

there will be approximately 100 surveys initiated, the second year 125 surveys initiated, and the third year 150 surveys initiated based on prior experience and expected growth in the program. These figures above represent an expected average per year over the three-year period.

(3) *Description of the need and use of the information:* The proposed renewal of this information collection activity provides a means to consistently assess, benchmark and improve customer satisfaction with Federal Government agency programs and/or services within the Executive Branch. The Federal Consulting Group of the Department of the Interior serves as the executive agent for this methodology and has partnered with the CFI Group and the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to offer the ACSI to Federal government agencies.

The CFI Group, a leader in customer satisfaction and customer experience management, offers a comprehensive model that quantifies the effects of quality improvements on citizen satisfaction. The CFI Group has developed the methodology and licenses it to the American Customer Satisfaction Index, an independent organization which produces the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). This national indicator is developed for different economic sectors each quarter, which are then published in *The Wall Street Journal*. The ACSI was introduced in 1994 by Professor Claes Fornell under the auspices of the University of Michigan, the American Society for Quality (ASQ), and the CFI Group. It monitors and benchmarks customer satisfaction across more than 200 companies and many U.S. Federal agencies.

The ACSI is the only cross-agency methodology for obtaining comparable measures of customer satisfaction with Federal government programs and/or services. Along with other economic objectives—such as employment and growth—the quality of output (goods and services) is a part of measuring living standards. The ACSI's ultimate purpose is to help improve the quality of goods and services available to American citizens.

ACSI surveys conducted by the Federal Consulting Group are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579, December 31, 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a). The agency information collection is an integral part of conducting an ACSI survey. The contractor will not be authorized to release any agency information upon completion of the survey without first obtaining permission from the Federal Consulting

Group and the participating agency. In no case shall any new system of records containing privacy information be developed by the Federal Consulting Group, participating agencies, or the contractor collecting the data. In addition, participating Federal agencies may only provide information used to randomly select respondents from among established systems of records provided for such routine uses.

There is no other agency or organization which is able to provide the information that is accessible through the surveying approach used in this information collection. Further, the information will enable Federal agencies to determine customer satisfaction metrics with discrimination capability across variables. Thus, this information collection will assist Federal agencies in improving their customer service in a targeted manner which will make best use of resources to improve service to the public.

This survey asks no questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

As required under 5 CFR 1320.8(d), a **Federal Register** notice soliciting comments on the collection of information was published on February 28, 2012 (77 FR 12073-74). No comments were received. This notice provides the public with an additional 30 days in which to comment on the proposed information collection activity.

### III. Request for Comments

The Departments invite comments on:

(a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agencies, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(b) The accuracy of the agencies' estimate of the burden of the collection and the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(c) Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(d) Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other collection techniques or other forms of information techniques.

"Burden" means the total time, effort, and financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, disclose, or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; to develop, acquire, install, and utilize

technology and systems for the purpose of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; to train personnel and to be able to respond to a collection of information, to search data sources, to complete and review the collection of information; and to transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

All written comments, with names and addresses, will be available for public inspection. If you wish us to withhold your personal information, you must prominently state at the beginning of your comment what personal information you want us to withhold. We will honor your request to the extent allowable by law. If you wish to view any comments received, you may do so by scheduling an appointment with the National Business Center, Federal Consulting Group by calling (202) 513-7655. A valid picture identification is required for entry into the Department of the Interior.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget control number.

**Ron Oberbillig,**

*Chief Operating Officer, Federal Consulting Group.*

[FR Doc. 2012-24763 Filed 10-9-12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-RK-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R5-R-2012-N078; BAC-4311-K9-S3]

#### **Patuxent Research Refuge, Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties, MD; Draft 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 (we, the Service), announce the availability of a draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment (CCP/EA) for Patuxent Research Refuge (Patuxent RR), located in Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties, Maryland, for public review and comment. The draft CCP/EA describes our proposal for managing the refuge for the next 15 years.

Also available for public review and comment are the draft findings of appropriateness and draft compatibility determinations for uses to be allowed upon initial completion of the plan, if alternative B is selected. These are included as appendix C in the draft CCP/EA.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, please send your comments no later than November 26, 2012. We will announce upcoming public meetings in local news media, via our project mailing list, and on our regional planning Web site: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/patuxent/ccphome.html>.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments or requests for copies or more information by any of the following methods. You may request hard copies or a CD-ROM of the documents.

*Email:* [northeastplanning@fws.gov](mailto:northeastplanning@fws.gov). Please include "Patuxent RR Draft CCP" in the subject line of the message.

*Fax:* Attention: Bill Perry, 413-253-8468.

*U.S. Mail:* Bill Perry, Natural Resource Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035.

*In-Person Drop-off, Viewing, or Pickup:* Call 301-497-5580 to make an appointment (necessary for view/pickup only) during regular business hours at Patuxent RR, 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD 20708. For more information on locations for viewing or obtaining documents, see "Public Availability of Documents" under

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager, 301-437-5580 (phone), or Bill Perry, Planning Team Leader, 413-253-8688 (phone); [northeastplanning@fws.gov](mailto:northeastplanning@fws.gov) (email).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### **Introduction**

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for Patuxent RR. We started this process through a notice in the **Federal Register** (75 FR 12563; March 16, 2010).

Patuxent RR was established in 1936 by Executive Order by President Franklin D. Roosevelt "to effectuate further the purposes of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act" and "as a wildlife experiment and research refuge." The total approved acquisition boundary encompasses 12,841 acres between Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, DC—an area with one of the highest densities of development in the United States. Currently, about 10,000 of Patuxent RR's 12,841 acres are forest, but the refuge also contains grasslands, freshwater marshes, shrub and early successional forest, and open

water. It provides important habitat for a variety of migratory birds of conservation concern. The refuge also offers unique opportunities for environmental education and interpretation in an urban setting and is home to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, a leading international research institute for wildlife and applied environmental research.

#### **Background**

##### *The CCP Process*

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) (Refuge 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 Refuge Administration Act.

##### *Public Outreach*

We started pre-planning for the Patuxent RR CCP in December 2009. In February 2010, we distributed our first newsletter and press release announcing our intent to prepare a CCP for the refuge. In February and March 2010, we had a formal public scoping period. The purpose of the public scoping period was to solicit comments from the community and other interested parties on the issues and impacts that should be evaluated in the draft CCP/EA. To help solicit public comments, we held two public meetings at the refuge during the formal public scoping period. Throughout the rest of the planning process, we have conducted additional outreach by participating in community meetings, events, and other public forums, and by requesting public input on managing the refuge and its programs. We received comments on topics such as the potential effects of climate change, habitat management, reforestation, environmental education

programs, and other public uses of the refuge. We have considered and evaluated all of the comments we received and addressed them in various ways in the alternatives presented in the draft CCP/EA.

#### **CCP Alternatives We Are Considering**

During the public scoping process, we, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, other governmental partners, and the public raised several issues. To address these issues, we developed and evaluated three alternatives in the draft CCP/EA. A full description of each alternative is in the draft CCP/EA. All alternatives include measures to control invasive species, monitor and abate diseases affecting wildlife and plant health, coordinate with USGS to house and support research efforts, protect cultural resources, continue existing projects managed by outside programs, and minimize impacts from the shooting ranges located on the refuge. There are also several actions that are common to both alternatives B and C. These include using green technology to update refuge buildings and grounds, constructing additional space for environmental education and interpretation classes, and collaborating with stakeholders on a redesign of the shooting ranges.

There are other actions that differ among the alternatives. The draft CCP/EA describes each alternative in detail and relates it to the issues and concerns that arose during the planning process. Below, we provide summaries for the three alternatives.

##### *Alternative A (Current Management)*

Alternative A (current management) satisfies the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1506.6(b)) requirement of a "no action" alternative, which we define as "continuing current management." It describes our existing management priorities and activities, and serves as a baseline for comparing and contrasting alternatives B and C. It would maintain our present levels of approved refuge staffing and the biological and visitor programs now in place. We would continue to manage for and maintain a diversity of habitats, including forests, forested wetlands, pine-oak savannah, grasslands, and scrub-shrub on the refuge. The refuge would continue to provide an active visitor use program that supports environmental education and interpretation, hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation and photography.

##### *Alternative B (Forest Restoration and Mixed Public Use)*

This alternative is the Service-preferred alternative. It combines the

actions we believe would most effectively achieve the refuge's purposes, vision, and goals, and respond to the issues raised during the scoping period. It emphasizes the management of specific refuge habitats to support species of conservation concern in the Chesapeake Bay region. In particular, it emphasizes forest biodiversity and ecosystem function. This includes the restoration of a number of impoundments and grasslands to forested areas to support forest interior-dwelling bird species and other forest-dependent species. In addition, alternative B strives to promote wildlife-dependent public uses, while allowing for non-wildlife-dependent public uses. In particular, it promotes higher quality hunting and fishing programs; expands wildlife observation, viewing, and photography opportunities; and initiates new interpretive program and environmental education opportunities.

*Alternative C (Maximize Forest Interior Restoration and Emphasize Wildlife-dependent Public Use Activities)*

Alternative C would focus on maximizing interior forest habitat. This would require active management to restore a majority of impoundments and grasslands into forested areas that would support forest interior-dwelling species, in addition to other species of conservation concern. Alternative C also focuses on accommodating wildlife-dependent public uses while minimizing non-wildlife-dependent uses, particularly by expanding wildlife observation, viewing, and photography opportunities and reducing the number of special events and interpretive programming.

**Public Availability of Documents**

In addition to any methods in **ADDRESSES**, you can view or obtain documents at the following locations:

- Our Web site: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/patuxent/ccphome.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; and/or
- Provide new or additional information relevant to the EA.

**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, a finding of no significant impact.

**Public Availability of Comments**

Before including your address, phone number, email 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: August 14, 2012.

**Deborah Rocque,**

*Acting Regional Director, Northeast Region.*

[FR Doc. 2012-24929 Filed 10-9-12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

[FWS-HQ-EA-2012-N234; FF09X60000-FVWF9792090000-XXX]

**Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council**

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a public meeting of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council). A Federal advisory committee, the Council was created in part to foster partnerships to enhance public awareness of the importance of aquatic resources and the social and economic benefits of recreational fishing and boating in the United States. This meeting is open to the public, and interested persons may make oral statements to the Council or may file written statements for consideration.

**DATES:** The meeting will take place Wednesday, November 7, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursday, November 8, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Central Standard Time). For deadlines and directions on registering to attend the meeting, submitting written material, and/or giving an oral presentation, please see "Public Input" under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Texas A & M University—Corpus Christi, Harte Research Institute; 6300

Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5869.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Douglas Hobbs, Council Coordinator, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Mailstop 3103-AEA, Arlington, VA 22203; telephone (703) 358-2336; fax (703) 358-2548; or email [doug\\_hobbs@fws.gov](mailto:doug_hobbs@fws.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In accordance with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., we announce that the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council will hold a meeting.

**Background**

The Council was formed in January 1993 to advise the Secretary of the Interior, through the Director of the Service, on nationally significant recreational fishing, boating, and aquatic resource conservation issues. The Council represents the interests of the public and private sectors of the sport fishing, boating, and conservation communities and is organized to enhance partnerships among industry, constituency groups, and government. The 18-member Council, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, includes the Service Director and the president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, who both serve in ex officio capacities. Other Council members are directors from State agencies responsible for managing recreational fish and wildlife resources and individuals who represent the interests of saltwater and freshwater recreational fishing, recreational boating, the recreational fishing and boating industries, recreational fisheries resource conservation, Native American tribes, aquatic resource outreach and education, and tourism. Background information on the Council is available at <http://www.fws.gov/sfbpc>.

**Meeting Agenda**

The Council will hold a meeting to consider:

- Finalizing the Council Strategic Work Plan for the 2012-2014 term.
- Issues regarding the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, Clean Vessel Act Grant Program, and the Sport Fish Restoration Boating Access Program.
- The Rigs to Reefs Program and the Interior Department implementation of its "Idle Iron" policy for decommissioning and removing unused oil and gas production infrastructure.
- The on-going effort to assist the Service in crafting a strategic vision for its fishery and aquatic resource conservation efforts.