

at Sunset Elementary School—Gymnasium, 12824 West 12th Avenue, Airway Heights, Washington 99001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. B.J. Howerton, Bureau of Indian Affairs, (503) 231-6749.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BIA as Lead Agency, in cooperation with the Tribe, intends to prepare an EIS for a proposed mixed-use development and corresponding master plan for a 145-acre parcel of trust land adjacent to the City of Airway Heights, Spokane County, Washington. The project site may include, but is not limited to, a variety of proposed land uses such as a casino resort and hotel, commercial retail uses, offices, medical facilities, recreational, cultural, and entertainment facilities, and related parking. The purpose of the proposed action is to improve the economy of the Tribe and help their members attain economic self sufficiency. This notice also announces a public scoping meeting to identify potential issues and content for inclusion in the EIS.

The EIS will assess the environmental consequences of BIA approval of a proposed master plan for the development of a mixed-use development—which may include a casino resort and hotel, commercial retail uses, offices, medical facilities, recreational, cultural, and entertainment facilities, and related parking—on an approximate 145-acre parcel of trust land adjacent to the western city limits of Airway Heights, Spokane County, Washington. The project site is near the northwest corner of U.S. Highway 2 (US-2) and Craig Road, and approximately 10 miles west of Spokane. It is located in the southwest quarter of 22-25-41, excluding US-2, and the north half of the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter, excluding the east 830 feet of the south 491.5 feet of 22-25-41, excluding roads.

The “Intergovernmental Agreement between the Spokane Tribe of Indians and the City of Airway Heights” and the “Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of Airway Heights and the Spokane Tribe of Indians Regarding Services and Impacts of Tribal Gaming on Indian Lands Located Adjacent to the City of Airway Heights (April 10, 2007)” provide details concerning shared responsibilities related to law enforcement and security services, public health and safety, road maintenance and repair, and other matters between the Tribe and the City.

The project site would also include internal access roads, parking areas, and associated landscaping. Conceptual traffic analyses suggest possible

roadway and/or intersection improvements along Craig Road and US-2 adjacent to the proposed project site.

Significant issues to be covered during the scoping process may include, but are not limited to, air quality, transportation, surface and groundwater resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomic conditions, public services, infrastructure, land use, aesthetics, and Environmental Justice.

Directions for Submitting Public Comments

If you choose to submit your comments to the BIA directly, your comments must be in writing and must be submitted in person or by mail. Please include your name, return address, and the caption, “DEIS Scoping Comments, Spokane Tribe of Indians West Plains Mixed-Use Development Project,” on the first page of your comments.

Public Comment Availability

Comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the BIA address shown above, during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority

This notice is published in accordance with section 1503.1 of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) implementing the procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4371 *et seq.*), and related Department of the Interior requirements in the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2), and is in the exercise of authority delegated to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs by 209 DM 8.1.

Dated: August 21, 2009.

George T. Skibine,

Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

[FR Doc. E9-20701 Filed 8-25-09; 11:15 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2009-N124; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge Complex

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability: draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment (Draft CCP/EA) for the Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex), consisting of Bald Knob, Big Lake, Cache River, and Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuges, for public review and comment. In this Draft CCP/EA, we describe the alternative we propose to use to manage this complex for the 15 years following approval of the final CCP.

DATES: To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments by September 28, 2009.

A meeting will be held to present the Draft CCP/EA to the public; mailings, newspaper articles, and posters will be the avenues to inform the public of the date and time for the meeting.

ADDRESSES: Send comments, questions, and requests for information to: Mr. William R. Smith, Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 26320 Highway 33 South, Augusta, AR 72006. The Draft CCP/EA is available on compact disk or in hard copy. The Draft CCP/EA may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Internet Site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. William R. Smith; telephone: 870/347-2074; e-mail: william_r_smith@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for Bald Knob, Big Lake, Cache River, and Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuges. We started this process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on January 3, 2007 (72 FR 142).

Background

The CCP Process

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) (Improvement Act), which amended the National Wildlife Refuge

System Administration Act of 1966, requires us to develop a CCP for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose for developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year strategy for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management, conservation, legal mandates, and our policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the Improvement Act.

Bald Knob National Wildlife Refuge (Bald Knob NWR) is near the town of Bald Knob in White County, Arkansas, and was established in 1993 to protect and provide feeding and resting areas for migrating waterfowl. Bald Knob NWR, totaling 16,100 acres of forested wetlands, moist-soil impoundments, and croplands, hosts one of the largest populations of wintering pintails in the State. The refuge is a crucial staging area for pintails migrating to the coastal areas of Louisiana and eastern Texas.

Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge (Big Lake NWR) is near the town of Manila in Mississippi County, Arkansas, and was established in 1915 by Executive Order of President Woodrow Wilson, to serve as a reserve and breeding ground for native birds. Big Lake NWR encompasses 11,038 acres of lake and swamp habitats, including 2,144 acres designated as Wilderness. Big Lake NWR provides important migratory bird habitat and is designated as a "National Natural Landmark Area." The American Bird Conservancy also has listed the refuge as a "Globally Important Bird Area."

Cache River National Wildlife Refuge (Cache River NWR) is near the towns of Augusta and Brinkley, Arkansas, and was established in 1986 to provide critical wintering habitat for waterfowl and other migratory and resident wildlife species. Although the land acquisition boundary is approved for 185,574 acres, Cache River NWR presently encompasses 66,350 acres situated within Jackson, Monroe, Prairie, and Woodruff Counties. Cache River NWR is noted as part of the most important wintering habitat for mallards in North America.

Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge (Wapanocca NWR) is 20 miles

northwest of Memphis, Tennessee, and near the town of Turrell in Crittendon County, Arkansas. Wapanocca NWR was established in 1961 to provide a wintering area for migratory waterfowl, and presently encompasses 5,620 acres of agricultural land, grassland, bottomland hardwood forest, and flooded cypress/willow swamp. Wapanocca NWR is important as a nesting area for resident wood ducks and provides significant habitat along the Mississippi River that is heavily used by migrating and wintering waterfowl. The American Bird Conservancy has listed the refuge as a "Continental Important Bird Area."

Significant issues identified in the Draft CCP/EA include: (1) Management of waterfowl, other migratory birds, and other native wildlife species; (2) bottomland hardwood reforestation and management; (3) management of moist-soil impoundments and croplands; (4) water quality; (5) invasive species management; (6) land acquisition; and (7) visitor services (e.g., hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretation, access, and facilities).

CCP Alternatives, Including our Proposed Alternative

We developed three alternatives for managing the refuges within the Complex and chose Alternative C as our proposed alternative. A full description is in the Draft CCP/EA. We summarize each below.

Alternative A—Maintain Current Management (No Action)

Under Alternative A, we would continue current management of each refuge within the Complex. We would continue to restore, protect, and manage bottomland hardwood forests, wetlands, cropland units, moist-soil units, open-water areas, grassland/scrub-shrub areas, and the Big Lake NWR Wilderness. Management activities would continue to focus on afforestation and reforestation, restoration of wetlands, invasive plant and nuisance animal management, cooperative farming, inventorying and monitoring, and priority public uses (e.g., hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation). We would seek to acquire land from willing sellers within the approved acquisition boundaries.

Alternative B—Minimal Management Alternative

Under Alternative B, we would undertake minimal wildlife, habitat, and

infrastructure management. Under this "let nature take its course" alternative, there would be no more active reforestation efforts; no moist-soil impoundments and croplands; and no more road, beaver dam, or invasive species management and maintenance programs. We would let natural succession proceed unchecked, and provide for development of early stage or successional forest habitat on abandoned lands, with no silvicultural treatments in existing forest stands being conducted. We would implement a custodial or passive stewardship approach to management and would monitor natural succession and wildlife populations over time. Both quality and quantity of habitats for wildlife would be expected to decline, along with wildlife use of these habitats. There would likely be reduced associated public use, because roadways and facilities would not be maintained and the quality of visitor services would diminish. There would be no change in the acreage or amount of waterfowl sanctuaries. We would seek to acquire land from willing sellers within the approved acquisition boundaries.

Alternative C—Enhanced Habitat Management and Public Use Programs (Proposed Alternative)

By implementing the proposed alternative, we would actively expand and improve habitat management and public use programs. We would intensify and enhance forest, moist-soil, scrub-shrub, grassland, and aquatic management programs in order to increase benefits for waterfowl, shorebirds, water birds, other migratory birds, and other species of native wildlife. We would expand wetlands and forest restoration projects. We would increase invasive plant and animal control projects. A full range of inventorying, monitoring, and research programs would be developed and implemented to enable adaptive management. We would continue habitat conservation and restoration projects. We would expand our land acquisition projects by working with willing sellers. We would also pursue boundary expansions. As part of a comprehensive visitor services program, we would improve environmental education and interpretation programs. Opportunities for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation would be expanded, and law enforcement coverage would be increased for more effective protection of resources and visitors. We would recruit additional staff, acquire additional equipment, and improve facilities to enable

implementation of these projects and programs.

Next Step

After the comment period ends, we will analyze the comments and address them.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority

This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105–57.

Dated: June 25, 2009.

Cynthia K. Dohner,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. E9–20665 Filed 8–26–09; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R7–R–2009–N0106; 70133–1265–0000–S3]

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Soldotna, AK

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the revised comprehensive conservation plan and final environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, USFWS), announce that the revised comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is available for public review and comment. The CCP/EIS was prepared pursuant to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (Refuge Administration Act) as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Refuge Improvement Act), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). It describes five alternatives for managing the Kenai

Refuge for the next 15 years, including continuing current management.

DATES: We will accept comments on the CCP/EIS until September 28, 2009.

ADDRESSES: To provide written comments or to request a paper copy or a compact disk of the CCP/EIS, contact Peter Wikoff, Planning Team Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS–231, Anchorage, AK 99503; telephone: (907) 786–3357; fax: (907) 786–3965; e-mail: fw7_kenai_planning@fws.gov. You may also view or download a copy of the CCP/EIS at: <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/kenpol.htm>. Copies of the CCP/EIS may be viewed at the Kenai Refuge Office in Soldotna, AK, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office in Anchorage, AK (address above).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Wikoff at the address or phone number provided above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 410hh *et seq.*, 43 U.S.C. 1602 *et seq.*) requires development of comprehensive conservation plans for all national wildlife refuges in Alaska. The CCP/EIS for the Kenai Refuge was developed consistent with Section 304(g) of ANILCA and the Refuge Administration Act as amended by the Refuge Improvement Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*). The purpose of developing a comprehensive conservation plan is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year management strategy for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish, wildlife, and habitat management and conservation; legal mandates; and Service policies. Comprehensive conservation plans define long-term goals and objectives toward which refuge management activities are directed. Comprehensive conservation plans are reviewed and updated every 15 years in accordance with direction in Section 304(g) of ANILCA, the Refuge Improvement Act, and NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*).

Background

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8979 creating the 1,730,000-acre Kenai National Moose Range. In 1980, ANILCA changed the name of the Range to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and substantially increased the size of the Refuge. Kenai Refuge encompasses approximately 1,988,000 acres. Section 303(4)(B) of ANILCA states that the purposes for which Kenai Refuge was

established include (i) to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity; (ii) to fulfill international treaty obligations of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats; (iii) to ensure water quality and necessary water quantity within the refuge; (iv) to provide opportunities for scientific research, interpretation, environmental education, and land management training; and (v) to provide opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation. A CCP/EIS was completed for the Kenai Refuge in 1985 (50 FR 31777, Aug. 6, 1985) following direction in Section 304(g) of ANILCA.

The ANILCA requires the Service to designate areas according to their respective resources and values and to specify programs and uses within the areas designated. To meet these requirements, the Alaska Region established management categories. A management category is a set of refuge management directions applied to an area to accomplish refuge purposes and goals. Appropriate public uses, commercial uses, facilities, and human activities are identified for each management category. Five management categories currently apply to the Kenai Refuge, including (1) Intensive, (2) Moderate, (3) Traditional, (4) Minimal, and (5) Wilderness.

The 1997 Refuge Improvement Act includes additional direction for conservation planning throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System. This direction has been incorporated into national planning policy for the National Wildlife Refuge System, including refuges in Alaska. The CCP/EIS for the Kenai Refuge meets the requirements of both ANILCA and the Refuge Administration Act as amended by the Refuge Improvement Act.

An Overview of Management Alternatives

The CCP/EIS describes and evaluates five alternatives (A–E) for managing the Kenai Refuge for the next 15 years. Alternatives A through E are each consistent with the purposes of the Kenai Refuge as mandated by ANILCA.

Alternative A (the No-Action Alternative) is required under NEPA and describes continuation of current management. Alternative A serves as a baseline against which to compare the other four alternatives, including Alternative E—the Service's Preferred Alternative. Under Alternative A, management of the Kenai Refuge would continue to follow direction described in the 1985 CCP/EIS and record of decision and subsequent step-down management plans. Under Alternative