

reduce hazardous fuel loading through mechanical clearing and prescribed fire. We would also continue to allow limited environmental education and interpretation programs under a SUP, or led by refuge staff.

*Alternative B (Increased Ecosystem Monitoring, Partnerships, and Public Use; Service-Preferred Alternative)*

Alternative B is the Service-preferred alternative. It combines the actions we believe would best achieve the refuge's purposes, vision, and goals and respond to public issues. Alternative B represents an extension and progression of all areas of current refuge management, including additional biological work, increased visitor services opportunities, and enhanced outreach to local communities. Alternative B places a greater emphasis on the importance of the refuge in a larger landscape context. This alternative would expand habitat management and monitoring for cooter and other species on additional refuge-owned parcels, and would include the use of prescribed burning to increase the structure and species composition of upland habitats to benefit wildlife resources of concern.

Alternative B would pursue the Service's administrative requirements to evaluate potential hunting opportunities on the Crooked Pond parcel. Wildlife observation, photography, interpretation, and environmental education would be allowed on special occasions when led by refuge staff or partners working under a SUP. These activities would allow visitors to gain a better understanding of the unique natural resources the refuge protects and encourage visitors to become better stewards and advocates for resource conservation.

Under alternative B, refuge staff would increase outreach to the local community to raise the refuge's visibility and promote the relevancy of the refuge and the Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex to conservation in southeast Massachusetts.

#### Next Steps

After this comment period ends, we will analyze the comments and address them in the form of a final CCP and, if appropriate, finding of no significant impact.

#### Public Availability of Documents

In addition to any methods listed in **ADDRESSES**, you can view or obtain documents from the agency Web site at: [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Massasoit/what\\_we\\_do/conservation.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Massasoit/what_we_do/conservation.html).

#### Submitting Comments

We consider comments substantive if they:

- Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the document.
- Question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of the EA.
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the EA.
- Provide new or additional information relevant to the EA.

#### Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comments, 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.

Dated: March 13, 2017.

**Wendi Weber,**

*Regional Director, Northeast Region.*

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**BILLING CODE 4333-15-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

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#### Notice of Public Meeting; Central Montana Resource Advisory Council

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

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

**DATES:** The Central Montana RAC meeting will be held on March 29 and 30, 2017, in Glasgow, Montana. The meeting on March 29, 2017, will be held from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m., with a 30-minute public comment period at 12:30 p.m. RAC members will take a field trip on March 30, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** The meetings will be in the Cottonwood Inn Conference Room, 54250 U.S. Hwy. 2, Glasgow, MT 59230.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mark Albers, North Central Montana District Manager, 1220 38th Street

North, Great Falls, MT 59401, (406) 791-7794, [malbers@blm.gov](mailto:malbers@blm.gov). Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-677-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FRS 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:** This 15-member council advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the BLM, on a variety of management issues associated with public land management in Montana. During these meetings, the RAC is scheduled to participate in, discuss, and act upon these topics or activities. All RAC meetings are open to the public.

Agenda items for the March 29-30, 2017, sessions include, but are not limited to: An update on implementation of the existing Sweet Grass Hills mineral withdrawal; an update on the American Prairie Reserve bison conversion proposal; information on BLM travel management planning; HiLine precipitation; a briefing on the proposed Sandy Coal Boat Ramp; regular business items such as planning the next meeting's agenda; and, a field trip to a sage grouse lek.

The RAC meeting will also have time allocated for oral public comments. Depending on the number of persons wishing to comment and time available, the time for individual oral comments may be limited.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comments, please 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:** 43 CFR 1784.4-2.

**Rick Hotaling,**

*Acting Associate State Director, BLM Montana/Dakotas.*

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