

The purpose of this notice is to achieve the following:

- (1) Advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and
- (2) Obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the environmental document.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written comments must be received no later than August 25, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Address comments, questions, and requests for further information to: Cheri Ehrhardt, Refuge Planner, Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge CCP, P.O. Box 6504, Titusville, Florida 32782-6504; Telephone: 321/861-2368; Fax: 321/861-1276; E-mail: LakeWoodruffCCP@fws.gov. You may find additional information concerning the refuge at its Internet site: <http://www.fws.gov/lakewoodruff/>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The comprehensive conservation planning process will consider many elements, including wildlife and habitat management, public recreational activities, and cultural resource protection. Public input to the planning process is essential. A public scoping meeting will be held. Please contact the refuge planner in the **ADDRESSES** section regarding the public scoping meeting. All comments received from individuals become part of the official public record. Requests for such comments will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations [40 CFR 1506.6(f)].

Congress established Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge in 1964 as a migratory bird refuge. It comprises 21,574 acres of freshwater marshes, swamps, creeks, hammocks, and upland forests. More than 1,000 acres of the refuge are designated as Wilderness. Management of the refuge focuses on water-level manipulation for waterfowl and wading birds, prescribed fire, noxious weed control, deer and feral hog management, and partnerships.

Authority: This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105-57.

Dated: June 14, 2006.

Cynthia K. Dohner,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 06-6475 Filed 7-25-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge

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

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is preparing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) located in Solano, Napa and Sonoma Counties of California. This notice advises the public that the Service intends to gather information necessary to prepare a CCP and EA pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The public and other agencies are encouraged to participate in the planning process by sending written comments on management actions that the Service should consider. The Service is also furnishing this notice in compliance with the Service CCP policy to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the CCP and EA. Opportunities for public input will be announced throughout the CCP/EA planning and development process.

DATES: To ensure that the Service has adequate time to evaluate and incorporate suggestions and other input into the planning process, comments should be received on or before September 11, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments or requests to be added to the mailing list to the following address: Winnie Chan, Refuge Planner, San Pablo Bay NWR CCP, San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, P.O. Box 524, Newark, California 94560. Written comments may also be faxed to (510) 792-5828, or sfbaynwrcc@fws.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Winnie Chan, Refuge Planner, at (510) 792-0222 or Christy Smith, Refuge Manager, at (707) 769-4200.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 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 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, 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, the CCP will identify compatible wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public. The recreational opportunities that will receive priority consideration are hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. The planning process will consider many elements, including habitat and wildlife management, compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, cultural resource protection, desired future conditions, land acquisition, environmental effects, and administrative resources. Public input into this planning process is very important. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuge and how the Service will implement management strategies.

Comments received will be used to develop goals and objectives, as well as identify key issues evaluated in the NEPA document. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be made available to the public. Opportunities for public participation will occur throughout the process.

The Service will send Planning Updates to people who are interested in the CCP process. These mailings will provide information on how to participate in the CCP process. Interested Federal, State, and local agencies, organizations, and individuals are invited to provide input. The Service expects to complete the CCP in 2008.

Background

The San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge is located in the cities of Petaluma, Vallejo, Napa and Novato. The 11,000-acre Refuge sits on the northernmost point of the San Francisco Bay Estuary known as the San Pablo Bay portion of the Estuary. The Refuge was initially established “* * * for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds” (16 U.S.C. 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)); “* * * particular value in carrying out the national migratory bird management program” (16 U.S.C. 667b (An Act Authorizing the Transfer of Certain Real Property for Wildlife, or other purposes)); and

“* * * to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species * * * or (B) plants” (16 U.S.C. 1534 (Endangered Species Act of 1973)).

The Refuge was established to protect endangered species, and to conserve migratory birds and other wildlife by preserving habitat and open space while providing compatible wildlife-oriented outdoor recreation to the public. While the Refuge was formally established in 1970, lands were not acquired until 1974.

The Service anticipates a draft CCP and EA to be available for public review and comment in 2007.

Doug S. Vandegrift,

*Acting Manager, CA/NV Operations,
Sacramento, California.*

[FR Doc. E6-11915 Filed 7-25-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Drought Management Plan for Operation of the Kerr Hydroelectric Project, Flathead Lake, MT

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability and public hearings.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) announces the availability of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a drought management plan for the operation of the Kerr Hydroelectric Project, Flathead Lake, Montana. In addition to mailing the draft EIS to cooperating agencies and those who previously requested the document, the BIA has made the draft EIS available at the Polson City Library, 2 First Avenue East, Polson, Montana, and the Flathead County Library, 247 First Avenue East, Kalispell, Montana. Additionally, the draft EIS may be obtained on the following Web site: <http://www.flatheadlake-eis.com>. The purpose of this notice is to inform the public, other Federal agencies, tribal, State, and local governments, organizations and businesses of the availability of the draft EIS and to announce public hearings to discuss the draft EIS.

DATES: Comments on the draft EIS must be received by September 29, 2006. The hearing dates and locations are:

1. August 29, 2006, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Red Lion Inn, 20 North Main Street, Kalispell, Montana.

2. August 30, 2006, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Polson City Library, Community Meeting Room, 2 First Avenue East, Polson, Montana.

ADDRESSES: Mail or hand deliver written comments to Jeffery Loman, Chief, Natural Resources Division, Office of Trust Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mail Stop 4655-MIB, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240. You may also fax comments to Chief, Natural Resources, (202) 219-0006 or (202) 219-1255.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jeffery Loman, Chief, Natural Resources Division, (202) 208-7373 or (202) 903-8295.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Flathead Lake is the largest natural fresh water lake in the western United States. It is home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, whose reservation encompasses an area including approximately the southern half of Flathead Lake. Flathead Lake is regulated by the operation of Kerr Dam, located at River Mile 72.0 at Polson, Montana. The Kerr Dam and Hydroelectric Project are located within the exterior boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation. The Project operates under a joint license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on July 17, 1985 to PPL Montana, LLC, successor-in-interest to the Montana Power Company and current operator of the Kerr Project, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The license has been amended several times since initial issuance.

Section 4(e) of the Federal Power Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to include conditions in hydropower licenses for the protection and utilization of Indian reservations. Pursuant to this authority, the Secretary required that certain articles be included in the Kerr Project license for the protection and utilization of the Flathead Indian Reservation. Among these is license Article 56, which requires minimum instream flow rates for the protection of fisheries and other resources in the Lower Flathead River below Kerr Dam. In addition to the Secretary's section 4(e) conditions, Article 43 of the Kerr Project license requires the operator to regulate Flathead Lake in accordance with a 1962 Memorandum of Understanding, as amended in 1965, between the Montana Power Company and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The purposes behind the MOU include providing for flood control by drawing down Flathead Lake every spring, and supporting recreation, tourism and associated

activities on Flathead Lake by refilling the lake in time for the summer season.

During low-water years, there may be an insufficient volume of water to achieve Article 43 lake levels while maintaining the minimum instream flow requirements of Article 56. Accordingly, the Secretary also included Article 60 in the Project license, which requires that the licensees develop and implement a drought management plan in consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Article 60 further requires that the drought management plan include a re-evaluation and adjustment of flood control requirements and other provisions necessary for compliance with lower Flathead River minimum instream flow mandates.

Pursuant to Article 60, PPL Montana submitted a proposed drought management plan to the Secretary of the Interior on March 4, 2002. Under Article 60, the Secretary has the authority to reject, modify, or otherwise alter the proposed drought management plan. The Secretary determined that the decision on the proposed drought management plan constitutes a major federal action that could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The National Environmental Policy Act therefore requires preparation of an EIS. PPL Montana's plan serves as the proposed action in the EIS.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was delegated the responsibility to serve as the Lead Agency for NEPA compliance in connection with the proposed drought management plan. On June 20, 2002, BIA published a Notice of Intent in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 42054) informing agencies and the public of BIA's intent to gather information necessary to prepare an EIS for the proposed drought management plan and initiating the formal scoping process (See Appendix A). The Notice of Intent encouraged comments and participation in the scoping process and included meeting dates, times, and locations. BIA held a series of public meetings and workshops in Kalispell, Charlo and Polson, Montana, on July 9-10, 2002, August 27-28, 2002, and October 22-23, 2002.

The drought management plan ultimately approved by the Secretary will govern how the Kerr Project licensees will prepare for and operate the Project during a drought and will benefit the public by providing information regarding the operation of