

visitor facilities and services in areas of the National Park System. Concession authorizations may be assigned, sold, transferred, or encumbered by the concessioner subject to prior written approval of the NPS. The NPS requires that certain information be submitted for review prior to the consummation of any sale, transfer, assignment, or encumbrance.

The information requested is used to determine whether or not the proposed transaction will result in an adverse impact on the protection, conservation, or preservation of the resources of the unit of the National Park System; decreased services to the public; the lack of a reasonable opportunity for profit over the remaining term of the authorization; or rates in excess of approved rates to the public. In addition, pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR Part 51, the value of rights for intangible assets such as the concession contract, right of preference in renewal, user days, or low fees, belongs to the Government. If any portion of the purchase price is attributable either directly or indirectly to such assets, the transaction may not be approved. The amount and type of information to be submitted varies with the type and complexity of the proposed transaction. Without such information, the NPS would be unable to determine whether approval of the proposed transaction would be adequate.

Affected public: Businesses, individuals, and nonprofit organizations.

Obligation to respond: Required to obtain or retain a benefit.

Frequency of response: On occasion.

Estimated total annual responses: 20.

Estimated average completion time per response: 80 hours.

Estimated annual reporting burden: 1,600 hours.

Estimated annual nonhour cost burden: \$5,000.

Comments are invited on: (1) The practical utility of the information being gathered; (2) the accuracy of the burden hour estimate; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden to respondents, including use of automated information collection techniques or other forms of information technology. 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 OMB will be able to do so.

Dated: April 17, 2009.

Cartina Miller,

NPS Information Collection Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. E9-9413 Filed 4-23-09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4312-53-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2009-N0057; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, Orleans Parish, LA

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 (Draft CCP/EA) for Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for public review and comment. In this Draft CCP/EA, we describe the alternative we propose to use to manage this refuge for the 15 years following approval of the Final CCP.

DATES: To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments by May 26, 2009.

ADDRESSES: Send comments, questions, and requests for information to: Mr. Pon Dixon, Deputy Project Leader, Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 61389 Highway 434, Lacombe, LA 70445. A copy of the Draft CCP/EA is available on both compact disc and hard copy, and it may be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Internet Site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Pon Dixon; telephone: 985/882-2014; fax: 985/882-9133; e-mail: pon_dixon@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice we continue the CCP process for Bayou Sauvage NWR. We started the process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on May 16, 2008 (72 FR 27585).

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 plan 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.

Bayou Sauvage NWR is in eastern Orleans Parish, Louisiana, and is entirely situated within the corporate limits of the city of New Orleans. It is the largest national wildlife refuge in an urban area of the United States, and is one of the last remaining marsh areas adjacent to the south shores of Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne. The refuge consists of 24,000 acres of wetlands and is bordered on three sides by water: Lake Pontchartrain on the north, Chef Menteur Pass on the east, and Lake Borgne on the south. The western side of the refuge is bordered by the Maxent Canal and lands that consist of bottomland hardwood habitat and exotic species, such as Chinese tallow and china berry. Un-leveed portions of the refuge consist of estuarine tidal marshes and shallow water. The Hurricane Protection Levee System, along with roadbeds, created freshwater impoundments, which altered the plant communities as well as the fish communities within these impoundments. Small forested areas exist on the low, natural ridges formed along natural drainages and along manmade canals.

CCP Alternatives, Including our Proposed Alternative

We developed three alternatives for managing the refuge and chose Alternative B as the proposed alternative. A full description is in the Draft CCP/EA. We summarize each alternative below.

Alternative A: Continuation of Current Refuge Management (No Action)

This alternative represents no change from current management of the refuge and provides a baseline. Management emphasis would continue to be directed towards accomplishing the refuge's primary purposes. Refuge staff would continue to restore and maintain emergent marsh—both tidally influenced and impounded, natural levee ridges, bottomland hardwood forests, spoil banks, and shallow open water bodies, all of which constitute a wide range of habitats within the refuge boundaries.

Current refuge management would continue to provide wintering and nesting habitats for migratory and resident waterfowl, wading birds, and migrating songbirds. The operation and management of the refuge would provide for the basic needs of these species, including feeding, resting, and breeding. The planting of vegetation used for food, nesting and cover, and moist-soil management in eight different water management units that cater to a variety of different species would continue to be priorities. At least two aerial waterfowl surveys would continue to be conducted.

Alternative B: Restoring and Improving Refuge Resources (Proposed Alternative)

This action was selected by the Service as the alternative that best signifies the vision, goals, and purposes of the refuge. Under Alternative B, the emphasis would be on restoring and improving refuge resources needed for wildlife and habitat management, while providing additional public use opportunities. This alternative would also allow the refuge to provide law enforcement protection that adequately meets the demands of an urban environment.

This alternative would focus on augmenting wildlife and habitat management to identify, conserve, and restore populations of native fish and wildlife species, with an emphasis on migratory birds and threatened and endangered species. This would partially be accomplished by increased monitoring of waterfowl, other migratory birds, and endemic species in order to assess and adapt management strategies and actions. The restoration of fresh and brackish marsh systems and hardwood forests would be a vital part of this proposed action and would be crucial to ensuring healthy and viable ecological communities following Hurricane Katrina. This restoration would require increased wetland vegetation and tree plantings, and the

use of beneficial dredge, breakwater structures, and organic materials to promote reestablishment of emergent marsh and to reduce wave energy erosion along Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne. Improving and monitoring water quality and active moist-soil management would assist in reestablishing freshwater marsh habitat.

The refuge would more aggressively control and, where possible, eliminate invasive plant species by seeking funding through the Service's invasive species control program. The control of Chinese tallow trees and cogon grass along the hardwood ridge would be a focal point. The control of nuisance wildlife would increase to include yearly population evaluations and more aggressive trapping programs for feral hogs and nutria.

Alternative B enhances the refuge's visitor services opportunities by: Improving and providing additional fishing opportunities; considering providing limited hunting opportunities on the refuge; providing environmental education that emphasizes refuge restoration activities, coastal conservation issues, and the diversity of water management regimes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; establishing a visitor center or contact station on the refuge; developing and implementing a visitor services management plan; and enhancing personal interpretive opportunities. Volunteer programs and friends groups also would be expanded to enhance all aspects of refuge management and to increase resource availability.

Land acquisitions within the approved acquisition boundary would be based on importance of the habitats for target management species and for their public use value. The refuge headquarters would not only house administrative offices, but would offer interpretation of refuge wildlife and habitats, and would demonstrate habitat improvements for individual landowners. The headquarters facilities would be developed as an urban public use area with trails; buildings presently not being used and landscaping would be refurbished for visitor and community outreach.

In addition to the enforcement of all Federal and State laws applicable to the refuge to protect archaeological and historical sites, the staff would identify and develop a cultural resources plan to protect all known sites. The allocation of one law enforcement officer to the refuge would not only provide security for these resources, but would also ensure visitor safety and public compliance with refuge regulations.

Alternative C: Optimize Public Use Opportunities

Active management of refuge resources would be employed to optimize public use opportunities. Resources would be dedicated to increasing the public use activities of fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation, and a limited hunting program would be considered. All purposes of the refuge and mandated monitoring of Federal trust species and archaeological resources would be continued, but other wildlife management would be dependent on public interests.

This alternative would utilize a custodial habitat management strategy. Moist-soil units would not be actively managed and would be allowed to revert back to brackish tidal marsh. These units would also be maintained near full pool level to facilitate public use opportunities, such as fishing and canoeing. Hardwood forest habitat in high public use areas would be restored and all other areas would recover naturally with no management intervention.

Increased wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and interpretation opportunities would result from the construction of an on-site visitor's center, canoe and birding tours, kiosks, and trail signs. Additionally, waterfowl and wildlife monitoring would be conducted periodically to identify high use areas for the visiting public to observe. Environmental education would be expanded by addressing a wide range of local and global environmental concerns and would be offered to a broader range of student groups and schools. New information brochures and tear sheets would be published to increase public outreach and to promote public use and recreational opportunities.

Land acquisitions within the approved acquisition boundary would be based on the importance of the habitat for public use. Administration plans would stress the need for increased maintenance of existing infrastructure and construction of new facilities that would benefit public use activities. The refuge would operate with the current level of staff. Law enforcement of refuge regulations and protection of wildlife and visitors would continue at current levels.

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: March 16, 2009.

Cynthia K. Dohner,
Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. E9–9411 Filed 4–23–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R4–R–2009–N0045; 40136–1265–0000–S3]

Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge, Hillsborough County, FL; Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge, Pinellas County, FL; and Passage Key National Wildlife Refuge, Manatee County, FL

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

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

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment (Draft CCP/EA) for Egmont Key, Pinellas, and Passage Key National Wildlife Refuges for public review and comment. These three refuges, known as the Tampa Bay Refuges, are managed as part of the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex. In this Draft CCP/EA, we describe the alternative we propose to use to manage these refuges for the 15 years following approval of the final CCP.

DATES: To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments by May 26, 2009.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the Draft CCP/EA should be addressed to: Mr. Richard J. Meyers, Assistant Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka NWR Complex, 9500 Koger Boulevard North, Suite 102, St. Petersburg, FL 33702. 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. Richard J. Meyers, telephone: 727/570–5417; e-mail: richard_meyers@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for Egmont Key, Pinellas, and Passage Key National Wildlife Refuges. We started the process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on December 3, 2004 (69 FR 70276).

Background

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 plan 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 and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Significant issues addressed in the Draft CCP/EA include: erosion; predatory/exotic/invasive species; human disturbance of wildlife, particularly with respect to illegal access to closed areas; fishing line and trash disposal; threatened and endangered species; bird and other wildlife surveys; environmental education and interpretation issues; and staffing, equipment, and facility needs.

Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) includes 392 acres and was established in 1974 to protect its significant natural, historical, and cultural resources from the impending threats of development. Egmont Key NWR is the only refuge island open to the public and has been traditionally visited for many years as a primary recreation destination. Egmont Key NWR seeks to provide nesting habitat for brown pelicans and other waterbirds, as well as to conserve and

protect barrier island habitat and to preserve historical structures of national significance (*i.e.*, historic lighthouse, guard house, gun batteries, and brick roads). Presently, the island's approximately 244 acres of beach and coastal berm support more than 110 species of nesting, migrating, and wintering birds. The island is listed as critical habitat for endangered piping plovers and provides habitat and protection for endangered manatees and sea turtles. Egmont Key NWR has an unusually high population of gopher tortoises and box turtles. Two wildlife sanctuaries, one on the east side of the island and one at the south end of the island, comprise about 97 acres and are closed to public use. Cooperative management agreements between the Service, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection entrust daily management activities of Egmont Key NWR to the Florida Park Service (FPS), which manages the island to protect and restore the historic structures and for swimming, sunbathing, shelling, and picnicking.

Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1951 as a breeding ground for colonial bird species. It contains seven mangrove islands encompassing about 394 acres. The refuge is comprised of Little Bird, Mule, Jackass, Listen, and Whale Island Keys and leases Tarpon and Indian Keys from Pinellas County. A Pinellas County seagrass sanctuary is located around Tarpon and Indian Keys and the use of internal combustion engines within this zone is prohibited to protect seagrass beds. Hundreds of brown pelicans and double-crested cormorants and dozens of herons, egrets, and roseate spoonbills nest within Tarpon and Little Bird Keys. Pinellas NWR provides important mangrove habitat for most long-legged wading species, especially for reddish egrets. All of the mangrove islands of Pinellas NWR are closed to public use year-round to protect migratory birds.

Passage Key National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was originally designated as a Federal bird reservation by President Roosevelt in 1905, which then consisted of a 60-acre island with a freshwater lake and lush vegetation. However, erosion and hurricanes have virtually destroyed the key, and it is now a meandering sand bar varying in size from 0.5 to 10 acres, depending on weather. In 1970, Passage Key NWR was designated a Wilderness Area. The refuge's objective is to provide habitat for colonial waterbirds. Hundreds of brown pelicans, laughing gulls, black skimmer, and royal terns, and small numbers of herons and egrets, nested