

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service**

[FWS–R3–R–2013–N238; FXRS1265030000–145–FF03R06000]

Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge; Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment (EA) for Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, which is authorized within the 20 counties that lie along the Missouri River from Kansas City to St. Louis, Missouri. In this final CCP, we describe how we intend to manage the refuge for the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: You will find the final CCP and the EA/FONSI on the planning Web site at www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/bigmuddyccp/. A limited number of hard copies and compact discs are available. You may request one by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* r3planning@fws.gov. Include “Big Muddy Refuge—Final CCP” in the subject line of the message.

- *U.S. Mail:* Conservation Planning, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5600 American Blvd. West, Suite 990, Bloomington, MN 55437.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Larson, 612–713–5430.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. We began the CCP process for Big Muddy Refuge by publishing a notice of intent in the *Federal Register* (72 FR 27587) on May 16, 2007. For more about the initial process and the history of the refuge, see that notice.

We released the EA and draft CCP to the public, announcing and requesting comments in a notice of availability (78 FR 60306) on October 1, 2013. The 30-day comment period was to end October 31, 2013, but was extended for an additional 3 weeks, ending on November 20, 2013, due to the Federal government shutdown that occurred from October 1 to 16. A summary of public comments and the agency responses is included in the final CCP.

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) (Administration Act), requires us 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 (NWRS), 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, CCPs identify 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 Administration Act.

Each unit of the NWRS was established for specific purposes. We use these purposes as the foundation for developing and prioritizing the management goals and objectives for each refuge within the NWRS mission, and to determine how the public can use each refuge. The planning process is a way for us and the public to evaluate management goals and objectives that will ensure the best possible approach to wildlife, plant, and habitat conservation, while providing for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities that are compatible with each refuge’s establishing purposes and the mission of the NWRS.

Additional Information

The final CCP may be found at www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/bigmuddyccp/. The final CCP includes detailed information about the planning process, the refuge, issues, and management alternative selected. The Web site also includes an EA and FONSI, prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (43 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). The EA/FONSI includes discussion of three alternative refuge management options. The Service’s selected alternative is reflected in the final CCP. The selected alternative delineates and includes management direction for three urban and two rural river reaches. Within all existing and future refuge units, the alternative calls for restoring hydrology, reconnecting the Missouri River and

tributaries to their floodplains, returning or maintaining natural cover types, and providing a specified standard level of visitor services. This alternative also emphasizes biological inventory and monitoring and additional visitor services and facilities within two of the five river reaches. One reach centered on Columbia, Missouri, receives the greatest emphasis. A detailed description of objectives and actions included in this selected alternative is found in chapter 4 of the final CCP.

Dated: February 11, 2014.

Thomas O. Melius,
Regional Director.

Editorial Note: This document was received for publication by the Office of Federal Register on September 4, 2014.

[FR Doc. 2014–21420 Filed 9–8–14; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service**

[FWS–R6–R–2014–N116;
FXRS1261060000–145–FF06R06000]

National Elk Refuge, Jackson, WY; Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce that our draft comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and environmental assessment (EA) for the National Elk Refuge is available. This draft CCP describes how the Service intends to manage this refuge for the next 15 years.

DATES: To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments on the draft CCP/EA by October 9, 2014. Submit comments by one of the methods under **ADDRESSES**.

ADDRESSES: Send your comments or requests for more information by any of the following methods.

- *Email:* refuge_ccps@fws.gov. Include “National Elk Refuge CCP” in the subject line of the message.

- *U.S. Mail:* Toni Griffin, Planning Team Leader, Suite 300, 134 Union Boulevard, Lakewood, CO 80228.

- *Document Request:* A copy of the CCP/EA may be obtained by writing to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Refuge Planning, 134 Union Boulevard, Suite 300, Lakewood, CO 80228; or by download from <http://>

www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/planning/ccp/wy/ner/ner.html.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Toni Griffin, 303-236-4378 (phone); or toni_griffin@fws.gov (email).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for the National Elk Refuge. We started this process through a notice in the **Federal Register** (75 FR 65370, October 22, 2010). The National Elk Refuge was established in 1912 as a “winter game (elk) reserve” (37 Stat. 293, 16 U.S.C. 673), and the following year Congress designated the area as “a winter elk refuge” (37 Stat. 847). In 1921, all lands included in the refuge, or that might be added in the future, were reserved and set apart as “refuges and breeding grounds for birds” [Executive Order (EO) 3596, which was affirmed in 1922 (EO 3741)]. In 1927 the refuge was expanded to provide “for the grazing of, and as a refuge for, American elk and other big game animals” (44 Stat. 1246, 16 U.S.C. 673a). These purposes apply to all or most of the lands now within the refuge. Several parcels have been added to the refuge specifically for the conservation of fish and wildlife (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956), the development of wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities (Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, 16 U.S.C. 460k-1), the protection of natural resources, and the conservation of threatened and endangered species (Endangered Species Act of 1973; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

The refuge is located in Teton County, Wyoming. A wide variety of habitats are found on the National Elk Refuge, including grassy meadows, marshes, timbered areas, sagebrush, and rocky outcroppings. Between November and May, the wildlife concentrations and diversity provide spectacular wildlife viewing opportunities. The refuge’s nearly 25,000 acres provide a winter home for one of the largest wintering concentrations of elk. In addition to the large elk herds, a free roaming bison herd winters at the refuge. A variety of waterfowl, including trumpeter swans, can be seen on nearly 1,600 acres of open water and marshlands. At least 47 mammal species and nearly 175 species of birds have been observed on the refuge. Some notable species include moose, bighorn sheep, pronghorn, gray wolves, mountain lions, bald eagles, and peregrine falcons.

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 and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the Administration Act.

Public Outreach

We started the CCP process for the National Elk Refuge in October 2010. Throughout the process, we have requested public comments and considered and incorporated them in the planning process. Public outreach has included a news release, planning update, and a scoping meeting. Comments we received cover topics such as habitat management, threatened and endangered species, and public use. We have considered and evaluated all of these comments, with many incorporated into the various alternatives addressed in the draft CCP and the EA.

CCP Alternatives We Are Considering

Alternative A—Current Management (No Action)

This no-action alternative represents the current management of the refuge. This alternative provides the baseline against which to compare the other alternatives. Programs would follow the same direction, emphasis, and intensity as they do now. The refuge would not expand current habitat and wildlife practices that benefit bison, elk, migratory birds, or other wildlife. Public use opportunities would remain at current levels.

Alternative B

An important aspect of this alternative would be to increase opportunities for wildlife-dependent

public uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation programs. This alternative would allow for the most public use as compared to the other alternatives. The other emphasis of this alternative would be to meet habitat and wildlife population objectives through intensive management actions. Because of increased public opportunities, refuge staff would focus more on intensive refuge-specific monitoring, rather than ecosystem monitoring, to gauge the effects of public use on habitat and wildlife.

Alternative C

This alternative would focus on preserving the Great Yellowstone Ecosystem and supporting natural processes. We would strive to preserve intact plant communities, maintain long-distance ungulate migrations, and maintain a full suite of large native carnivores. Public use would emphasize interpretation, environmental education and outreach which may occur off-refuge through community programs and classroom settings, along with the publication and distribution of printed and electronic materials, over recreational opportunities that are direct experiences on the refuge. Tools such as webcams may be installed to provide offsite wildlife viewing opportunities.

Alternative D—Proposed Action

Our proposed action is a blended alternative which incorporates a combination of elements from alternative B and alternative C. Habitat and wildlife management would allow for natural processes to promote natural habitats. Some habitats, such as wetlands, would be intensively managed to enhance swan habitat and improve forage quantity and quality for elk and bison. Similar to alternative B, the refuge would increase opportunities for wildlife-dependent public uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education. Keeping some areas undeveloped and returning some areas to a natural state, we would increase development in other areas to enhance visitor services.

Public Meetings

Opportunity for public input will be provided at a public meeting. The specific date and time for the public meeting is yet to be determined, but will be announced via local media and a planning update.

Next Steps

After the public reviews and provides comments on the draft CCP and EA, the planning team will present this document along with a summary of all substantive public comments to the Regional Director. The Regional Director will consider the environmental effects of each alternative, along with information gathered during public review, and will select a preferred alternative for the draft CCP and EA. If the Regional Director finds that no significant impacts would occur, the Regional Director's decision will be disclosed in a Finding of No Significant Impact. If the Regional Director finds a significant impact would occur, an environmental impact statement will be prepared. If approved, the action in the preferred alternative will compose the final CCP.

Public Availability of Comments

All public comment information provided voluntarily by mail, by phone, or at public meetings (e.g., names, addresses, letters of comment, input recorded during meetings) becomes part of the official public record. If requested under the Freedom of Information Act by a private citizen or organization, the Service may provide copies of such information.

Authority

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*); NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508, 43 CFR part 46); other appropriate Federal laws and regulations; Executive Order 12996; 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; and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those laws and regulations.

Dated: August 5, 2014.

Matt Hogan,

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

[FR Doc. 2014–21415 Filed 9–8–14; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

[GX14EE000101100]

Announcement of National Geospatial Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) will meet on September 23–24, 2014 at the National Conservation Training Center, 698 Conservation Way, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. The meeting will be held in Room #201 Instructional East. The NGAC, which is composed of representatives from governmental, private sector, non-profit, and academic organizations, was established to advise the Federal Geographic Data Committee on management of Federal geospatial programs, the development of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, and the implementation of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A–16. Topics to be addressed at the meeting include:

- Leadership Dialogue
- Recent FGDC Activities
- NSDI Strategic Plan
- Geospatial Platform
- NGAC Subcommittee Activities
- National Information Exchange Model
- Emerging Geospatial Issues

The meeting will include an opportunity for public comment during the morning of September 24. Comments may also be submitted to the NGAC in writing. Members of the public who wish to attend the meeting must register in advance for clearance into the meeting site. Please register by contacting Lucia Foulkes at the Federal Geographic Data Committee (703–648–4142, lfoulkes@usgs.gov). Registrations are due by September 17. While the meeting will be open to the public, registration is required for entrance to the facility, and seating may be limited due to room capacity.

DATES: The meeting will be held on September 23 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on September 24 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Mahoney, U.S. Geological Survey (206–220–4621).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Meetings of the National Geospatial Advisory Committee are open to the public. Additional information about the NGAC

and the meeting are available at www.fgdc.gov/ngac.

Kenneth Shaffer,

Deputy Executive Director, Federal Geographic Data Committee.

[FR Doc. 2014–21367 Filed 9–8–14; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLAK910000–L1410000.PP0000–LXSIARAC0000]

Notice of Public Meeting, BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council

AGENCY: Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska Resource Advisory Council (RAC) will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The meeting will be held September 29 & 30, 2014 at the Office of Aviation Services located at 4405 Lear Court, Anchorage, Alaska 99502–1032. The meeting starts at 9:30 a.m. each day in training room #109. The council will accept comments from the public on Monday, September 29 from 3:00–4:00 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thom Jennings, RAC Coordinator, BLM-Alaska State Office, 222 W. 7th Avenue #13, Anchorage, AK 99513. Telephone 907–271–3335 or email tjennings@blm.gov. 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. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 15-member Council advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, on a variety of planning and management issues associated with public land management in Alaska. At this meeting, topics planned for discussion include:

- Update on proposed development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR–A)
- Introduction to the scope and charter of the NPR–A Working Group