

The scope of the Decision Report is limited to the proposed minor boundary expansion of lands for Okefenokee NWR. The report is not intended to cover the specific method(s) of land acquisition that may be used, nor the development and/or implementation of detailed, specific programs for the administration and management of those lands. If the lands are traded and the needed lands or interests in lands are acquired, the Service will apply the refuge's existing management plans to incorporate the new lands and resources under its control. At that time, these refuge management plans will be reviewed in accordance with Departmental requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Refer to the Decision Report for more details and alternatives.

Categorical Exclusion(s). Multiple categorical exclusions, as listed below, apply to the Proposed Action because it has been determined to be a class of action which does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

516DM 8.5, A. (4) The acquisition of real property obtained either through discretionary acts or when acquired by law, whether by way of condemnation, donation, escheat, right-of-entry, escrow, exchange, lapses, purchases, or transfer and that will be under the jurisdiction or control of the United States. Such acquisition of real property shall be in accordance with 602 DM 2 and the Service's procedures, when the acquisition is from willing seller, continuance of or minor modification to the existing land use is planned, and the acquisition planning process has been performed in coordination with the affected public.

516 DM 8.5 B (9) Minor changes in existing master plans, comprehensive conservation plans, or operations, when no or minor effects are anticipated. Examples could include minor changes in the type and location of compatible public use activities and land management practices.

The establishment of Okefenokee Refuge in 1937 marked the culmination of a movement initiated at least 25 years earlier by a group of scientists from Cornell University who recognized the educational, scientific, and recreational values of this unique area. The Okefenokee Society formed in 1918 and promoted nationwide interest in the swamp. With the support of state and local interests and numerous conservation and scientific organizations, the Federal Government acquired most of the swamp for refuge purposes in 1937. The current acquisition boundary and current management were previously outlined and analyzed in the Okefenokee CCP and associated Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact (EA/FONSI) (USFWS 2006). Representing minor changes to this previously approved document, the Proposed Action is anticipated to have no or negligible impacts, justifying the use of the categorical exclusions 516 DM 8.5(A)(4) and (B)(9).

As outlined above and tiering from the referenced NEPA and planning documents, the Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further NEPA documentation. Further, this Proposed Action would not trigger an extraordinary circumstance precluding the use of a Categorical Exclusion as outlined under 43 CFR §46.215.