

Authority: Section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended.

Dated: May, 1999.

David S. Cristy,

Director, IRM Policy and Management Division.

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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

[Docket No. FR-4493-N-01]

Ginnie Mae Release of Certain Geographic and Other Data on Mortgage-Backed Securities

AGENCY: Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae), HUD.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the intent of Ginnie Mae, a government corporation within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to release certain geographic and other data submitted by Ginnie Mae issuers.

DATES: Effective date: May 26, 1999. Comments due date: Comments objecting to the release of the information described in this notice are due on or before June 9, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Fry, Director, Capital Markets, Room 6210, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20410; telephone 1-202-401-8970 (this is not a toll free number). Speech or hearing impaired individuals may access this number via TTY by calling the toll free Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae), a corporation that is wholly owned by the federal government, was created in 1968 to assist in the movement of funds from investors into the housing market. Ginnie Mae guarantees the timely payment of principal and interest on single and multiclass mortgage-backed securities issued by private institutions. The securities are backed by pools of mortgage loans which are insured or guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Rural Housing Service, and the Secretary of HUD under section 184 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (Pub.L. 102-550, approved October 28, 1992; 106 Stat. 3672, 3739; 12 U.S.C. 1715z-13a).

The Public Securities Association, now The Bond Market Association (TBMA), has long requested various information about the mortgages backing the securities. Specifically, TBMA has requested information regarding the geographic location of the loans in each pool by State, the number of loans in the pool, and the breakdown of loans in each pool by insurance or guaranty program, generally FHA or VA. Ginnie Mae has made an initial policy determination that release and publication of this information for each pool in the Ginnie Mae mortgage-backed securities (MBS) program would be advantageous to investors and to the MBS program. At present, the Government Sponsored Entities disclose such information with respect to their MBS. Unless this information is available, investors may use less favorable assumptions when pricing Ginnie Mae guaranteed securities. If this information is available to investors, the net effect should be more accurate pricing and tighter yield spreads. Those yield spreads will inure to the benefit of the ultimate beneficiaries of the Ginnie Mae MBS program—the purchasers of homes financed through federally insured or guaranteed loans.

Ginnie Mae presently intends to respond to TBMA's request by commencing publication of this information at a date in July 1999, and to continue to publish this information on a quarterly basis thereafter.

The Department of Justice has advised HUD that, in the case of numerous information submitters, disclosure by an agency is permitted after publication of the agency's intent to release such information in a manner calculated to provide notice and affording affected parties an opportunity to comment. Such notice and opportunity to comment serves in lieu of publication of a notice and comment regulation. HUD first used this procedure in connection with disclosure of past note sale bids by publication in the **Federal Register** and the *Commerce Business Daily* (see 63 FR 36255 (July 2, 1998) and CBDNet Submission No. 230722 (July 30, 1998)). Following this procedure, Ginnie Mae is publishing this notice of Ginnie Mae's intent to release this information and to continue the quarterly release of this information.

Commenters should submit their statements to the Ginnie Mae contact identified in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** section of this notice. Ginnie Mae is particularly interested in receiving comments from Ginnie Mae submitters and investors. Commenters shall have until June 9, 1999 to provide Ginnie Mae with a detailed written

statement of their objections, if any, to release of the information. Such statement shall specify all grounds for withholding the information and shall specifically demonstrate why the information is a trade secret or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential. If a commenter maintains that disclosure would cause competitive harm, for example, the statement should show that disclosure would reasonably be expected to cause such harm. Conclusory statements that the information would be useful to competitors or similar conclusory statements generally will not be considered sufficient to justify confidential treatment.

Ginnie Mae will carefully consider commenters' objections before determining whether to disclose the information. If Ginnie Mae decides to disclose the information over the objections of a submitter, Ginnie Mae will advise the submitter in a written notice of its intent to disclose the information 10 working days before the specified disclosure date.

Dated: May 19, 1999.

George S. Anderson,

Executive Vice President, Government National Mortgage Association.

[FR Doc. 99-13264 Filed 5-25-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of a Draft Jersey Coast Refuges Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces the availability for public review of a draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge and Cape May National Wildlife Refuge—collectively known as the Jersey Coast Refuges. This plan will assist the Service in identifying what role the Refuges will play in supporting the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and addressing community expectations for public use.

The draft plan describes two alternatives for management of the Refuges, and discusses the process used to develop the alternatives and their environmental consequences. It describes the potential effects of each

alternative on the physical, biological, and socio-economic environment. The No Act Alternative discusses the Service's current level of activities for habitat and population management, public recreation opportunities, land acquisition, and office and visitor facilities. The Action Alternative will allow the Service to initiate or expand additional habitat and population management efforts, wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, land protection efforts, and consider new office and visitor center facilities.

The Service is seeking public input on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan. With public review and input to this draft, the Action Alternative will be developed in more detail as the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan. The Final Plan will guide the Service on the future direction and management of E.B. Forsythe NWR and Cape May NWR for the next 15 years.

The Plan is available from the refuges, local public libraries in Southern New Jersey, and on the Web at <http://www/fws.gov/r5ebfwr>. You may also contact Alison Whitlock: Division of Realty; 300 Westgate Center Drive; Hadley, MA 01035-9589.

Dated: May 21, 1999.

Sherry W. Morgan,

Geographic Assistant Regional Director—North.

[FR Doc. 99-13487 5-25-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

North American Wetlands Conservation Act: Request for Evaluation Grant Proposals for Year 2000

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that over the period June 1, 1999, to July 15, 1999, we, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), will entertain proposals that request matching funds for projects that evaluate the success of North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) projects, or that will ensure the success of future NAWCA projects by improving strategic conservation planning capabilities. We will give funding priority to projects related to existing wetland conservation implementation plans, to be conducted in a partnership mode by wetland managers and scientists. Project criteria, proposal

formatting and other essential application information is provided here. Funding is limited to projects located in the United States.

DATES: Initial proposals (pre-proposals) must bear postmarks no later than Thursday, July 15, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Address proposals to: North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 110, Arlington, Virginia, 22203, Attn: Evaluation Grants Coordinator.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Rex R. Johnson, Evaluation Grants Coordinator, North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, 11510 American Holly Drive, Laurel, Maryland, 20708-4017, 301/497-5674; facsimile 301/497-5706, rex-johnson@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Evaluation Grants

1. Introduction

Since its inception in 1989, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA or Act) has added a new dimension to the conservation of wetland-associated migratory birds and the diverse wetland ecosystems upon which they and many other fish and wildlife species depend. Never before had Federal legislation been passed with the express purpose of creating partnerships among Federal and non-Federal wetland conservationists or with the explicit goal of implementing management plans emanating from international treaties and conventions. The Act was precedent-setting in its support of the new and innovative partnerships that were emerging from implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and visionary in its anticipation of major national and international conservation initiatives for nongame migratory birds. Moreover, an institutional framework was created for garnering additional resources and pooling them to implement, via partnerships, high priority wetland conservation projects across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Over the past eight years, \$249 million of NAWCA grant funds have been leveraged with \$516 million of partner funds and allocated through a highly competitive process to 588 projects in North America. However, the success of NAWCA involves more than the efficient allocation of limited Federal financial resources to support partner projects. The ultimate success of the Act hinges on efficiency and effectiveness in

the attainment of biological ends—the conservation of migratory birds and the North American wetland ecosystems upon which many species of migratory birds and other wildlife depend. The evaluation grants program, described below, is designed to address how successfully the program is delivering the migratory bird and other wildlife resource benefits anticipated by the Act.

1.1 The Purposes of the Act

Any strategy for implementing NAWCA or procedures for monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness must arise from the purposes of the Act:

* * * To encourage partnerships among public agencies and other interests—

(1) To protect, enhance, restore, and manage an appropriate distribution and diversity of wetland ecosystems and other habitats for migratory birds and other fish and wildlife in North America;

(2) To maintain current or improved distributions of migratory bird populations; and

(3) To sustain an abundance of waterfowl and other migratory birds consistent with the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the international obligations contained in the migratory bird treaties and conventions and other agreements with Canada, Mexico, and other countries.

These purposes infer an explicit and measureable relationship between wetland conservation and wetland-wildlife management and values at a North American scale. While habitat benefits for all wetland-associated fish and wildlife are recognized, the stated emphasis on the Act is on “current or improved distributions of migratory bird populations” consistent with “international obligations.” The international migratory patterns of these birds is the thread which binds the patchwork of regional and national conservation work into a truly continent-wide quilt of wetland conservation.

1.1.1 Improving NAWCA Implementation Through Evaluation

Section 19 of the 1994 amendments to NAWCA called for the development of “a strategy to assist in implementation of the Act” and “procedures to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of wetlands conservation projects completed under this Act.” Specifically

* * *

Not later than January 31, 1996, the Secretary, in cooperation with the [North American Wetlands Conservation] Council, to further the purposes of the Act shall—

(1) Develop and implement a strategy to assist in the implementation of this Act in conserving the full complement of North American wetlands systems and species