

and semipermanent or permanent wetlands, interspersed among agricultural lands, comprise most of the Districts.

These diverse prairie habitats provide for a myriad of waterfowl, waterbird, and neotropical migratory bird species, resident white-tailed deer, as well as federally listed species such as whooping and sandhill cranes, least terns, and piping plovers in the eastern portion of the districts to pronghorn, mule deer, and prairie chicken, among others, in the westernmost portion of the planning area. Native fish such as walleye and lake trout, as well as a large variety of other smaller native fish species, share this environment with sport fishes such as smallmouth and largemouth bass, bluegill and northern pike.

Wetland drainage and tiling, as well as prairie conversion to crop production, pose some of the greatest challenges to the wildlife and native plant species of this region of the Central Flyway.

The Districts were created to administer the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program to protect wetlands from various threats—particularly drainage. Grassland easements were included in this program in 1991. The purpose of the Districts is “to assure the long-term viability of the breeding waterfowl population and production through the acquisition and management of waterfowl production areas, while considering the needs of other migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and other wildlife.” This purpose statement was developed for all Region 6 wetland management districts.

Despite the decentralized nature of the lands managed by the three districts, it is estimated that annual visitation to all three districts’ lands totaled more than 240,000 visitor-days, with nearly 75 percent of this visitation involving local residents and the remaining 25 percent from visitors from outside of the planning area. Hunting accounted for nearly 80 percent of the total visitation, followed by fishing with nearly 12 percent, and non-consumptive uses, such as bird watching and wildlife photography, accounting for less than eight percent. Trapping is also a popular activity among visitors to the Districts.

The Districts have been historically managed for migratory birds, with an emphasis on waterfowl species. Management techniques include prescribed burning, cattle grazing, invasive species control, and water level management in wetlands with water control structures. Past management has included installing some water control

structures and constructing channels used to divert water. The planning area is a popular area for research by the Service and local universities, as well as state and other partners, given its diversity of wildlife and plants.

We announce our decision and the availability of the FONSI for the final CCP for the Huron Wetland Management District, Madison Wetland Management District, and Sand Lake Wetland Management District in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR 1506.6(b)) requirements. We completed a thorough analysis of impacts on the human environment, which we included in the EA that accompanied the draft CCP.

The CCP will guide us in managing and administering Huron Wetland Management District, Madison Wetland Management District, and Sand Lake Wetland Management District for the next 15 years. Alternative B, as we described in the final CCP, is the foundation for the CCP.

Background

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee) (Refuge Administration Act), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, requires us to develop a CCP for each unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System (System). The purpose for developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year plan for achieving their unit’s purposes and contributing toward the mission of the System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management, 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 Refuge Administration Act.

CCP Alternatives, Including Selected Alternative

Our draft CCP and our EA addressed and evaluated three management alternatives. Alternative A, Current Management, would have maintained the current management activities of each of the three Districts. Alternative B, Increased Efficiency, would seek the development and implementation of an improved, science-based priority system

to restore native prairie habitats. Alternative C, Increased Efficiency with Expanded Resources, would follow the same prioritization system for restoration and management as under Alternative B, but it would be based on projected staffing and funding increases.

Comments

We solicited comments on the draft CCP and the EA for Huron, Madison, and Sand Lake Wetland Management Districts from October 21, 2011 to November 21, 2011 (76 FR 65525, October 21, 2011). The Service received 9 comments during the public review period. All of those comments were thoroughly evaluated by the planning team. However none of the comments caused substantial changes to the CCP.

Selected Alternative

After considering the comments we received, we have selected Alternative B for implementation. This alternative, also known as Increased Efficiency, would emphasize developing and implementing an improved, science-based priority system to restore native prairie habitats for the benefit of waterfowl and other migratory birds. Districts staffs will focus on high priority tracts and, when possible, on medium-priority tracts. The focus of this will be to restore ecological processes and native grassland species to the greatest extent possible within the parameters of available resources and existing budgetary and staffing constraints. The Districts’ staffs will seek to maintain the existing levels and types of public use programs, ensuring that programs offered to the public are of consistently high quality.

Dated: September 12, 2012.

Steve Guertin,

*Regional Director, Mountain-Prairie Region,
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLAZ956000.L14200000.BJ0000.241A]

Notice of Filing of Plats of Survey; Arizona

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Filing of Plats of Survey; Arizona.

SUMMARY: The plats of survey of the described lands were officially filed in the Arizona State Office, Bureau of Land

Management, Phoenix, Arizona, on dates indicated.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

The supplemental plat representing the amended lotting in section 3, Township 4 South, Range 5 East, accepted October 1, 2012, and officially filed October 3, 2012, Arizona.

This plat was prepared at the request of the Bureau of Land Management.

The supplemental plat representing the amended lotting in section 15, Township 4 South, Range 6 East, accepted October 1, 2012, and officially filed October 3, 2012, Arizona.

This plat was prepared at the request of the Bureau of Land Management.

A person or party who wishes to protest against any of these surveys must file a written protest with the Arizona State Director, Bureau of Land Management, stating that they wish to protest.

A statement of reasons for a protest may be filed with the notice of protest to the State Director, or the statement of reasons must be filed with the State Director within thirty (30) days after the protest is filed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

These plats will be available for inspection in the Arizona State Office, Bureau of Land Management, One North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona, 85004-4427. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

Stephen K. Hansen,
Chief Cadastral Surveyor of Arizona.

[FR Doc. 2012-25385 Filed 10-15-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLWYL03000-L51010000-FX0000-LVRWK09K1030; WYW-167155]

Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision for the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project and Approved Visual Resource Management Plan Amendment for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Rawlins Field Office, Carbon County, Wyoming

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project and Approved Plan Amendment to the Rawlins Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Visual Resource Management (VRM), the applicable plan for the project site and the surrounding areas located in the Rawlins Field Office. The Secretary of the Interior signed the ROD on October 9, 2012, which constitutes the final decision of the Department.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the ROD including the Approved Plan amendment to the Rawlins RMP are available upon request from the BLM Rawlins Field Office, 1300 North Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming; or via the Internet at the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/rfo/Chokecherry.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Pamela Murdock, BLM Project Manager, at 307-775-6259; through mail at BLM Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, WY 82007; or email at pmurdock@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM evaluated the potential wind energy development on a broad level to determine appropriate areas and restrictions for the Power Company of Wyoming, LLC (PCW) to develop a wind energy facility on public lands in the Application Area administered by the BLM in compliance with the Federal

Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, BLM right-of-way (ROW) regulations, and other applicable Federal laws. This decision does not authorize development of the wind energy project; rather, it sets the parameters for which future ROW applications may be submitted by PCW. The ROW applications will be screened against the analysis conducted in this environmental impact statement (EIS), and then the appropriate level of subsequent, tiered National Environmental Policy Act analysis will be conducted prior to the BLM issuing a decision on ROW applications. The BLM selected this manner of analyzing the project based on its size and complexity of resources. Accordingly, through this decision the BLM is (1) determining whether the area identified in PCW's proposal is appropriate for wind energy development; (2) Identifying the requirements for future wind development in the area; and (3) Amending the VRM class decision portions of the 2008 Rawlins RMP for the designated Decision Area. Two resulting decisions are as follows: (1) The BLM has determined that portions of the Application Area are suitable for wind energy development and associated facilities on public lands subject to the requirements for all future wind development in the area as described under the Preferred Alternative in the CCSM project Final EIS, herein referred to as the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative analyzed a wind energy development proposal by PCW in the 219,707-acre alternative boundary to accommodate development of a 2,000- to 3,000-megawatt (MW) project consisting of up to 1,000 turbines and ancillary facilities in the two sites—the 109,086-acre Chokecherry site and the 110,161-acre Sierra Madre site—and off-site access on 460 acres. Power generated by the project would be routed to one or more of up to five potential transmission lines analyzed in detail in separate EISs or an existing transmission line on the northern edge of the Project Site, all of which were considered in the cumulative impact analysis for this project. (2) The BLM is requiring that certain project design features and mitigation measures be incorporated into any future CCSM wind energy development authorizations. These design features and mitigation measures include the identified BLM environmental constraints, applicant-committed measures and best management practices, and mitigation measures identified through the EIS process. The CCSM project also would