

wildlife refuge. The purpose in developing a comprehensive conservation plan 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 Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, plans identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

The purpose of this notice is to achieve the following:

- (1) Advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and
  - (2) Obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issue to include in the environmental document.
- DATES:** An open house style meeting will be held during the scoping phase and public draft phase of the comprehensive conservation plan development process. Special mailings, newspaper articles, and other media announcements will be used to inform the public and state and local government agencies of the dates and opportunities for input throughout the planning process.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments and requests for more information regarding the Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge planning process should be sent to: Mike Dawson, Refuge Planner, Fish and Wildlife Service, 6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Suite B, Jackson, Mississippi 39213; Telephone: 601/965-4903, ext. 20; Fax: 601/965-4010; Electronic mail: [mike\\_dawson@fws.gov](mailto:mike_dawson@fws.gov) To ensure consideration, written comments must be received no later than February 13, 2005. Our practice is to make comments, including names and addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home addresses from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1992 under the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, to protect one of the largest expanses of undisturbed pine savanna habitats in the Gulf Coastal Plain region. It consists of 9,831 acres within an approved acquisition boundary of 17,741 acres. The refuge also manages

930 acres of Farm Service Agency tracts. The largest portion of the refuge consists of a mosaic of pine savannas, interspersed with poorly drained evergreen bays and pond cypress stands graduating to estuarine salt marshes to the south.

Recreation and education opportunities on the refuge include hunting photography, and wildlife observation. Approximately 2,500 people visit the refuge annually.

The Service will conduct a comprehensive conservation planning process that will provide opportunity for state and local governments, agencies, organizations, and the public to participate in issue scoping and public comment. Comments received by the planning team will be used as part of the planning process.

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

Dated: October 27, 2005.

**Cynthia K. Dohner,**

*Acting Regional Director.*

[FR Doc. 05-24592 Filed 12-28-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Harvest and Export of American Ginseng

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice: request for information from the public; announcement of public meetings.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce public meetings on American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*). These meetings will help us gather information from the public in preparation of our 2006 findings on the export of American ginseng roots, for the issuance of permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

**DATES:** The meeting dates are:

1. January 31, 2006, 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., Moon Township (Pittsburgh), PA.
2. February 10, 2006, 8 a.m. to 12 noon, Asheville, NC.
3. February 15, 2006, 8 a.m. to 12 noon, Indianapolis, IN.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting locations are:

1. Moon Township (Pittsburgh)—DoubleTree Hotel, 8402 University Blvd., Moon Township, PA 15108; telephone number (412) 329-1400.

2. Asheville—Holiday Inn, 1450 Tunnel Road, Asheville, NC 28805; telephone number (828) 298-5611.

3. Indianapolis—Hampton Inn, Indianapolis Airport, 5601 Fortune Circle West, Indianapolis, IN 46241; telephone number (317) 244-1221.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information, or directions to meetings contact Ms. Pat Ford, Division of Scientific Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 750, Arlington, VA 22203; 703-358-1708 (telephone), 703-358-2276 (fax), or [patricia\\_ford@fws.gov](mailto:patricia_ford@fws.gov) (e-mail); or Ms. Anne St. John, Division of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, VA 22203; 703-358-2095 (telephone), 703-358-2298 (fax), or [anne\\_stjohn@fws.gov](mailto:anne_stjohn@fws.gov) (e-mail).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, or Convention) is an international treaty designed to control and regulate international trade in certain animal and plant species that are now or potentially may be threatened with extinction by international trade. Currently, 169 countries, including the United States, are Parties to CITES. The species for which trade is controlled are listed in Appendix I, II, or III of the Convention. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by international trade. Commercial trade in Appendix-I species is prohibited. Appendix II includes species that, although not necessarily threatened with extinction at the present time, may become so unless their trade is strictly controlled through a system of export permits. Appendix II also includes species that CITES must regulate so that trade in other listed species may be brought under effective control (*i.e.*, because of similarity of appearance between listed species and other species). Appendix III comprises species subject to regulation within the jurisdiction of any CITES Party country that has requested the cooperation of the other Parties in regulating international trade in the species.

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) was listed in Appendix II of CITES on July 1, 1975. The Division of Scientific Authority and the Division of Management Authority of the Service regulate the export of American ginseng, including whole plants, whole roots, and root parts. To meet CITES requirements for export of American ginseng from the United States, the

Division of Scientific Authority must determine that the export will not be detrimental to the survival of the species, and the Division of Management Authority must be satisfied that the American ginseng roots to be exported were legally acquired.

Since the inclusion of American ginseng in CITES Appendix II, the Divisions of Scientific Authority and Management Authority have issued findings on a State by State basis. To determine whether or not to approve exports of American ginseng, the Division of Scientific Authority has annually reviewed available information from various sources (other Federal agencies, State regulatory agencies, industry and associations, nongovernmental organizations, and academic researchers) on the biology and trade status of the species. After a thorough review, the Division of Scientific Authority makes a non-detriment finding and the Division of Management Authority makes a legal acquisition finding on the export of American ginseng to be harvested during the year in question. From 1999 through 2004, the Division of Scientific Authority included in its non-detriment finding for the export of wild (including wild-simulated and woodsgrown) American ginseng roots an age-based restriction (*i.e.*, plants must be at least 5 years old). In 2005, the Division of Scientific Authority included in its non-detriment findings for the export of wild American ginseng roots an age-based restriction that plants must be at least 10 years old, and for the export of wild-simulated and woodsgrown American ginseng roots that plants must be at least 5 years old.

States with harvest programs for wild and/or artificially propagated American ginseng are: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

The Divisions of Scientific Authority and Management Authority will host an American ginseng workshop from January 31 through February 2, 2006, in Moon Township, Pennsylvania, with representatives of State and Federal agencies that regulate the species, to discuss the status and management of American ginseng and the CITES export program for the species. This workshop will provide an important opportunity for representatives of the States and Federal agencies to discuss and consider improvements to the CITES export program for this species. Except for

sessions on January 31 at this location, and the two public meetings on other dates in other locations (see Public Meetings), this meeting will be closed to the public.

Information from the 2006 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's American ginseng workshop will be available in April 2006 upon request from the Division of Scientific Authority or the Division of Management Authority (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**); a copy of the workshop report will also be available from our Web site at: <http://www.fws.gov/international/animals/ginindx/.html>.

#### Public Meetings

At the January 31, 2006, Moon Township (Pittsburgh) meeting, we invite the public to listen to academic and federal researchers present their current research on American ginseng from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; representatives of the American ginseng industry and other stakeholders will speak from 1:30 to 2:30. This will be the only meeting and location at which the public can hear these presentations. After the morning's presentations, from 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., we will hold an open public meeting (a listening session) to hear from people involved or interested in American ginseng harvest and trade. We are particularly interested in obtaining any current information on the status of American ginseng in the wild, or other pertinent information that would contribute to improve the CITES export program for this species. We will discuss the Federal regulatory framework for the export of American ginseng and how these regulations control the international trade of this species. We will also discuss the different CITES definitions as they are applied to American ginseng grown under different production systems and how these systems affect the export of American ginseng roots.

The two open public meetings that follow the January meeting, on February 10 and February 15, 2006 (in Asheville and Indianapolis, respectively—see **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**), will also be open public meetings to hear from people involved or interested in American ginseng harvest and trade.

You may get directions to the meeting locations from the Division of Scientific Authority or the Division of Management Authority (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or **ADDRESSES**). Persons planning to attend the January 31, 2006 meeting who require interpretation for the hearing impaired must notify the Division of Scientific Authority by January 23, 2006; for the other two meetings, please

notify the Division of Scientific Authority as soon as possible (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

#### Author

The primary author of this notice is Patricia Ford, the Division of Scientific Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dated: December 20, 2005.

**Marshall P. Jones, Jr.**,

*Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. E5-8014 Filed 12-28-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Indian Affairs

#### Public Comment About Congressionally Mandated Study of Energy Rights-of-Way on Tribal Lands

**AGENCY:** Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of request for public comment.

**SUMMARY:** Section 1813 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-58) requires the Department of the Interior (DOI) and Department of Energy to provide Congress with a study regarding energy rights-of-way on tribal lands. The study is due to Congress by August 7, 2006. The Departments are interested in receiving comments from the public about how to proceed with implementing section 1813.

**DATES:** Comments are due on or before January 20, 2006.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments by regular mail to Attention: Section 1813 ROW Study, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, 1849 C St., NW., Mail Stop 2749-MIB, Washington, DC, 20240 or by e-mail to [IEED@bia.edu](mailto:IEED@bia.edu).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Darryl Francois, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, 1849 C St., NW., Mail Stop 2749-MIB, Washington, DC, 20240. He can also be reached by telephone at (202) 219-0740 or by electronic mail at [darryl.francois@mms.gov](mailto:darryl.francois@mms.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 1813 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-58) requires the Secretaries of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Energy (Departments) to conduct a study of energy related rights-of-way on tribal lands. The Act requires that the study address four subjects:

1. An analysis of historical rates of compensation;