

American Programs all power and authority to administer the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4101 *et seq.*), except as provided in Section B of this delegation of authority.

The Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing further redelegates to the ONAP Administrators; the Director, Office of Grants Management; and Director, Office of Grants Evaluation the power and authority to:

A. Review plans submitted in compliance with Section 102 of the Act and to notify the tribe or the tribally designated housing entity whether the plan complies with the statutory requirements, the reasons for the noncompliance, and the modifications necessary to meet the requirements of section 102 of the Act;

Execute all necessary agreements, including but not limited to grant agreements;

B. Conduct environmental reviews in compliance with section 105(b) of the Act;

C. Review performance reports submitted by the tribe or the tribally designated housing entity and issue reports based on such review; and

D. Any other authority necessary to carry out the purposes of the Act which have not been excepted from this redelegation.

Section B. Authority Excepted

The authority redelegated does not include:

A. The power to waive regulations or the power to waive the requirement for submitting the Plan as set forth in Section 101(b)(2) of the Act;

B. The authority to require the replacement of a tribally designated housing entity pursuant to Section 402 of the Act.

Section C. Authority to Further Redelegate

The authority delegated in Section A above, to the ONAP Administrators; the Director, Office of Grants Management; and the Director, Office of Grants Evaluation above may be redelegated.

Authority: Section 7(d), Department of Housing and Urban Development Act, 42 U.S.C. 3535(d).

Dated: September 25, 1998.

Deborah Vincent,

General Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Issue 2 Final Comprehensive Conservation Plans, Associated Environmental Assessments, and Findings of No Significant Impact for 2 National Wildlife Refuges in the Southwest Region

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared Final Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCP), associated Environmental Assessments (EA), and Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Roswell, New Mexico, and San Andres National Wildlife Refuge, Las Cruces, New Mexico pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and its implementing regulations. The Regional Director, Southwest Regional Office, upon issuing a FONSI for both the San Andres NWR EA and the Bitter Lake NWR EA considered ranges of alternatives for each document.

Approval of the Bitter Lake NWR CCP formalizes six goals which will result in: (1) Restoration, enhancement, and protection of biological diversity, land, wildlife and habitat; (2) Restoration of hydrological resources and improvements to water quality; (3) Provision of compatible recreational uses; (4) Protection of cultural resources; (5) Strengthening and maintenance of effective relationships with other governmental agencies and stakeholders; (6) Improvements to refuge staffing and funding. Some of the specific changes to the existing program changes include but are not necessarily limited to the following strategies:

- A restoration of 250 acres of Research Natural Areas and 1000 acres in other areas by removal and control of non-native salt cedar;
- Restoration of over story vegetation near the refuge headquarters (10 acres) and providing appropriate irrigation;
- Restoration of 140 acres of abandoned agricultural fields as grasslands;
- Enhance promotion of environmental education in area schools and organizations on the value of short grass prairie ecosystems;
- Acquire identified land parcels as appropriate as they become available on a willing seller basis;

- Restoration of 100 acres of habitat associated with 25 gypsum sinkholes;
- Conversion of non-productive farmlands to seasonal wetlands/moist soil units;

- Construction and upgrade of all-weather road for wildlife tour route.

Approval of the San Andres NWR CCP constitutes the definition of appropriate management approaches and establishment of refuge goals, objectives and strategies leading to the achievement of the refuge's purposes and mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The CCP formalizes six goals which will result in: (1) Restoration, enhancement, and protection of biological diversity, land, wildlife and habitat; (2) Protection of archeological and cultural resources; (3) Provision of increased wildlife education and interpretation initiatives; (4) Strengthening and maintenance of effective relationships with other governmental agencies and stakeholders; (5) Improvements to refuge staffing and funding. Approval of the San Andres NWR CCP establishes a management program inclusive of the following objectives:

- Enhancing refuge baseline biological data collection;
- Establishing and protecting an augmentable scabies free desert bighorn population;
- Reducing and eliminating non-native plant and animal species;
- Implementing cost effective fire management strategies for habitat protection and enhancement;
- Continuing cultural resource inventory and monitoring efforts;
- Continuing effective educational outreach;
- Improving coordination efforts with other agencies and stakeholders; and,
- Improving use of internal budgetary reporting mechanisms to achieve effecting staffing and facilities levels.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the San Andres NWR CCP establishes the following strategies:

- Continue herpetofauna surveys;
- Continue to mist net and band neotropical migratory birds;
- Conduct point count surveys of neotropical migratory birds;
- Conduct small mammals surveys to improve baseline data;
- Conduct annual mule deer and mountain lion surveys to determine population trends and effects on bighorn sheep habitat;
- Continue cooperative efforts with WSMR regarding Land Condition Trend Analysis program transects;
- Gather air quality data from air quality stations on the refuge;
- Participate with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish in efforts

to transplant and track radio collared sentinel rams;

- Conduct and promote research on scabies mite in the San Andres Mountains;
- Determine effects of ungulate encroachment and consider establishment of special depredation hunts;
- Reduce salt cedar refuge-wide by at least 20% using various methods of extraction;
- Develop prescribe burn proposals for portions of Bennett Mountain, Black Brushy Mountain and San Andres Mountain approximately 5,000 acres);
- Monitor and evaluate effects of burning strategies;
- Engage in public outreach to foster better understandings of refuge fire management efforts;
- Conduct Global Positioning System (GPS) survey of known archeological and historic sites;
- Construct shelters for historical sites in jeopardy from natural degradation;
- Participate in cooperative effort with state and federal agencies to establish an off site visitor center that would emphasize refuge resources and those of other jurisdictions;
- Construct an information kiosk and associated interpretive information at the San Augustine Pass parking area;
- Improve interagency coordinating efforts; and,
- Secure needed staffing, funding, and facilities to assist in the implementation efforts to achieve plan goals and objectives.

Based on a review and evaluation of the information contained in the CCP and EA for Bitter Lake NWR and San Andres NWR, the Regional Director, Southwest Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has determined that the approval of the individual or cumulative approaches reflected in the respective Proposed Alternatives and CCP Goals, Objectives and Strategies, is not deemed to constitute a major Federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. However, it is the intent of the Service to revisit questions of potential significant environmental consequences in accordance with NEPA upon consideration of the implementation of site specific proposals called for and discussed in the final plan document.

ADDRESSES: Copies may be obtained by writing to: Mr. Tom Baca, Natural

Resource Planner, Division of Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P. O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: It is Service policy to have all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System managed in accordance with an approved CCP. The CCP guides management decisions and identifies refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. The planning process has considered many elements, including habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection and acquisition, public and recreational uses, and cultural resources. Public input into this planning process has assisted in the development of these documents. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuges and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The Service considered comments and advice generated in response to draft documents issued July 1998. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with Service CCP policy to advise other agencies and the public of the availability of the final documents.

Dated: September 25, 1998.

Nancy M. Kaufman,
Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Intent To Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated Environmental Document for Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge, Hartford, KS

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan and associated environmental document.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service intends to gather information necessary to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and associated environmental document for the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge near Hartford, Kansas. The Service is issuing this notice in compliance with its policy to advise other organizations and the public of its intentions and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to be considered in the planning process.

DATES: Written comments should be received by November 13, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments and requests for more information should be sent to: Refuge Manager, Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge, 530 West Maple, P.O. Box 128, Hartford, Kansas 66854. Fax (316) 392-5554. Email: r6rw_flh@fws.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jerre Gamble, Refuge Manager, (316) 392-5553 extension 102.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Service has initiated comprehensive conservation planning for Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge for the conservation and development of its natural resources. This Refuge is located in the central portion of eastern Kansas, surrounding portions of the John Redmond Reservoir, near the town of Hartford. The Refuge is open to Public use.

Comprehensive planning will develop management goals, objectives, and strategies to carry out the purposes of the Refuge and comply with laws and policies governing refuge management and public use of refuges.

The Service requests input as to what issues, affecting management or public use, should be addressed during the planning process. The Service is especially interested in receiving public input in the following areas:

- What makes the Refuge special for you?
- What problems or issues do you see affecting management or public use of the Refuges?
- What improvements do you recommend for the Refuge?
- What changes, if any, would you like to see in the management of the Refuge?

The Service has provided the above questions for your optional use. The Service has no requirement that you must provide information. The Planning Team developed these questions to facilitate finding out more information about individual issues and ideas. Comments received by the Planning Team will be used as part of the planning process; individual comments will not be referenced in our reports or directly responded to.

An opportunity will also be provided for public input at an open house in early November 1998 which will be held to scope issues and concerns (schedule can be obtained from the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge at above address). All information provided voluntarily by mail, phone, or at public meetings becomes part of the official public record (i.e., names, addresses, letters of comment, input recorded during meetings). If requested under the Freedom of Information Act by a private