

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.

Comments

We made copies of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (Draft CCP/EA) available for a 30-day public review and comment period via a **Federal Register** notice on May 2, 2012 (77 FR 26035). We provided more than 125 copies of the Draft CCP/EA to those individuals or organizations requesting a copy. A total of 12 individuals, organizations, and government agencies provided comments by U.S. mail or email. Comments were received from many organizations, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission; University of South Florida; Florida State University; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Florida Natural Areas Inventory; Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; Jena Band of Choctaw Indians; and Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources; and several members of the public.

CCP Alternatives, Including our Preferred Alternative

We developed three alternatives for managing the refuge (Alternatives A, B, and C), with Alternative C selected for implementation. This alternative will focus on a greater effort to manage and protect the refuge's native and imperiled species. We will continue to survey and monitor species of federal responsibility, such as threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, and key native species, but will also gain a better understanding of native species on the refuge. Additional efforts will be made to protect and support nesting for key species, as well as gain a better understanding of population dynamics of some species. We will conduct evaluations to determine if it is suitable to reestablish populations of the eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise, and eastern wild turkey on the refuge.

We will 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 will continue to support deep water for a freshwater fisheries program, with an occasional draw-down to manage vegetation within the system. Since the purchase of the refuge, there has been minimal emphasis on timber condition, so a forest habitat assessment will be conducted. The management of exotic,

invasive, and nuisance animals and plants will be a focus, with emphasis on aggressively eradicating feral hogs.

Wildlife-dependent recreational uses of the refuge will be expanded. We will allow hunting of white-tailed deer, sambar deer, and raccoon. Fishing will consist of saltwater and freshwater opportunities. Wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation will be enhanced to focus on imperiled species, the unique barrier island history and ecosystem as they relate to the coastal environment, and management style incorporating climate change effects. We will enhance the environmental education program to incorporate Florida Sunshine Standards, while establishing guidelines for public programs. Vehicle tours that meet management objectives will continue as long as we have sufficient staff to support the program. In addition to the current staff, the following positions will be added: assistant refuge manager, wildlife biologist, maintenance worker, wildlife officer, visitor services specialist, and boat operator. We will also add a wildlife biologist under the Student Conservation Employment Program, continue our participation in the Youth Conservation Corps, and explore Student Conservation Association and AmeriCorps program opportunities.

We will continue to use volunteers and strive to build stronger relationships with the Friends group and our partners to manage the resources, support the Strategic Habitat Conservation initiative, and the Landscape Conservation Cooperative. As climate change affects the refuge, we will increase research of species and habitat changes to support the best management decisions through adaptive management.

We have included compatibility determinations in the final CCP for the following: (1) Hunting (Big Game); (2) Recreational Fishing; (3) Environmental Education and Interpretation; (4) Wildlife Observation and Photography; (5) Hiking, Jogging, Walking, and Bicycling; (6) Boating (canoeing and kayaking); (7) Camping (associated with hunting); (8) Firewood Gathering (associated with hunting); (9) General Research and Scientific Collecting; and (10) Beach Use and Shelling.

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: November 2, 2012.

Mark J. Musaus,

Acting Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R6-R-2012-N232; FF06R06000-FXRS1265066CCPOS2-123]

Establishment of Swan Valley Conservation Area, Montana

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has established the Swan Valley Conservation Area as a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Service established the Swan Valley Conservation Area on August 6, 2012, with the donation of an 80-acre conservation easement in Missoula County, Montana.

ADDRESSES: A map depicting the approved Refuge boundary and other information regarding the Refuge is available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/planning/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Toni Griffin, Planning Team Leader, Division of Refuge Planning, USFWS, P.O. Box 25486, DFC, Denver, CO 80225. <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/planning/>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Service has established the Swan Valley Conservation Area in western Montana, including portions of Lake and Missoula Counties. The Service will conserve wildlife resources in the conservation area, primarily through the purchase of perpetual easements and a limited amount of fee-title from willing sellers. These easements will connect and expand existing lands under conservation protection. Fee-title purchases will be restricted to lands immediately adjacent to Swan River National Wildlife Refuge.

The project will help ensure the perpetual conservation of one of the last undeveloped, low-elevation coniferous forest ecosystems in western Montana, in the greater Crown of the Continent ecosystem. Based on anticipated levels of landowner participation, objectives for the conservation area are to protect 10,000 acres of wildlife habitat through conservation easements and another 1,000 acres through fee-title around the

existing Swan River National Wildlife Refuge. The conservation area is a component of the broader landscape-scale Crown of the Continent initiative to ensure the continued function of one of the only ecosystems in the United States which still contains essentially the full suite of species that were present during the Lewis and Clark expedition. The prioritization for land protection will incorporate the elements of strategic habitat conservation (SHC) to ensure effective conservation. SHC entails strategic biological planning and conservation design, integrated conservation delivery, monitoring, and research at ecoregional scales.

This conservation area allows the Service to purchase conservation easements using the acquisition authority of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a–j) and the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 (16 U.S.C. 715–715d, 715e, 715f–r). The Federal money used to acquire conservation easements is from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601–4 through 11; funds received under this act are derived primarily from oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, motorboat fuel taxes, and the sale of surplus Federal property), and the sale of Federal Duck Stamps [Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act (16 U.S.C. 718–718j, 48 Stat. 452)]. Additional funding to acquire lands, water, or interests for fish and wildlife conservation purposes could be identified by Congress or donated by nonprofit organizations. The purchase of easements or fee title from willing sellers will be subject to available money.

The Service has involved the public, agencies, partners, and legislators throughout the planning process for the easement program. At the beginning of the planning process, the Service initiated public involvement for the proposal to protect habitats primarily through acquisition of wetland and grassland conservation easements for management as part of the Refuge System. The Service spent time discussing the proposed project with landowners; conservation organizations; Federal, State, and county governments; tribes; and other interested groups and individuals. Open house meetings were held on May 18 and June 2, 2010, in Condon, Montana. These meetings were announced in local and regional media.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321), the Service prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that evaluated two alternatives and their potential impacts on the project area.

The Service released the draft environmental assessment (EA) and LPP on July 26, 2010, for a 30-day public review period. The draft documents were made available to Federal elected officials and agencies, State elected officials and agencies, Native American tribes with aboriginal or tribal interests, local media, and other members of the public that were identified during the scoping process. The Service received six written comments from agencies, organizations, and members of the public. After all comments were received, they were reviewed, added to the administrative record, and, if substantial, incorporated into the environmental assessment (EA).

Based on the documentation contained in the environmental assessment (EA), a Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on September 24, 2010, for the authorization of the Swan Valley Conservation Area.

Dated: August 24, 2012.

Steve Guertin,

*Regional Director, Mountain-Prairie Region,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

**[LLAZC03000.L51050000.EA0000
LVRCA13SA040.241A, AZ–SRP–030–10–04
and AZ–SRP–030–10–05]**

Notice of Temporary Closures of Public Lands in La Paz County, AZ

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management,
Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lake Havasu Field Office will close certain public lands during the Best in the Desert (BITD) Racing Association “BITD PARKER 250” and “BITD 425” events.

DATES: These closures will be in effect from 2 p.m., January 11, 2013, through 6 p.m., January 12, 2013, and 2 p.m., February 1, 2013, through 11:59 p.m., February 2, 2013, Mountain Standard Time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Dodson, Field Staff Ranger, BLM Lake Havasu Field Office, 2610 Sweetwater Avenue, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406, 928–505–1200. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 to contact the above

individual during normal business hours. FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question for the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The closures affect public lands administered by the Lake Havasu Field Office in La Paz County, Arizona. This action is being taken to help ensure public safety, prevent unnecessary environmental degradation, and to protect natural and cultural resources adjacent to the event site during the Best in the Desert (BITD) Racing Association “BITD Parker 250” and “BITD 425” official permitted off-highway vehicle (OHV) events.

The closure orders are issued under the authority of 43 CFR 8340 subpart 8341; 43 CFR 8360, subpart 8364.1; and 43 CFR 2932 which allow the BLM to establish closures for the protection of persons, property, and public lands and resources. Violation of any of the terms, conditions, or restrictions contained within this closure order may subject the violator to citation or arrest with a penalty or fine or imprisonment or both as specified by law.

Penalties: Violation of any regulations in this part by a member of the public is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 and/or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months.

Description of Race Course Closed Area: Beginning at the eastern boundary of the Colorado River Indian Tribe (CRIT) Reservation, the closed area runs east along Shea Road, then east into Osborne Wash on the Parker-Swansea Road to the Central Arizona Project (CAP) Canal, then north on the west side of the CAP Canal, crossing the canal on the county-maintained road, running northeast into Mineral Wash Canyon, then southeast on the county-maintained road, through the four-corners intersection to the Midway (Pit) intersection, then east on Transmission Pass Road, through State Trust Land located in Butler Valley, turning north into Cunningham Wash to North Tank; continuing south to Transmission Pass Road and east (reentering public land) within 2 miles of Alamo Dam Road. The course turns south and west onto the wooden power line road, onto the State Trust Land in Butler Valley, turning southwest into Cunningham Wash to the Graham Well, intersecting Butler Valley Road, then north and west on the county-maintained road to the “Bouse Y” intersection, 2 miles north of Bouse, Arizona. The course proceeds north, paralleling the Bouse-Swansea Road to the Midway (Pit) intersection, then west