

prescribed fire would be a more likely management tool.

Background

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 *et seq.*), requires the Service to develop a CCP for each National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose in 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 Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction for conserving wildlife and their habitats, the CCP identifies wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370d).

Dated: August 24, 2009.

Thomas O. Melius,

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

[FR Doc. E9–30645 Filed 12–24–09; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R3–R–2009–N167; 30136–1265–0000–S3]

Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge: Jackson, Jennings, & Monroe Counties, IN

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the 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 the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge

(NWR). Goals and objectives in the CCP describe how the agency intends to manage the refuge over the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Final CCP and FONSI/EA may be viewed at the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters or at public libraries near the refuge. You may access and download a copy via the Planning Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/muscatatuck>, or you may obtain a copy on compact disk by contacting: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Conservation Planning, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, MN 55111 (1–800–247–1247, extension 5429), or Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, 12985 East U.S. Highway 50, Seymour, IN 47274 (812–522–4352). A limited number of hardcopies will be available for distribution at the Refuge Headquarters.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Marc Webber (812–522–4352).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we complete the CCP process for Muscatatuck NWR, which we began by publishing a notice of intent on (72 FR 27587). For more information about the initial process, see that notice. We released the draft CCP and EA to the public, announcing and requesting comments in a notice of availability on April 3, 2009 (74 FR 15297).

Muscatatuck NWR, located in southeastern Indiana, was established in 1966 under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act for the protection and production of migratory birds and other wildlife. The refuge is comprised of 7,802 acres, including the 78-acre Restle Unit approximately 45 miles to the northwest. The Refuge also administers nine Farm Service Agency conservation easements, totaling 130.5 acres. The 97-acre Seep Springs Research Natural Area preserves one of only seven acid seep springs documented in the state.

The Draft CCP and EA were officially released for public review on April 6, 2009; the comment period lasted 33 days until May 8, 2009. Planning information was sent to over 1,000 individuals and organizations for review, resulting in 40 written comment submissions with over 150 individual comments. During the comment period the Refuge also hosted an open house to receive public comments and feedback on the CCP and EA documents. Approximately 25 people attended this event. A number of minor changes were made to the documents in response to

comments, and one new objective was added regarding landscape-level conservation.

Selected Alternative

After considering the comments received, we have selected Alternative C (Balance Natural Processes and Constructed Units; Increased Focus on High Quality Priority General Public Uses) for implementation. Under the selected alternative the Refuge will rely on a combination of active management and natural processes to provide quality wildlife habitat for over 80 species of Regional Conservation Priority, including 3 species listed as federally threatened or endangered. Habitat management will trend toward more historic landscape conditions by expanding forest habitat areas and decreasing management of constructed wetlands. Wildlife-dependant recreation opportunities, biological surveys and monitoring activities, and invasive plant management would all increase under the preferred alternative. Partnerships will play a key role in meeting larger-landscape conservation challenges such as habitat fragmentation and global climate change.

Background

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 *et seq.*), requires the Service to develop a CCP for each National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose in 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 Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction for conserving wildlife and their habitats, the CCP identifies wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370d).

Dated: August 24, 2009.

Thomas O. Melius,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R3-ES-2009-N270; 30120-1113-0000-F6]

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Permit Applications

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of permit applications; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, invite the public to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered species. With some exceptions, the Endangered Species Act (Act) prohibits activities with endangered and threatened species unless a Federal permit allows such activity. The Act requires that we invite public comment before issuing these permits.

DATES: We must receive any written comments on or before January 27, 2010.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments by U.S. mail to the Regional Director, Attn: Peter Fasbender, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056; or by electronic mail to permitsR3ES@fws.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Fasbender, (612) 713-5343.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

We invite public comment on the following permit applications for certain activities with endangered species authorized by section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and our regulations governing the taking of endangered species in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 50 CFR 17. Submit your written data, comments, or request for a copy of the complete application to the address shown in **ADDRESSES**. When submitting comments, please refer to the appropriate permit application number.

Permit Applications

Permit Application Number: TE120259-1

Applicant: Missouri Department of Conservation, Chillicothe, Missouri.

The applicant requests a permit renewal to take (capture and release, temporarily hold for propagation) Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) in the Missouri River, including its tributaries, and the Upper Mississippi River within the State of Missouri, and the Kansas River within the State of Kansas. Activities will be conducted in conjunction with long-term population assessment and recovery work. Proposed activities are aimed at enhancement of the survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE151107

Applicant: Redwing Ecological Services, Louisville, Kentucky.

The applicant requests a permit renewal to take (capture and release) the following endangered bat species: Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*), Virginia big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*), and Ozark big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii ingens*). The applicant seeks authority throughout the range of the species in Regions 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Service. Proposed activities are aimed at enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE234121

Applicant: Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc., Cheyenne, Wyoming.

The applicant requests a permit to take (capture and release) Indiana bats, gray bats, Ozark big-eared bats, and Virginia big-eared bats throughout the range of the species, which includes Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Proposed activities are aimed at enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE120258

Applicant: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Des Moines, Iowa.

The applicant requests a permit renewal to take (capture and release, collect voucher specimens) the Topeka shiner (*Notropis topeka*) throughout the State of Iowa to document species presence or absence. Proposed activities are for the enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE023666

Applicant: Eric R. Britzke, Clinton, Mississippi.

The applicant requests a permit renewal to take (capture and release) Indiana bats, gray bats, Virginia big-eared bats, Ozark big-eared bats, and Northern flying squirrels (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) throughout the range of the species in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Proposed activities are for the enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE194099

Applicant: Michael A. Hoggarth, Westerville, Ohio.

The applicant requests a permit renewal to take (capture and release, capture and relocate) purple cat's paw pearly mussel (*Epioblasma obliquata obliquata*), fanshell (*Cyprogenia stegaria*), white cat's paw (*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*), pink mucket pearly mussel (*Lampsilis abrupta*), rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*), sheepsnose (*Plethobasus cyphus*), and clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) mussels throughout the State of Ohio. Proposed activities are for the enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE235639

Applicant: Jessica Hickey, P.I., Davey Resource Group, Kent, Ohio.

The applicant requests a permit renewal to take (capture and release) Indiana bats throughout Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Proposed activities are for the enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.

Permit Application Number: TE120231

Applicant: John C. Timpone, Ballwin, Missouri.

The applicant requests an amendment and renewal of his permit to take (capture and release) Indiana bats. The amendment seeks to add the gray bat to the species authorized as well as additional states for authorized activities. The applicant seeks authority in Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. Proposed activities are for the enhancement of survival of the species in the wild.