



NEWS RELEASE



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Hanford Reach National Monument Final Management Plan Set

The Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the Pacific Region, Ren Lohofener, today signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for the *Final Hanford Reach National Monument Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS)*. By signing the ROD, the Regional Director provides his approval for the plan released early last month, setting management direction for the Hanford Reach National Monument (Monument) for the next 15 years.

The FWS released the Draft CCP/EIS in December, 2006. Based on the over 300 letters received during a three-month comment period, the FWS developed a Final Preferred Alternative, which was released to the public and forwarded to the Regional Director for approval last month. The now-approved plan allows for:

- Treating 13,000 acres annually for invasive species.
- Restoring 5,100 acres of habitat annually.
- Opening additional lands to public access pending lifting of Department of Energy safety and security zones.
- Opening an additional 10,680 acres to some form of hunting (67,117 acres total).
- Developing up to fifteen new interpretive sites and up to 100 miles of trails.
- Leaving the White Bluffs Boat Launch open while identifying the need for the Visitor Services Plan to derive a capacity limit.
- Working with partners to develop new boat launches in the Vernita Bridge and Ringold Fish Hatchery areas.
- Working with equestrian interest groups to assess trails and facility development needs and limiting horseback use to roads and trails.
- Keeping the Saddle Mountain Road open, using seasonal closures if necessary to protect specific resources.