NWR

- Boating (Non-motorized/Human Powered)

Egmont and Pinellas NWRs

- Wildlife Observation and Photography (Non-commercial)

A description of each use and its anticipated biological impact is presented in this appendix.

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities:

Egmont Key NWR

Public Law 93-341 dated July 10, 1974.

Pinellas NWR

Executive Order 3502 dated June 21, 1921 prohibits disturbance of birds or eggs on Indian Key
Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. section 715-715r)

Passage Key NWR

Executive Order 3578 dated October 10, 1905.

Refuge Purposes:

Egmont Key NWR

To administer the refuge in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966.

Pinellas NWR

For lands acquired under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, as amended, the purposed of the acquisition is: "…for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."

"…suitable for – (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development. (2) the protection of natural resources. (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species 16 U.S.C. Section 460k-1 (Refuge Recreation Act)

Passage Key NWR

"…as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds." Executive Order 3578, dated October 10, 1905.

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission: The mission of the System, as defined by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1977, is:

"... to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

Other Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Policies:

Antiquities Act of 1906 (34 Stat. 225)
Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, as amended
Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (15 U.S.C. 703-711; 40 Stat. 755)
Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 (16 U.S.C. 715r; 45 Stat. 1222)
Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934 (16 U.S.C. 718-178h; 48 Stat. 451)
Criminal Code Provisions of 1940 (18 U.S.C. 41)
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668d; 54 Stat. 250)
Refuge Trespass Act of June 25, 1948 (18 U.S.C. 41; 62 Stat. 686)
Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a-742j; 70 Stat.1119)
Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4; 76 Stat. 653)
Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136; 78 Stat. 890)
Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470, et seq.; 80 Stat. 915)
National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd, 668ee; 80 Stat. 927)
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq; 83 Stat. 852)
Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands (Executive Order 11644, as amended by Executive Order 10989)
Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq; 87 Stat. 884)
Refuge Revenue Sharing Act of 1935, as amended in 1978 (16 U.S.C. 715s; 92 Stat. 1319)

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 (S.B. 740)
The Property Clause of the U.S. Constitution Article IV 3, Clause 2
The Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution Article 1, Section 8
The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-57, USC668dd)
Executive Order 12996, Management and General Public Use of the National Wildlife Refuge System, March 25, 1996
Cooperative Agreement Between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Florida Department of Natural Resources (now Florida Department of Environmental Protection), November 24, 1989.
Memorandum of Understanding between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chassahowitzka Refuges Complex Tampa Bay Refuges Homosassa, Florida and U.S. Coast Guard St. Petersburg Group, St. Petersburg, Florida dated February 7, 1984.
Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund Amendment to Sovereignty Submerged Land Management Agreement No. 750-0013 dated April 7, 1992
Management Agreement for Certain Sovereignty Submerged Lands Surrounding Passage Key National Wildlife Refuge in Manatee County Agreement No. 750-0013 dated February 7, 1986

Compatibility determinations for each description listed were considered separately. Although the preceding sections from "Uses" through "Public Review and Comment" are only written once within the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Tampa Bay Refuges, they are part of each descriptive use and become part of that compatibility determination if considered apart from the CCP.

Public Review and Comment: The notice of availability for the Draft CCP/EA for Tampa Bay Refuges was published in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2009. Notices of the availability of the Draft CCP/EA and of the scheduled public meetings were sent to more than 180 individual parties including five Indian tribes. The Draft CCP/EA was circulated through the Florida State Clearinghouse to the following state, regional, and local governments: Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council; Florida Department of Community Affairs; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Florida Departments of State, Transportation, and Environmental Protection; and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The public review and comment period for the Draft CCP/EA was from April 26 through May 26, 2009. At least 57 people attended the two public meetings held in Pinellas County on May 8 and 14. Several speakers at the public meetings identified themselves as representing the following organizations: Friends of Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges; Egmont Key Alliance; and the St. Petersburg Audubon Society. A total of 23 comment letters were received by mail or by e-mail from twelve individuals and the following eight organizations: Friends of Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges; Egmont Key Alliance; Tampa Bay Ferry; St. Petersburg Audubon; Save the Manatee Club; Tampa Bay Watch; Friends of the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex; and the Audubon of Florida. In addition, comments were received from the following government agencies: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas. No comments received were specific to the compatibility determinations (Appendix F). Comments received related to allowed public uses as described in the Draft CCP/EA were consistent with the compatibility determinations.

Use: Mosquito Management (Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas NWRs)

This use involves activities undertaken to manage and control mosquitoes, including habitat management.

Availability of Resources: The cost of allowing this use on the refuges is absorbed within the operating budget and does not require additional staff for enforcement or other purposes. Mosquito control operations will be conducted by the Tampa Bay Pilots Association. The refuges will annually review and evaluate mosquito control operations and special use permit compliance.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Typically, microbial larvicides or aerial sprayings are applied to aquatic habitats where mosquito larvae occur. These compounds pose minimal threats to non-target, vertebrate, and invertebrate species. Experimental testing of some microbial larvicides has shown no demonstrated effects of larvicidal applications on other aquatic insects or invertebrates. There are no known mammalian health effects resulting from larvicidal applications.

Determination (check one below):
___Use is Not Compatible
_X_Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: The Tampa Bay Pilots Association currently uses a ground application of bti to standing water on lands leased from the Service at the Pilot Compound on Egmont Key. A Pesticide Use Proposal must be approved for this application on an annual basis.

Justification: If mosquito populations are elevated due to storm events or disease outbreaks, mosquito control may be necessary. Mosquito control is warranted for the health and safety of employees of the refuge, Florida Park Service, and the Tampa Bay Pilots Association, including volunteers and interns working for these agencies.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Photography, Video, Filming, or Audio Recording (Commercial, News, and Educational) (Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas NWRs)

These activities involve photography, videography, filming, or other recording of sight or sound for public information, educational, or commercial purposes.

Availability of Resources: The cost of allowing these uses on the refuges would be absorbed within the operating budget.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Filming from helicopters could affect wildlife, especially nesting birds. The transport of equipment could result in trampling of vegetation or wildlife nests.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: All commercial activity conducted by an individual or organization, including guiding and outfitting, would be regulated under a special use permit. The landing of helicopters would also be regulated under a special use permit. Aerial craft is subject to the Federal Aviation Administration's regulations on airspace and height restrictions around wildlife refuges. Some areas are closed to the public. Certain areas of the refuges may be restricted seasonally for breeding or nesting purposes or to protect habitat.

Justification: The use of media is an important tool to promote the wildlife refuge and to facilitate environmental education and awareness of the refuges' resources, wildlife, and habitat. If regulated through a special use permit, impacts to wildlife and habitat can be minimized.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Research/Surveys (Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas NWRs)

These uses include scientific research, inventorying, monitoring, and scientific collecting conducted by non-refuge personnel on refuge lands. The refuges are often used for biological and historical research by the Florida Park Service, the Audubon Society, Tampa Bay Watch, Egmont Key Alliance, and others.

Availability of Resources: The cost of most field studies is borne by the researchers with the exception of staff time to review proposals, issue a special use permit, and monitor the project. These are considered routine duties of biologists and managers and are absorbed within refuge operating costs.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: The collecting or monitoring of field data during a research project may cause mortality to some target species. Minor habitat and temporary wildlife disturbance may also occur. Research project impacts are minimized by strict monitoring of all projects by refuge personnel.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: All research proposals are reviewed by refuge staff before approval is given. A special use permit is prepared for each project, which specifies the purpose and duration of the project, location of field work, and any special conditions that the permittee is required to follow. Refuge personnel regularly monitor the progress of all field work, and all permittees are required to submit an annual report of work accomplished and/or a final report of the study.

Historical research and archaeological investigations by non-Service parties require both Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) permits and refuge special use permits. ARPA permit applications are available only from the Regional Historic Preservation Officer. The applicants are required to submit a number of items to initiate the process, which includes identification of the site and/or area of interest, a research proposal, and a resumé for the principal investigator.

Justification: Research is important because it provides the Service with scientific information that can be used to manage natural resources. Species identification, resource inventorying and resource monitoring provide valuable data for refuge operations. Access to current and state-of-the-art research can aid management decisions.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Beach Use (Shelling, Fossil Collecting, and Walking/Hiking) (Egmont Key NWR)

The beaches on Egmont Key NWR that are not closed to the public are available for the activities of shelling, fossil collecting, and walking/hiking.

Availability of Resources: The cost of allowing these uses on the refuge is absorbed within the operating budget and does not require additional staff for enforcement or other purposes.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Removal of certain shells would affect hermit crabs or mollusks that could inhabit them. However, due to the limited number of visitors on the island and the large number of shells that wash ashore, impacts are expected to be minor. Walking on beaches can increase the opportunity of disturbing wildlife, creating litter, or trampling vegetation or nests.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Regarding shell collecting, shells containing live animals may not be taken. No live animals may be removed from shells. These activities are restricted to daylight hours. Certain areas of the refuge may be restricted seasonally for breeding or nesting purposes to protect habitat or for experimental purposes to draw in birds.

Justification: These activities are low impact. Walking and hiking are considered to be wildlife-oriented. Observation of wildlife may be enhanced by visiting the open shoreline beaches.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Beach Use (Sunbathing and Swimming from Shore) (Egmont Key NWR)

The beaches on Egmont Key NWR that are not closed to the public are available for the activities of sunbathing and swimming from shore.

Availability of Resources: The public beaches are maintained by refuge staff and volunteers. Swimming is available at the swimmer's own risk.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: No significant impacts are anticipated from sunbathing or swimming from shore. Some littering, vandalism, plant removal, and feeding/disturbance of wildlife may occur. Litter that washes in or that is left by visitors will be controlled through refuge staff, volunteers, and through regular monthly beach cleanups conducted by the citizen support organization.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Sunbathing and swimming are restricted to areas open to the public away from densely populated areas of nesting birds. These activities will be restricted to daylight hours only. Visitors will be asked to "pack it in, pack it out" and remove their own litter. Pets are not allowed on the island and visitors will be asked to minimize their noise (i.e., blaring radios, screaming) in order to reduce the disturbance to wildlife. Refuge and state park law enforcement patrol of public use areas should continue to minimize violations.

Justification: Although sunbathing and swimming are not wildlife-dependent or priority public uses, wildlife may be seen while sunbathing or swimming.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Concessions (Egmont Key NWR)

There are presently no concessions on Egmont Key. Concessions are businesses operated by a private enterprise that provide equipment, facilities or other goods or services for the recreational, educational, and /or interpretive enjoyment for the public. A concession, such as a boat tour or ferry, could be used to bring persons to the island.

Availability of Resources: The cost of allowing these uses on the refuge would be absorbed within the operating budget. A special use or operating permit may be used to cover any administrative costs to accommodating this use.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Small groups led by professional guides or boat crews that are under permit should have minimal impacts on the environment.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Concessions would only be run under agreement with the Service through operating or special use permits. Concessionaires would be trained to avoid leading their groups in activities that could harm wildlife or habitat.

Justification: Since Egmont Key is an island and the Service has no means to shuttle persons out to the island, a concession would be useful for providing access to the island. The number and activities of visitors could be controlled partly by concessions if they are under a permit system. Regulation of concessions would ensure training of staff for visitor education and safety. Access for the purpose of wildlife-dependent recreation would allow more opportunity for public use.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Hiking/Walking (Egmont Key NWR)

Egmont Key NWR contains rudimentary roads and trails, a brick road dating from the World War II era, and miles of shoreline that are accessible for walking and hiking.

Availability of Resources: Some of the developed primitive roads and trails are maintained for refuge purposes and therefore maintenance does not constitute additional cost for these activities.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Impacts from these activities could include littering, vegetation trampling, and wildlife disturbance.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Hiking and walking are restricted to daylight hours. Certain areas of the refuge may be restricted seasonally for breeding or nesting purposes or to protect or promote habitat. No pets are allowed on the island.

Justification: These activities are low impact and considered to be wildlife-oriented. Observation of wildlife is enhanced by using the trails offered at the refuge.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Picnicking (Egmont Key NWR)

There are presently no picnic facilities (e.g., tables, shelters, and restrooms) available to the public on Egmont Key NWR.

Availability of Resources: Staff resources limit this use as there are no facilities available to the public. The cost of allowing this use on the refuge would be absorbed within the operating budget.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: No significant impacts are expected since picnicking is restricted to the upland portion of the refuge. Some littering, vandalism, plant removal, and feeding/disturbance of wildlife could occur. Litter would have to be controlled by the placement and collection of refuse containers.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Picnicking, like all refuge uses, is restricted to daylight hours. Picnicking on the beach/shoreline is discouraged to prevent littering and disturbance to wildlife and trampling of wildlife nests. Some areas of the refuge may be closed to picnicking on a seasonal, temporary, or trial basis for the protection of wildlife and habitat.

Justification: Picnic areas and facilities can provide refuge visitors a place to rest and to observe wildlife around these sites with minimal disturbance to wildlife. Sites could also be developed to allow mobility impaired visitor access to areas where animal life is plentiful. While there are no facilities in the refuge at present, properly placed facilities could be an asset in drawing visitors to certain areas. Interpretive displays could be located at these resting sites.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Snorkeling (Skin Diving)/SCUBA Diving (Egmont Key NWR)

Snorkeling is permitted from shore and in the seagrass beds on the east side of Egmont Key NWR, where there is a vessel exclusion zone. Access to the seagrass beds can be from boats anchored outside the vessel exclusion zone or from visitors walking south along the eastern shoreline of the refuge to the vessel exclusion zone. There is also snorkeling and SCUBA diving on the batteries offshore on the southwestern side of Egmont Key NWR.

Availability of Resources: Snorkeling and diving are activities visitors can do at their own risk. There are no lifeguards. No additional costs are required of the refuge to accommodate this use.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Disturbance of wildlife or trampling of nests can be expected by visitors walking along the shoreline. These impacts are expected to be minimal and temporary. Snorkelers who walk in the seagrass areas can damage them. Although it is prohibited by refuge regulation, some take of live marine species, especially mollusks, could occur. Since this is an activity to be done at the diver's risk, safety concerns include injuries and the potential for heart attacks or the drowning of unfit swimmers.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Snorkeling is allowed from refuge beaches. To access the seagrass beds, snorkelers must walk a distance down the beach.before entering the water. This will limit the number of persons that enter the seagrass beds. Many snorkelers are trained not to stand on the bottom or to touch marine life or any living organisms. An interpretive sign might be used at the access point along the beach to educate snorkelers. If snorkelers come to the refuge via a regulated concession, they could be provided with an educational program on snorkeling etiquette and how to minimize damage in seagrasses, along with an interpretive program on marine resources and the value of seagrass beds. Florida regulations for swimming and diving apply. Skin and SCUBA divers should carry and use a dive flag signaling divers down. This prohibits boaters from coming within 100 feet of a diver.

Justification: Snorkeling provides an opportunity for wildlife observation of the marine environment. Learning about an environment and enjoying time in it is a means of instilling a value of stewardship among visitors. Although this is not a priority public use, it provides a means of wildlife observation.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Boating (Non-motorized/Human Powered) (Pinellas NWR)

Motorized boats are prohibited within the refuge boundary around Tarpon, Indian/Bird, and part of Whale Keys. Within the refuge boundary on these islands, only non-motorized/human powered boats, such as canoes and kayaks, are allowed. Persons in watercraft vessels are restricted to paddling, poling, or pedaling as means of propulsion to cross through these waters.

Availability of Resources: The cost of allowing this use on the refuge is absorbed within the operating budget and does not require additional staff for enforcement or other purposes.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Since non-motorized boats are quieter than motor boats, fewer disturbance and noise impacts to wildlife are anticipated than if motor boats were prohibited. Some littering and minor impacts to wildlife or habitat may occur, but these are expected to be minor due to the limited number of persons who visit these islands by non-motorized vessel.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Boating by non-motorized/human powered vessels is restricted to daylight use only within the refuge boundary of Tarpon, Indian/Bird, and part of Whale Keys. For fishers, fishing is prohibited within the area between the island shores and the casting distance between the island and their vessel. This is to ensure that birds are not snagged by fishhooks and that monofilament is not caught in vegetation on the island.

Justification: Boating allows access to these islands for wildlife observation, which is a priority public use under the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. By restricting boating to non-motorized/human powered vessels, it will cut down the number of visitors within the refuge boundary and it will prevent impacts from oil or gas spills.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 10-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2019

Use: Wildlife Observation and Photography (Non-commercial) (Egmont Key and Pinellas NWRs)

Non-consumptive wildlife observation uses include wildlife observation, which is defined as the viewing of fish, wildlife, plants and habitats, including the provision of access to viewing areas. Photography involves refuge visitation for the purpose of photographing natural or cultural resources, or public uses of these resources for individual recreational purposes rather than news, educational, or commercial purposes. Wildlife observation can also include commercial guiding or outfitting of refuge visitors to view fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitats (including provisions of access to viewing areas). There are presently no refuge-sanctioned guides or outfitters for wildlife observation and photography excursions.

Availability of Resources: The cost of allowing this use on the refuges would be absorbed within the operating budget. Trails and beaches are maintained for refuge purposes and recreational use. The addition of platforms, photography blinds, or towers to encourage these uses on the refuges would involve new construction costs. With a fee program, the refuges could receive 80 percent on entrance fee receipts. This may be used to support the six priority public uses identified in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. If outfitters and guides were allowed under special use or operators' permits as part of a concession, then there may be fees involved to cover the administrative costs of operating a permit system.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Some violations of refuge regulations are anticipated, such as wildlife disturbance, collecting, poaching, plant removal, littering, and vandalism.

Determination (check one below):
___ Use is Not Compatible
_X_ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Patrol of public use areas should minimize violations of refuge regulations. The refuges are closed overnight. Certain areas of the refuges may be restricted seasonally for breeding or nesting purposes or to protect habitat.

Justification: These are priority public uses under the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act.

NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision: *Place an X in appropriate space*.

___ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Statement
___ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Statement
_X_ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
___ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Mandatory 15-year Re-evaluation Date: 09/25/2024

Other Uses:

Bicycling, Camping, Competitive Sporting Events, and Geocaching (Egmont Key NWR)

Boating (Overnight Mooring) (Egmont Key and Pinellas NWRs)

Military Uses, Boating – Other (Vessel Landings) (Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas NWRs)

The CCP team addressed these “other uses” and they were found to be not appropriate. The team and refuge managers also deemed them imcompatible uses due to the fact that all are non-priority, non-wildlife-dependent uses. Each use had the potential for user conflicts, public safety concerns, habitat and/or wildlife disturbance, habitat destruction, and/or resource degradation (e.g., vandalism, littering, and/or disturbance to cultural resources). The specific rationale for each decision is included in the CCP planning record within the compatibility determinations’ file.

Approval of Compatibility Determination

The signature of approval is for all compatibility determinations considered within the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Tampa Bay Refuges. If one of the descriptive uses is considered for compatibility outside of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan, the approval signature becomes part of that determination.

Refuge Manager: Signed 08/03/2009
(Signature/Date)

Regional Compatibility Coordinator: Signed 8/26/09
(Signature/Date)

Refuge Supervisor: Signed 9/14/09
(Signature/Date)

Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, Southeast Region: Signed 9-15-09
(Signature/Date)

Appendix G. Intra-Service Section 7 Biological Evaluation

REGION 4
INTRA-SERVICE SECTION 7 BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION FORM

[Note: This form provides the outline of information needed for intra-Service consultation. If additional space is needed, attach additional sheets, or set up this form to accommodate your responses.]

Originating Person: Joyce M. Kleen
Telephone Number: 352/563-2088 x 211 **E-Mail:** joyce_kleen@fws.gov
Date: September 15, 2008

PROJECT NAME (Grant Title/Number): Tampa Bay Refuges Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

I. Service Program:
___ Ecological Services
___ Federal Aid
___ Clean Vessel Act
___ Coastal Wetlands
___ Endangered Species Section 6
___ Partners for Fish and Wildlife
___ Sport Fish Restoration
___ Wildlife Restoration
___ Fisheries
_X_Refuges/Wildlife

II. State/Agency: Florida, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

III. Station Name: Tampa Bay Refuges including Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas National Wildlife Refuges

IV. Description of Proposed Action (attach additional pages as needed):

Implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Tampa Bay Refuges, which include Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas, totaling 639 acres in Hillsborough, Manatee, and Pinellas Counties, respectively.

The preferred alternative identified in the CCP outlines actions to improve refuge management. It supports the purposes for which the refuges were established and the missions of the refuges and Refuge System. The CCP identifies six broad goals for habitat and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, visitor services, cultural resources, wilderness, and administration. Specific objectives and strategies for these goals are detailed. The goals, objectives, and strategies were developed to support international, national, and regional conservation plans and initiatives in partnership with other agencies, such as the FWC.

V. Pertinent Species and Habitat:

A. Include species/habitat occurrence map: See Figures 14, 15, 16 in the CCP

B. Complete the following table:

SPECIES/CRITICAL HABITAT	STATUS[1]
Atlantic loggerhead turtle	T
Atlantic green turtle	E
Piping plover/CH-Egmont	E
Wood stork	E
West Indian manatee	E

[1]STATUS: E=endangered, T=threatened, PE=proposed endangered, PT=proposed threatened, CH=critical habitat, PCH=proposed critical habitat, C=candidate species

VI. Location (attach map): See Figures 1 and 2 in the CCP

A. Ecoregion Number and Name: Ecoregion 32, North Florida Ecosystem

B. County and State: Hillsborough, Manatee, and Pinellas Counties, Florida

C. Section, township, and range (or latitude and longitude):

T 33 S, R 15 E, S 23, 24, 25, 26-Egmont
T 33 S, R 16 E, -Passage
T 31 S, R 16 E, S 15; T 32 S, R 15 E, S 20, 29, 32; & T 32 S, R 16 E, S 27, 28, 33, 34-Pinellas

D. Distance (miles) and direction to nearest town:

Less than 2 miles southwest of St. Petersburg, Florida

E. Species/habitat occurrence:

Atlantic loggerhead turtles nest on the beaches around the perimeter of Egmont Key NWR. One nest was also documented on Passage Key NWR in 1995. Atlantic green turtles are occasional visitors to the sea grass beds along the east side of Egmont Key NWR and may be seen in the coastal waters of Passage Key and Pinellas NWRs.

West Indian manatees forage in the sea grass beds along the east side of Egmont Key NWR and may also be found in the coastal waters surrounding Passage Key and Pinellas NWRs.

Piping plovers have been documented on the beaches of Egmont Key NWR during the fall months and occasionally during the winter. The beach is designated as critical habitat for piping plovers

VII. Determination of Effects:

A. Explanation of effects of the action on species and critical habitats in item V. B (attach additional pages as needed):

SPECIES/ CRITICAL HABITAT	IMPACTS TO SPECIES/CRITICAL HABITAT
Atlantic loggerhead turtle	The project is not likely to adversely affect loggerheads.
Atlantic green turtle	The project is not likely to adversely affect green turtles.
Piping plover/CH-Egmont	The project is not likely to adversely affect piping plovers.
Wood stork	The project is not likely to adversely affect wood storks.
West Indian manatee	The project is not likely to adversely affect manatees.

Beach renourishment and protection will benefit nesting loggerhead sea turtles and wintering piping plovers by providing more nesting habitat for loggerheads and more wintering habitat for piping plovers.

Protection of the sea grass beds near Egmont Key NWR and surrounding Pinellas NWR will benefit manatees and green sea turtles.

Habitat restoration of the mangrove islands within Pinellas NWR will provide more habitat for wood storks.

B. Explanation of actions to be implemented to reduce adverse effects:

SPECIES/ CRITICAL HABITAT	ACTIONS TO MITIGATE/MINIMIZE IMPACTS
Atlantic loggerhead turtle	Beach renourishment projects will not occur during loggerhead nesting season (summer months).
Atlantic green turtle	No actions to mitigate/minimize impacts are needed for green turtles.
Piping plover/CH-Egmont	Beach renourishment projects may occur during the fall and winter when plovers are present which may temporarily displace plovers. The renourishment projects will ultimately provide more beach habitat for the plovers.
Wood stork	No actions to mitigate/minimize impacts are needed for wood storks.
West Indian manatee	No actions to mitigate/minimize impacts are needed for manatees.

Beach renourishment projects will occur during the fall and winter when loggerhead turtles are not nesting. The additional habitat provided by the extra sand will provide more beach area for the turtles to nest and is critical to loggerhead nesting success. The additional sand will protect the incubating eggs from high surf and waves caused by high tides, tropical storms, and hurricanes.

These same renourishment projects will be occurring during the fall and winter when piping plovers are present, which may cause the birds to be temporarily displaced or it may temporarily reduce the availability of invertebrates. The addition of the new sand will ultimately provide more habitat for piping plovers to winter.

VIII. Effect Determination and Response Requested:

SPECIES/ CRITICAL HABITAT	DETERMINATION[1]			RESPONSE[1] REQUESTED
	NE	NA	AA	
Atlantic loggerhead turtle		X		Concurrence
Atlantic green turtle		X		Concurrence
Pining plover/CH-Egmont		X		Concurrence
Wood stork		X		Concurrence
West Indian manatee		X		Concurrence

[1]DETERMINATION/RESPONSE REQUESTED:

NE = no effect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action will not directly, indirectly, or cumulatively impact, either positively or negatively, any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat. Response Requested is optional but a "Concurrence" is recommended for a complete Administrative Record.

NA = not likely to adversely affect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action is not likely to adversely impact any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat or there may be beneficial effects to these resources. Response Requested is a "Concurrence".

AA = likely to adversely affect. This determination is appropriate when the proposed action is likely to adversely impact any listed, proposed, candidate species or designated/proposed critical habitat. Response Requested for listed species is "Formal Consultation". Response Requested for proposed or candidate species is "Conference".

Signed

Signature (originating station) **date** 05/24/2008

Deputy Refuge Manager / Acting Refuge Manager

Title

IX. Reviewing Ecological Services Office Evaluation:

A. Concurrence ✓ **Nonconcurrence** _____

B. Formal consultation required _____

C. Conference required _____

D. Informal conference required _____

E. Remarks (attach additional pages as needed):

Signed 1/8/09

Signature **date**

Deputy Field Supervisor Jacksonville Ecological Services

Title **office**

Appendix H. Wilderness Review

The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines a wilderness area as an area of federal land that retains its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human inhabitation, and is managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which:

1. generally appears to have been influenced primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable;

2. has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation;

3. has at least 5,000 contiguous roadless acres or is of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpeded condition; or is a roadless island, regardless of size;

4. does not substantially exhibit the effects of logging, farming, grazing, or other extensive development or alteration of the landscape, or its wilderness character could be restored through appropriate management at the time of review; and

5. may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.

The lands within the Tampa Bay Refuges were reviewed for their suitability in meeting the criteria for wilderness, as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

WILDERNESS REVIEW –
PINELLAS, EGMONT KEY, AND PASSAGE KEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES
JANUARY 12, 2005

The Service's Comprehensive Conservation Plan team for Tampa Bay Refuges met at Chassahowitzka NWR on January 12, 2004, to discuss the refuges' wilderness review. The review team included:

- Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager
- John Kasbohm, Assistant Refuge Manager
- Joyce Kleen, Wildlife Biologist
- Mary Morris, Natural Resource Planner
- Richard Meyers, Assistant Refuge Ranger
- Sarah Palmisano, Refuge Operations Specialist
- Deborah Jerome, Wilderness Coordinator, Regional Office (via conference call)

The wilderness review is a required component of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). The Wilderness Act defines a Wilderness Area as an area of federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which:

1) Generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable;

2) Has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation;

3) Has at least 5,000 contiguous roadless acres or is of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition;

4) Does not substantially exhibit the effects of logging, farming, grazing, or other extensive development or alteration of the landscape, or its wilderness character could be restored through appropriate management, at the time of review;

5) Is a roadless island; and

6) May contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, education, scenic or historic value.

There is a three-phase process for conducting a wilderness review: inventory, study, and recommendation. During the inventory phase of the wilderness review, the emphasis is on an assessment of wilderness character as defined by the above criteria within the inventory unit. Lands that meet the above criteria will be designated as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs).

The determination to recommend (or not recommend) a WSA to Congress for wilderness designation will be made through the CCP decision-making process.

The team discussed land status and ownership. The Passage Key NWR Wilderness was designated by Congress under Public Law 91-504 on October 23, 1970. The entire refuge portion of the island, estimated at 36.37 acres, but now experiencing erosion, is designated as a Wilderness Area. Since Passage Key NWR is already a Wilderness area and since this area cannot be expanded, it is not included in this summary as a wilderness inventory unit. Indian/Bird and Tarpon Keys are not owned in fee simple. They are leased from Pinellas County; therefore, they are not included as wilderness inventory units and they are not considered for WSA designation.

The team identified wilderness inventory units potentially meeting the WSA criteria and these units are identified in Table 18 and Figure 19. All of the units identified meet criterion 5 above since they are roadless islands.

Table 17. Wilderness inventory units – Tampa Bay Refuges

Unit	Acreage
Egmont Key	328.29
Little Bird Key	1.24
Jackass Key	4.31
Mule Key	0.07
Listen Key	3.99
Whale Key	2.80

Wilderness Management

The wilderness management policy and regulations allow motorized access and use of mechanized equipment for administrative purposes only if such uses are the minimum necessary to accomplish wilderness objectives. For the purpose of analysis in the CCP and the environmental assessment, which was Section B of the Draft CCP, managers should assume that authorization of such uses would be temporary and rare in a wilderness area. If such restrictions would significantly limit the Service's ability to accomplish other resource management objectives, these impacts should be fully described in the environmental consequences of the environmental assessment and would obviously be a factor for consideration in selecting a preferred alternative.

Resource Management Issues

Fire Management – Passage Key NWR and the Pinellas NWR keys do not need fire suppression or prescribed burning. Passage Key NWR has very little vegetation and the mangrove keys of Pinellas NWR are wet. Egmont Key NWR has had seven known fires (wild or arson) since the time it became a refuge in 1974. The Fire Management Plan dated May 25, 2001, covers wildfire contingency planning, but not prescribed burning. As part of the ongoing refuge operations, a burn prescription for Egmont Key NWR will be written.

Endangered Species – There are no known federally listed species on these islands, although there may be some undocumented, occasional use of some islands/keys by wood storks.

Public Use – Public use is primarily on Egmont Key NWR, which has an extensive beach area. Public uses, such as boating, sailing, and fishing, occur in the surrounding waters and interior tidal creeks. The keys and interior lagoon of Tarpon Key within Pinellas NWR are closed to public use to protect nesting and resting birds, but fishing is permitted in waters surrounding these islands. Passage Key NWR is also closed to public use to protect nesting and resting birds.

Navigable Waters – All of the inventory units are bounded by navigable waters which are sovereign State land. The Service has limited authority to restrict activities, such as motor boating, on navigable water bodies.

Summary of Wilderness Inventory Findings

The wilderness review inventory team identified six Wilderness Inventory Areas on the Tampa Bay Refuges (Table 18). Egmont Key NWR is a sandy beach island located in the Gulf of Mexico at the mouth of Tampa Bay. All five keys within Pinellas NWR are small, mangrove keys located in Tampa Bay. Small, mangrove islands generally do not meet the requirement of having "outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation" (criterion 2 above).

The findings for each of the inventory units identified in Table 18 are summarized as follows:

Egmont Key NWR (328 acres) does not meet the criteria for a WSA. It does not meet the criterion 5 (a roadless island of any size), since it contains primitive roads and the remains of historic roads. Further, Egmont Key NWR does not meet criterion 4 since it contains many structures, including the remains of Fort Dade. It has a historically significant lighthouse on the island that is contained on the U.S. Coast Guard property. Out parcels on the island include the 55-acre Coast Guard tract and the 5-acre Tampa Bay Pilots housing compound. The Pilots lease another 5 acres from the refuge. Criterion 2 is also not applicable to Egmont Key NWR. Heavy public use limits the opportunities for individuals to enjoy solitude or a primitive and unconfined

recreational experience. The island is close to a major shipping channel that goes to the Port of Tampa. Large vessel traffic is frequent around the island. The pilot boats, private vessels, and tour operations also operate around the island.

Little Bird Key (1 acre) meets criterion 5 above for a WSA (a roadless island of any size), but could not be practicably managed as wilderness because of its location and close proximity to homes, Highway 693, and heavy motor boating activity. This heavy public use around the island, combined with the size of the island, limits the opportunities for individuals to enjoy solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience.

Jackass Key (4 acres) meets criterion 5 above for a WSA (a roadless island of any size), but could not be practicably managed as wilderness because of its location and close proximity to urban areas, Highway 693, and heavy motor boating activity. This heavy public use around the island, combined with the size of the island, limits the opportunities for individuals to enjoy solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience.

Mule Key (0.7 acres) meets criteria 5 above for a WSA (a roadless island of any size), but could not be practicably managed as wilderness because of its location and close proximity to homes, Highway 693, and heavy motor boating activity. This heavy public use around the island, combined with the size of the island, limits the opportunities for individuals to enjoy solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience.

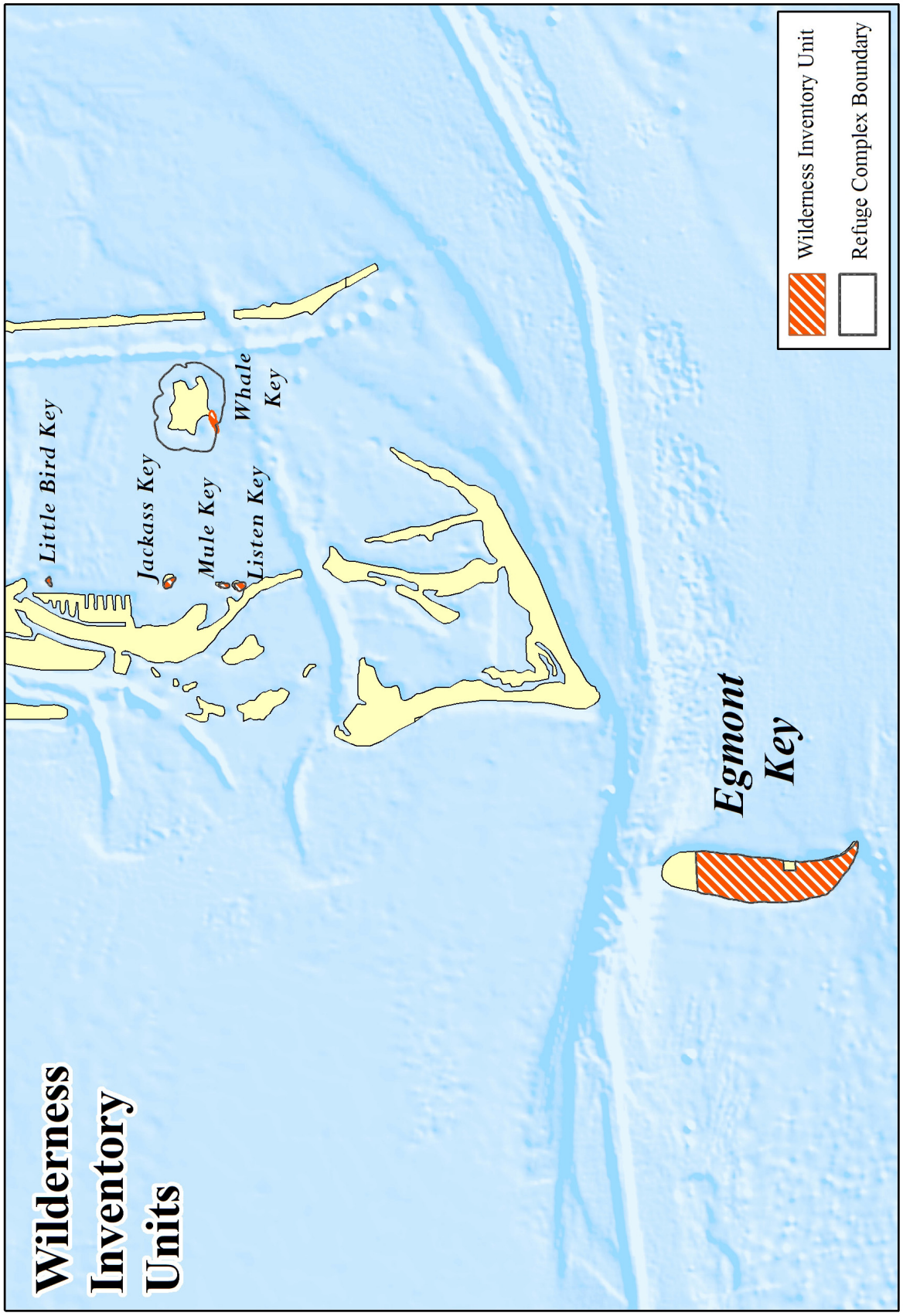
Listen Key (4 acres) meets the criterion 5 above for a WSA (a roadless island of any size), but could not be practicably managed as wilderness because of its location and close proximity to homes, Highway 693, and heavy motor boating activity. This heavy public use around the island, combined with the size of the island, limits the opportunities for individuals to enjoy solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience.

Whale Island (3 acres) meets the criterion 5 above for a WSA (a roadless island of any size), but could not be practicably managed as wilderness because of its location and close proximity to urban areas, I-275 and the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, and heavy motor boating activity. This heavy public use around the island combined with the size of the island limits the opportunities for individuals to enjoy solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience.

Recommendation

It is the recommendation of the team that none of the six inventory units described in the preceding section should be designated as WSAs.

Figure 19. Tampa Bay Refuges wilderness inventory units



Appendix I. Refuge Biota

Priority Bird Species

Mangrove Nesting and Roosting Waterbirds

All the species treated in this section are restricted to nesting on Pinellas NWR, with the exception of brown pelican that also nest on Egmont Key NWR and Passage Key NWR (before it was lost to a hurricane). Nesting on Pinellas NWR occurs in mangrove woodlands, currently mostly on Little Bird Key. Formerly, nesting occurred widely on other keys, especially on Tarpon and Whale Keys, but now at greatly reduced levels.

Tarpon Key, one of the islands within Pinellas NWR, was a significant nesting, resting, and feeding area for a variety of colonial nesting waterbirds including white ibis, reddish egrets, and roseate spoonbills. Very little nesting has been documented since 2002, when consistent predator control efforts ceased and this colony succumbed to raccoons and possibly fish crows. In addition, some of the mangrove habitat has been lost due to erosion from boat wakes, storm tides, tropical storms, and hurricanes. Although these islands are closed to all public use, illegal access by the public still occurs and may cause birds to abandon their nests or flush from their nests allowing predators to move in.

The late Rich Paul, National Audubon Society-retired, reviewed Audubon's data for bird populations in Tampa Bay and Pinellas County. Audubon's data was compared with data from Jim Rodgers, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), and any disparities were clarified and resolved.

The conservation list for Bird Conservation Region 31 (BCR 31, Peninsular Florida) indicates the following species nesting in Tampa Bay (most on refuges) should be considered as in need of conservation attention in refuge planning:

Species of Conservation Importance (Concern vs. Stewardship vs. other, Action level, species, Combined Score, whether or not State listed, Refuge [2003] pairs, and percentage of 2003 pairs compared with Tampa Bay overall, compared with estimate of total pairs in BCR 31, and compared with estimate of total pairs in Southeast US Region; then percentage of 2003 pairs overall in Tampa Bay with BCR 31 and Southeast US). Percentages over 5 percent are highlighted to indicate high responsibility locally and regionally for Tampa Bay Refuges.

Conservation Concern Species

Critical Recovery

Wood Stork (Combined Score 19), also Federally Endangered and State listed (0/0/0, 8/5)

Immediate Management

*Reddish Egret (Combined Score 23), also State listed (**5**/1/<1, 18/5)

*Roseate Spoonbill (Combined Score 17), also State listed (**8**/<1/<1, 36/6)

Management Attention

*Brown Pelican (Combined Score 20), also State listed (**13/**2/<1, 12/3)

Tricolored Heron (Combined Score 19), also State listed (1/1/<1, **63**/3)

White Ibis (Combined Score 18), also State listed (0/0/0, **45**/12)

Glossy Ibis (Combined Score, 17) (0/0/0, **47/14**)

Anhinga (Combined Score 16) (0/0/0, **11**/4)
Great Blue Heron (Combined Score 16) (**18**/2/<1, **13**/<1)
Green Heron (Combined Score 16) (4/<1/<1, <1/<1)
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Combined Score 16) (3/<1/<1, 11/1)
*Great Egret (Combined Score 15) (**6**/<1/<1, **8**/1)
Little Blue Heron (Combined Score 15), also State listed (3/<1/<1, **14**/1)

Conservation Stewardship
Planning and Responsibility
*Double-crested Cormorant (**21**/2/2, **12/9**)
Snowy Egret, also State listed, (4/2/<1, **38**/3)

Other species
Cattle Egret (<1/<1/<1, **18**/2)
Black-crowned Night-Heron (13/2/<1, 18/2)

*Tampa Bay Refuges have high responsibility (>5 percent) for supporting all Tampa Bay populations.
**Tampa Bay Refuges have high responsibility (>50 percent) for supporting all peninsular Florida (BCR 31) populations.

Regionally, the reddish egret is the highest priority species among long-legged waders found nesting in Tampa Bay. It has not increased overall since the stoppage of the millinery trade. The Tampa Bay area supports the northernmost breeding population along Florida's Gulf Coast and includes at present between 60 and 85 pairs. This population has stabilized in the last few years.

The federally listed endangered wood stork is not nesting on any refuge lands in the Tampa Bay area, but it does nest in Tampa Bay.

Roseate spoonbills regionally appear to be doing well, but there is concern for the species in peninsular Florida (especially south Florida). Tampa Bay populations may be important as the northernmost breeding population along Florida's Gulf Coast.

Brown pelicans seem to be doing alright elsewhere in the southeast, with the exception of some areas in Florida (and South Carolina). Some Florida populations are apparently undergoing population declines. Brown pelicans are susceptible to entanglement in monofilament line; islands near fishing piers and boating passes seem to be the worst affected. Pelicans may be attempting to gather monofilament as fine material for nests, thus either getting entangled, or distributing monofilament throughout nesting areas.

The tricolored heron is of increasing concern regionally and in Florida. Because this species is most numerous in coastal habitats, Tampa Bay Refuges provide significant potential for foraging and nesting habitat.

White ibis are also of some regional concern, but while the species does breed in Tampa Bay, none are presently nesting on Pinellas NWR proper. This is a wandering species where numbers can fluctuate greatly locally depending on water conditions throughout the state/region. This area can provide important nesting sites when conditions inland are poor. For example in 2003, 18,000 pairs

nested in Tampa Bay due to poor conditions at historical colonies in the Everglades. More recently, white ibis actually nested on Egmont Key annually since 2005, for the first time known to the present refuge staff (i.e., during the last 18 years.)

Yellow-crowned night herons nest at edges and are vulnerable to fish crows. They are crustacean specialists and have limited foraging areas. Black-crowned night herons are more widespread and not of much concern overall, but colonies do not exist in the thousands like they used to. Both species nest on Tarpon and Little Bird Keys, Pinellas NWR and also on Egmont Key NWR.

Although not breeding in Tampa Bay, the keys in Pinellas NWR may represent important post-breeding roost sites for the magnificent frigatebird.

The two main short-term management issues identified during the Biological Review affecting mangrove nesting species are: (1) Depredation, which within recent years (when predator control has slacked off), has led to near complete abandonment of Tarpon and Whale Keys (among other islands on the refuge); and (2) through law enforcement presence the need to ensure that human disturbance is not a factor where and when waterbirds are nesting on the refuge. In addition to the above two major issues, three other long-term issues need to be considered: (1) Island stabilization through renourishment; (2) removal of exotic vegetation; and (3) reduction of monofilament lines causing mortality.

Beach-Nesting Waterbird and Shorebird Species

As with mangrove nesting waterbirds, the late Rich Paul, National Audubon Society-retired, reviewed Audubon's data for populations of beach nesting species in Tampa Bay and Pinellas County. Audubon's data was compared with data from Jim Rodgers, FWC, and any disparities were clarified and resolved. Within Tampa Bay, Egmont Key NWR and Passage Key NWR support a large majority of nesting terns and laughing gulls (while these species, other than brown pelican; do not occur on Pinellas NWR).

Approximately 38,000 pairs of birds nested on Egmont's beaches in 2007, up from 50 pairs in 1998. Brown pelicans, which have nested on Passage Key, began nesting on Egmont Key in 2000 for the first time in 17 years. Disturbance by people entering closed areas has caused total failure of all nesting colonies in past years. Continued efforts by volunteers, state park service staff, and refuge law enforcement to keep people out of closed areas, has allowed birds to successfully nest without human disturbance. Unfortunately, birds are still subject to loss of habitat and nests resulting from other forces-predators, high tides, tropical storms, and hurricanes.

Approximately 3,000 pairs of birds, including laughing gulls, royal terns, sandwich terns, and black skimmers, nested on Passage Key through 2004. In 2005, Passage Key NWR was reduced to a sandbar. Over the past 100 years, this island refuge has been reduced from 36 acres due to the effects of high tides, tropical storms, and hurricanes. This island is closed to the public year-round to protect nesting, resting, and migrating birds, but illegal access by the public continues to cause birds to abandon their nests. Since this refuge is designated wilderness, any attempt to restore it through beach renourishment requires additional considerations on impacts to wilderness character.

The conservation list for Bird Conservation Region 31 (BCR 31, Peninsular Florida) indicates the following species nesting in Tampa Bay (most on refuges) should be considered as in need of conservation attention in refuge planning:

Species of Conservation Importance (Concern vs. Stewardship vs. other, Action level, species, Combined Score, whether or not State listed, Refuge [2003] pairs, and percentage of 2003 pairs compared with Tampa Bay overall, compared with estimate of total pairs in BCR 31, and compared with estimate of total pairs in Southeast U.S. Region; then percentage of 2003 pairs overall in Tampa Bay with BCR 31 and Southeast U.S.). Percentages over 5 percent are highlighted to indicate high responsibility locally and regionally for Tampa Bay Refuges.

Conservation Concern Species

Critical Recovery
Snowy Plover (Combined Score 20), also State listed (0/0/0, 5/<1)

Immediate Management
None

Management Attention
Wilson's Plover (Combined Score 21) (0/0/0, **13**/2)
American Oystercatcher (Combined Score 21), also State listed (3/1/<1, **40**/3)
*Brown Pelican (Combined Score 20), also State listed (**14/**2/<1, **12**/3)
*Black Skimmer (Combined Score 20), also State listed (**18/15/**2, **82/11**)
*Least Tern (Combined Score 19), also State listed (**8**/<1/<1, **6**/1)
Sandwich Tern (Combined Score 17) (75**/**66/**1, **89**/2)
Laughing Gull (Combined Score 16) (61/50/74**, **82/12**)
Gull-billed Tern (Concern Score 16) (0/0/0, **53**/1)

Planning and Responsibility
Willet (Conservation Score 16) (2/<1/<1, <1/<1)

Conservation Stewardship
Planning and Responsibility
Royal Tern (82/82/**4, **100/5**)

Other species
Black-necked Stilt (0/0/0 <1/<1)
Caspian Tern (0/0/0, **49/5**)

*Tampa Bay Refuges have high responsibility (>5 percent) for supporting all Tampa Bay populations.
**Tampa Bay Refuges have high responsibility (>50 percent) for supporting all peninsular Florida (BCR 31) populations.

Beyond this conservation list above, it is instructive to divide beach nesting species into two types: (1) Those that do not tend to occur in huge colonies, but are more spread out, and (2) those that do occur only in large colonies generally on very isolated islands that are completely free of mammalian predators. The first group tends to have the species undergoing the most severe declines today, while the second group of species appears largely stable regionally, but only will continue to be stable if known colonies are all protected against predators becoming established and from increasing levels of human disturbance.

Islands and Mainland Beaches (most threatened as they do not tend to concentrate in huge colonies and are more subject to problems associated with nesting sites readily accessible to mammalian predators and high public use on beaches):
Snowy plover
Wilson's plover
American oystercatcher
Gull-billed tern
Least tern
Black skimmer

Isolated Islands (these species do well where islands are protected/managed; no predators and minimal human disturbance):
Brown pelican
Royal tern
Sandwich tern
Laughing gull
Caspian tern (not particularly common nesting species in the southeast, but where they do nest they occur only with royals and/or sandwich terns)

Among nesting shorebirds, plovers and oystercatchers are the highest priority species, but presently only the American oystercatcher is known to nest on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs. Wilson's plovers are not nesting on any refuge lands, but the potential exists. Snowy plovers also are not nesting on refuge lands in Tampa Bay, but do occur elsewhere in Tampa Bay.

Among the colonial nesting species, black skimmers and least terns are the highest priority species nesting on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs and these refuges may be among the most secure nesting sites in Tampa Bay. These two species are undergoing declines or are staying relatively stable by moving nesting off of beaches to gravel roof-tops (especially least tern) throughout the Southeast, including the Tampa Bay area. They generally have poor reproduction on beaches due to constant depredation and high human disturbance, but their reproductive rates on rooftops may not be much better on average. Roof-top colonies are subject to large scale failure associated with major storm events. Also, when colonies start to become large they are more likely to attract avian predators that can cause failure and abandonment (examples of avian predators on rooftops may include fish crows, cattle egrets, and even burrowing owls). Beyond these issues, now it is apparent that gravel on roof-tops are being phased out across the southeast and specifically in the Tampa Bay area (DeVries and Forys 2004, Loss of tar and gravel rooftops in Pinellas County, Florida, and potential effects on least tern populations, *Florida Field Naturalist* 32:1-41). As this phase out occurs, whatever higher level of overall reproductive success that may occur on roof-tops over beach habitats will be lost, highlighting the increasing importance of minimizing human disturbance especially on Egmont Key (both within closed areas as well as where compatible public use is now allowed).

Large and important colonies of brown pelicans, laughing gulls, royal and sandwich terns occur on Egmont Key NWR and formerly on Passage Key NWR. In particular among these species, sandwich tern is worth some specific attention on Tampa Bay Refuges from both a Tampa Bay and southeast regional perspective. With close to 90 percent of sandwich tern pairs in peninsular Florida occurring in Tampa Bay, and 66 percent of those on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs, it is clear that refuge colonies for this species are extremely important to maintain. Recent observations during the last two breeding seasons may be cause for some concern with respect to this species. Sandwich terns, at least on Egmont Key, typically settle in first to form nesting colonies and they are soon surrounded by large numbers of royal terns, but during the last two nesting seasons the opposite has been observed with sandwich terns forming a ring around settled in royal terns. This appears important as royal terns are easily able to fend off depredating fish crows and when they form the exterior of the mixed species colony they also protect sandwich terns from depredation. While on the review in 2004, the team observed adult sandwich terns on the edge of the mixed species colony being dragged off of their eggs by fish crows, with other fish crows then being able to access the eggs, resulting in depredation. Whether this depredation is becoming serious for sandwich terns at Egmont Key NWR is unclear, but it is clear when nesting sandwich terns form the edge of the mixed species colony, they suffer from a higher level of depredation than experienced by this species when it forms the core of the mixed species colony. Why sandwich terns formed a ring around nesting royal terns the last two nesting seasons is unknown, and this should be monitored in subsequent years and perhaps a research need identified if this pattern continues. Regionally, Tampa Bay does not presently represent a large proportion of nesting sandwich terns (less than 5 percent), but that may be changing as the world's largest sandwich tern colony within Breton NWR, Louisiana, has been dramatically reduced since the 1998 hurricane season (decreased by half), and perhaps will be reduced further still after the 2005 hurricane season, thus raising the importance of other relatively large colonies, such as on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs. There is not an indication that nesting pairs from Breton NWR are shifting to Tampa Bay (yet), but this is something to watch for. Nevertheless, the percentage of regional pairs occurring in Tampa Bay may need to be reassessed if the 2006 nesting season indicates further declines in Louisiana and relative stability in Tampa Bay.

Laughing gulls also deserve some special mention. According to Paul's data, laughing gulls have shown a 60 percent decline in the last 25 years in Florida, which may be more closely related to better waste management practices, reducing readily available foraging areas for gulls, more than anything else. Nevertheless, one-half of peninsular Florida's population of laughing gulls occur on Egmont Key NWR and formerly on Passage Key NWR and are therefore identified here as in need of at least some responsibility attention, if not also management attention. However, such management attention needs to be kept in perspective with the requirements of the other beach nesting species on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs. First, laughing gulls require some level of vegetation cover in line with brown pelican requirements, but in contrast to the requirements of open sand for nesting terns, skimmers, and oystercatchers. In addition, laughing gulls can be serious nest predators on adjacent nesting terns, skimmers, and shorebirds. Generally, laughing gulls are not considered a serious problem unless something else is disturbing tern and skimmer colonies or oystercatcher pairs on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs (e.g., increasing levels of human disturbance). The appropriate balance in managing vegetation on Egmont Key NWR should be based on the needs of brown pelicans as much or more than laughing gulls, but overall the needs of terns and skimmers for open sand for nesting should take precedent overall. Passage Key NWR is designated wilderness and regularly subject to overwashing and therefore no active vegetation management is considered necessary for that refuge. On balance, the review team does not recommend any special attention for laughing gulls at Egmont Key NWR beyond protection from disturbance, which benefits all beach-nesting species.

The first priority is to maintain and conserve nesting habitats for terns, skimmers, and oystercatchers on both Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs. The second priority is to maintain and conserve breeding and post-breeding roosting and foraging habitat for these species. The two main short-term management issues identified during the Biological Review effecting beach nesting species on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs are: (1) Depredation which within recent years (when predator control has slacked off) has led to near complete abandonment of Tarpon and Whale Keys (among other islands on the refuge), and (2) through law enforcement presence the need to ensure that human disturbance is not a factor where and when waterbirds are nesting on the refuge. In addition to the above two major issues, three other long-term issues need to be considered: (1) Island stabilization through renourishment, (2) vegetation management on Egmont Key NWR, and (3) reduction of monofilament killing birds.

Disturbance --There are two wildlife sanctuaries, totaling 97 acres, which are located on Egmont Key. One is at the southern end of the island to protect nesting and resting birds and the second is along the eastern shoreline to protect feeding birds. Keeping visitors out of these closed areas is vital to the protection of nesting birds. If humans intrude on a nesting colony, adult birds flush from their nests, making their eggs and/or young vulnerable to predation by crows, laughing gulls, or excessive heat from the sun.

In addition, at least American oystercatchers nest outside of sanctuary areas and may have difficulty bringing off broods if there is excessive public use near nest sites. A regular law enforcement presence is necessary to ensure that otherwise compatible public use is conducted in ways to avoid disturbance of nesting, roosting, and foraging birds outside of sanctuaries, especially American oystercatchers. With minimal disturbance, it is possible that additional least terns and black skimmers may nest outside of sanctuary areas.

Depredation -- Egmont Key NWR has no raccoons and any that make it to the island are removed. Rats have invaded Egmont NWR during beach renourishment in 2006 and are being controlled. Four cats remain within the Tampa Bay Pilots' Compound and they have been neutered. Unleashed pets, mainly dogs, cause problems with disturbing colonial nesting birds and can kill the adult birds. Although the state park allowed dogs on a 6-foot leash, refuge regulations prohibited pets but was not being enforced. "No pet" signs have been posted now throughout the island. Fish crows are predating on ground-nesting birds on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs. Ticks may be causing problems for adult birds. Also, peregrine falcons are known to take laughing gulls and terns during winter.

Refuges should closely monitor whether fish crows are causing a population level effect on birds. If depredation from fish crows is considered to be increasing or already excessive, USDA Wildlife Services should be consulted about methods for dealing with individual crows exhibiting depredation behavior.

Vegetation management -- Vegetation management is necessary to maintain and increase nesting areas for terns and skimmers, especially where erosion rates are exceeding accretion rates. Vegetation management may include a limited amount of removing native (sea oats and low herbaceous plants) as well as exotic (Brazilian pepper and Australian pine) plants. In particular, fish crows use the Australian pines as perches and removal of these exotic trees may be one measure to reduce depredation problems from fish crows.

Beach renourishment -- Beach renourishment is likely necessary to maintain the existing nesting habitat for terns and skimmers on both Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs, given present erosion rates ongoing on both refuges. However, there are many considerations involved in promoting continual renourishment proposals. The immediate impacts of beach renourishment include effects to near shore fauna, including a reduction in invertebrates available for foraging shorebirds and

effects or changes to the pattern of currents off shore. Renourished beaches require periodic investments to maintain. The consequences of not renourishing the beach include no beach for sea turtles or birds to nest on. In addition to providing habitat for nesting turtles and birds, renourishment also protects the cultural resources on Egmont Key NWR. Beach renourishment should only occur after nesting season for the birds and turtles.

The review team encourages beach renourishment at Egmont Key NWR on regular intervals with a thoughtful process that considers all resource issues and addresses when, where, how, how much, etc. Short-term decisions to renourish the beach at Egmont Key NWR need to be expedited to take advantage of dredge spoil that could become available.

Passage Key NWR may benefit from renourishment activities also or the island can be left to come and go dynamically with natural processes. There are Wilderness Designation concerns, but renourishment can be done (e.g., Pelican Island).

Reduce monofilament -- Hundreds of birds are killed and/or maimed by improperly discarded fishing line in Tampa Bay each year, especially vulnerable are the brown pelican and the magnificent frigatebird. Working with state and local agencies, the refuge needs to educate anglers on the harm associated with inappropriate monofilament disposal.

Non-breeding Shorebirds

In addition to supporting important nesting habitat, the beaches and sand dunes on Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs also provide important foraging and roosting habitat for transient and wintering shorebirds (including the federally threatened piping plover).

Major issues for these species include disturbance and beach renourishment that have been treated above.

The conservation list for Bird Conservation Region 31 (BCR 31, peninsular Florida) indicates the following species migrating through or wintering in Tampa Bay should be considered as in need of conservation attention in refuge planning:

Species of Conservation Importance (Concern vs. Stewardship vs. other, Action level, species, Combined Score, and whether State listed).

Conservation Concern Species

Critical Recovery
Piping Plover 24, also FT, SL
Long-billed Curlew 19

Immediate Management
None

Management Attention
Marbled Godwit 19
Semipalmated Sandpiper 19
Short-billed Dowitcher 19
Least Sandpiper 18
Stilt Sandpiper 18
Red Knot 17
Sanderling 17
Western Sandpiper 17
Dunlin 17
Whimbrel 16
Ruddy Turnstone 16

Planning and Responsibility
Willet 16

Conservation Stewardship
Planning and Responsibility
Black-bellied Plover
Semipalmated Plover

Other species
None

*Tampa Bay Refuges have high responsibility for supporting all Tampa Bay populations.
**Tampa Bay Refuges have high responsibility for supporting all peninsular Florida (BCR 31) populations.

Special mention is needed for red knot, for which status at Egmont Key and Passage Key NWRs is unclear. Any red knots that do occur may involve both individuals from the southeast U.S. wintering population (considered presently stable, maybe) and possibly also individuals migrating to and from Tierra del Fuego (undergoing steep declines). Both populations, but especially the Tierra del Fuego population, are of increasing concern. If repeated beach renourishment results in a collapse of beach invertebrates available, then this may further impact one or both red knot populations if either occur regularly at Egmont Key NWR. Similarly, repeated disturbances of foraging red knot flocks (and other shorebirds) may reduce ability to migrate successfully to the next important stopover site (whether northbound or southbound).

Landbirds

Landbirds of conservation interest on Tampa Bay Refuges include mangrove breeding species (on Pinellas NWR) and transient neartic-neotropical migratory species (on Pinellas and Egmont Key NWRs).

The conservation list for Bird Conservation Region 31 (BCR 31, peninsular Florida) indicates the following species breeding, migrating through, or wintering in Tampa Bay should be considered as in need of conservation attention in refuge planning: Most of this attention would be tied to monitoring as there is very little active management intended for landbird habitat other than exotic vegetation control where needed.

Species of Conservation Importance (Concern vs. Stewardship vs. other Action level, species, Combined Score, and whether state listed).

Conservation Concern Species

Critical Recovery
None

Immediate Management
Prairie Warbler (Florida subspecies) 19
Loggerhead Shrike (any on Egmont Key?) 18
Painted Bunting (non-breeding) 17

Management Attention
Mangrove Cuckoo 19
Black-whiskered Vireo 19
Common Ground-Dove 17
Eastern Towhee (CHECK for Egmont) 17
Common Nighthawk 16
Chuck-will's-widow 16
Eastern Meadowlark 16
Northern Flicker 15
Northern Harrier 14
Purple Martin 14
Vesper Sparrow (non-breeding) 14

Planning and Responsibility
None

Conservation Stewardship
Planning and Responsibility
Gray Kingbird
White-eyed Vireo
Sedge Wren
Cape May Warbler (transient))
Black-throated Blue Warbler (transient)
Connecticut Warbler (transient)
Bobolink (transient)

Other species

Peregrine Falcon (N)

Mangroves support a number of landbirds of continental and regional concern, principally restricted within the continental United States to Peninsula Florida. Principal among these species are mangrove cuckoo, black-whiskered vireo, and Florida prairie warbler, all of which reach the northern most breeding outposts in Florida within the Tampa-St. Petersburg area (specifically no further north of Anclote Keys, Pasco County). Of these three species in Tampa Bay, the Florida prairie warbler is the most common, mangrove cuckoo is the rarest, and black-whiskered vireo is thought to have declined in recent decades (Paul, regional reports in *American Birds*).

Gray kingbird is another breeding species that is associated with open habitats and appears to be stable in the Tampa Bay area.

Dozens of nearctic-neotropical migratory species regularly pass through Tampa Bay, especially northbound and are priorities either at the national level or within specific physiographic regions. Presumably, availability of extensive and diverse mangrove and hardwood hammock habitats will accommodate the invertebrate, fruit, and nectar demands of most in-transit forest-dwelling species. Many grassland-scrubland species seem to make successful enroute use of disturbed habitats as well.

Efforts are underway to determine status and trends of these transient species in Florida, using point counts as the basic survey technique. Once a protocol is established, data from Tampa Bay Refuges would be desired to better understand roles of refuge lands in contributing to the conservation of these species. Fruiting understory and edge plants are important for these species. Establishing transects in contribution to regional Migration Surveys (on Egmont Key as best location) would add information on both the status of migratory birds and their use of refuge habitats. Any management actions implemented in hardwood hammock should give consideration to potential impacts on food and shelter resources available long-term to migrating birds. However, it is likely that any such actions would be beneficial or neutral.

As mentioned above, mosquito control on adjacent lands may affect indirectly insectivore food supplies for both breeding and migratory landbirds (including larvicides). Monitoring the mosquito control activities with respect to drift should be considered for landbirds in Tampa Bay Refuges.

Florida prairie warbler, gray kingbird (local interest species), black-whiskered vireo, and mangrove cuckoo were being monitored on mangrove islands by the late Rich Paul. Tampa Bay represents the northernmost established outpost for these species along the Gulf Coast of Florida and detections should be recorded during other activities. Refuge staff should seek the possibility of continuing Rich Paul's important work with these and other Tampa Bay bird species.

Refuges and other collaborators in south Florida are establishing monitoring protocols to determine status and trends for Florida's mangrove associated landbird species using the following baseline data to measure status (the densities given below are for mangrove birds and based on accounts in the Rare Biota of Florida series). Without knowing what is presently in Tampa Bay, if and when we establish a survey system (point counts or otherwise), we should compare with the densities listed for Florida Prairie Warbler, Black-whiskered Vireo, and Mangrove Cuckoo. These densities are likely based on south Florida counts and it is likely Tampa Bay densities for at least mangrove cuckoo and black-whiskered vireo should be much lower:

Mangrove Cuckoo with 1 pair per 25 acres of habitat

Black-whiskered Vireo with one singing male per 2.5 acres of habitat

Florida Prairie Warbler with one singing male per 2.5 acres of habitat

FISHES

Common Name	Scientific Name
Speckled worm eel	*Myrophis punctatus*
Spotted moray	*Cymnothorax moringa*
Spotted seatrout	*Cynoscion nebulosus*
Tarpon	*Megalops atlanticus*
Common snook	*Centropomus undecimalis*
Mosquitofish	*Gambusia sp.*
Striped mullet	*Mugil cephalus*
Redfish	*Scianops ocellatus*
Barracuda	*Sphyraena barracuda*
Sheepshead	*Archosargus probatocephalus*
Atlantic spadefish	*Chaetodipterus faber*
Blacktip shark	*Carcharhinus limbatus*
Bonnethead shark	*Sphyrna tiburo*
Burrfish	*Chilomycterus* sp.
Pigmy File Fish	*Monacanthus setifer*
Florida pompano	*TGrachinotus carolinus*
Gafftopsail catfish	*Bagre marinus*
Nassau grouper	*Epinephelus striatus*
Nurse shark	*Ginglymostoma cirratum*
Pinfish	*Lagodon rhomboids*
Scrawled cowfish	*Lactophrys quadricornis*
Sharksucker	*Echeneis naucrates*

REPTILES

Common Name	Scientific Name
Florida box turtle	*Terrapene carolina bauri*
Gopher tortoise	*Gopherus polyphemus*
Atlantic loggerhead	*Caretta caretta caretta*
Atlantic green turtle	*Chelonia mydas mydas*
Green anole	*Anolis carolinensis carolinensis*
Brown anole*	*Anolis sagrei*
Six-lined racerunner	*Cnemidophorus sexlineatus sexlineatus*
Southeastern five-lined skink	*Eumeces inexpectatus*
Mole skink	*Eumeces egregious*
Southern black racer	*Coluber constrictor priapus*
Corn snake	*Elaphe guttata guttata*
Yellow rat snake	*Elaphe obsolete quadrivittata*
Florida kingsnake	*Lampropeltis getula floridana*
Eastern diamondback rattlesnake	*Crotalus adamanteus*

AMPHIBIANS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Eastern narrowmouth toad	*Gastrophryne carolinensis*
Squirrel treefrog	*Hyla squirella*

MAMMALS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Common pilot whale	*Globicephala melaena*
Short-finned pilot whale	*Globicephala macrorhynchus*
Bottle-nosed dolphin	*Tursiops truncates*
Risso's dolphin	*Grampus griseus*
West Indian manatee	*Trichechus manatus latirostris*
Feral cat*	*Felis domesticus*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
PTERIDOPHYTES	
Toothed mid-sorus fern	Blechnum serrulatum
Golden polypody	Phlebodium aureum
Whisk fern	Pteris vittata
GYMNOSPERMS	
Southern red cedar	*Juniperus silicicola*
ANGIOSPERMS	
MONOCOTS	
False sisal	*Agave decipens*
Wild century plant	*Agave neglecta*
Sisal hemp*	*Agave sisalana*
Bushy bluestem	*Andropogon glomeratus*
Tall threeawn grass	*Aristida patula*
Southern sandspur	*Cenchrus echinatus*
Coast sandspur	*Cenchrus incertus*
Dune sandspur	*Cenchrus tribuloides*
Milk-and-wine lily	*Crinum americanum*
String-lily	*Crinum americanum*
Bermuda grass*	*Cynodon dactylon*
Alabama swamp flat sedge	*Cyperus ligularis*
Flatleaf flat sedge	*Cyperus planifolius*
Texas sedge	*Cyperus polystachyos*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Straw-color flat sedge	*Cyperus strigosus*
Crowfoot grass*	*Dactyloctenium aegyptium*
Seashore saltgrass	*Distichlis spicata*
Roadgrass	*Eleocharis baldwinii*
Centipede grass*	*Eremochloa ophiuroides*
Rock finger grass	*Eustachys petraea*
Marsh fimbry	*Fimbristylis spedicea*
Shoal grass	*Halodule wrightii*
Muhly grass	*Muhlenbergia capillaries*
Beach panicum	*Panicum amarum*
Guinea grass	*Panicum maximum*
Thin paspalum	*Paspalum setaceum*
Seashore pellitory	*Paspalum vaginatum*
Date palm*	*Phoenix dactylifera*
White tops	*Phynchospora colorata*
Red natal grass	*Rhynchelytrum repens*
Sabal palm	*Sabal palmetto*
Saw palmetto	*Serenoa repens*
Knotroot foxtail	*Seteria parviflora*
Narrow-leaf blue-eyed grass	*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*
Wild bamboo	*Smilax auriculata*
Marshhay cord grass	*Spartina patens*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Spring ladies' tresses	*Sprianthes vernalis*
Seashore dropseed	*Sporobolus viginicus*
St. Augustine grass	*Stenotaphrum secundatum*
Manatee grass	*Syringodium filiforme*
Turtle grass	*Thalassis testudinum*
Ball moss	*Tillandsia recurvata*
Southern cattail	*Typha domingensis*
Sea oats	*Uniola paniculata*
Spanish bayonet*	*Yucca aloifolia*
DICOTS	
Smooth chaff-flower	*Alternanthera polygonoides*
Mexican poppy	*Argemone Mexicana*
Annual marsh aster	*Aster subulatus*
Sand atriplex	*Atriplex pentandra*
Groundsel bush	*Baccharis halimifolia*
Smooth water-hyssop	*Bacopa monnieri*
Saltwort	*Batis maritime*
Beggar's tick	*Bidens alba*
Samphire	*Blutaparon vermiculare*
Red spiderling	*Boerhavia diffusa*
Sea daisy	*Borrichia frutescens*
Blueheart	*Buchnera Americana*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Saffron plum	*Bumelia celastrina*
Gray nicker	*Caesalpinia bonduc*
Southern sea rocket	*Cakile lanceolata*
Love vine	*Cassytha filiformis*
Beefwood*	*Casuarina cunninghamiana*
Australian pine*	*Casuarina equisetifolia*
Scaly-bark beefwood*	*Casuarina glauca*
Madagascar periwinkle*	*Catharanthus roseus*
Partridge pea	*Chamaecrista fasciculate*
Blodgett's spurge	*Chamaesyce blodgettii*
Sand-dune spurge	*Chamaesyce bombensus*
Garden spurge	*Chamaesyce hirta*
Hyssop spurge	*Chamaesyce hyssopifolia*
Coast spurge	*Chamaesyce mesembryanthemifolia*
Lambs quarters	*Chenopodium album*
Snowberry	*Chiococca alba*
Horrid thistle	*Cirsium horridulum*
Tread softly	*Snidoscolus stimulosus*
Pigeon plum	*Coccoloba diversifolia*
Sea grape	*Coccoloba uvifera*
Buttonwood	*Conocarpus erecta*
Horseweed	*Conyza Canadensis*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Milk-and-wine lily	*Crinum amabile*
Small rattlebox	*Crotalaria pumila*
Rabbit bells	*Crotalaria rotundifolia*
Love vine	*Cuscuta gronovii*
Coastal cynanchum	*Cynanchum angustifolium*
Coin vine	*Dalbergia ecastophyllum*
Florida beggarweed	*Desmodium tortuosum*
Varnish leaf	*Dodonaea viscose*
False-daisy	*Eclipta prostrate*
Southern fleabane	*Erigeron quercifolius*
Daisy fleabane	*Erigeron strigosus*
Beach creeper	*Ernodea littoralis*
Spanish stopper	*Eugenia foetida*
Semaphore eupatorium	*Eupatorium mikaniodes*
Late boneset	*Eupatorium serotinum*
Seaside gentian	*Eustoma exaltata*
Golden fig	*Ficus aurea*
Florida yellow top	*Flaveria floridana*
Florida privet	*Forestiera segregate*
Downy milk-pea	*Galactia volubilis*
One-flowered bedstraw	*Galium uniflorum*
Southern gaura	*Gaura angustifolia*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Purple cudweed	*Gnaphalium purpureum*
Diamond flower	*Hedyotis nigricans*
Hairy beach sunflower	*Helianthus debilis vestitus*
Beach sunflower	*Helianthus debilis*
Scorpion tail	*Heliotropium angiospermum*
Pineland heliotrope	*Heliotropium polyphyllum*
Camphorweed	*Heterotheca subaxillaris*
Marsh pennywort	*Hydrocotyle umbellate*
Moonflower	*Ipomoea alba*
Railroad vine	*Ipomoea pes-caprae*
Bloodleaf	*Iresine diffusa*
Bigleaf marsh elder	*Iva frutescens*
Seacoast marsh elder	*Iva imbricate*
Saltmarsh mallow	*Kosteletzkya virginica*
White mangrove	*Laguncularia racemosa*
Poor man's pepper	*Lepidium virginicum*
Variable false pimpernel	*Lindernia anagallidea*
Frog fruit	*Lippia nodiflora*
Christmasberry	*Lycium carolinianum*
Curtiss' primrose-willow	*Ludwigia curtissii*
Purple axil-flower	*Mecardonia acuminate*
Chinaberry*	*Melia azedarach*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Climbing hempweed	*Midania scandens*
Wax myrtle	*Myrica cerifera*
Oleander*	*Nerium oleander*
Seaside evening primrose	*Oenothera humifusa*
Prickly-pear cactus	*Opuntia humifusa*
Shell mound prickly-pear cactus	*Opuntia stricta*
Florida pellitory	*Parietaria floridana*
White pellitory	*Parietaria praetermissa*
Virginia creeper	*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*
Corky-stemmed passionflower	*Passiflora suberosa*
Frog fruit	*Phyla nodiflora*
Abnormal phyllanthus	*Phyllanthus abnormis*
Seaside ground cherry	*Physalis viscose*
Pokeweed	*Phytolacca Americana*
Paleseed plantain	*Plantago virginica*
Shrubby camphorweed	*Pluchea odorata*
Painted-leaf	*Poinsettia cyathophora*
Large flowered milk wort	*Polygala grandiflora*
Rustweed	*Polypremum procumbens*
Portulaca	*Portulaca oleracea*
Pink purslane	*Portulaca pilosa*
Hair-like mock bishop's-weed	*Ptilimnium capillaceum*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Myrsine	*Rapanea punctata*
Red mangrove	*Rhizophora mangle*
Least snout bean	*Phynchosia minima*
Toothcup	*Rotala ramosior*
Southern dewberry	*Rubus trivalis*
Water pimpernel	*Samolus ebracteatus*
Inkberry	*Scaevola plumieri*
Brazilian pepper*	*Schinus terebinthifolius*
Slender sea purslane	*Sesuvium maritimum*
Sea purslane	*Sesuvium portulacastrum*
Southern sida	*Sida acuta*
Black nightshade	*Solanum chenopodioides*
Pine barren goldenrod	*Solidago fistulosa*
Seaside goldenrod	*Solidago sempervirens*
Common sow thistle	*Sonchus oleraceus*
Yellow necklace pod	*Sophora tomentosa*
Blue porterweed	*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*
Bay-cedar	*Suriana maritime*
New Zealand spinach*	*Tetragonia tetagoniodes*
Poison ivy	*Toxicondendron radicans*
Forked bluecurl	*Trichostema dichotomum*
Marsh verbena	*Verbena scabra*

PLANTS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Yellow vigna	*Vigna luteola*
Summer grape	*Vitus aestivalis*
Southern fox grape	*Vitus rotundifolia var. munsoniana*
Indian waltheria	*Waltheria indica*
Hercules club	*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*

Appendix J. Budget Requests

The Service Asset Management Maintenance System (SAMMS) is a system that has been used to track the needs for new projects and positions on national wildlife refuges. In the situation, SAMMS does not reflect all the present needs of the Tampa Bay Refuges. Below are SAMMS projects and additional personal needs to implement the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for these three refuges. This funding and its associated projects are identified in Chapter V of this document. All SAMMS projects involving staff positions are also represented in the RONS list on the following table:

Tampa Bay Refuges – Service Asset Management Maintenance System projects

Projects Name	Initial Cost ($)	Recurring Costs ($) *
Eradicate or Control Exotic and Invasive Predators	$130,000	$5,000
Science-based Inventory and Monitoring of Plant and Animal Populations	$45,000	$45,000
Eradicate or Control Exotic and Invasive Plants	$100,000	$15,000
Fire Management Program on Egmont Key NWR	$70,000	$15,000
Erosion Monitoring and Beach Restoration	$5,000	$5,000
Mangrove Restoration for Pinellas NWR	$5,000	$5,000
Habitat Maintenance for Beach Nesters	$5,000	$5,000
Protect Refuge Resources and Visitors	$70,000	$70,000
Cultural Resource Protection and Interpretation	$30,000	$5,000
Minimize Impacts of Trash, Marine Debris, and Oil Spills	$20,000	$5,000
Visitor Center and Environmental Education	$565,000	$100,000
Improve Wildlife-dependent Recreation	$75,000	$5,000
Construct New Refuge Dock	$150,000	$2,000
Construct New Public Restroom Facility by Egmont Key Guard House	$950,000	$25,000
Construct Shop/ Bunk House Facility on Egmont Key NWR	$750,000	$15,000
Construct Commercial Docking Facility by Egmont Guard House	$500,000	$15,000
Meet/ Fulfill Heavy Equipment Needs	$75,000	$10,000

Projects Name	Initial Cost ($)	Recurring Costs ($) *
Replace All-Terrain Utility Vehicle	$12,000	$1,000
Replace 25-Foot Work Boat	$125,000	$10,000
Replace 23-Foot Law Enforcement Boat	$100,000	$10,000
Administrative Support	$78,000	$78,000
TOTAL	**$3,860,000**	**$446,000**

The Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS) is a system that has been used in the past to track the needs for new projects and positions on national wildlife refuges. RONS is generally being phased out by SAMMS. In this situation, RONS does not reflect all the present needs of the Tampa Bay Refuges. The RONS projects listed represent shared funding and staffing for Egmont Key, Passage Key, and Pinellas NWRs, whereas all refuges are administered with the same budget and staff.

Tampa Bay Refuges – Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS) projects list

Project Name	Number	Amount
Full-time Law Enforcement Officer	084571	$98,000
Biological Technician	084742	$78,000
Public Use Specialist	084712	$115,000
Office Assistant (PTE)	084720	$28,000
Wildlife Refuge Specialist	085080	$95,000
Refuge Biologist	085150	$95,000
Maintenance Worker	084758	$78,000
TOTAL		**$587,000**

Appendix K. List of Preparers

Table 18. Tampa Bay Refuges Comprehensive Conservation Core Planning Team Members.

Name and Title	Organization, Location
Jim Kraus, former Refuge Manager John Kasbohm, former Deputy Refuge Manager Sarah Palmisano, former Refuge Operations Specialist Keith Ramos, Refuge Manager Richard Meyers, Assistant Refuge Manager Joyce Kleen, Wildlife Biologist Ivan Vicente, Park Ranger	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
Mary Morris, Planner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Regional Office, Tallahassee, Florida
Anne Aiken, Contracted Planner	U.S. Tennessee Valley Authority, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Table 19. Tampa Bay Refuges comprehensive conservation public use review team members (March 23-25, 2004)

Name and Title	Organization, Location
Jim Kraus, former Refuge Manager Shawn Gillette, former Park Ranger	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
Garry Tucker, Visitor Services and Outreach Deborah Jerome, Visitor Services and Outreach	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Regional Office, Atlanta
Dorn Whitmore, Public Use Specialist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Merritt Island NWR

Table 20. Tampa Bay Refuges comprehensive conservation cultural resources review team members (August 31 to September 1, 2004)

Name and Title	Organization, Location
Jim Kraus, former Refuge Manager John Kasbohm, former Deputy Refuge Manager Sarah Palmisano, former Refuge Operations Specialist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
Rick Kanaski, Regional Archaeologist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia
Mary Morris, Planner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Regional Office, Tallahassee, Florida
Scott Robinson, Park Manager	Florida Park Service – Honeymoon Island, Dunedin, Florida
Tom Watson, Assistant Park Manager	Florida Park Service – Egmont Key, St. Petersburg, Florida
Brian Burket, Office of Park Planning	Florida Park Service
Richard Johnson, President Barbara Schmidt, Member and volunteer	Egmont Key Alliance, St. Petersburg, Florida
Laura Kammerer, Deputy SHPO	Florida Division of Historical Resources
Steve Martin, Historical Resource Administrator	Florida Division of Environmental Protection
Brent Weisman, Department of Anthropology	University of South Florida
Jonathan Dean, Ph.D. Candidate	University of South Florida
Margo Schwadron, Archaeologist	National Park Service, Southeast Archaeological Center

Table 21. Tampa Bay Refuges comprehensive conservation biological review team members (May 11-13, 2004)

Name and Title	Organization, Location
Jim Kraus, former Refuge Manager John Kasbohm, former Deputy Refuge Manager Sarah Palmisano, former Refuge Operations Specialist Joyce Kleen, Wildlife Biologist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
Dean Demarest, Acting Nongame Bird Program Coordinator Chuck Hunter, Regional Refuge Biologist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia
Nancy Douglass, Regional Nongame Wildlife Biologist	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Lakeland, Florida
Rich Paul, retired (now deceased), Research Biologist and Sanctuary Manager	Florida Coastal Sanctuaries, National Audubon, Tampa, Florida
Sally Braem, Biologist	Florida Park Service – Honeymoon Island State Park, Dunedin, Florida
Mary Morris, Planner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Office, Tallahassee, Florida
Consulted, but not able to attend the biological review:	
Ken Dodd, Herpetology Expert	U.S. Geological Survey, Gainesville, Florida
Peter Stangel, Director, Southeast Region	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Atlanta, Georgia
Sandy MacPherson, Sea Turtle Coordinator	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Office, Jacksonville, Florida

Table 22. Tampa Bay Refuges comprehensive conservation wilderness review team members (January 11-12, 2005)

Name and Title	Organization, Location
Jim Kraus, former Refuge Manager John Kasbohm, former Deputy Refuge Manager Sarah Palmisano, former Refuge Operations Specialist Joyce Kleen, Wildlife Biologist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
Deborah Jerome, Visitor Services and Outreach	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Regional Office, Atlanta, Georgia (via conference call)
Mary Morris, Planner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Regional Office, Tallahassee, Florida

Appendix L. Consultation and Coordination

OVERVIEW

This appendix summarizes the consultation and coordination that has occurred to date in identifying the issues, alternatives, and preferred alternative, which are presented in this CCP. It lists the meetings that have been held with the various agencies, organizations, and individuals that were consulted in the preparation of this CCP. The list of participants, in addition to those individuals and organizations who provided comments during the public scoping process, includes the CCP Core Planning Team and the Interagency Coordination Planning Team.

The following meetings, open houses, and contacts were undertaken by the Service during the preparation of this CCP.

Core Planning Team

The Core Planning Team is comprised exclusively of Service staff and Service contractor. Personnel from St. Marks NWR and the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex, which includes the Tampa Bay Refuges, served on the team. Key tasks of the team included defining and refining the refuges' vision; identifying, reviewing, and filtering the issues; defining the goals and objectives; and outlining the alternatives.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
- Keith Ramos, Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
- Richard Meyers, Assistant Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex/Tampa Bay Refuges
- Joyce Kleen, Wildlife Biologist, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
- Ivan Vicente, Visitor Services Specialist, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
- Mary Morris, Natural Resources Planner, St. Marks NWR
- Evelyn Nelson, Writer/Editor, Southeast Regional Office
- Anne Aiken, Contractor, Tennessee Valley Authority

Interagency Coordination Planning Team

The Interagency Coordination Planning Team included local, state, and federal governmental field staff representatives involved with the resources at the local level. In addition to some of the members of the Core Planning Team, the Interagency Coordination Planning Team consisted of personnel from the Service's Savannah Coastal Refuges and the local Ecological Services Office; the U.S. Coast Guard; Florida Park Service; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; County Environmental Management and Parks Departments; and the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. During the Interagency Scoping Meeting on October 12, 2005, the team identified and discussed issues and opportunities for resource protection, habitat restoration, and public use at the Tampa Bay Refuges.

Members of the team who participated in the initial scoping meeting are as follows:

Fish and Wildlife Service

- Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
- Richard Meyers, Assistant Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex/Tampa Bay Refuges
- Joyce Kleen, Wildlife Biologist, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
- Mary Morris, Natural Resources Planner, St. Marks NWR
- Richard Kanaski, Regional Historic Preservation Officer and Regional Archaeologist, Savannah Coastal Refuges
- Linda Smith, Ecological Services Office

U.S. Coast Guard

- Lt. Heather Osburn, U.S.Coast Guard Sector, St. Petersburg

State of Florida

- Tom Watson, Assistant Park Manager, Egmont Key Preserve State Park
- Peter Krulder, Park Manager, Honeymoon Island State Park
- Valinda Subic, District 4 Bureau Chief, Florida Park Service
- Brian Burket, Park Planner, Florida Park Service
- Terry Hingtgen, Environmental Specialist III, Florida Park Service
- James Beever, Biological Scientist IV, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- William R. Smith, Biological Scientist III, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Lee Taylor, Southwest Region Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Parks Small, Natural and Cultural Resources Bureau Chief, Florida Park Service

County Agencies

- Eric Fehrmann, M.S., Environmental Program Manager, Pinellas County Environmental Management
- Deborah J. Chayet, Grants Specialist, Pinellas County Park Department

Other Agencies

- Lindsay Griffen, Environmental Associate, Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Public Scoping Meetings

The Core Planning Team hosted open houses/public scoping meetings in Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Manatee Counties in February 2006. The refuges' draft vision, goals, and issues were presented and public input was requested. Comment forms were made available at the meetings, as well as at the refuges' headquarters. The completed forms were submitted to the Service by mail or e-mail. Public input is greatly appreciated and was incorporated into this CCP.

Public Meetings for the Draft CCP/EA

At least 57 persons attended two public meetings held to present the Draft CCP/EA during the open comment period. Refuge staff and other participants at the meetings included the following individuals:

Richard Meyers – Assistant Refuge Manager (Primary Speaker)
Keith Ramos – Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex
Joyce Kleen – Wildlife Biologist
Ivan Vicente – Public Use Specialist
Craig Cavanna – Refuge Law Enforcement Officer

Several speakers identified themselves as representing the following organizations: The FTBNWR, EKA, and SPAS.

Notices of the Draft CCP/EA's availability and public meetings were sent to over 180 persons on the CCP mailing list, including representatives of the following Indian tribes: The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Tribe of Florida, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Poarch Band of Creek Indians of Alabama, and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma. A total of 23 comment letters was received by mail or e-mail from 12 persons and the 8 following organizations: FTBNWR, EKA, Tampa Bay Ferry, SPAS, SMC, Tampa Bay Watch, Friends of the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex, Inc., and Audubon of Florida. Additionally, comments were received from the following government agencies: FWC, FDEP-DRP, and FDEP-CAMA.

The Draft CCP/EA was circulated through the Florida State Clearinghouse to state, regional, and local governments: The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, Florida Department of Community Affairs, FWC, Florida Departments of State, Transportation, FDEP-DRP, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The clearinghouse agencies review documents pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 12372, Gubernatorial Executive Order 95-359, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. FWC replied that the agency had no comments on the Draft CCP/EA. The FDEP-DRP had commented on the Service's Internal Review Draft and all appropriate comments were incorporated into or addressed within the Draft CCP/EA. The Florida State Clearinghouse issued a letter dated June 11, 2009 and signed by Sally B. Mann, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Programs, DEP. It states that the Draft CCP/EA for Tampa Bay Refuges is consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program.

Appendix M. Finding of No Significant Impact

Introduction
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) proposes to protect and manage certain fish and wildlife resources in Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Manatee Counties, Florida, through the Tampa Bay Refuges (Egmont Key, Pinellas, and Passage Key NWRs). An Environmental Assessment was prepared to inform the public of the possible environmental consequences of implementing the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Tampa Bay Refuges. A description of the alternatives, the rationale for selecting the preferred alternative, the environmental effects of the preferred alternative, the potential adverse effects of the action, and a declaration concerning the factors determining the significance of effects, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, are outlined below. The supporting information can be found in the Environmental Assessment, which is Section B of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

Alternatives
In developing the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Tampa Bay Refuges, the Service evaluated three alternatives:

The Service adopted Alternative B, the "Preferred Alternative," as the comprehensive conservation plan for guiding the direction of the refuges for the next 15 years. The overriding concern reflected in this plan is that wildlife conservation assumes first priority in refuge management; wildlife-dependent recreational uses are allowed if they are compatible with wildlife conservation. Wildlife-dependent recreation uses (wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation) will be emphasized and encouraged.

Alternative A. (Current Management – No Action)
Alternative A represents no change from current management of the Refuge. Under this alternative, the no action alternative, present management of the refuge would continue at the current level. The refuge would continue its primary mission of providing habitat for wildlife. Wildlife and habitat would be protected through a variety of management tools, such as area closures, predator control, law enforcement, exotic plant control, erosion control, and cleanup of trash. These activities (except for the closures) would be conducted on an opportunistic basis or under the direction and guidance of others.

The refuge would continue to be managed by one full-time assistant refuge manager, with the support of nine staff members 100 miles driving distance away at the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex. The refuge would continue to be assisted by numerous partners in opportunistically conducting bird and other wildlife surveys, educating visitors, and encouraging wildlife photography and observation. The Service would continue its cooperative management agreement with the FPS to manage Egmont Key NWR, with the State being responsible for most public recreation and interpretation of natural and cultural resources, and the Service being primarily responsible for the management of all wildlife and habitat. Meetings between the two agencies would continue to be held approximately twice a year.

Under this alternative, the existing level of funding and staffing would be maintained. Accordingly, some positions would not be filled when vacated if funds needed to be reallocated to meet rising costs or new priorities.

Alternative B. (Preferred Alternative)
The preferred alternative, Alternative B, is considered to be the most effective management action for meeting the purposes of the refuges. Under Alternative B, the Service would take more of a leadership role by coordinating and/or directing activities done and decisions made by partners that have an impact on the refuge, including coordinating, directing, and conducting bird surveys and Atlantic loggerhead sea turtle surveys; coordinating additional bird surveys and monitoring and conducting research on the gopher tortoises of Egmont Key; and, with partners, identifying, mapping, and protecting state-listed plant species on the refuges. The Service would promote and support increasing the Friends Group to 150+ members.

Under this alternative, Service staff dedicated to the Tampa Bay Refuges would be increased to four full-time permanent employees and one part-time permanent employee, which would include the addition of a law enforcement officer to increase protection of wildlife, habitat, and visitor safety; a biological technician to conduct bird surveys, predator and exotic species control, and beach renourishment activities; a public use specialist to facilitate and create opportunities for environmental education, interpretation, and wildlife photography and observation; and a part-time administrative office assistant. Larger office space to accommodate the increased staff along with the Friends Group would be acquired, as well as facilities for boat storage and use; also, a Visitor Center would be established.

The cooperative agreement with FPS to manage Egmont Key NWR would be enhanced under this alternative by establishing monthly communications and quarterly meetings. Further, the Service would facilitate the transfer of the USCG property on Egmont Key to the Service, and would establish the Service's interest in the Pilots Compound property in the event that occupancy of that property changes. Acquisition of these lands would enable the Service to better conserve, protect, and manage the habitat on Egmont Key.

Alternative C.
Under Alternative C, the Service would take on an even greater leadership role at the refuges, enhancing and expanding the activities proposed under Alternative B. The Service staff dedicated to the Tampa Bay Refuges would be increased to seven full-time permanent employees, including two law enforcement officers, one biological technician, one public use specialist, one maintenance person/equipment operators, and an administrative office assistant. The Service would promote and support increasing the Friends Group to 200-300 members. Additional equipment and facilities would be acquired to support the staff and increased activities on the refuges.

The additional staff members would allow the refuge to increase the frequency of some monitoring (e.g., piping plover); initiate bird research; routinely monitor and research gopher tortoises; enhance protection of wildlife, habitats, and visitor safety; control exotic and invasive vegetation on a routine basis; and provide educational events on a routine basis, including weekly interpretative tours using concessionaire(s) selected and operating under Service contract.
Under this alternative, the Service would own and manage all of Egmont Key without sharing that responsibility with the FPS—an overlay state park managed by FPS would no longer exist, allowing the Service to manage the island in a comprehensive manner.

Selection Rationale
Alternative B is selected for implementation because it directs the development of programs to best achieve the refuges' purposes and goals; emphasizes enhanced Service leadership role on the refuges, collection of habitat and wildlife data, and protection of wildlife; and ensures long-term achievement of Refuge and Service objectives. At the same time, the management actions provide increased and balanced levels of compatible public use opportunities consistent with existing laws,

Service policies, and sound biological principles. It provides the best mix of program elements to achieve desired long-term conditions.

Under this alternative, all lands under the management and direction of the refuges will be protected, maintained, and enhanced to best achieve national, ecosystem, and refuge-specific goals and objectives within anticipated funding and staffing levels. In addition, the action positively addresses significant issues and concerns expressed by the public.

Environmental Effects
Implementation of the Service's management action is expected to result in environmental, social, and economic effects as outlined in the Environmental Assessment (Section B) of the Draft CCP. Habitat management, population management, land conservation, and visitor services management activities on the Tampa Bay Refuges would result in net positive benefits related to native habitat, water quality, wildlife populations, cultural and historical resources, public use, and socioeconomic resources. These effects are detailed as follows:

1. Habitat size and diversity will increase or be maintained due to increased control of exotic and invasive vegetation, increased erosion control, comprehensive beach renourishment efforts, and use of prescribed fire.
2. Habitats will be further protected by increased Service law enforcement presence, extension of Service law enforcement jurisdiction to waters surrounding the refuges, and by use of signs and education.
3. Surveys to identify and map state-listed plant species on the refuges will be a useful tool to ultimately protect these plants.
4. Erosion control activities, and cleanup of monofilament fishing line and trash and education regarding proper disposal of these items will improve water quality by reducing turbidity and pollution.
5. Increased monitoring, surveying, and researching of native and migrating wildlife will help identify trends in populations and diversity and aid in better wildlife management decisions.
6. Wildlife will be protected by closing areas to the public, increased control of predators, increased Service law enforcement presence and jurisdiction, and improved signage and education.
7. Wildlife populations are expected to benefit from increased habitat size and diversity.
8. Cultural and historical resources will be further protected by regular comprehensive beach renourishment, and increased control of encroaching vegetation.
9. Increased law enforcement presence and education will curb vandalism, unpermitted artifact collection, and other destructive behavior that could cause damage to cultural and historic structures.
10. Establishment of the Egmont Key Guard House and Visitor Center will provide additional cultural and historical education and interpretation opportunities; educational and interpretive materials will be updated.
11. Wildlife observation opportunities will be improved by the installation of an observation tower and closed-circuit television for viewing closed areas.
12. Wildlife photography opportunities will be improved by the establishment of a photo blind.
13. Enhanced public use opportunities are expected to increase the number of visitors. The increased number of visitors and increased local Service staffing numbers will both benefit the local economy.

Potential Adverse Effects and Mitigation Measures

Wildlife Disturbance
Disturbance to wildlife at some level is an unavoidable consequence of any public use program, regardless of the activity involved. Obviously, some activities innately have the potential to be more disturbing than others. The management actions to be implemented have been carefully planned to avoid unacceptable levels of impact.

As currently proposed, the known and anticipated levels of disturbance of the management action are considered minimal and well within the tolerance level of known wildlife species and populations present in the area. Implementation of the public use program would take place through carefully controlled time and space zoning, establishment of protection zones around key sites, and routing of roads and trails to avoid direct contact with sensitive areas, such as nesting bird habitat, etc. Monitoring activities through wildlife inventories and assessments of public use levels and activities would be utilized, and public use programs would be adjusted as needed to limit disturbance.

User Group Conflicts
As public use levels expand across time, some conflicts between user groups may occur. Programs would be adjusted, as needed, to eliminate or minimize these problems and provide quality wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities. Experience has proven that time and space zonings, such as establishment of separate use areas, use periods, and restricting numbers of users, are effective tools in eliminating conflicts between user groups.

Effects on Adjacent Landowners
Implementation of the management action would not negatively impact adjacent landowners. Positive impacts that would be expected include higher property values and increased opportunities for viewing more diverse wildlife.

Land Ownership and Site Development
Land acquisition efforts by the Service could lead to changes in land use and recreational use patterns. However, most of the non-Service-owned lands within the refuges' approved acquisition boundaries would retain their current use. If these lands are acquired as additions to the refuges, they would be maintained and managed for native wildlife populations, and opened to wildlife-compatible public uses, where feasible.

Potential development of the buildings, docks, observation tower, and other improvements could lead to minor short-term negative impacts on plants, soils, and some wildlife species. When building the observation towers, efforts would be made to use recycled products and environmentally sensitive treated lumber. All construction activities would comply with the requirements of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; the National Historic Preservation Act; Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management; and other applicable regulatory requirements.

The management action is not expected to have significant adverse effects on wetlands and floodplains, pursuant to Executive Orders 11990 and 11988.

Coordination
The management action has been thoroughly coordinated with all interested and/or affected parties. Parties contacted include:

All affected landowners
Congressional representatives
Governor of Florida
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Division of Recreation and Parks
Southwest Florida Water Management District
The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer
Local community officials
Interested citizens
Conservation organizations

Findings
It is my determination that the management action does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment under the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (as amended). As such, an environmental impact statement is not required. This determination is based on the following factors (40 C.F.R. 1508.27), as addressed in the Environmental Assessment for the Tampa Bay Refuges:

1. Both beneficial and adverse effects have been considered and this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. (Environmental Assessment, pages 141-159).

2. The actions will not have a significant effect on public health and safety. (Environmental Assessment, page 143).

3. The project will not significantly affect any unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historical or cultural resources, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. (Environmental Assessment, pages 141-143).

4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. (Environmental Assessment, pages 141-143, 158).

5. The actions do not involve highly uncertain, unique, or unknown environmental risks to the human environment. (Environmental Assessment, pages 141-143).

6. The actions will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor do they represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. (Environmental Assessment, pages 141-159).

7. There will be no cumulatively significant impacts on the environment. Cumulative impacts have been analyzed with consideration of other similar activities on adjacent lands, in past action, and in foreseeable future actions. (Environmental Assessment, pages 158-159).

8. The actions will not significantly affect any site listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, nor will they cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources. (Environmental Assessment, pages 142-143).

9. The actions are not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species, or their habitats. (Environmental Assessment, pages 141-159).

10. The actions will not lead to a violation of federal, state, or local laws imposed for the protection of the environment. (Environmental Assessment, pages 141-159).

Supporting References

Fish and Wildlife Service. 2009. Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Tampa Bay Refuges, Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Manatee Counties, Florida. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region.

Document Availability

The Environmental Assessment was Section B of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Tampa Bay Refuges and was made available in April 2009. Additional copies are available by writing: Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 1502 S.E. Kings Bay Drive, Crystal River, FL 34429.

Signed

Acting Regional Director

9-25-09

Date