

BRIEFING STATEMENT

PREPARED FOR: NWRS LEADERSHIP TEAM

DATE: May 31, 2018

TITLE: CCP Revisions

ISSUE: This memo outlines policy considerations for revising comprehensive conservation plans (CCPs), particularly as it relates to the development of hunting and fishing step-down management plans and the implementation of other Departmental priorities.

BACKGROUND: The Fish and Wildlife Service is poised to update or develop numerous new hunting and fishing step-down management plans in response to Secretarial Order 3356, "Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories." Secretarial Order 3366, "Increasing Recreational Opportunities on Lands and Waters Managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior," will create a similar need to update and/or develop new step-down management plans for other outdoor recreational opportunities on refuge lands. If the goals, objectives, strategies or actions proposed in a step-down management plans are not consistent with the underlying CCP for a refuge, the CCP will have to be amended or revised concurrently with the step-down management planning process.

Current planning policy provides only limited guidance on how to revise CCPs:

(8) Review and Revise Plan

(a) Plan Review. Review the CCP at least annually to decide if it requires any revisions. Modify the plan and associated management activities whenever this review or other monitoring and evaluation determine that we need changes to achieve planning unit purpose(s), vision, and goals.

(b) Plan Revision. Revise the CCP when significant new information becomes available, ecological conditions change, major refuge expansion occurs, or when we identify the need to do so during plan review. This should occur every 15 years or sooner, if necessary. All plan revisions should follow the procedures outlined in this chapter for preparing plans and will require NEPA compliance. Document minor plan revisions that meet the criteria of a categorical exclusion in an Environmental Action Statement, in accordance with [550 FW 3.3C](#). Contact the Regional NEPA Coordinator for an up-to-date list of categorical exclusions and for other NEPA assistance. If the plan requires a major revision, then the CCP process starts anew at the preplanning step. See [602 FW 3.4C\(1\)](#).

(c) Ongoing Public Involvement. Continue informing and involving the public through appropriate means.

STATUS/KEY POINTS:

A small team is currently working on recommendations for additional guidance to ensure CCP revisions associated with ongoing step-down management planning and other changes are developed consistently and efficiently. Progress will be reported with recommendations for next steps.

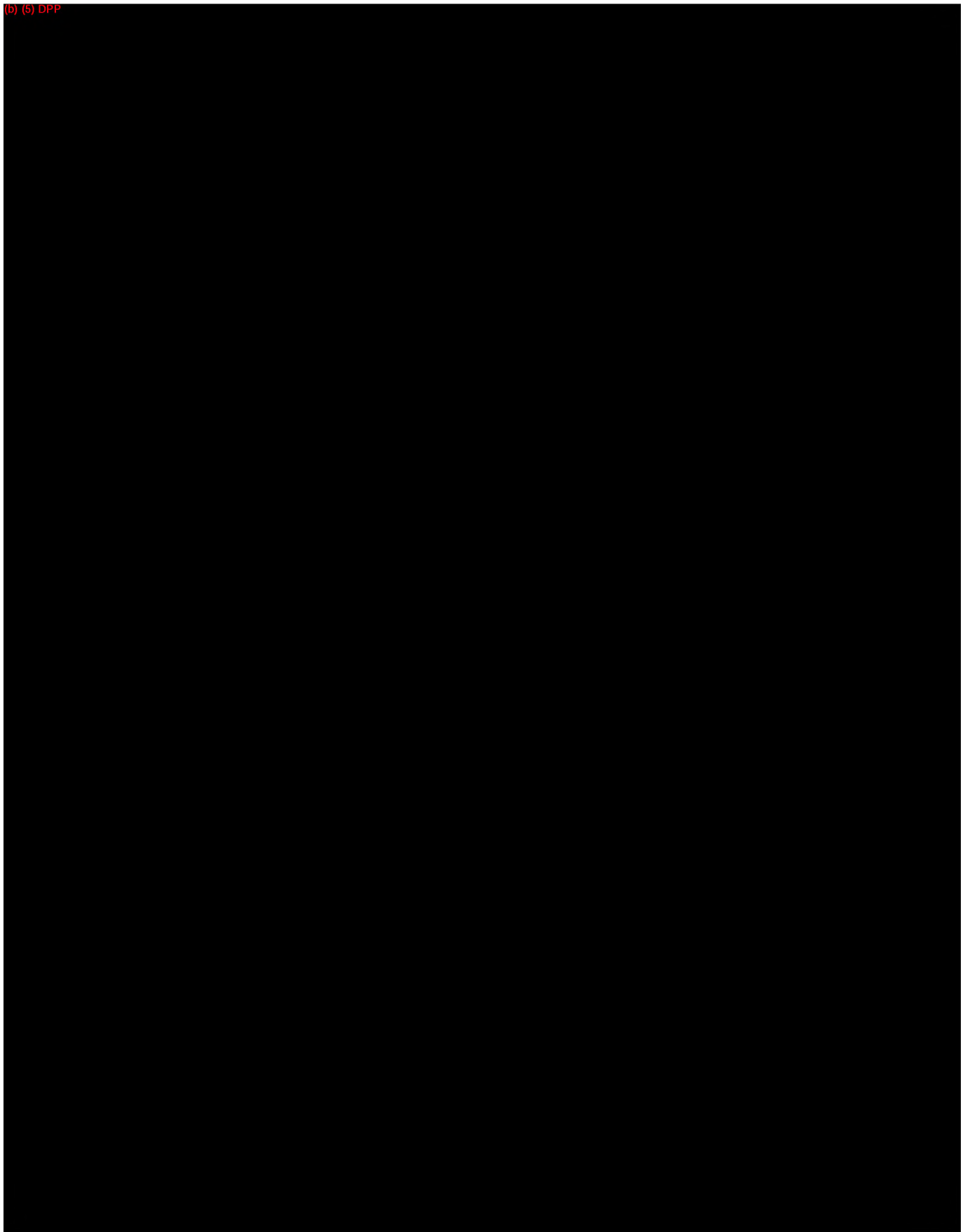
Key policy issues currently being considered include:

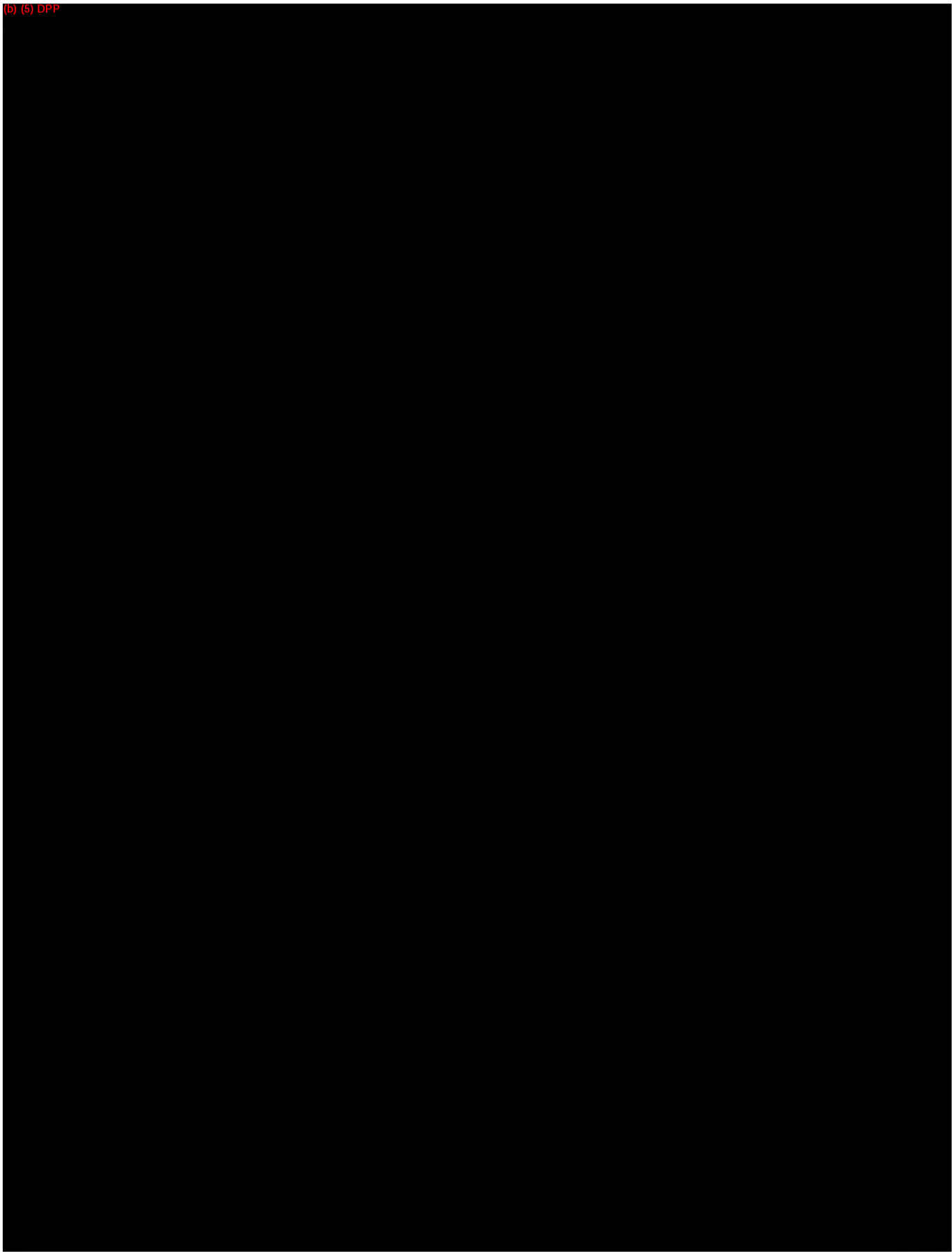
- The relationship between CCP revisions and National Environmental Policy Act compliance, including Administration and Departmental changes in NEPA policy.
- How do we define minor versus major revisions?
- What steps and procedures should be followed for revisions based on the scope and scale of the proposed revisions? Can we revise CCPs through the step-down management planning process?
- What constitutes a comprehensive review/revision that “resets the clock” with respect to the Refuge Improvement Act’s requirement to revise the CCP every 15 years “as may be necessary.”

ACTIONS

The team, consisting of Noah Matson, Ross Alliston, and Ella Wagener from HQ, and Mark Pelz (R8), and Pam Wingrove (R4) will develop a proposal to address these policy questions and present to the Chiefs at the July or August VTC.

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(b) (5) DPP

