in such documents be designed to meet the standard in PECE. The PECE policy is posted on our Candidate Conservation Web site at *http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/candidate-conservation-process.html*.

Comments: On November 15, 2011, we published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 70748) a notice of our intent to request that OMB renew approval for this information collection. In that notice, we solicited comments for 60 days, ending on January 17, 2012. We received two comments in response to this notice.

Commenter 1 agreed that the collection of information is necessary. The commenter recommends that the PECE policy be vetted with nongovernment organizations (NGOs), States, and Federal agencies so that when these groups are developing conservation efforts for species that may be petitioned to be listed under the ESA, they understand the evaluation bar that must be met in order for their conservation efforts to be considered as part of the Service's listing determination.

Response: On June 13, 2000, we published a **Federal Register** notice (65 FR 37102) soliciting public comments on the draft policy. We received comments from 44 entities, primarily States and NGOs. We evaluated these comments and incorporated them into the final policy, which includes a section on the evaluation criteria that conservation efforts must meet. The final policy is posted on our Candidate Conservation Web page (*http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/candidate-conservation-process.html*) and on our Laws and Policies Web page (*http://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies/regulations-and-policies.html*).

Commenter 2 objected to paying for the collection of information and said that funding should be eliminated. The commenter also said its purpose is not explained very well.

Response: Evaluation of conservation actions as part of our listing decision is required by the ESA, and therefore cannot be eliminated. An explanation of the policy and the policy itself are posted on our Candidate Conservation Web page. The commenter did not provide comments on the burden estimate; ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of information; or on the ways to minimize the burden.

Commenter 1 agreed that the PECE policy will not have a $100 million annual effect or adversely affect an economic sector, productivity, jobs, the environment, or other units of government in the collection of data. However, the commenter stated that the implementation of conservation efforts measures associated with the listing under the ESA will certainly meet both the monetary bar and the adverse impacts bar.

Response: The burden estimates for implementing conservation actions covered by this information collection are limited to the amount of time needed to prepare the conservation agreements and to conduct the monitoring and reporting. The burden estimates do not cover the monetary cost of implementing the conservation measures themselves. The ESA specifies that we must base listing determinations *solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available* (emphasis added) after conducting a review of the status of the species and after taking into account those conservation practices, if any, being made by any State or any political subdivision of a State to protect such species. In making a listing determination, we also consider the conservation efforts of entities other than States and political subdivisions of States. The PECE policy describes how we will evaluate, as part of the listing determination, the extent which these conservation actions reduce the threats facing a species. Under the requirements of the ESA, we cannot use economic impacts as part of our listing determination.

Commenter 1 stated that the PECE policy is not well distributed or understood, and claimed that finding the most recent PECE was difficult. The commenter suggested that we provide a link to the most recent version for future review, and stated that better dissemination and explanation of the policy would bolster the quality, utility and clarity of the information.

Response: See above for links to the policy.

Commenter 1 stated that it is in the State's best interest to have conservation programs be successful and to allow activities that have and will occur across the landscape to continue. The commenter does not mind providing this information, provided that the Service will be acting in good faith to advance the conservation program to an approved State.

Response: We coordinate closely with State wildlife management agencies in the conservation and management of endangered and threatened species under the ESA. State wildlife agencies are our primary conservation partners, and we routinely share data with them. In addition, under section 6 of the ESA, we provide grants to States and territories to participate in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed, and listed species. The grant program provides funding to States and territories for species and habitat conservation actions on non-Federal lands. A State or territory must currently have, or enter into, an approved cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior to receive grants. Most States and territories have entered into these agreements for both plant and animal species.

We have not made any changes to our information collection requirements as a result of these comments.

We again invite comments concerning this information collection on:

- Whether or not the collection of information is necessary, including whether or not the information will have practical utility;
- The accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information;
- Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. Before including your address, phone number, email 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 OMB in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that it will be done.

Dated: April 26, 2012.

Tina A. Campbell,

Chief, Division of Policy and Directives Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2012–10576 Filed 5–1–12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R4–R–2012–N047; FXRS12650400000S3–123–FF04R02000]

St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge, FL; Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a draft comprehensive

conservation plan and environmental assessment (Draft CCP/EA) for St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Franklin and Gulf Counties, Florida, 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 June 1, 2012.

ADDRESSES: You may obtain a copy of the Draft CCP/EA by contacting Ms. Laura Housh, via U.S. mail at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, 2700 Suwannee Canal Road, Folkston, GA 31537. Alternatively, you may download the document from our Internet Site at *http://southeast.fws.gov/planning* under ''Draft Documents.'' Comments on the Draft CCP/EA may be submitted to the above postal address or by email to *stvincentccp@fws.gov*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Laura Housh at 912/496–7366, extension 244 (telephone); 912/496–3322 (fax); or via email at *stvincentccp@fws.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for St. Vincent NWR. We started the process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on April 8, 2009 (74 FR 16002). For more about the refuge and our CCP process, please see that notice. St. Vincent NWR was established in 1968, to protect and conserve migratory birds in accordance with the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 (16 U.S.C. 715D).

St. Vincent NWR is situated along the gulf coast of northwest Florida, about 60 miles from Panama City and 80 miles from Tallahassee. The approved acquisition boundary for the refuge is approximately 13,736 acres. The current management boundary is approximately 12,490 acres. We oversee 21 Farm Service Agency easements (1,625 acres) in 6 counties. The 12,490-acre refuge boundary includes two islands—St. Vincent Island (12,358 acres) and Pig Island (46 acres). It also includes a mainland tract (86 acres).

Background

The CCP Process

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee) (Administration Act), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, 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 Administration Act.

Significant issues addressed in the Draft CCP/EA include: (1) The control of invasive exotic species combined with education; (2) the need for more education, outreach, and awareness of the refuge; (3) the need to evaluate the appropriate size and staff needed to accomplish established purposes (i.e., consider biologist and wildlife officer positions); (4) the need to broaden and strengthen relationships and partnerships internally and externally; (5) the need to better understand the potential impacts of climate change on refuge resources; (6) the need to evaluate accessibility issues; and (7) the need to acquire additional funding to support refuge needs.

CCP Alternatives, Including Our Proposed Alternative

We developed three alternatives for managing the refuge (Alternatives A, B, and C), with Alternative C as our proposed alternative. A full description of each alternative is in the Draft CCP/EA. We summarize each alternative below.

Alternative A: Current Management (No Action)

Under this alternative, there would be no action taken to improve or enhance the refuge's current habitats, or improve wildlife and public use management programs. Species of Federal responsibility, such as threatened and endangered species and migratory birds, would continue to be monitored at present levels. Additional species monitoring would occur as opportunistic events when contacts outside our staff offer support. Current habitat management, including prescribed fire and hydrological restoration, would continue as outside resources become available to assist our staff. Management of exotic, invasive, and nuisance animal and plant species would continue to be opportunistic. The public use programs of hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation would continue at present levels. Acquisition of lands into the refuge would occur when funding is appropriated and as willing sellers are interested in selling land that is necessary for refuge operations and/or critical habitats for sensitive species. The staff would consist of a manager, office assistant, forestry technician, and biological science technician, along with supplementary support from the remainder of the North Florida National Wildlife Refuge Complex staff, when available, as well as support from volunteers and partners.

Alternative B: Focus on Natural and Primitive Processes

The focus of Alternative B would be to emphasize the natural and primitive processes, while adhering to policy, mandates, and the missions of the Service and refuge. We would continue to support actions necessary to protect and manage for species of Federal responsibility, such as threatened and endangered species and migratory birds. Additional key species would be monitored as the refuge transitions into a more natural and primitive environment.

We would aggressively attempt to restore the hydrology to natural conditions with the removal of additional roads on St. Vincent Island. All water control structures, including the impoundment system on St. Vincent Island, would be opened to allow natural flow of water to and from the bay and the gulf. Under this alternative, prescribed burning would be discontinued, to allow natural fire events to occur unless human life or property is involved. Since the purchase of the refuge, there has been minimal emphasis on timber conditions, so a forest habitat assessment would be conducted on refuge lands. The eradication of exotic species (e.g., feral hogs and sambar deer) would be a key component of this alternative.

Wildlife-dependent recreational uses would continue, with some major changes. The hunt program would consist of a quality white-tailed deer and raccoon hunt (sambar deer and feral hog hunts would be phased out as eradication of these species occurs). As this alternative focuses on natural and primitive processes, camping during hunts would be discontinued and self check-in stations would be installed. Fishing opportunities would be based on natural processes, since stocking of freshwater fish would be discontinued.

Wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education and interpretation would continue to focus on a natural and primitive process, with a discontinuation of vehicle tours.

We would continue to maintain and build relations with partners, volunteers, and the friends group as they relate to managing the resource, supporting the strategic habitat conservation (SHC) initiative, and the landscape conservation cooperative (LCC). There would continue to be a need for research and studies on the refuge to gain a better understanding of the resource and the changes resulting from environmental and human events.

We would staff the refuge at current levels, plus add an assistant manager, a wildlife biologist, a maintenance worker, and a wildlife officer.

Alternative C: Focus on Native and Imperiled Species (Proposed Alternative)

This alternative expands on Alternative A, with an increased effort to manage and protect the refuge's native and imperiled species. Under this alternative, we would continue to survey and monitor species of Federal responsibility, such as threatened and endangered species and migratory birds, and key native species. We would also gain a better understanding of native species. Additional efforts would be made to protect and support nesting opportunities for key species, as well as gain a better understanding of population dynamics of some species. There would be evaluations to determine if it is suitable to reestablish populations of the eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise, and eastern wild turkey.

We would continue to manage lakes 1, 2, and 3 by seasonal draw-downs to support the needs of shorebirds and wading birds. Lakes 4 and 5 would continue to support deep water for a freshwater fisheries program, with occasional draw-down to manage the vegetation within the system. Since the purchase of the refuge, there has been minimal emphasis on timber conditions, so a forest habitat assessment would be conducted. The management of exotic, invasive, and nuisance animals and plants would be a focus, with emphasis on aggressively eradicating feral hogs.

Wildlife-dependent recreational uses would be expanded. The hunt program would consist of white-tailed deer, raccoon, and sambar deer. Fishing would consist of saltwater and freshwater opportunities. Wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation would be enhanced to focus on imperiled species and the unique barrier island history and ecosystem as they relate to the coastal environment. We would enhance the environmental education program to incorporate Florida Sunshine Standards, while establishing guidelines for public programs. Vehicle tours that meet management objectives would continue as long as we have sufficient staff to support the program. The refuge would be staffed at current levels, in addition to an assistant manager, a wildlife biologist, a maintenance worker, a wildlife officer, a visitor services specialist, and a boat operator. Under this alternative, we would hire a wildlife biologist student through the Student Career Experience Program, continue the Youth Conservation Corps Program, and explore opportunities to work with students through the Student Conservation Association and AmeriCorps programs. Even with the increased staff, we would continue to expand our volunteer program and build stronger relations with the friends group and partners to manage our resources, supporting the SHC initiative and the LCC. As climate change affects the refuge, increased research and studies would need to be conducted on species and habitats, to support the best management decisions through adaptive management.

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, email 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 (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*).

Dated: March 29, 2012.

Mark J. Musaus,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 2012–10571 Filed 5–1–12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LL WO31000.L13100000.PB0000.24 1E]

Renewal of Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: 30-Day Notice and Request for Comments.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has submitted an information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to continue the collection of information from those who wish to assign record title or transfer operating rights in a lease for oil and gas or geothermal resources. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) previously approved this information collection activity, and assigned it control number 1004–0034.

DATES: The OMB is required to respond to this information collection request within 60 days but may respond after 30 days. For maximum consideration, written comments should be received on or before June 1, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Please submit comments directly to the Desk Officer for the Department of the Interior (OMB #1004–0034), Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, fax 202–395–5806, or by electronic mail at *oira_docket@omb.eop.gov*. Please provide a copy of your comments to the BLM. You may do so via mail, fax, or electronic mail.

Mail: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 1849 C Street NW., Room 2134LM, Attention: Jean Sonneman, Washington, DC 20240.

Fax: to Jean Sonneman at 202–245–0050.

Electronic mail: *Jean_Sonneman@blm.gov*.

Please indicate ''Attn: 1004–0034'' regardless of the form of your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Barbara Gamble, Division of Fluid Minerals, at 202–912–7148. Persons who use a telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339, to leave a message for Ms. Gamble. You may also review the information collection request online at *http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501–3521) and OMB regulations at 5