

Background

The CCP Process

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee), requires the Service to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for each national 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.

Each unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, including each of these NWRs, is established with specific purposes. The Service uses these purposes to develop and prioritize management goals and objectives within the National Wildlife Refuge System mission, and to guide which public uses will occur on these Refuges. The planning process is a way for us and the public to evaluate management goals and objectives for the best possible conservation efforts of this important wildlife habitat, while providing for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities that are compatible with the Refuges' establishing purposes and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Service will conduct comprehensive conservation planning processes that will provide opportunity for Tribal, State, and local governments; agencies; organizations; and the public to participate in issue scoping and public comment for the future management of the Big Stone NWR, Neal Smith NWR, Crane Meadows NWR, Gravel Island NWR, Green Bay NWR, Harbor Island NWR, Huron NWR, and Michigan Islands NWR. We invite anyone interested to respond to the following two questions:

1. What issues do you want to see addressed in the CCP?
2. What improvements would you recommend for the refuges?

Responding to these two questions is optional; you are not required to provide information to us. Our Planning Team developed the questions to gather

information about individual issues and ideas concerning these Refuges. Comments we receive will be used as part of the planning process; however, we will not reference individual comments in our reports or directly respond to them.

We will also give the public an opportunity to provide input at open houses. You can obtain a schedule of the open house events by contacting the Refuge Managers listed in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice.

The environmental review of these projects will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508); other appropriate Federal laws and regulations; and our policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations. All comments we receive from individuals on our environmental assessments become part of the official public record. We will handle requests for such comments in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, NEPA (40 CFR 1506.6(f)), and other Departmental and Service policies and procedures.

Dated: November 7, 2008.

Charles M. Wooley,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R1–NWRs–2008–N0310; 1265–0000–10137–S3]

Baker Island, Howland Island, and Jarvis Island National Wildlife Refuges, U.S. Territories

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the final comprehensive conservation plans and findings of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) have completed Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) and Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSIs) for the Baker Island, Howland Island, and Jarvis Island National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges). The CCPs were developed to provide a foundation for the management and use of these Refuges. We are furnishing this notice to advise other agencies and the public of the availability of the CCPs and FONSIs,

and the decision to implement Alternative B as described in each CCP. The Service's Regional Director for the Pacific Region selected Alternative B for managing these Refuges for the next 15 years. The Refuges are U.S. Territories in the central Pacific Ocean, located between 1,300 and 1,600 miles southwest of Honolulu, Hawai'i.

DATES: The CCPs and FONSIs are now available. Implementation of the CCPs may begin immediately.

ADDRESSES: Printed copies of the CCPs and FONSIs are available for viewing or may be obtained by visiting or writing the Pacific Remote Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 5–211, Honolulu, HI 96850. These documents are also available for viewing and downloading on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning/>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Donald Palawski, Refuge Manager, Pacific Remote Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, phone number (808) 792–9560.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Baker Island, Howland Island, and Jarvis Island Refuges are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (Refuge Administration Act), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee), requires all units of the National Wildlife Refuge System to be managed in accordance with an approved CCP. A CCP provides management direction and identifies refuge goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving refuge purposes. The CCPs and FONSIs for the Refuges were prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended, and its implementing regulations, the Refuge Administration Act, and Service policies.

The Refuges and surrounding marine waters are unincorporated territories under the sovereignty of the United States. The Refuges straddle the equator in the Central Pacific subregion of the Polynesian Region of the Pacific Basin. This subregion, the largest of the four in the Polynesian Region, is the most remote part of the tropical Pacific and includes only low-lying reef islands, atolls and submerged reefs. The dominant wildlife species on these islands includes breeding seabirds and migrant shorebirds. In the waters surrounding the Refuges there are extremely pristine and unique coral reef and deep water ecosystems that exist nowhere else in the United States.

During the CCP planning process for these Refuges many elements were considered, including wildlife management and habitat protection, off-Refuge wildlife-dependent educational opportunities, and coordination with Federal agencies and other interested groups. The Draft CCPs and associated Environmental Assessments identified and evaluated four alternatives for managing these Refuges. The Draft CCPs were available for a 45-day public review and comment period. The Service received nine comment communications, which were incorporated into, or responded to in the final CCPs. No substantive changes were required to address public comments.

Changes to the Refuges' management include a modest increase in the frequency of staff visits to monitor seabird abundance and nesting status, conducting seabird nesting restoration, conducting marine exploration and marine ecosystem monitoring, and preserving cultural resource and wilderness resource values at the Refuges. Public access to the Refuges will remain closed, and commercial fishing will continue to be prohibited within the boundaries of these Refuges.

The following key actions described in the CCPs will be implemented.

- With assistance from partners, we will conduct management activities annually at the Refuges.
- We will continue to conserve, manage, and protect native terrestrial and marine communities that are representative of remote tropical Pacific islands.
- We will develop baseline data to understand sea turtle and seabird use at these Refuges.
- We will take actions to restore breeding populations of the Polynesian storm-petrel to the Refuges by using electronic call devices to attract and establish nesting colonies.
- We will conduct management actions in a manner that maintains and preserves the wilderness character of the terrestrial and marine communities at these Refuges.
- In coordination with partners, we will use remote surveillance and monitoring techniques to ensure the Refuges' biological, cultural, and historic resources are preserved.
- The Service will develop an off-Refuge environmental education and interpretation program for the public to learn about wilderness values, cultural and historic resources, tropical island ecosystems, seabirds, and coral reefs at these and other remote Pacific island refuges.

Dated: August 12, 2008.

David J. Wesley,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R5-R-2008-N0190; 50133-1265-WPCP-S3]

Wapack National Wildlife Refuge, Hillsborough County, NH

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability: final comprehensive conservation plan and finding of no significant impact for environmental assessment.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of our final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment (EA) for Wapack National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). In this final CCP, we describe how we will manage the refuge for the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: You may view or obtain copies of the final CCP and FONSI by any of the following methods. You may request a hard copy or CD-ROM.

Agency Web Site: Download a copy of the document(s) at <http://library.fws.gov/ccps/wapack/>.

E-mail: fw5rw_prnwr@fws.gov. Please include "Wapack NWR CCP" in the subject line of the message.

Mail: Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA 01950.

In-Person Viewing or Pickup: Call 978-465-5753 to make an appointment during regular business hours at Parker River NWR headquarters. The final document is also available at the library listed under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**, below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Graham Taylor, Refuge Manager, Parker River NWR; phone number 978-465-5753; e-mail address: fw5rw_prnwr@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we finalize the CCP process for Wapack NWR. We started by publishing a notice of intent in the

Federal Register (72 FR 8197; February 23, 2007). For more about the process, see that notice. We announced the release of the draft CCP/EA to the public and requested their comments in a notice of availability in the **Federal Register** (73 FR 15769; March 25, 2008).

Wapack NWR, at 1,625 acres, was established by donation in 1972 as the first national wildlife refuge in New Hampshire. Its purpose is for migratory birds. It is administered by the staff of the Parker River NWR, headquartered in Newburyport, Massachusetts. The refuge encompasses the 2,278-foot North Pack Monadnock Mountain in the towns of Greenfield and Temple, New Hampshire. The terms of the deed of donation require the Service to manage the refuge in a "wilderness-like" setting for wildlife. Specific deed restrictions prohibit motorized vehicles, hunting and fishing, trapping, or cutting trees.

Mature northern hardwood-mixed and spruce-fir forest characterizes the refuge. It provides nesting habitat for many migratory songbirds such as the black-capped chickadee, blackburnian warbler, black-throated blue warbler, hermit thrush, myrtle warbler, ovenbird, and red-eyed vireo. The refuge also supports a wide variety of other native wildlife, including deer, bear, coyote, fisher, fox, mink and weasel.

Visitors engage in wildlife observation and photography on the refuge. It is especially popular for viewing the fall migration of hawks. A 4-mile segment of the 21-mile Wapack Trail traverses the refuge, and rewards hikers with a beautiful view of the surrounding mountains. Three other trails also offer quality opportunities for viewing and photographing wildlife.

We are announcing our decision and the availability of the FONSI and final CCP for Wapack NWR in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1506.6(b)). We completed a thorough analysis of effects on the human environment, which we included in the draft CCP/EA.

The final CCP will guide us in managing and administering Wapack NWR for the next 15 years. Alternative B, which we described in the draft CCP/EA as the Service-preferred alternative, is the foundation for the final CCP.

Background

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