

acquisition within existing boundaries; and

Alternative D—Existing Boundaries and Least River Connectivity, enhancing habitat conservation via more flood protection and less river connectivity on refuge lands within existing boundaries.

Components of the final comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment include:

Habitat and Public Use—Under the selected alternative identified for Complex management in the final environmental assessment, habitats and public use would be enhanced on current divisions. Some flood-friendly nature trails, observation platforms, and information kiosks would offer recreational and educational opportunities to the public. Additional hunting, fishing, and non-consumptive wildlife uses would be implemented where biologically compatible. Habitats are improved through a process of ensuring the appropriate management options are being applied at each site.

Partnerships—The final comprehensive conservation plan for the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge Complex emphasizes the importance of the close working relationships the Complex has established with three Upper Mississippi River states and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Along with these partners, the Service operates a mosaic of habitat and public use opportunities along the corridor. All partners are involved in the effort to reverse a trend of declining resource values on the River. These relationships will be strengthened under the plan.

Resource Conservation—The Plan proposes a resource conservation plan incorporating partnership programs offered through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Department of Agriculture, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program and flood reduction projects. Service acquisition of land would be staged, occurring as willing sellers emerged and as funds became available. Acquisition would target the most flood-prone lands that have high natural resource values and also would produce benefits to federal policy efforts, such as providing storage capacity, reducing disaster assistance payments, and increasing water quality through increased nutrient cycling.

Dated: May 17, 2004.

Charles M. Wooley,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District (WMD), Bloomington, MN

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces that the final CCP and EA is available for Minnesota Valley NWR and Minnesota Valley WMD, Bloomington, Minnesota. The CCP was prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The goals and objectives presented in the CCP describe how the agency intends to manage the Refuge and waterfowl production areas over the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the final CCP and EA are available on compact disk or hard copy. You may access and download a copy via the Refuge Web site at: <http://midwest.fws.gov/planning/MinnesotaValley/index.html> or by writing to the Refuge at: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, 3815 East 80th Street, Bloomington, Minnesota 55425-1600.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rick Schultz, Refuge Manager, (952) 854-5900.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Minnesota Valley NWR is located along 34 miles of the lower Minnesota River from near the City of Jordan to historic Fort Snelling and the river's confluence with the Mississippi River. The Refuge is also responsible for a 14-county region known as the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District. It consists of more than 5,000 acres of waterfowl production areas and conservation easements.

The CCP recommends an expansion of the current boundaries by a total of 10,737 acres in 6 new units of the Refuge.

Funding for land acquisition will in large part be available through a Refuge Trust Fund established as mitigation for damages caused by expansion of the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport.

We intend to increase hunting opportunities by expanding archery

deer hunts, providing wild turkey and deer hunts for disabled hunters, improving the youth waterfowl hunting program, and by opening newly-acquired lands to appropriate hunting uses.

The CCP proposes interpretive programs and improvements to existing facilities that will maintain or increase visitation from the present 250,000-300,000 visitors a year.

Dated: July 2, 2004.

Charles M. Wooley,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota.

[FR Doc. 04-21375 Filed 9-22-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

Patent, Trademark and Copyright Acts

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of prospective intent to award exclusive license.

SUMMARY: The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is contemplating awarding an exclusive license to Westco Scientific Instruments, Inc., of Danbury, CT, on U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/251,696, entitled "Reduction Devise for Nitrate Determination."

Inquiries: If other parties are interested in similar activities, or have comments related to the prospective award, please contact Neil Mark, USGS, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 201, Reston, Virginia 20192, voice (703) 648-4344, fax (703) 648-7219, or e-mail nmark@usgs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is submitted to meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 208 *et seq.*

Dated: September 3, 2004.

Carol F. Aten,

Chief, Office of Administrative Policy and Services.

[FR Doc. 04-21383 Filed 9-22-04; 8:45 am]

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