

# News Release



**Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Complex**  
**1000 Auction Road**  
**Fallon, Nevada 89406**

Contact: Janet Schmidt, (775)428-6452

*June 30, 2003*

## Environmental Plan Finalized for Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Complex Plan

The California/Nevada Operations Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Boundary Revision, authorizing the implementation of Alternative "E" of the EIS.

The ROD details the decision making process and the role the public played in selecting Alternative "E". This alternative received support from the majority of the public that commented on the plan, and is endorsed by the Nevada Division of Wildlife and the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

Alternative E provides the best balance between satisfying the National Wildlife Refuge System and Service missions and purposes of the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Anaho Island NWR, while providing opportunities for compatible refuge uses. Recreational uses found compatible on Stillwater NWR include hunting, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation, and horseback riding. As a result of the adoption of this alternative and a new management direction, changes to boating during the hunt season will be in effect beginning with the October 2003 waterfowl hunt season. Livestock grazing and furbearer trapping are to be phased out as commercial uses but retained as management tools. Opportunities would be enhanced for environmental education and wildlife observation and photography, through design and construction of a new auto tour loop and additional visitor facilities.

Alternative E will form the basis of the Stillwater NWRC Comprehensive Conservation Plan. This plan will guide the management of the refuge complex, which currently includes three refuges -- Stillwater, Fallon, and Anaho Island -- and management authority over the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area, which consists of Bureau of Reclamation withdrawn lands, for the next 15 years. These refuges currently lack management plans that incorporate the latest National Wildlife Refuge System policies or specific purposes identified by Congress.

The boundary revision, to be submitted to Congress for approval, would consolidate portions of the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge and Stillwater Wildlife Management Area into Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, and extend the boundary to include a portion of the lower Carson River and a large sand dune complex. Those portions of the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge and Stillwater Wildlife Management Area not included in the Refuge boundary revision would revert to Bureau of Reclamation management. Private lands within the boundary would be acquired from willing sellers as available.

The boundary revision and management strategies proposed in the final EIS meet the requirements established by the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended, for all refuges, and the specific purposes established for the Stillwater and Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuges by Public Law 101-618. The alternative proposes no change in the boundary or management of Anaho Island NWR. The island will continue to be closed to all public use to protect colonial nesting waterbirds.

Additional information on the EIS, ROD, and changes to hunting and fishing regulations are available through the Stillwater NWR website at <http://stillwater.fws.gov> or from the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge Complex headquarters. Contact Stillwater NWRC, 1000 Auction Road, Fallon, Nevada, (775)428-6452.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

- FWS -

*For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
visit our home page at <http://www.fws.gov>*