

supplemental feeding program for condors. No lethal take of condors would be authorized under the permit.

### National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

The Service's proposed issuance of an incidental take permit is a federal action and triggers the need for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Service has prepared a draft EIS that evaluates the impacts of proposed issuance of the permit and implementation of the MSHCP, and also evaluates the impacts of a reasonable range of alternatives.

The draft EIS analyzes three alternatives in addition to the proposed MSHCP, summarized above. The Service has identified the proposed MSHCP as the Preferred Alternative. Additional alternatives are described below.

*No Action/No MSHCP Alternative:* The No Action/No MSHCP Alternative allows for development in areas where the Service believes that no take of federally listed species is likely to occur and thus no ITP is required. The No Action/No MSHCP Alternative generally includes ongoing Ranch uses as well as development of the Covered Lands that could occur consistent with the Kern County General Plan—Land Use Designations on the approximately 56,922 acres of the Covered Lands that are outside of the CSA and a two-mile buffer area around the CSA. This Alternative provides for development of up to 5,897 residential units and 6,512,200 square feet of commercial space.

*Condor HCP Alternative:* The Condor HCP Alternative would result in the issuance of an ITP covering only the California condor. No development would occur within the CSA for the 50-year term of the ITP, but permanent conservation easements would not be recorded within the CSA or elsewhere within the Covered Lands. This alternative would not include the comprehensive protective measures that would apply to all of the Covered Species in the Proposed MSHCP Alternative. The Condor HCP Alternative would include the same type and density of development within the Tejon Mountain Village Plan area and Lebec/Headquarters area as is included in the Proposed MSHCP Alternative, but would also include development consistent with the Kern County General Plan—Land Use Designations in all other portions of the Covered Lands except for the CSA. This Alternative provides for development of up to 7,100 residential units and

4,940,710 square feet of commercial space development.

*MSHCP General Plan Buildout Alternative:* The MSHCP General Plan Buildout Alternative would include issuance of an ITP for the five federally listed species identified above. Development in the locations, densities and intensities allowed under the current Kern County General Plan—Land Use Designations would be covered, except that no development would be allowed in the CSA during the term of the ITP. This Alternative provides for development of up to 8,752 residential units and 6,762,690 square feet of commercial space development.

### Public Comments

If you wish to comment on the permit application, draft MSHCP, draft IA, or draft EIS, you may submit your comments to the address listed in the ADDRESSES section of this document. 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 may 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.

The Service will evaluate the application, associated documents, and comments submitted to them to prepare a final EIS. A permit decision will be made no sooner than 30 days after the publication of the final EIS and completion of the Record of Decision.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(a) of the Act and pursuant to implementing regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1506.6).

Dated: January 29, 2009.

#### Ken McDermond,

*Deputy Regional Director, California and Nevada Region, Sacramento, California.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R9-EA-2009-N0009]; [97600-9792-0000-5d]

#### Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council

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

**ACTION:** Notice of teleconference.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a public teleconference of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council).

**DATES:** We will hold the teleconference on Monday, February 23, 2009, 2–3 p.m. (Eastern time). If you wish to listen to the teleconference proceedings or submit written material for the Council to consider during the teleconference, notify Douglas Hobbs by Friday, February 13, 2009. If you wish to submit a written statement for Council consideration during the teleconference, we must receive it no later than February 16, 2009. See instructions under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Douglas Hobbs, Council Coordinator, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Mailstop 3103–AEA, Arlington, VA 22203; (703) 358–2336 (phone); (703) 358–2548 (fax), or [doug\\_hobbs@fws.gov](mailto:doug_hobbs@fws.gov) (e-mail).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

In accordance with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., we give notice that the Council will hold a teleconference on Monday, February 23, 2009, from 2 to 3 p.m.

The Council was formed in January 1993 to advise the Secretary of the Interior, through the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife 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>.

The Council will convene to: (1) Approve recommendations to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service for funding Fiscal Year 2009 Boating

Infrastructure Grant proposals; and (2) to consider other Council business. We will post the final agenda on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/sfbpc>.

### Procedures for Public Input

#### Format Requirements for Oral and Written Commenters

Whether you wish to comment orally or in written form, you must provide us with written copies of your comments. All written statements must be supplied to the Council Coordinator in *both* of the following formats:

- One hard copy with original signature, and
- One electronic copy via e-mail (acceptable file format: Adobe Acrobat PDF, WordPerfect, MS Word, MS PowerPoint, or Rich Text files in IBM-PC/Windows 98/2000/XP format).

#### Submitting Written Information for the Council To Consider

Speakers who wish to expand upon their oral statements or those who had wished to speak but could not be accommodated on the agenda are invited to submit written statements to the Council. Interested members of the public may submit relevant written information for the Council to consider during the public teleconference. We must receive all written statements by Monday, February 16, 2009, so that we can make the information available to the Council for their consideration prior to the teleconference.

#### Council Minutes

The Council Coordinator will maintain the teleconference's summary minutes, which will be available for public inspection at the location under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** during regular business hours within 30 days after the teleconference. You may purchase personal copies for the cost of duplication.

Dated: January 21, 2009.

**Rowan W. Gould,**

*Acting Director.*

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**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2008-N0299; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

#### Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, Franklin, Madison, and Tensas Parishes, LA

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability: draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment (Draft CCP/EA) for Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for public review and comment. In this Draft CCP/EA, we describe the alternative we propose to use to manage this refuge for the 15 years following approval of the Final CCP.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments by March 6, 2009. A meeting will be held to present the Draft CCP/EA to the public. Mailings, newspaper articles, and posters will be the avenues to inform the public of the date and time for the meeting.

**ADDRESSES:** Requests for copies of the Draft CCP/EA should be addressed to: Tina Chouinard, Refuge Planner, Fish and Wildlife Service, 6772 Highway 76 South, Stanton, TN 38069. The Draft CCP/EA may be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Internet site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tina Chouinard; Telephone: 731/780-8208; E-mail: [tina\\_chouinard@fws.gov](mailto:tina_chouinard@fws.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for Tensas River NWR. We started the process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on September 08, 2006 (71 FR 53131).

Tensas River NWR consists of 74,622 acres in fee title and 195 acres in easement. It is located in the Tensas Basin in northeast Louisiana, approximately 60 miles southeast of Monroe, Louisiana, and 25 miles southwest of Vicksburg, Mississippi. The refuge area encompasses portions of Madison, Tensas, and Franklin Parishes. The office/visitor center and maintenance facilities on the refuge are located approximately 12 miles southwest of Tallulah, Louisiana.

In an effort to conserve the largest privately owned tract of bottomland hardwoods remaining in the Mississippi Delta, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Tensas River NWR by Public Law 96-285 on June 28, 1980. Tensas River NWR was established for various purposes, including:

- "For the preservation and development of the environmental resources \* \* \* to conserve the diversity of fish and wildlife

and their habitat \* \* \* for the conservation and development of wildlife and natural resources, the development of outdoor recreation opportunities, and interpretative education," and "to give special consideration to management of the timber on the refuge to ensure continued commercial production and harvest compatible with the purposes for which the refuge is established and the needs of fish and wildlife which depend upon the dynamic and diversified hardwood forest" (94 Stat. 595, dated June 28, 1980);

- "For the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources" [16 U.S.C. 742f(a)(4)] "for the benefit of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in performing its activities and services. Such acceptance may be subject to the terms of any restrictive or affirmative covenant, or condition of servitude" [16 U.S.C. 742f(b)(1) (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956)];

- "For conservation purposes" [7 U.S.C. 2002 (Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act)];

- "To conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species \* \* \* or (B) plants" [16 U.S.C. 1534 (Endangered Species Act of 1973)].

Tensas River NWR currently provides a mix of various habitat types, including bottomland hardwood forests, hardwood reforestation areas, open field moist-soil areas, and open field-cropland. There are approximately 11,000 acres of forest less than 30 years old; 6,000 acres of 30- to 60-year old timber, and 53,000 acres of 60-plus year old timber. Eighty percent (56,000 acres) of the refuge is composed of sweetgum/willow oak/Nuttall oak forest type; 20 percent is sugarberry/American elm/green ash (12,600 acres); and a small percentage is overcup oak/bitter pecan and cypress brake timber types. The majority of the refuge is in a closed-canopy condition.

Because Tensas River NWR is part of the Lower Mississippi River Ecosystem, the refuge is a component of many regional and ecosystem conservation planning initiatives. The Mississippi Alluvial Valley (MAV) is a critical ecoregion for migratory birds in North America. Tensas River NWR provides important foraging and resting habitats within the MAV for waterfowl, as well as a variety of other migratory birds such as woodcock, marshbirds, neotropical migratory birds, colonial waterbirds, and wading birds. This area specifically contributes important regional resources to an international habitat management effort known as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which seeks to return waterfowl species populations to levels observed during the 1970s.