

expanded wildlife habitat management or expanded public use opportunities, Alternate D seeks to optimize the benefits of the refuges to wildlife and people, recognizing that tradeoffs may preclude maximizing the benefits of each alternative. By seeking the "best of both" Alternatives B and C, Alternative D would promote better management and protection of fish, wildlife, and their habitats and higher quality recreational and educational programs for visitors.

Under Alternative D, refuge lands would be more intensely managed than at present to provide high quality habitat for wildlife, which would work toward fulfilling the habitat objectives outlined for the Mississippi Alluvial Valley Migratory Bird Initiative, and would include significant benefits for waterfowl, shorebirds, and neotropical migratory birds. With the implementation of this alternative, there would be significant habitat benefits to migratory bird species by increasing and enhancing breeding, wintering, and migration habitat for wetland-dependent migratory species. This alternative contributes directly to the objectives of the Lower Mississippi Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Partners in Flight—Mississippi Alluvial Valley Habitat Conservation Plan, the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan—Lower Mississippi Valley/West Gulf Coastal Plain, West Tennessee Wildlife Resources Conservation Plan, and the North American Woodcock Plan, and provides integrated migratory bird management objectives in a landscape-level, biologically driven framework particularly for migratory birds. This would include creating and maintaining additional moist-soil units and restoring bottomland hardwood forest habitats.

Fisheries management would be emphasized and, where appropriate, restored for native diversity within the floodplain. Refuge habitats would be managed and restored for natural diversity in support of national and regional plans. Forest management would address the need to restore and enhance the red oak component for migratory waterfowl and develop vertical structure to provide habitat for a diversity of species, particularly priority migratory birds. Any future reforestation efforts would incorporate greater native tree species diversity.

This alternative would encourage more public recreational and educational uses, where feasible, while intensifying current habitat management. Hunting and fishing would continue with greater emphasis on the quality of the experience and with more diverse opportunities, including those for youth and disabled hunters/anglers. Education and interpretation would be promoted while providing programs and partnerships with local schools. Wildlife observation and photography opportunities would be expanded. Information guides and signage that highlight refuge management programs, as well as unique wildlife habitats, would also be developed. Efforts would also be undertaken to improve road maintenance in order to provide better visitor access.

A visitor center and headquarters office would be constructed on the refuges, with space for interpretation, environmental education, and staff.

Research studies would continue to be fostered and partnerships developed with universities and other agencies, with the refuges providing needed resources and study sites. Research would also provide benefits to conservation efforts throughout the Lower Mississippi River Valley to preserve, enhance, restore, and manage bottomland hardwood habitat.

Inventorying and monitoring of birds, freshwater mussels, reptiles, and amphibians would be continued and expanded in order to assess population trends, correlate with environmental pressures, and provide baseline data to be used in development of appropriate management strategies. Additional staff would include biological, law enforcement, outreach, and maintenance personnel. Providing a wildlife biologist, outdoor recreation planner, maintenance workers, and an additional full-time law enforcement officer would enable the Service to fully develop and manage fish and wildlife resources and habitats, provide opportunities and facilities for wildlife observation and photography, provide environmental educational programs that promote a greater understanding of natural resources, and protect natural and cultural resources, as well as refuge visitors.

Under this alternative, the refuges would continue to acquire lands within

the present acquisition boundaries for the use of compatible wildlife-dependent public recreation and environmental education opportunities.

Tracts that provide better-quality habitat and connectivity to existing refuge lands would receive higher priority for acquisition. The refuges would also use other important acquisition tools, including partnerships with conservation organizations, conservation easements with adjacent landowners, and leases/cooperative agreements.

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

Dated: October 7, 2005.

Cynthia K. Dohner,

Acting Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Concession Contracts and Permits: Expiring Contracts; Extension

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Public notice.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 36 CFR 51.23, public notice is hereby given that the National Park Service proposes to extend the following expiring concession contracts for a period of up to 2 years, or until such time as a new contract is executed, whichever occurs sooner.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: All of the listed concession authorizations will expire by their terms on or before December 31, 2005. The National Park Service has determined that the proposed short-term extensions are necessary in order to avoid interruption of visitor services and has taken all reasonable and appropriate steps to consider alternatives to avoid such interruption. These extensions will allow the National Park Service to complete and issue prospectuses leading to the competitive selection of concessioners for new long-term concession contracts covering these operations.

Conc ID No.	Concessioner name	Park
GLBA002–00	Holland America Line, Inc	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA003–00	Princess Cruises, Inc	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA004–00	P&O, Inc. (Princess Cruises)	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA005–00	Holland America Line-Westours, Inc	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.

Conc ID No.	Concessioner name	Park
GLBA006-00	World Explorer Cruises	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA007-00	NCL Cruises Ltd. (Norwegian Cruise Line)	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA036-00	Crystal Cruises, Inc	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA046-00	Celebrity Cruises, Inc	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA050-00	Carnival Cruise Line	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
GLBA040-00	West Travel, Inc. (Cruise West)	Glacier Bay National Park & Pres.
WRST001-98	Daniel R. Schwarzer (AAA Alaskan Outfitters, Inc.)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST002-98	Mel Gillis (Alaska Trophy Hunting & Fishing)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST003-98	W. Kirk Ellis (Devils Mtn Guiding Service)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST004-98	W. Cole Ellis (Ellis Big Game Guides and Outfitters)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST005-98	Dick Gunlogson	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST006-98	Robert Fithian (Alaskan Mountain Guides)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST007-98	Mark Collins (Jungles, Deserts & Mountains)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST009-98	Lorene Ellis (Nabesna Glacier Guide Service)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST010-98	Matt Owen (Northern Air Trophy)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST011-98	Terry Overly (Pioneer Outfitters)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST012-98	Urban E. Raho (Ptarmigan Lake Lodge)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST013-98	Thomas Vaden (Solo Creek Guides)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST014-98	John Claus (Ultima Thule Outfitters)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST015-98	Paul Claus (Ultima Thule Outfitters)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST016-98	Richard G. Petersen (Wrangell Outfitters)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.
WRST017-98	Chuck McMahan (Gakona Guide Service)	Wrangell-St. Elias NPRes.

DATES: *Effective Date:* January 1, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jo A. Pendry, Concession Program Manager, National Park Service, Washington, DC 20240, Telephone 202/513-7156.

Dated: December 15, 2005.

Alfred J. Poole, III,

Acting Assistant Director, Business Services.

[FR Doc. 06-20 Filed 1-3-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4312-53-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Public Notice

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the terms of existing concession contracts, public notice is hereby given that the National Park Service intends to request a continuation of visitor services for a period not-to-exceed 1 year from the date of contract expiration.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The contracts listed below have been

extended to maximum allowable under 36 CFR 51.23. Under the provisions of current concession contracts and pending the completion of the public solicitation of a prospectus for a new concession contract, the National Park Service authorizes continuation of visitor services for a period not-to-exceed 1 year under the terms and conditions of the current contract as amended. The continuation of operations does not affect any rights with respect to selection for award of a new concession contract.

Conc ID No.	Concessioner name	Park
CC-OZAR001-88	Shane and Kimberly Van Steenis (Alley Spring Canoe Rental).	Ozark NSR.
CC-OZAR012-88	Akers Ferry Canoe Rental, Inc	Ozark NSR.
CC-OZAR016-89	Carr's Grocery & Canoe Rental	Ozark NSR.
CC-SLBE005-87	G. Michael Grosvenor (Manitou Island Transit)	Sleeping Bear Dunes NL.

DATES: *Effective Date:* January 1, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jo A. Pendry, Concession Program Manager, National Park Service, Washington, DC 20240, Telephone, 202/513-7156.

Dated: December 15, 2005.

Alfred J. Poole, III,

Acting Assistant Director, Business Services.

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BILLING CODE 4312-53-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Public Notice

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 36 CFR 51.23, public notice is hereby given that the National Park Service proposes to extend the following expiring concession contracts for a period of up to one year, or until such time as a new contract is executed, whichever occurs sooner.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: All of the listed concession authorizations will

expire by their terms on or before December 31, 2005. The National Park Service has determined that the proposed short-term extensions are necessary in order to avoid interruption of visitor services and has taken all reasonable and appropriate steps to consider alternatives to avoid such interruption. These extensions will allow the National Park Service to complete and issue prospectuses leading to the competitive selection of concessioners for new long-term concession contracts covering these operations.