

observation and photography are the most popular activities. Our staffing and facilities would remain the same. Seven staff positions for the refuge complex would remain in place, and the headquarters would remain at the Sunderland Office.

Alternative B (Enhanced Visitor Services and Habitat Diversity—the Service-Preferred Alternative)

This alternative is the one we propose as the best way to manage this refuge over the next 15 years. It includes an array of management actions that, in our professional judgment, works best toward achieving the refuge purposes, our vision and goals, and the goals of other State and regional conservation plans. We also believe it most effectively addresses the key issues that arose during the planning process.

Similar to alternative A, under alternative B we would primarily allow natural processes to shape the refuge's forest habitat and would continue to work with partners to complement the larger landscape for priority species through partnerships. We would conduct forest inventories every 10 to 15 years to determine silvicultural prescriptions to encourage early successional forest habitat and pine regeneration, and to maintain the existing unique character of large-diameter trees. A habitat management plan would be completed within 1 year of CCP approval. The current meadow would be expanded up to approximately 3 acres, but not at the expense of mature forest habitat. A treatment schedule for maintaining the view to the lake from the Hay Estate house would be developed in partnership with The Fells and incorporate both scenic and wildlife habitat aspects that meet biological and cultural objectives for the area.

We would continue to monitor refuge forests and wetlands for invasive plants and disease, and to treat them to the extent our funding allows. Protecting and enhancing riparian and wetlands habitat would be a priority, including the undeveloped Lake Sunapee shoreline, Beech Brook, fens, and vernal pools. We would also continue our monitoring and inventory program, but regularly evaluate the results to help us better understand the implications of our management actions and identify ways to improve their effectiveness.

In addition to enhancing our existing programs in wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation, we would open the refuge to fishing. We would also work with partners to accommodate hunting on their lands as part of a regional recreational program offering a diversity

of wildlife-dependent public use opportunities. We would seek partnerships to help us achieve our enhanced and new programs, including assistance on interpretive trail construction and enhancements, and environmental education programs using the refuge as a living laboratory. The refuge would remain closed to hunting due to its small size and staffing constraints. We would also improve and expand access to the lake for freshwater fishing and enhance trails for environmentally sensitive stream crossings and access to additional habitats. If we can secure permanent funding, we would fill one new visitor services staff position to provide depth to our programs and achieve our goals and objectives. We also propose to collaborate with neighboring partner, The Fells, at their visitor contact facilities at the adjacent Fells gatehouse and parking lot to increase our visibility and improve public access to refuge land.

Alternative C (Forest Management Emphasis)

This alternative resembles Alternative B in its refuge administration and facilities, but differs in its habitat management intensity and visitor services programs.

Under Alternative C, we would actively manage for mature upland forest, including silvicultural prescriptions such as thinning or soil scarification to promote regeneration success. Additional early successional forest habitat would be provided by expanding the existing meadow and creating new meadows, but not at the expense of mature forest habitat. The width of The Fells view to the lake would be expanded to provide additional habitat for wildlife dependent upon early successional habitat, and increase the view from the estate house.

As in Alternative B, we would protect and enhance riparian and wetlands habitats as a priority. As in Alternative B, we would monitor and inventory our forests and wetlands for invasive plants and disease and treat them to the extent funding allows. Protecting and enhancing riparian and wetland habitats would also be a priority. Compared to Alternative B, we would conduct a more intensive, focused monitoring and inventory program designed to address more-specific questions about habitat quality and the response of wildlife populations. In the near-term, inventory and monitoring would be aimed specifically at documenting the species and habitat baseline conditions.

Under Alternative C, our public use programs would accommodate additional access with enhanced trail conditions to allow people of all abilities to access and view the lake. This Alternative explores the possibility of accommodating hunting by determining the feasibility of a very limited hunt program in collaboration with our State partners.

Public Meetings

The public will have the opportunity to provide input at one public meeting in Newbury, New Hampshire. We will release mailings, news releases, and announcements electronically and provide information about opportunities for public review and comment on our Web site and in local newspapers, along with the contact information below. You can obtain the schedule from the planning team leader or project leader (*see ADDRESSES*).

You may also submit comments anytime during the planning process by mail, electronic mail, or facsimile (*see ADDRESSES*). For specific information, including dates, times, and locations, contact the project leader (*see ADDRESSES*) or visit our Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/johnhay/ccphome.html>.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail 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 available to the public 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: January 8, 2010.

Wendi Weber,

Acting Regional Director, Northeast Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R3-R-2009-N243; 30136-1265-0000-S3]

Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge, NE; Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge, MN; and Iowa Wetland Management District, IA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and associated environmental documents for the Boyer Chute and Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) and the Iowa Wetland Management District (WMD). We furnish this notice in compliance with our CCP policy to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to be considered in the planning process.

We also invite comments on archeological, historic, and traditional cultural sites in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

In addition, special mailings, newspaper articles, Internet postings, and other media announcements will inform people of the opportunities for written comments.

ADDRESSES: Comments or requests for more information can be sent to the appropriate refuge at the following addresses:

1. *Attention:* Refuge Manager, Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge, 3720 Rivers Way, Fort Calhoun, NE 68023;

2. *Attention:* Refuge Manager, Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge, 26624 N. Tower Road, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501;

3. *Attention:* Refuge Manager, Iowa Wetland Management District, 1710 360th Street, Titonka, IA 50480.

You may also find information on the CCP planning process and submit comments electronically on the planning Web site <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning> or you may e-mail comments to r3planning@fws.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Cox, DeSoto NWR, 712-642-4121; Scott Kahan, Hamden Slough NWR, 218-847-4431; or George Maze, Iowa WMD, 515-928-2523.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: With this notice, we initiate the CCP for the Boyer Chute NWR, with headquarters in Fort Calhoun, NE; the CCP for the Hamden Slough NWR, with headquarters in Detroit Lakes, MN; and the CCP for the Iowa WMD, with headquarters in Titonka, IA.

Background

The CCP Process

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), requires us to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for each national wildlife refuge. Land parcels we manage within a Wetland Management District are also units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. 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.

Each unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, including each of these NWRs, is established with specific purposes. We use these purposes to develop and prioritize management goals and objectives within the National Wildlife Refuge System mission, and to guide which public uses will occur on these Refuges. The planning process is a way for us and the public to evaluate management goals and objectives for the best possible conservation efforts of this important wildlife habitat, while providing for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities that are compatible with the Refuges' establishing purposes and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

We will conduct a comprehensive conservation planning process that will provide opportunity for Tribal, State, and local governments; agencies; organizations; and the public to participate in issue scoping and public comment for the future management of Boyer Chute NWR, Hamden Slough NWR, and Iowa WMD. We invite anyone interested to respond to the following two questions:

1. What issues do you want to see addressed in the CCP?

2. What improvements would you recommend for the Refuges or Wetland District?

Responding to these two questions is optional; you are not required to provide information to us. Our Planning Team developed the questions to gather information about individual issues and ideas concerning these Refuges and Wetland District. Comments we receive will be used as part of the planning process; however, we will not reference

individual comments in our reports or directly respond to them.

We also invite comments on archeological, historic, and traditional cultural sites in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

We will also give the public an opportunity to provide input at open houses. You can obtain a schedule of the open house events by contacting the Refuge Managers listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

The environmental review of these projects will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*); NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508); other appropriate Federal laws and regulations; and our policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, 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: December 14, 2009.

Charles M. Wooley,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLIDC00000.L16400000.BF0000.241A.0; 4500012112]

Notice of Public Meeting, Coeur d'Alene District Resource Advisory Council Meeting and Recreation Subcommittee Meeting; Idaho

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (FLREA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Coeur d'Alene District Resource Advisory Council