

purchase of approximately 37 acres of credits at a Service and California Department of Fish and Game-approved conservation bank, to ensure temporary and permanent effects are mitigated.

Under the proposed action alternative, we would issue an incidental take permit for the applicant's proposed project, which includes the activities described above and in more detail in the plan.

Environmental Review and Next Steps

As described in our EA, we have made the preliminary determination that approval of the proposed plan and issuance of the permit would qualify as FONSI under NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), as provided by Federal regulations (40 CFR 1500, 5(k), 1507.3(b)(2), 1508.4) and the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 2 and 516 DM 8). Our EA articulates the project effects on all potential resources that could be adversely affected, including aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, climate change, biological resources, cultural resources, geology, minerals and paleontological resources, hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public health hazards, recreation, traffic and transportation, and utilities and public service systems. It also includes an analysis of alternatives, and other required analyses such as unavoidable adverse effects, irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources, short-term uses versus long-term productivity and cumulative effects, and the environmentally preferable alternative (the proposed project).

Public Comments

We request data, comments, new information, or suggestions from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, Tribes, industry, or any other interested party on this notice. We particularly seek comments on the following:

1. Biological information concerning the species;
2. Relevant data concerning the species;
3. Additional information concerning the range, distribution, population size, and population trends of the species;
4. Current or planned activities in the subject area and their possible impacts on the species;
5. The presence of archeological sites, buildings and structures, historic events, sacred and traditional areas, and other historic preservation concerns, which are required to be considered in project planning by the National Historic Preservation Act; and

6. Identification of any other environmental issues that should be considered with regard to the proposed development and permit action.

You may submit your comments and materials by one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section.

We will identify in the FONSI if we need to prepare further NEPA documentation. We will also consider public comments on the draft EA when making the final determination on whether to prepare additional NEPA documents on the proposed action.

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.

Availability of Documents

You may obtain copies of the permit application, plan, and EA from the individuals in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Copies of these documents are available for public inspection, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office (see **ADDRESSES**).

Authority

We provide this notice pursuant to section 10(c) of the Act and the NEPA public-involvement regulations (40 CFR 1500.1(b), 1500.2(d), and 1506.6). We will evaluate the permit application, including the plan and comments we receive, to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the Act. If the requirements are met, we will issue a permit to the applicant for the incidental take of the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California tiger salamander from the implementation of the Covered Activities described in the plan. We will make the final permit decision no sooner than 30 days after the date of this notice.

Alexandra Pitts,

Deputy Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R5-R-2011-N218; BAC-4311-K9-S3]

Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge, Poquoson, VA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), intend to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and environmental assessment (EA) for Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge (the refuge, NWR), which is located in Poquoson, VA. We provide this notice in compliance with our CCP policy to advise other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, and the public of our intention to conduct detailed planning on this refuge.

DATES: We will announce opportunities for public input throughout the CCP process in the **Federal Register**, local news media, and on our refuge planning Web site at http://www.fws.gov/northeast/plumtreeisland/refuge_planning.html.

ADDRESSES: Send your comments or requests for more information by any of the following methods.

Email: fw5rw_evrnwr@fws.gov. Include "Plum Tree Island CCP" in the subject line of the message.

Fax: Attn: Meghan Carfioli, (804) 829-9606.

U.S. Mail: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex—Charles City Sub-Office, 11116 Kimages Road, Charles City, VA 23030.

In-Person Drop-off: You may drop off comments during regular business hours at the address above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Meghan Carfioli, Planning Team Leader, (804) 829-5413 (phone) or Andy Hofmann, Project Leader, Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex, (804) 333-1470 (phone), fw5rw_evrnwr@fws.gov (email).

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Introduction

With this notice, we initiate our process for developing a CCP for Plum Tree Island NWR, in the city of Poquoson, VA. This notice complies with our CCP policy to advise other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, and

the public of our intention to conduct detailed planning on this refuge.

Background

The CCP Process

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee) (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 of developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year plan for achieving refuge purposes and contributing to the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife 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 Administration Act.

Each unit of the NWRS was established for specific purposes. We use these purposes as the foundation for developing and prioritizing the management goals and objectives for each refuge within the NWRS, and to determine how the public can use each refuge. The planning process is a way for us and the public to evaluate management goals and objectives that will ensure the best possible approach to wildlife, plant, and habitat conservation, while providing for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities that are compatible with each refuge's establishing purposes and the mission of the NWRS.

Our CCP process provides participation opportunities for Federal, Tribal, State, and local governments, agencies, organizations, and the public. Throughout the process, we will have formal comment periods and hold public meetings to gather comments, issues, concerns, ideas, and suggestions for the future management of Plum Tree Island NWR. You may also send comments during the planning process by mail, email, or fax (see **ADDRESSES**).

We will conduct the environmental review of this project and develop an EA in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*); NEPA regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508); other

appropriate Federal laws and regulations; and our policies and procedures for compliance with those laws and regulations.

Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge

Plum Tree Island NWR is one of four refuges that comprise the Eastern Virginia Rivers NWR Complex. The 3,502-acre refuge is located along the Atlantic Flyway in the city of Poquoson, VA. It was established in 1972 to conserve wetlands and important migratory bird habitat in the lower Chesapeake Bay. The refuge's salt marsh, scrub-shrub, and forest habitats support a variety of native wildlife species, including waterfowl, marshbirds, and shorebirds. The refuge's beaches are also home to the federally threatened northeastern beach tiger beetle (*Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis*).

The U.S. Department of Defense previously administered the refuge lands and used all but the refuge's 200-acre Cow Island Tract as a gunnery and bombing range. Extensive unexploded ordnance remains on the refuge, posing serious safety concerns. Most of the refuge is closed to public access. The only public use offered is an annual, permit-only, waterfowl hunt on the Cow Island Tract.

Scoping: Preliminary Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

We have identified several preliminary issues, concerns, and opportunities that we intend to address in the CCP. These include the following:

- Unexploded ordnance on the refuge and its implications for refuge management and public access;
- The potential for climate change to impact refuge resources;
- The potential for land acquisition and conservation easements within the existing, approved boundary;
- Opportunities to collaborate with partner organizations for off-refuge interpretation and education programming.

We expect that members of the public, our conservation partners and Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments may identify additional issues during public scoping.

Public Meetings

During the planning process, we will hold public meetings for individuals, organizations, and agencies to provide comments, issues, concerns, and suggestions about refuge management. When we schedule formal comment periods and public meeting(s), we will announce them in the **Federal Register**, local news media, and on our refuge

planning Web site at http://www.fws.gov/northeast/plumtreeisland/refuge_planning.html.

You can also obtain the schedule from the planning team leader or project leader (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

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: December 5, 2011.

Salvatore M. Amato,

Acting Regional Director, Northeast Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R1–MB–2011–N256;
FXMB1231010000P2–123–FF01M01000]

Special Purpose Permit Application; Draft Environmental Assessment; Hawaii-Based Shallow-Set Longline Fishery

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the Fish and Wildlife Service, have received an application under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (MBTA), from the Pacific Islands Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Department of Commerce, for a permit for the incidental take of migratory birds in the operation of the Hawaii-based shallow-set longline fishery that targets swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*). If issued, the permit would be the first of its kind under our Special Purpose permitting regulations. We invite public comment on the draft environmental assessment (DEA), which evaluates alternatives associated with this permit application.

DATES: To ensure consideration, please send your written comments by February 9, 2012.

ADDRESSES: You may download a copy of the DEA on the Internet at <http://>