

News Release



Pacific Region

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex

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www.fws.gov/refuge/billy_frank_jr_nisqually
www.fws.gov/refuge/grays_harbor

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Public Comment Sought on Draft Management Plan for Two National Wildlife Refuges in Washington *The plan proposes increased public use opportunities at the Refuges near Hoquiam and Olympia*

Olympia, Wash. - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service invites the public to review and comment on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge and the Black River Unit of Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. The draft CCP/EA is a 15-year management plan—it describes the long-term biological and management goals, objectives, and strategies for the Refuge and Unit.

“The planning process is a way for the Service and the public to evaluate management goals and objectives that will ensure the best approach to wildlife, plant, and habitat conservation, while providing opportunities for the public to safely enjoy fish and wildlife-dependent recreation on national wildlife refuges,” said Project Leader Glynnis Nakai.

The draft management plan includes an analysis of two alternatives. The Service’s preferred alternative includes additional staffing, more active habitat management projects, such as marsh restoration and invasive species removal, and pursuing priority scientific inventory, monitoring, and research studies for informed decision-making. Public use changes would include new viewing platforms and improvements to existing facilities; additional welcome, orientation, and interpretive features; and enhancing the environmental education program. Outreach efforts, partnerships, and recruitment and training of volunteers would continue to be supported and expanded. At Grays Harbor Refuge, the Service would continue to work with partners to evaluate opportunities for developing a nature center. Within the Black River Unit, areas would be opened to public use, including wildlife observation, interpretation, and wildlife photography. The Service would also work with Thurston County to potentially develop a boat launch area.

The full draft plan may be accessed online at www.fws.gov/refuge/billy_frank_jr_nisqually or www.fws.gov/refuge/grays_harbor. Printed copies are available for review at the public libraries in Hoquiam, Aberdeen, and Tumwater. Printed or CD-ROM copies can be requested from the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex Office at (360) 753-9467.

Comments on the draft plan should be received by November 25, 2016 and emailed to FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov. Please include “Grays Harbor/Black River CCP” in the e-mail subject line. Comments can also be mailed or faxed to: Glynnis Nakai, Project Leader, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 100 Brown Farm Road, Olympia, WA 98516; fax number (360) 534-9302. Public comments will be analyzed and addressed in a final CCP/EA, scheduled to be completed in winter 2017. The final plan will guide management for 15 years, and actions will be implemented as funding becomes available.

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The National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the world's premier system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's fish, wildlife and plants. Since President Theodore Roosevelt designated Florida's Pelican Island as the first wildlife refuge in 1903, the System has grown to more than 941.6 million acres, 565 refuges, 38 wetland management districts nationwide, and 5 Marine National Monuments.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/USFWSPacific, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/USFWSPacific, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws>, and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwspacific>.