

environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended; 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.

#### *The Refuges*

The Koyukuk Refuge (3,550,000 acres), Nowitna Refuge (1,560,000 acres), and Northern Unit (Kaiyuh Flats) of Innoko Refuge (350,800 acres) are managed from the headquarters office in Galena, Alaska. Following are the purposes for which the Koyukuk and Nowitna National Wildlife Refuges were established by ANILCA: (i) To conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity, including but not limited to [Koyukuk] waterfowl and other migratory birds, moose, caribou (including participation in coordinated ecological studies and management of the Western Arctic caribou herd), furbearers, and salmon; [Nowitna] trumpeter swans, white-fronted geese, canvasbacks, and other waterfowl and migratory birds; moose; caribou; martens, wolverines, and other furbearers; salmon; sheefish; and northern pike; [Innoko] waterfowl, peregrine falcons, other migratory birds, black bear, moose, furbearers, and other mammals; and salmon; (ii) to fulfill the international treaty obligations of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats; (iii) to provide, in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in subparagraphs (i) and (ii), the opportunity for continued subsistence uses by local residents; (iv) to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in paragraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the refuge.

The CCPs for these refuges were completed in 1987. They provide direction for managing the refuges by identifying the types and level of activities that can occur on the refuges. The refuges are divided into three management categories: Most of the refuges are in the Minimal management category; 400,000 acres of the Koyukuk Refuge are designated Wilderness; and 142,000 acres of the Nowitna Refuge are in the Wild and Scenic River category. As we revise the CCPs, the two current CCPs will be combined into one CCP.

Koyukuk Refuge lies in a basin surrounded by rolling, low mountains and is bisected by the Koyukuk River, the third largest river in Alaska. The refuge's rich wetlands combine with lowland forests to support a diversity of wildlife, including moose and large

populations of migrating waterfowl. There are about 15,000 lakes and over 5,500 miles of rivers and streams within the boundaries of the refuge. Refuge lands support large numbers of nesting waterfowl and contain some of Alaska's highest quality moose habitat. The refuge is also home to caribou, wolves, lynx, pike, raptors, and black and grizzly bears. The six Native (Koyukon Athabascan) villages adjacent to, or within, the refuge boundaries have used the refuge for centuries. Hunting, fishing and trapping are still important subsistence activities today.

The northern unit (Kaiyuh Flats) of Innoko Refuge shares a common boundary with Koyukuk Refuge and is home to waterfowl, peregrine falcons, other migratory birds, black bear, moose, fur bearers and other mammals, and salmon. Pike, a long-lived fish that can reach large sizes, also winter in the Kaiyuh Flats.

Nowitna Refuge's topography varies from flat lowlands dotted with wetlands to rolling hills capped by alpine tundra. During summer, Nowitna's varied habitats support over 125 bird species but this number drops to only a few dozen during winter. The Palisades, a series of bluffs on the Yukon River near the northeast boundary of the refuge, is a rich source of fossils and other evidence of Pleistocene Era animals and plants. The Nowitna River bisects the refuge and forms a broad meandering flood plain. Two-hundred twenty-three miles of the Nowitna is designated Wild and Scenic River and passes through a 15 mile canyon with peaks up to 2,100 feet. In the spring, high water and ice dams can back the river up more than 100 miles, affecting water levels and permitting the migration of fish from many adjacent lakes and sloughs.

#### **Scoping: Preliminary Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities**

We have identified preliminary issues, concerns, and opportunities and may address them in the CCP. Preliminary issues include (1) concern about management of moose, salmon, predators, and waterfowl within the refuges; (2) competition for refuge resources between local and non-local users; (3) desire for improved public outreach and involvement in refuge management; (4) sensitivity to local cultural ways; (5) future trends in public use of the refuge and how public use will be managed; (6) effects of climate change on the refuge; (7) implementation of existing policies on cabins, timber harvest, and other resource development; and (8) effects of existing and proposed off-refuge development on refuge lands and

resources. These and other issues will be explored during the scoping process and the refuge will determine which issues will be addressed in the revised CCP.

#### **Public Meetings**

We will involve the public through open houses, meetings, and comments. We will mail planning updates to our refuge mailing list to keep the public aware of the status of the revision and how we use public comments in each stage of the planning process. Scoping meetings are planned to be held in October, 2007 in the following refuge area communities: Hughes, Huslia, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Nulato, Ruby, and Tanana. A week-long open house will be held at refuge headquarters in Galena also in October. Details will be announced locally.

#### **Public Availability of Comments**

Before including your name, 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 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: October 1, 2007.

**Thomas O. Melius,**

*Regional Director, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska.*

[FR Doc. E7-19794 Filed 10-5-07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## **DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

### **Fish and Wildlife Service**

#### **Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service, announce our decision and the availability of the Final CCP and FONSI for Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge in Jackson County, Mississippi. The CCP 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.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the CCP/FONSI may be obtained by writing to: Lloyd Culp, Refuge Manager, Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge, 7200 Crane Lane, Gautier, MS 39553; Telephone: 228/497-6322; Fax 228/497-5407. The CCP/FONSI may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Internet Web site: <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** With this notice, we finalize the CCP process for Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge, begun as announced in the **Federal Register** (70 FR 30478; May 26, 2005). For more about the process, see that notice. We released the Draft CCP and Environmental Assessment (EA) to the public, requesting comments in a notice of availability in the **Federal Register** (71 FR 67627; November 22, 2006).

Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1975 to safeguard the critically endangered Mississippi sandhill crane and its unique disappearing habitat.

With this notice, we announce our decision and the availability of the Final CCP/FONSI in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act [40 CFR § 1506.6(b)] requirements. We completed a thorough analysis of the environmental, social, and economic considerations, which we included in the Final CCP/FONSI. The FONSI documents the selection of Alternative D, the preferred alternative.

The Draft CCP/EA identified and evaluated four alternatives for managing the refuge over the next 15 years. Under Alternative A, the no-action alternative, present management would have continued. Current approaches to managing and protecting cranes, other wildlife and habitats, and allowing for public use would have remain unchanged. Under Alternative B, the refuge would have emphasized its biological program by applying maximum efforts to enhance habitat conditions and increase wildlife populations, particularly the endangered crane. The visitor services program would have remained as it is at present. Under Alternative C, management would have focused on maximizing opportunities for public visitation, increasing both facilities and activities.

We chose Alternative D as the preferred alternative. This determination was made based on the best professional judgment of the planning team and the comments received on the Draft CCP/EA. Under this alternative, the refuge will strive to optimize both its biological program and

its visitor services program. With regard to the Mississippi sandhill crane, the refuge's objective will be to provide for a self-sustaining crane population of 130 to 170 individuals, including 30–35 nesting pairs, fledging 10–15 young annually for at least 10 years.

Over the 15-year life of the plan, the staff will increase emphasis on environmental education and interpretation to lead to a better understanding of the importance of wildlife and habitat resources, especially sandhill cranes, savanna, fire ecology, invasive species, endangered species, and migratory birds. Research studies on the refuge will be fostered and partnerships developed with universities and other agencies, providing needed resources and experiment sites, while meeting the needs of the refuge's wildlife and habitat management programs. Research will also benefit conservation efforts throughout coastal Mississippi to conserve, enhance, restore, and manage native habitat. New surveys on birds, reptiles, and amphibians will be initiated to develop baseline information.

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

**Editorial Note:** This document was received at the Office of the Federal Register on October 3, 2007.

Dated: April 26, 2007.

**Cynthia K. Dohner,**

*Acting Regional Director.*

[FR Doc. E7–19798 Filed 10–5–07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310–55–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Proposed Florida Scrub-Jay Safe Harbor Agreement, Volusia County, FL

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

**ACTION:** *Notice:* receipt of application for an enhancement of survival permit; safe harbor agreement.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of an Enhancement of Survival Permit (ESP) application and Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA). Daytona Beach Community College (Applicant) requests an ESP permit under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The permit application includes a proposed Safe Harbor Agreement (Agreement) for the threatened Florida scrub-jay

(*Apelocoma coerulescens*) (scrub-jay) for a period of 20 years.

We (the Service) announce the opening of a 30-day comment period and request comments from the public on the Applicant's enhancement of survival permit application and the accompanying proposed Agreement. All comments we receive, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be released to the public. For further information and instructions on reviewing and commenting on this application, see the **ADDRESSES** section, below.

**DATES:** We must receive any written comments on the ESP application and SHA on or before November 8, 2007.

**ADDRESSES:** If you wish to review the ESP application and SHA, you may write the Field Supervisor at our Jacksonville Field Office, 6620 Southpoint Drive South, Suite 310, Jacksonville, FL 32216, or make an appointment to visit during normal business hours. If you wish to comment, you may mail or hand deliver comments to the Jacksonville Field Office, or you may e-mail comments to [michael\\_jennings@fws.gov](mailto:michael_jennings@fws.gov). For more information on reviewing documents and public comments and submitting comments, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Michael Jennings, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Jacksonville Field Office (see **ADDRESSES**), telephone: 904/232–2580, ext. 113.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Public Review and Comment: Please reference permit number TE146919–0 in all requests or comments. Please include your name and return address in your e-mail message. If you do not receive a confirmation from us that we have received your e-mail message, contact us directly at the telephone number listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. 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 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. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.