

information collection associated with the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund Grant Program. The supporting statement for our emergency request is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/pdm/0128SupCurrent.pdf>. The OMB control number for this collection is 1018-0128, which expires on January 31, 2006. We plan to request that OMB approve this information collection for a 3-year term. Federal agencies may not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Proposals submitted for funding under the Marine Turtle Conservation Act are subject to a panel review, comprised of in-house and select outside technical experts. The information collected under this program's Notice of Funding Availability includes: a project summary and narrative; letter of appropriate government endorsement; brief curricula vitae for key project personnel; and complete standard forms 424, 424a and 424b. Proposals from U.S. applicants also include a copy of the organization's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NIRCA) (if applicable) and a complete DI-2010. The project summary and narrative is the basis for this information collection request for approval, and allows the review panel to assess how well the project addresses the priorities identified by the Act. As all of the projects under this Act will be conducted outside the United States, the letter of appropriate government endorsement ensures that the proposed activities will not meet with local resistance or work in opposition to locally identified priorities and needs. Brief curricula vitae for key project personnel allow the review panel to assess the qualifications of project staff to effectively carry out the project goals and objectives. Although the standard forms are only required for U.S. financial assistance applicants, we ask all applicants to submit these forms in order to allow for more uniformity across all proposals. As all Federal entities are required to honor the indirect cost rates an organization has negotiated with their cognizant agency, we require all organizations with a NICRA to submit the agreement paperwork with their proposals to verify how their rate is applied in their proposed budget. The DI-2010 is a required form for all U.S. financial assistance applicants.

The information requested in this collection, outside of the required standard forms, is considered the minimum information necessary to

allow the review panel sufficient technical, financial, and administrative information to determine the merits of each proposal, and to select the best projects for funding.

Title: Marine Turtle Conservation Fund Grant Program.

OMB Control Number: 1018-0128.

Service Form Numbers: N/A.

Frequency of Collection: Annually.

Description of Respondents: Foreign governments; domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations, and individuals.

Total Annual Responses: 55 responses.

Total Annual Burden Hours: 660 hours.

We invite comments concerning this collection on: (1) Whether or not the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether or not the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden on the public; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond.

Dated: August 3, 2005.

Hope Grey,

*Information Collection Clearance Officer,
Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. 05-16148 Filed 8-15-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Monroe County, Florida.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service announces that a Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge are available for review and comment. The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, requires the Service to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose in developing a comprehensive conservation plan 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 on conserving wildlife and their habitats, plans identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation.

Significant issues address in the draft plan include: threatened and endangered species; migratory birds, habitat restoration; invasive exotic species control; funding and staffing; and land acquisition.

DATES: Individuals wishing to comment on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge should do so no later than October 17, 2005. Public comments were requested, considered, and incorporated throughout the planning process. Public outreach has included public scoping meetings, planning updates, and a **Federal Register** notice.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment should be addressed to the Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 28950 Watson Boulevard, Big Pine Key, Florida 33043; Telephone 305/872-2239. The plan and environmental assessment may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Internet Web site <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning/>. Comments on the draft plan may be submitted to the above address or via electronic mail to van_fischer@fws.gov. Please include your name and return address in your Internet message. Our practice is to make comments, including names and mailing addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home addresses from the record, which will honor to the extent allowable by law.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Service developed three alternatives for managing the refuge and chose Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative.

Alternatives

Serving as a basis for each alternative, goals and sets of objectives and

strategies were developed to help fulfill the purposes of the refuge and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Objectives are desired conditions or outcomes that are grouped into sets, and for this planning effort, consolidated into three alternatives. These alternatives represent different approaches to managing the refuge while still meeting purposes and goals. Plans will be revised at least every 15 years, or earlier, if monitoring indicates management changes are warranted. Goals are common for each of the alternatives with objectives and strategies differing. A comparison of each alternative follows the general descriptions.

Alternative 1: (No Action)

Continuation of current refuge management that includes basic habitat management, such as control of exotics and fundamental monitoring. This alternative represents no change from current management of the refuge and is considered a baseline. Management emphasis would continue to focus on maintaining biological integrity of habitats found on the refuge. Primary management activities include invasive exotic plant control, pest management, habitat restoration, and basic monitoring of threatened and endangered species. Alternative 1 represents the anticipated conditions of the refuge for the next 15 years assuming current policies, programs, and activities continue. The other two alternatives are compared to this alternative in order to evaluate differences in future conditions compared to baseline management.

This alternative reflects actions that include supporting recovery efforts for federally listed species, restoring hammocks, restoring wetlands, and acquiring lands from willing sellers within the acquisition boundary. Monitoring of plants and animals would be limited due to staffing constraints and limited research interest. Habitat management actions are intended to benefit all wildlife by maintaining habitat integrity.

Management coordination would occur between the refuge and the adjacent state botanical preserve. Coordination would be limited because of staffing constraints and remain focused on invasive exotics control, habitat restoration, and threatened and endangered species. Since the refuge is closed to the public, visitors would continue to be directed to the state botanical preserve. The preserve has infrastructure to accommodate visitors who want to experience being in a hardwood hammock or mangrove forest.

The refuge would remain staffed with a refuge manager and periodic interns.

Researchers would be accommodated when projects benefit the refuge. The refuge would remain closed to public and commercial access.

Alternative 2: (Preferred Alternative)
Increase management actions that focus greater attention on actively managing habitats to provide increased habitat value.

This alternative is the preferred alternative for managing the refuge. Under this alternative, existing management activities would continue, and some activities would be expanded. This alternative proposes to add an additional full-time biological technician to allow for expansion of activities such as monitoring, exotics control, and restoration.

The staff member would help support the additional activities proposed under this alternative.

Increasing efforts related to exotics control, pest management, and monitoring are characteristic of this alternative. This increased management actions would help to achieve the long-term goals and objectives in a timelier manner than under the "no action" alternative. This alternative would result in a more ecosystem-based management approach that views the refuge as a single system rather than separate habitat types. Federally listed species would still be of primary concern, but needs of other resident and migratory wildlife would also be considered.

A more proactive approach to land acquisition would be taken in order to purchase remaining inholdings. The refuge would actively contact owners of inholdings and seek to acquire the parcels. There are roughly 400 acres of inholdings that the refuge wants to acquire in order to restore distributed habitats on those parcels. Acquiring inholdings would also ensure that connectivity of refuge habitats is maintained.

Alternative 3: (Limited Public Access)
Open refuge to limited public use and access while increasing management actions that focus greater attention on actively managing habitats to provide increased habitat value.

This alternative is an expanded version of Alternative 2 that allows for opening the refuge to limited public use. The refuge was established as a closed refuge and the possibility of allowing public use was considered for this alternative. Restoration of habitats may provide an opportunity to incorporate nature trails that provide access to the refuge.

These potential nature trails would need to be located in areas that would result in no disturbance to wildlife since

they would be located in areas that were disturbed. The trails would also provide interpretive signs to educate visitors about refuge resources.

In addition to the nature trails, there would be a strengthening of the refuge friends group in order to provide guided tours of the refuge. Refuge staff would train volunteers to conduct tours of areas that are only accessible with a guide. This approach would open the refuge and allow visitors to experience the refuge while minimizing disturbance to sensitive wildlife areas.

Alternatives Considered, but Rejected

Opening the entire refuge to general public use and access was rejected since it would create too much disturbance to sensitive wildlife. Additionally, a full-time refuge ranger and law enforcement officer would need to be added to the staff to handle the influx of visitors. The Florida Keys receive approximately 4 million visitors per year and even a fraction of a percent of those visitors stopping at the refuge would cause impacts of unacceptable levels.

Active habitat manipulation to emulate natural disturbances (*e.g.*, hurricane micro-bursts) was discussed at length during the biological review as a possible approach to increase preferred habitat for federally listed species. This alternative centered on clearing one to five acres of mature hardwood hammock to create disturbed areas. The planning team unanimously agreed that destroying intact hardwood hammock was too controversial to undertake. However, restoring existing disturbed areas (*e.g.*, NIKE site) to a younger-aged hammock was agreed upon and incorporated into the preferred alternative.

Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge is in north Key Largo approximately 40-miles south of Miami, Florida, on County Road 905. The refuge headquarters is 1.8 miles north of the U.S. Highway 1 and County Road 905 split in Key Largo, Florida. The refuge was established as a closed refuge and is not open to the general public.

Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1980 to protect critical breeding and nesting habitat for the endangered American crocodile and other wildlife. The refuge is currently comprised of 6,700 acres including 650 acres of open water. It contains a mosaic of habitat types, including tropical hardwood hammock, mangrove forest, and salt marsh. These habitats are critical for hundreds of plants and animals including six federally listed species. The refuge is unusual in that not all of the critical habitat areas are in a pristine,

undisturbed condition. A large portion of the refuge was going to be a residential development complete with canals for boating access. The dredge-spoil from the canal system was piled up in berms on the banks of the canals and became an important nesting area for the federally listed American crocodile. American crocodiles are fairly wide-spread throughout the tropics, however, in the United States, crocodiles are only found in south Florida and the Keys.

The refuge protects one of the largest remaining tracts of tropical hardwood hammock, which is a globally threatened habitat type. These diverse forests are home to hundreds of plants and animals including the federally listed Key Largo woodrat, Key Largo cotton mouse, Schaus swallowtail butterfly, Stock Island tree snail, and eastern indigo snake. These species require hammocks in order to survive. Unfortunately, most of the hammocks in Key Largo have been eliminated by development, which has led to considerable population declines in these already imperiled species.

Authority: This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1977, Public Law 105-57.

Dated: June 17, 2005.

Cynthia K. Dohner,

Acting Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the Florida Scrub-Jay Resulting From the Proposed Construction of a Single-Family Home in Sarasota County, FL

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Jeffrey and Patricia Adams (Applicants) request an incidental take permit (ITP) pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), as amended (Act). The Applicants anticipate removal of about 0.22 acre of Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) (scrub-jay) foraging, sheltering, and possibly nesting habitat, incidental to lot preparation for the construction of a single-family home and supporting infrastructure in Sarasota County, Florida (project). The loss of 0.22 acre of foraging, sheltering,

and possibly nesting habitat is expected to result in the take of one family of scrub-jays.

The Applicants' Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) describes the mitigation and minimization measures proposed to address the effects of the project to the scrub-jay. These measures are outlined in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below. The Service has determined that the Applicants' proposal, including the proposed mitigation and minimization measures, would individually and cumulatively have a minor or negligible effect on the species covered in the HCP. Therefore, the ITP is a "low-effect" project and qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as provided by the Department of Interior Manual (516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1). The Service announces the availability of the Applicants' ITP application, HCP, and Screening Form for Low-Effect HCP Determinations for the incidental take application. Copies of the ITP application, HCP, and Screening Form may be obtained by making a request to the Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). Requests must be in writing to be processed. This notice is provided pursuant to section 10 of the Act and NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

DATES: Written comments on the ITP application, HCP, and Screening Form should be sent to the Service's Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**) and should be received on or before September 15 2005.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the application, HCP, and Screening Form may obtain a copy by writing the Service's Southeast Regional Office at the address below. Please reference permit number TE096080-0 in such requests. Documents will also be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the Southeast Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30345 (Attn: Endangered Species Permits), or at the South Florida Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1339 20th Street, Vero Beach, Florida 32960-3559 (Attn: Field Supervisor).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. David Dell, Regional HCP Coordinator, Southeast Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES** above), telephone: 404-679-7313, facsimile: 404-679-7081; or Mr. George Dennis, Fish and Wildlife Ecologist, South Florida Ecological Services Field Office (see **ADDRESSES**

above), telephone: 772-562-3909, ext. 309.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: If you wish to comment, you may submit comments by any one of several methods. Please reference permit number TE096080-0 in such comments. You may mail comments to the Service's Southeast Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). You may also comment via the internet to david_dell@fws.gov. Please submit comments over the internet as an ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include your name and return address in your e-mail message. If you do not receive a confirmation from us that we have received your e-mail message, contact us directly at either telephone number listed above (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). Finally, you may hand-deliver comments to either Service office listed above (see **ADDRESSES**). Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home addresses from the administrative record. We will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law. There may also be other circumstances in which we would withhold from the administrative record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. We will not, however, consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

The Florida scrub-jay is geographically isolated from other species of scrub-jays found in Mexico and the western United States. The scrub-jay is found exclusively in peninsular Florida and is restricted to xeric uplands (well-drained, sandy soil habitats supporting a growth of oak-dominated scrub). Increasing urban and agricultural development has resulted in habitat loss and fragmentation, which has adversely affected the distribution and numbers of scrub-jays. The total estimated population is between 7,000 and 11,000 individuals.

The decline in the number and distribution of scrub-jays in west-central Florida has been exacerbated by tremendous urban growth in the past 50 years. Historical commercial and residential development has occurred