

responsibilities of stakeholder members and designated consumer representative has been developed and endorsed by stakeholder groups; (3) a formal needs assessment of PRC stakeholders has been conducted and utilized to establish a consensus based research and knowledge application agenda and implementation plan; and (4) stakeholders have endorsed the implementation plan.

There is no registration fee for the sessions. Preregistration is encouraged. Registrants are responsible for costs associated with their own travel, meals and lodging. To preregister and for logistical assistance, please contact Un Lee, Tascon, Inc., (301) 315-9000. Session confirmation will be faxed.

Dated: March 21, 2000.

Richard Kopanda,

Executive Officer, SAMHSA.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated Environmental Assessment for the Washington Coast National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges), Which Are Located in Clallam, Jefferson, and Grays Harbor Counties, WA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan and associated environmental assessment.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and an associated environmental assessment for the Washington Coast National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges), which are composed of Flattery Rocks National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Quillayute Needles NWR, and Copalis NWR, located in Clallam, Jefferson, and Grays Harbor Counties, Washington. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with Service CCP policy and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the environmental document.

DATES: Submit comments on issues to include on or before April 29, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Address comments and requests for more information, to be put on the mailing list, or for a copy of the most recent planning update to: Refuge Manager, Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 33 S. Barr Road, Port Angeles, Washington, 98362, or call the Complex at (360) 457-8451. Submit faxes to (360) 457-9778. If you choose to submit comments via electronic mail, visit our Pacific Region Planning Website: <http://www.r1.fws.gov/planning/plnhome.html>. Please send these comments using the "Guest Mailbox" provided at that site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Refuge Manager Kevin Ryan at the address and phone number above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Washington Coast NWRs (Flattery Rocks, Quillayute Needles, and Copalis NWRs), were established in 1907 by Theodore Roosevelt for the purpose of being "a preserve and breeding ground for native birds and animals" (Executive Orders 703, 704, and 705). These three Refuges extend over 100 miles along the outer coast of Washington State and include more than 600 rocks, reefs, and islands. Approximately 80% of the seabirds in the State nest within the Refuges. It was the original intent, with the establishment of the Refuges, to preserve these islands in a natural condition and to minimize human intrusion. As such, all islands are closed to public entry. Because of the physical characteristics of these islands, landings and access are extremely hazardous. On October 23, 1970, the Washington Islands Wilderness was established by Public Law 92-504. This placed all the islands, except for Destruction and James Islands, under wilderness designation.

It is Service policy to have all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System managed in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Conservation Plan. This CCP will guide management decisions and identify Refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving Refuge purposes. Public input into this planning process is encouraged. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuges and how the Service will implement management strategies over the next 15 years. Until the CCP is completed, Refuge management will continue to be guided by official Refuge purposes; Federal legislation regarding management of national wildlife refuges; and other legal, regulatory, and policy guidance.

Comments and concerns received will be used to develop goals, key issues and management strategies, and draft alternatives. Additional opportunities for public participation will occur throughout the CCP process, which is expected to be completed in early 2001. Interested federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, organizations, and individuals will be contacted for input.

At this time, preliminary issues identified for the CCP include: how to handle wildlife disturbances caused by low-flying aircraft and by people trespassing during low tides or in water craft; the amount of research opportunities that the Refuges can support without adversely impacting biological resources; determining if invasive species are a problem, and if so, what would be the appropriate management response; determining what opportunities exist to cooperate with agencies responsible for pollution threats; and identifying off-site educational/interpretative opportunities in cooperation with the National Park Service, National Marine Sanctuary, state and local government, and Tribes. Because of their inaccessibility and the sensitivity of wildlife to disturbance, public uses of the Refuges' Islands are not a part of the long-term planning. A range of alternatives (and their effects on the biological resources and on the local communities) that address the issues and management strategies associated with these issues will be evaluated in the environmental assessment.

With the publication of this notice, the public is encouraged to send written comments on these and other issues, courses of action that the Service should consider, and potential impacts that could result from CCP implementation on Washington Coast National Wildlife Refuges.

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, Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Regulations 40 CFR 1506.6(f), and other Service and Department policy and procedures. When requested, the Service generally will provide comment letters with the names and addresses of the individuals who wrote the comments. However, the telephone number of the commenting individual will not be provided in response to such requests to the extent permissible by law. Additionally, public comment letters are not required to contain the author's name, address, or other identifying information. Such comments

may be submitted anonymously to the Service.

The environmental review of this project 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 1500–1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, Executive Order 12996, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: March 22, 2000.

Thomas Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 00–7608 Filed 3–27–00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Establishment of Management Bodies in Alaska To Develop Recommendations Related to the Spring/Summer Subsistence Harvest of Migratory Birds

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of decision.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published a Notice in the **Federal Register**, 64 FR 35674, July 1, 1999, inviting public comment on an options document entitled, “Forming Management Bodies to Implement Legal Spring and Summer Migratory Bird Subsistence Hunting in Alaska.” The document described four models for organizing management bodies as required by the amended migratory bird treaty with Canada. The comment period closed October 29 and, after reviewing the comments, the Alaska Regional Director decided to implement a system combining elements of models 1 and 3 as described in the options document.

DATES: The decision described in this notice will become effective April 27, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Correspondence may be addressed to the Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503; Attn: Migratory Bird Management.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mimi Hogan, 907/786–3673, or Bob Stevens, 907/786–3499, at the above address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In 1916 the U.S. Senate ratified the Convention Between the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) For The Protection Of Migratory Birds. A similar treaty was ratified with Mexico in 1936. The treaties specified a close season on the taking of migratory game birds between March 10 and September 1 of each year. The treaties did not take into account traditional harvests of migratory birds by northern indigenous people during the spring and summer months. This harvest, which had occurred for centuries, was a necessary part of the subsistence lifestyle of the northern people, and continued after the ratification of the treaties. After many years of attempts to change the treaties, the Senate approved Protocol amendments to both treaties in 1997, allowing for the subsistence harvest of migratory birds by indigenous inhabitants of identified subsistence zones in Alaska.

(a) *What is the intent of the Protocol amendments?* The goals of the Protocol are to allow a traditional subsistence harvest and to improve conservation of migratory birds by allowing for the effective regulation of this harvest. The action is not intended to cause significant increases in the take of migratory birds relative to their continental population sizes.

(b) *Who is eligible to harvest in the spring and summer?* The U.S. Senate confirmed its understanding at ratification that an eligible indigenous inhabitant is a permanent resident of a village within a subsistence harvest area, regardless of race.

(c) *Where are the subsistence harvest areas?* According to Protocol documents, most villages north and west of the Alaska range and within the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak Archipelago, and the Aleutian Islands would qualify as subsistence harvest areas. Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna and Fairbanks North Star Boroughs, the Kenai Peninsula roaded area, the Gulf of Alaska roaded area and Southeast Alaska would generally not qualify for a spring or summer harvest.

(d) *Are there exceptions to the eligible areas?* Protocol language allows for limited exceptions so that some individual communities within excluded areas may qualify for designation as subsistence harvest areas for some limited purposes. For example, regulations could allow collecting of gull eggs by some villages in Southeast Alaska.

(e) *What other changes does the Protocol mandate?* The Protocol amendments call for participation of

indigenous inhabitants on management bodies that will be created to ensure an effective and meaningful role for indigenous inhabitants in the conservation of migratory birds.

(f) *Who will be on these management bodies and what will they do?* The Secretary of State’s submittal document accompanying the Protocol confirms that the management bodies will include Native, federal, and State of Alaska representatives as equals, and that they will develop recommendations for, among other things: seasons and bag limits; law enforcement policies; population and harvest monitoring; education programs; research and use of traditional knowledge; and habitat protection.

(g) *Where do the recommendations go?* Relevant recommendations will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and to the Flyway Councils.

Summary of Public Involvement

(a) *What public process did you follow before writing the options document entitled, “Forming Management Bodies to Implement Legal Spring and Summer Migratory Bird Subsistence Hunting in Alaska”?* To aid in the preparation of the options document entitled, “Forming Management Bodies to Implement Legal Spring and Summer Migratory Bird Subsistence Hunting in Alaska”, the Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Native Migratory Bird Working Group held public forums to discuss the amended treaty and to listen to the needs of the subsistence user. The Native Migratory Bird Working Group is a consortium of Alaska Natives, formed by the Rural Alaska Community Action Program to represent the Alaska Native subsistence hunters of migratory birds. Forum locations included Nome, Kotzebue, Fort Yukon, Allakaket, Naknek, Bethel, Dillingham, Barrow, and Copper Center. The Service led additional briefings and discussions at the annual meeting of the Association of Village Council Presidents in Hooper Bay, and for the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida in Juneau. Refuge staffs at the Yukon Delta, Togiak, and Kodiak National Wildlife Refuges conducted public meetings in the villages within their refuge areas and discussed the amended treaty at those meetings. We wrote the four models described in the options document based on what we heard at statewide meetings.

(b) *Who received copies of “Forming Management Bodies to Implement Legal Spring and Summer Migratory Bird Subsistence Hunting in Alaska”?* In May 1999 we released to the public for