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**Authority:** Section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 35, as amended.

Dated: September 3, 2008.

**Lillian L. Deitzer,**

*Departmental Paperwork Reduction Act Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2008-N0248; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

#### Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in Manteo, North Carolina.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service announces that a Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Finding of No Significant Impact for Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge is available for distribution. The plan was prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and describes how the refuge will be managed for the next 15 years. The compatibility determinations for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation, and trapping of selected furbearers are also available in the plan.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the plan may be obtained by writing to the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 1969, Manteo, North Carolina 27954. The plan may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Web site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning/>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The availability of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for a 45-day public review and comment period was announced in the **Federal Register** on May 30, 2006 (71 FR 30687). The plan and environmental assessment identified and evaluated three alternatives for managing the refuge over the next 15 years. Alternative 1, the no-action

alternative, would have continued current management of the refuge. Alternative 3 would have resulted in substantial program increases.

Based on the environmental assessment and the comments received, the Service adopted Alternative 2 as its preferred alternative. Alternative 2 directs the development of programs to best achieve the refuge purpose and goals; emphasizes wildlife conservation as our highest priority in refuge management; collects habitat and wildlife data; and ensures long-term achievement of refuge and Service objectives. At the same time, these management actions provide balanced levels of compatible public use opportunities consistent with existing laws, Service policies, and sound biological principles. Alternative 2 provides the best mix of program elements to achieve desired long-term conditions.

Under this alternative, all lands under the management and direction of the refuge will be protected, maintained, and enhanced to best achieve national, ecosystem, and refuge-specific goals and objectives within anticipated funding and staffing levels. In addition, the action positively addresses significant issues and concerns expressed by the public.

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge is located in Dare and Hyde Counties, North Carolina, about 3.5 hours east of Raleigh and 1.5 hours south of the Virginia line. The refuge covers a total of 153,017 acres within the 239,800-acre acquisition boundary and occupies the eastern-most portion of the Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula in eastern North Carolina. The refuge is the lead refuge in the North Carolina Coastal Plain Refuge Complex and consists of a variety of habitats, including forested wetlands, shrub wetlands, agricultural lands, moist-soil areas, open waters, dirt/gravel access roads and trails, and recently reforested areas. Annually, more than 35,000 people visit the refuge.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bonnie Strawser, Wildlife Interpretive Specialist, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge; *telephone:* 252-473-1131; *fax:* 252-473-1668; *e-mail:* [bonnie\\_strawser@fws.gov](mailto:bonnie_strawser@fws.gov); or by writing to the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge at the address in the **ADDRESSES** section.

**Authority:** This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105-57.

Dated: March 30, 2007.

**Cynthia K. Dohner,**

*Acting Regional Director.*

**Editorial Note:** This document was received in the Office of the Federal Register on September 5, 2008.

[FR Doc. E8-20974 Filed 9-9-08; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2008-N0163; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

#### Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuge, Benton County, AR

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability: final comprehensive conservation plan and finding of no significant impact.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of our final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuge. In the final CCP, we describe how we will manage this refuge for the next 15 years.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the plan may be obtained by writing to: Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge, 10448 Holla Bend Road, Dardanelle, AR 72834. The CCP/FONSI may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Web site <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning/>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Durwin Carter, Refuge Manager, Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge; *Telephone:* (479) 229-4300; *Fax:* (479) 229-4302.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Introduction

With this notice, we finalize the CCP process for Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuge. We started this process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on November 23, 2005 (70 FR 70878). For more about the process, see that notice.

Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1989 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to protect cave inhabitants, including the endangered gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*), Benton cave crayfish (*Cambarus aculabrum*), and the threatened Ozark cavefish (*Amblyopsis rosae*). The cave also has historically provided habitat for the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). This 123-acre Ozark Mountain refuge, which includes a limestone solution cave with approximately 1.5

miles of passageways, is located 20 miles west of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and approximately 2 miles north of U.S. Highway 412. The ecology of Logan Cave has been described as the highest quality cave habitat in the entire Ozark region. There are only two known entry points for the cave: the sinkhole and spring. The sinkhole consists of a steep sided funnel shaped depression about 50 feet in diameter located on a forested hillside. The spring entrance is located on a hillside under an overhang rock bluff. Most of the refuge consists of hillsides, which support a mature climax community of oak and hickory.

Groundwater surfacing within the cave forms a stream that flows throughout the cave and at the outfall forms Logan Spring, which drains to Osage Creek just south of the refuge. Osage Creek is a major tributary of the Illinois River, which is the main drainage in southwestern Benton County, and their confluence is about 1.2 miles south of the refuge. In past years, spring water from the cave had a measured flow of approximately 5 million gallons per day and supplied the Logan community, a fish hatchery, and 49 fish ponds.

We announce our decision and the availability of the final CCP and FONSI for Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuge in accordance with the 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 draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment (Draft CCP/EA). The CCP will guide us in managing and administering Logan Cave Refuge for the next 15 years.

The compatibility determinations for environmental education and interpretation, research, and monitoring are available in the CCP.

### Background

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee) (Improvement Act), which amended the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, requires us to develop a CCP for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose for developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year plan for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge 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, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the Improvement Act.

### Comments

Approximately 120 copies of the Draft CCP/EA were made available for a 30-day public review period as announced in the **Federal Register** on January 25, 2008 (73 FR 4615). A public meeting was held on February 12, 2008, at 6 p.m., at the Logan Community Center. Fifteen individuals were in attendance at the meeting. Eight respondents consisting of the Service; the State Clearinghouse of Arkansas, Department of Finance and Administration; the Ozark Underground Laboratory, Inc.; Natural Resources Conservation Service; the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission; and local citizens submitted written comments by mail or e-mail.

### Selected Alternative

We developed three alternatives for management of the refuge and chose Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative. This alternative was considered to be the most effective for meeting the purposes of the refuge by conserving, restoring, and managing the refuge's habitats and wildlife while optimizing wildlife-dependent public uses. Alternative 3 best achieves national, ecosystem, and refuge-specific goals and objectives and positively addresses significant issues and concerns expressed by the public.

Under Alternative 3, all refuge management actions will be directed toward achieving the refuge's primary purpose to properly administer, conserve, and develop the 123-acre area for protection of a unique cave ecosystem that provides essential habitat for the endangered gray bat, endangered Benton cave crayfish, the threatened Ozark cavefish, and other significant cave dwelling wildlife species, while contributing to other national, regional, and state goals to protect and restore karst habitats and species.

The primary focus under this alternative will be to add a staff person and equipment in order to manage, maintain, restore, and protect the refuge's habitats and wildlife species. Wildlife and plant censuses and inventory activities will be initiated and maintained to obtain the biological information needed to continue current

refuge management programs and implement crucial management programs on and off the refuge.

Active habitat management will be implemented to maintain and enhance water quality and quantity within the cave system, the recharge zone (groundwater recharge areas), and waterways within the bat foraging areas through best management practices, easements, and partnerships with private landowners and other federal and state agencies. Continuous groundwater quality monitoring is crucial to the existence of the aquatic species utilizing the cave stream and groundwater corridors.

The Benton cave crayfish and Ozark Cavefish populations will be maintained at a minimum of 35 and 40 individuals, respectively. A properly trained survey team (no more than 4 observers) will perform ocular surveys bi-annually in January or February. During these surveys, the occurrence of any Indiana bats will be noted. The refuge will study the micro-climate of the cave to determine suitability for Indiana bats. Gray bats will be counted annually during July by exit counts. At least two trained persons will count bats at the same time on the same evening as the bats emerge from the spring and sinkhole entrances. Bat guano will be measured each year as soon as possible after the maternity colony has left the cave. No more than three persons will conduct guano measurements and this will be done in conjunction with the crayfish/cavefish surveys when possible. The refuge will maintain all other populations of karst species, such as pseudoscorpions, isopods, amphipods, beetles, collembolans, and other blind insects, adapted to subterranean habitats. The abundance of the grotto salamander will also be monitored.

The refuge will identify and implement strategies to improve conditions on and off refuge lands for forest dwelling birds. The primary purpose of this effort will be to work with partners and private landowners to provide a forest system of sufficient size and carrying capacity to reach regional objectives associated with area-sensitive neotropical migratory birds. This will also help protect and enhance foraging area for the gray bats, especially along Osage creek and its tributaries.

Wildlife-dependent recreation activities, such as wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation will be provided. Utilizing various partners, the refuge will develop a small environmental education program, focusing on karst

environments. Although the cave is gated and entrance is limited to biological surveys, some cave environmental education can still occur (i.e., supervised visits by small groups to observe emergence of gray bats from a safe distance during the summer). The refuge will develop a community-based volunteer program by establishing a Cave Steward or Friends program. Volunteers will be educated on management issues and utilized to help complete wildlife and plant surveys, maintenance projects, and to conduct public recreation and education programs.

**Authority:** This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105-57.

Dated: July 1, 2008.

**Cynthia K. Dohner,**

*Acting Regional Director.*

[FR Doc. E8-20977 Filed 9-9-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2008-N00160; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

#### **Upper Ouachita and Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuges, Morehouse, Union, Richland, East Carroll, West Carroll, Natchitoches, and Grant Parishes, LA**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability: final comprehensive conservation plan and finding of no significant impact.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of our final comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for Upper Ouachita and Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuges. In the final CCP, we describe how we will manage these refuges for the next 15 years.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the CCP may be obtained by writing to: North Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 11372 Highway 143, Farmerville, LA 71241. The CCP may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Web site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning/>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. George Chandler; Telephone: 318-726-4222; Fax: 318-726-4667; e-mail: [george\\_chandler@fws.gov](mailto:george_chandler@fws.gov).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### **Introduction**

With this notice, we finalize the CCP process for Upper Ouachita and Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuges. We started this process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on July 13, 2005 (70 FR 40396).

The Upper Ouachita and Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuges, including 44 Farm Service Agency (FSA) lands, ranging in size from 3 acres to 1,000 acres, are units of the North Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Upper Ouachita Refuge is in northeastern Louisiana. The northern boundary lies on the Louisiana-Arkansas state line. The refuge borders both sides of the Ouachita River, running north-south for 13.7 miles, extending 3.3 miles to the east and 16 miles to the west. The southernmost point on the refuge is approximately 20 miles north of Monroe, Louisiana. The current acquisition area encompasses 61,633 acres of which 42,594 acres have been purchased with 26,304 acres in Union Parish and 16,290 acres in Morehouse Parish.

Upper Ouachita Refuge was established in November 1978. The federally legislated purposes are "for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds" (Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 715d); and for " \* \* \* the conservation of the wetlands of the nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions \* \* \*" (16 U.S.C. 3901(b)).

Upper Ouachita Refuge consists of 4,540 acres of pine and pine/hardwood forests, 19,767 acres of bottomland hardwood forests, 9,236 acres of reforested bottomlands, 2,000 acres of scrub/shrub, 1,182 acres of moist-soil plantings, 2,541 acres of agricultural fields, 418 acres of fallow agricultural fields, and 2,910 acres of open water.

The USDA Farm Service Agency units were established in 1990, in response to growing Fish and Wildlife Service land-based responsibilities off of traditional refuges. The Wetlands Office is responsible for the administration of wetland easements and fee title land transfers from the Farm Service Agency for conservation purposes (Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, 7 U.S.C. 2002) and for the benefit of endangered species, resident and migratory waterfowl, neotropical migratory birds, and other wildlife. The units also include the first fee title tract transfer from the Farm Service Agency to the Service, with the establishment of

Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuge in 1988. The units consist of 36 Farm Service Agency easements, 7 fee title tracts, and 1 lease, all concentrated in northeastern Louisiana and encompassing 6 parishes. These units are spread across north Louisiana, ranging in size from 3 acres to 1,000 acres.

Handy Brake Refuge is primarily a permanent wetland of excellent habitat for wintering waterfowl, wading birds, and many other wetland-dependent species. A free lease of 35 acres of International Paper Company land provides an upland area overlooking the wetland. An observation deck in the upland area provides wildlife viewing opportunities into the wetlands. Habitat management within these units focuses primarily on reforestation of marginal agricultural areas and development and maintenance of moist-soil units. These varied habitats provide for a diverse array of wildlife. There is no hunting or fishing permitted throughout these units.

We announce our decision and the availability of the final CCP and FONSI for Upper Ouachita and Handy Brake National Wildlife Refuges in accordance with the 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 draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment (Draft CCP/EA). The CCP will guide us in managing and administering Upper Ouachita and Handy Brake Refuges for the next 15 years. Alternative B is the foundation for the CCP.

The compatibility determinations for (1) wildlife observation and photography; (2) environmental education and interpretation; (3) fishing; and (4) cooperative farming are also available within the CCP.

#### **Background**

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee) (Improvement Act), which amended the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, requires us to develop a CCP for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose for developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year plan for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge 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-