

programs. We will offer new deer and waterfowl hunting opportunities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR and expand environmental education programs and facilities. We will also develop new interpretive materials that focus on how these refuges contribute to the conservation of temperate and neotropical migratory birds.

In the CCP, we commit to conducting wilderness reviews of both Eastern Shore of Virginia (including Skidmore Island) and Fisherman Island NWRs, within 3 years of approval. We will also evaluate these lands for their potential as Research Natural Areas, within the same time frame as the wilderness reviews.

The CCP also establishes how we will manage three facilities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, which were important public concerns during development of both the draft and final CCPs: The Wise Point boat ramp, the firearms range, and the communications tower.

Wise Point Boat Ramp: When the United States acquired the former Wise Point Corporation property in December 2001, the purchase included a private boat ramp which provides one of the only access points to deep water on the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula. The boat ramp is popular with recreational anglers and important to the operations of at least 20 commercial watermen. The CCP outlines our plans to maintain access for both user groups, and improve the entrance road, boat ramp, and the parking lot. Docking, 24-hour access, and parking privileges for commercial watermen will be phased out over time. We will charge a fee for boat ramp use with a fee structure based on the type and frequency of use. We will monitor these developments at the boat ramp to ensure they do not adversely impact barrier island and marsh-dependent species, water quality, and surrounding habitat.

Firearms Range: Immediately adjacent to the refuge, on 60 acres owned by Northampton County, is a firearms range used by Federal, State and County law enforcement personnel. Our staff will continue to maintain the firearms range, scheduling usage so as not to conflict with environmental education programs. We will continue to work with partners to find an alternate, off-refuge site for the firearms range. Until a new site is located, we will work with Northampton County to implement new practices for firearms range management, including those that control surface runoff and leachate from the berm, and periodically remove contaminated soils.

Communications Tower: When the refuge was acquired, the Service assumed two existing leases which allowed a 299-foot communications tower and a switching station on the refuge. The tower supports in-house radio communications for Verizon, Inc. and refuge staff. Adjacent to the tower, the switching station houses underground communications lines which cross the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel and head north to Cape Charles. The leases on both the tower and the switching station expire in 2007. We will not renew the lease for the tower, and Verizon, Inc. will be responsible for removing the tower once the lease expires. The Service will work with Verizon, Inc. to assess the need for continued use of the switching station.

Dated: April 7, 2004.

Richard O. Bennett,

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

[FR Doc. 04-16270 Filed 7-16-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge, Las Vegas, NM

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

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces that the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) is available for the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). This CCP is prepared pursuant to 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 *et seq.*), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and describes how the Service intends to manage this Refuge over the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the CCP are available on compact diskette or hard copy, and can be obtained by writing: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Yvette Truitt-Ortiz, Division of Planning, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87103.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joe Rodriguez, Refuge Manager, Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge, Route 1, Box 399, Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701; 505-425-3581, or Yvette Truitt-Ortiz, Natural Resource Planner, U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, Division of Planning, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87103; 505-248-6452; or direct e-mail to yvette_truittortiz@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A CCP is required by 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 *et seq.*). The purpose in developing CCPs 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 science, conservation, legal mandates, and Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, the CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. These CCPs will be reviewed and updated at least every 15 years in accordance with 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 *et seq.*), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Dated: May 3, 2004.

David Yazzie,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

[FR Doc. 04-16342 Filed 7-16-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge, Muleshoe, TX and Grulla National Wildlife Refuge, Arch, NM

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

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces that the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Muleshoe and Grulla National Wildlife Refuges has been approved and is now available. Prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, this

CCP describes how the Service intends to manage these refuges over the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the CCP are available on compact disk or in hard copy, and can be obtained by writing: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Carol Torrez, Division of Planning, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87103-1306.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Harold Beierman, Refuge Manager, Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 549, Muleshoe, Texas 79347; telephone: (806) 946-3341; or Carol Torrez, Biologist/Natural Resource Planner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Planning, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87103-1306; telephone: (505)248-6821; e-mail: carol_torrez@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A CCP is required by 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 *et seq.*). The purpose in developing CCPs 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 science, conservation, legal mandates, and Service policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, the CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. These CCPs will be reviewed and updated at least every 15 years in accordance with 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 *et seq.*), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Dated: May 3, 2004.

David Yazzie,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
[FR Doc. 04-16343 Filed 7-16-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Draft Recovery Plan for *Phlox hirsuta* (Yreka Phlox)

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability for review and comment.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("we") announces the availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for *Phlox hirsuta* (Yreka Phlox) for public review and comment.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before October 18, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the draft recovery plan are available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the following location: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Yreka Fish and Wildlife Office, 1829 South Oregon Street, Yreka, California (telephone (530) 842-5763). Requests for copies of the draft recovery plan and written comments and materials regarding this plan should be addressed to Phil Detrich, Field Supervisor, at the above Yreka address. An electronic copy of the draft revised recovery plan is also available at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nadine Kanim, Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above Yreka address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Recovery of endangered or threatened animals and plants is a primary goal of our endangered species program and the Endangered Species Act (Act) 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Recovery means improvement of the status of listed species to the point at which listing is no longer appropriate under the criteria set out in section 4(a)(1) of the Act. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establish criteria for downlisting or delisting listed species, and estimate time and cost for implementing the measures needed for recovery.

The Act requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. We will consider all information presented during the public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised

recovery plan. Substantive technical comments may result in changes to the recovery plan. Substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation may not necessarily result in changes to the recovery plan, but will be forwarded to appropriate Federal or other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions. Individual responses to comments will not be provided.

Phlox hirsuta is a narrow endemic plant known only from the vicinity of Yreka, California. Only four populations, separated by a minimum of 0.88 kilometers (0.55 miles), are currently known to occur. Distribution within these occurrences ranges from scattered plants to numerous discrete sub-occurrences. *Phlox hirsuta* occurs on lands owned and managed by the City of Yreka, the U. S. Forest Service, the California Department of Transportation, industrial timber companies, and private landowners.

The goal of this recovery plan is to establish criteria necessary to accomplish downlisting and eventually delisting of the species. The criteria for downlisting to threatened status are that: (1) four occurrences (two of which must be the China Hill and Soap Creek Ridge occurrences) have secure permanent protection (legally-binding arrangements that ensure management for the benefit of *Phlox hirsuta* in perpetuity); and (2) a *Phlox hirsuta* seed bank and effective propagation techniques have been established. The criteria for delisting are that: (1) the reclassification criteria for downlisting have been met; and (2) two additional occurrences have been located and permanently protected, or 10 years of demographic research and/or quantitative monitoring at four protected occurrences has indicated that plant population size has not declined more than 10 percent at any occurrence (total change between year 0 and year 10).

Public Comments Solicited

We solicit written comments on this draft recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered in developing a final recovery plan.

Authority: The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).