DECISION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: FERAL SWINE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT IN NEW YORK

PURPOSE

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) program, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service have prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental and social impacts to the quality of the human environment from resolving damage, including conflicts and threats, to agricultural resources, property, natural resources, and human safety associated with feral swine (*Sus scrofa*) (USDA 2012). The EA documents the need for damage management in the State and assesses potential impacts on the human environment of three alternatives to address that need. The proposed action in the EA would continue an integrated methods approach to address the need to manage damage and threats associated with feral swine.

The EA evaluated the issues and alternatives associated with WS' potential participation in managing damage and threats caused by feral swine in the State. The EA was prepared by WS and the cooperating agencies to determine if the alternatives could have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Specifically, the EA was prepared to: 1) facilitate planning, 2) facilitate interagency coordination, 3) streamline program management, 4) evaluate the potential environmental consequences of the alternatives related to the issues associated with managing damage caused by feral swine, and 5) clearly communicate to the public the analysis of individual and cumulative impacts.

NEED FOR ACTION

The need for action arises from requests for assistance received by WS to reduce and prevent damage associated with feral swine from occurring to agricultural resources, natural resources, property, and threats to human safety. WS would only conduct damage management activities after receiving a request for assistance. Before initiating activities, a Memorandum of Understanding, cooperative service agreement, or other comparable document would be signed between WS and the entity requesting assistance, which would list all the methods the property owner or manager would allow to be used on property they own and/or manage. WS may also be requested to participate in disease surveillance and monitoring.

SCOPE OF ANALYSES IN THE EA

The EA evaluates the need for action to manage damage associated with feral swine, the potential issues associated with managing damage caused by feral swine, and the environmental consequences of conducting different alternatives to meet the need for action while addressing the identified issues. The EA evaluates meeting the need for action under three alternatives. The methods available for use or recommendation under each of the alternatives evaluated were provided in Appendix B of the EA. The actions evaluated were the use of those methods available under the alternatives and the employment of those methods by WS to manage or prevent damage and threats associated with feral swine. The standard WS Decision Model (Slate et al. 1992) would be the site-specific procedure for individual actions conducted by WS (see WS Directive 2.201).

Issues related to managing damage caused by feral swine in New York were initially developed by WS, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Department of

Agriculture and Markets, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Issues were defined and preliminary alternatives were identified through the scoping process. As part of the scoping process, the EA was made available to the public for review and comment by a legal notice published daily in *The Times Union* newspaper from December 06, 2012 through December 08, 2012. A notice of availability and the EA were also made available for public review and comment on the APHIS website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/nepa.shtml beginning on December 3, 2012. A letter of availability was also mailed directly to agencies, organizations, and individuals with probable interest in feral swine damage management in the State. The public involvement process ended on January 11, 2013.

WS received six comment letters related to the public comment period. The comment letters received during the public involvement process was reviewed for substantive issues and alternatives, which were considered in developing this Decision for the EA. A summary of the comments received and responses to the comments are provided in Appendix A of this Decision.

AUTHORITY AND COMPLIANCE

WS is authorized by law to reduce damage caused by animals through the Act of March 2, 1931 (46 Stat. 1468; 7 USC 426-426b), as amended and the Act of December 22, 1987 (101 Stat. 1329-331, 7 USC 426c). Management of wildlife in the State is the responsibility of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets can make regulatory changes to the operation of enclosed shooting facilities that have either domestic swine, Eurasian wild boar, or hybrids of the two on their premises, as well as making regulatory changes to the importation of swine for these and other purposes in the State of New York. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets provides consultation and information to WS and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regarding the regulation and husbandry of swine in New York. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service can provide funds to fish and wildlife agencies for projects to restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals and their habitat through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program, including funding to manage damage caused by feral swine to natural resources.

The EA and this Decision ensures WS' actions comply with the NEPA, with the Council on Environmental Quality guidelines (40 CFR 1500), and with APHIS' NEPA implementing regulations (7 CFR 372). All activities, including disposal requirements, would be conducted consistent with: 1) the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 2) the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, 3) the Airborne Hunting Act, 4) applicable Executive Orders, and 5) applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies, including WS' Directives.

DECISIONS TO BE MADE

Based on the scope of the EA, the decisions to be made are: 1) should Wildlife Services and cooperating agencies fund and conduct feral swine damage management to alleviate damage to agriculture, property, natural resources, and threats to human safety, 2) should Wildlife Services and the cooperating agencies fund and conduct disease surveillance and monitoring in the feral swine population when requested, 3) should Wildlife Services and the cooperating agencies fund and implement an integrated wildlife damage management strategy, including technical assistance and direct operation assistance, to meet the need for feral swine damage management in New York, 4) if not, should Wildlife Services and the cooperating agencies attempt to fund and implement one of the alternatives to an integrated damage management strategy as described in the EA, and 5) would the proposed action result in significant effects to the human environment requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Feral swine damage or threats can occur wherever feral swine occur within the State. Currently, feral swine populations in New York are located in proximity to enclosed shooting facilities suggesting that swine may have escaped from those facilities (USDA 2010). Feral swine have been located in Tioga, Cortland, Onondaga, Clinton, Sullivan, and Delaware counties, but may also occur in other areas of New York. However, assistance with the management of feral swine damage would only be conducted by WS when requested by a landowner or manager and only on properties where a cooperative service agreement or other comparable document had been signed between Wildlife Services and a cooperating agency, business, organization, or landowner.

Upon receiving a request for assistance, feral swine damage management activities could be conducted on federal, state, tribal, municipal, and private properties in New York. Areas where damage or threats of damage could occur include, but would not be limited to agricultural fields, orchards, farmyards, ranches, livestock operations, aquaculture facilities, industrial sites, natural areas, government properties and facilities, private properties, corporate properties, schools, parks, woodlots, recreation areas, communally-owned homeowner/property owner association properties, wildlife refuges, levees, dikes, and wildlife management areas. The area would also include airports and military airbases where feral swine could pose a threat to human safety and to property; areas where feral swine negatively affect wildlife, including T&E species; and public property where feral swine were negatively affecting historic structures, cultural landscapes, and natural resources.

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH FERAL SWINE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Issues related to managing damage associated with feral swine in New York were defined and preliminary alternatives were identified by WS and the cooperating agencies. The EA was also made available to the public for review and comment through notices published in local media and through direct notification of potentially interested parties.

Chapter 2 of the EA describes in detail the issues considered and evaluated in the EA (USDA 2012). The following issues were identified as important to the scope of the analysis (40 CFR 1508.25) with each alternative evaluated in the EA relative to the impacts on those major issues:

- Issue 1 - Effects of Damage Management Activities on Feral Swine Populations
- Issue 2 - Effects on Non-target Wildlife Species Populations, Including T&E Species
- Issue 3 - Effects of Damage Management Methods on Human Health and Safety
- Issue 4 - Effects on the Aesthetic Values of Feral Swine
- Issue 5 - Humaneness and Animal Welfare Concerns of Methods

ISSUES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL WITH RATIONALE

In addition to those issues analyzed in detail, several issues were identified during the development of the EA but were not considered in detail. The rationale for the decision not to analyze those issues in detail is discussed in the EA. Those issues not analyzed in detail were:

- Appropriateness of Preparing an EA (Instead of an EIS) For Such a Large Area
- Threats to Biodiversity from Damage Management Activities
- A Loss Threshold Should Be Established Before Allowing Lethal Methods
- Harvest of Feral Swine through Hunting
- Donation Of Feral Swine Taken Through Management Activities For Human Consumption

- Feral Swine Damage Management Should Not Occur at Taxpayer Expense
- Cost Effectiveness of Management Methods
- Effectiveness of Feral Swine Damage Management Methods
- Feral Swine Damage Should Be Managed By Private Nuisance Wildlife Control Agents
- Effects from the Use of Lead Ammunition in Firearms
- Potential for Feral Swine to Disperse to Other Areas Due to Management Activities
- A Site Specific Analysis Should be Made for Every Location Where Feral Swine Damage Management Would Occur

DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES

The following three alternatives were developed to respond to the issues identified in Chapter 2 of the EA (USDA 2012). A detailed discussion of the effects of the alternatives on the issues was described in the EA under Chapter 4; below is a summary of the alternatives.

Alternative 1 – No Feral Swine Damage Management Conducted by Wildlife Services

Under the no involvement alternative, WS would not be involved with any aspect of managing damage caused by feral swine in New York. All requests for assistance received by WS would be referred to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Marks, and/or other entities. Most of the methods described in Appendix B of the EA would be available under this alternative. The only methods that would not be available to manage damage caused by feral swine under this alternative would be immobilizing drugs, euthanasia chemicals, aerial shooting, cable restraints, and foot snares; however, those methods could be used by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and their cooperators. All other methods described in Appendix B of the EA would be available to those persons experiencing damage.

Alternative 2 – Feral Swine Damage Management by Wildlife Services through Technical Assistance Only

Under the technical assistance only alternative, WS would address every request for assistance with technical assistance only. Technical assistance would provide those persons seeking assistance with information and recommendations on methods and techniques that those cooperators could implement without WS' direct involvement in the action. Technical assistance could be provided through personal or telephone consultations and through site visits. Under this alternative, the immediate burden of resolving threats or damage associated with feral swine would be placed on those persons experiencing damage. Those persons could employ methods recommended by WS, could employ other methods, could seek further assistance from other entities, or could take no further action.

Similar to Alternative 1, methods described in Appendix B would be available to those persons experiencing damage or threats associated with feral swine in the State except for immobilizing drugs, euthanasia chemicals, aerial shooting, cable restraints, and foot snares; however, those methods could be used by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and their cooperators. All other methods described in Appendix B of the EA would be available to those persons experiencing damage.

Alternative 3 - Continuing the Current Integrated Approach to Managing Feral Swine Damage (Proposed Action/No Action)

The proposed action would continue the current program of employing an integrated damage management approach using available methods, as appropriate, to reduce damage associated with feral

swine in the State. An integrated methods strategy would be recommended and used, encompassing the use of practical and effective methods of preventing or reducing damage while minimizing harmful effects of damage management measures on people, other species, and the environment. Non-lethal methods would be given preference in the formulation of each damage management strategy, and would be recommended or implemented when practical and effective before recommending or implementing lethal methods. However, non-lethal methods would not always be applied as a first response to each damage problem. The most appropriate response could often be a combination of non-lethal and lethal methods, or there could be instances where application of lethal methods alone would be the most appropriate strategy. Technical assistance provided under this alternative would be similar to technical assistance provided under Alternative 2.

All of the methods addressed in Appendix B of the EA would be available to WS for use to resolve requests for assistance to manage damage associated with feral swine in the State. Using the WS Decision model discussed in the EA, WS could employ methods singularly or in combination in an integrated approach to alleviate damage caused by feral swine.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL WITH RATIONALE

Additional alternatives were also evaluated but were not considered in detail in the EA with rationale provided. The alternatives analyzed but not in detail included:

- Non-lethal Methods Implemented Before Lethal Methods
- Use of Lethal Methods Only
- Live Trapping and Translocate Only
- Use of Non-lethal Methods Only
- Reducing Damage by Managing Feral Swine Populations through the Use of Reproductive Inhibitors
- Compensation for Feral Swine Damage
- Bounties

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR FERAL SWINE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

The current WS program uses many standard operating procedures. Standard operating procedures were discussed in Chapter 3 of the EA (USDA 2012). Those standard operating procedures would be incorporated into activities conducted by WS under the proposed action alternative (Alternative 3) and when applicable, under the technical assistance alternative (Alternative 2). If the no involvement by WS alternative (Alternative 1) were selected, the lack of assistance by WS would preclude the employment or recommendation of those standard operating procedures addressed in the EA.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES FOR ISSUES ANALYZED IN DETAIL

The EA analyzed the environmental consequences of each alternative as the alternatives related to the issues identified to provide information needed for making informed decisions in selecting the appropriate alternative to address the need for action. The following resource values in New York are not expected to be significantly impacted by any of the alternatives analyzed in the EA: soils, geology, minerals, water quality/quantity, flood plains, wetlands, critical habitats (areas listed in threatened and endangered (T&E) species recovery plans), visual resources, air quality, prime and unique farmlands, aquatic resources, timber, and range. The activities proposed in the alternatives would have a negligible effect on atmospheric conditions including the global climate. Meaningful direct or indirect emissions of greenhouse gases would not occur because of any of the alternatives. Those alternatives would meet the

requirements of applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders, including the Clean Air Act and Executive Order 13514.

Chapter 4 of the EA analyzed the environmental consequences of each alternative in comparison to determine the extent of actual or potential impacts on the major issues identified in the EA. The proposed action/no action alternative served as the baseline for the analysis and the comparison of expected impacts among the alternatives. The analyses also take into consideration mandates, directives, and the procedures of WS and the cooperating agencies. The analyses in Chapter 4 of the EA indicated the potential impacts to the quality of the human environment would be similar across the alternatives.

Issue 1 - Effects of Damage Management Activities on Feral Swine Populations

Under the proposed action, WS could incorporate non-lethal and lethal methods described in Appendix B of the EA in an integrated approach in which all or a combination of methods could be employed to resolve a request for assistance. WS could recommend and operationally employ both non-lethal and lethal methods, as governed by Federal, State, and local laws and regulations under the proposed action. Similarly, WS could recommend the use of non-lethal and/or lethal methods under Alternative 2; however, WS would not provide direct operational assistance.

Non-lethal methods could be used to exclude, harass, and disperse target wildlife from areas where damage or threats were occurring. Non-lethal methods available under the alternatives could disperse or otherwise make an area unattractive to feral swine that were causing damage, which could reduce the presence of feral swine at the site and potentially the immediate area around the site where non-lethal methods were employed. Non-lethal methods would be given preference when addressing requests for assistance under Alternative 2 and Alternative 3. However, non-lethal methods would not necessarily be employed to resolve every request for assistance if deemed inappropriate by WS' personnel using the WS Decision Model, especially in situations where the requesting entity had already attempted to resolve the damage or threats of damage using non-lethal methods. When effective, non-lethal methods would disperse feral swine from the area resulting in a reduction in the presence of those swine at the site where those methods were employed. Non-lethal methods are generally regarded as having minimal effects on overall populations of wildlife since those species would be unharmed. Non-lethal methods would not be employed over large geographical areas or applied at such intensity that essential resources (*e.g.*, food sources, habitat) would be unavailable for extended durations or over a wide geographical scope that long-term adverse effects would occur to a species' population. The continued use of non-lethal methods often leads to the habituation of wildlife to those methods, which can decrease the effectiveness of those methods.

When employed under the alternatives, lethal methods would often be employed to remove those animals that have been identified as causing damage or posing a threat to human safety. The use of lethal methods could result in local reductions of feral swine in the area where damage or threats were occurring. Under the proposed action alternative, WS could be requested to provide direct operational assistance where WS employs lethal methods to remove feral swine. The number of individuals removed from the population annually by WS using lethal methods would be dependent on the number of requests for assistance received, the number of individuals involved with the associated damage or threat, and the efficacy of methods employed. The level of estimated annual lethal take addressed in the EA under the proposed action alternative was based on activities that were conducted to address previous requests for assistance. In addition, the estimated annual lethal take level was based on additional efforts of WS to address requests for assistance. As discussed in Chapter 1 of the EA, feral swine populations can increase and expand rapidly. If the feral swine population increases and expands in the State, additional efforts could occur by WS to address requests for assistance.

Feral swine that could be removed by WS under the proposed action could be taken by those persons experiencing damage or threats in the absence of WS' direct involvement under the other alternatives. In addition, feral swine in New York are considered an invasive species and can be taken throughout the year where legal by those persons holding a legal small game hunting license. Feral swine can be lethally removed during the day and at night. Since the lack of WS' direct involvement does not preclude the lethal take of feral swine by those persons experiencing damage or threats, WS' involvement in the taking of those swine under the proposed action would not be additive to the number of swine that could be taken by other entities in the absence of WS' involvement. The number of feral swine taken annually would likely be similar across the alternatives, since the take of feral swine could occur even if WS was not directly involved with providing assistance under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Those activities proposed, including the proposed take of feral swine under Alternative 3, would not be additive to the number of animals that could be taken by other entities under the other alternatives despite the lack of WS' involvement.

In addition, most non-lethal and lethal methods available for resolving damage or threats associated with feral swine would be available under any of the alternatives. Immobilizing drugs, euthanasia chemicals, aerial shooting, cable restraints, and foot snares would be the only methods that would not be available under all of the alternatives; however, those methods could be used by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and their cooperators. Based on the evaluation in the EA (USDA 2012), the availability of those methods under the proposed action alternative would not pose significant environmental risks when used by trained WS personnel and in accordance with their use guidelines.

The goal of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is to eliminate current populations of feral swine in the State and to prevent feral swine from becoming established. Therefore, any reduction in the current or future population of feral swine in the State would occur pursuant to the goals of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Any removal of feral swine by WS would also occur pursuant to Executive Order 13112, which requires federal agencies, to the extent practical and permitted by law, reduce invasion of exotic species and the associated damages.

Since the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulates wildlife populations in the State, including feral swine, any reduction in the feral swine population in New York that might occur under this alternative would occur within the management objectives established by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Issue 2 - Effects on Non-target Wildlife Species Populations, Including T&E Species

Another issue often raised is the potential impacts to populations of wildlife that could be taken as non-targets during damage management activities. While efforts would be made to minimize the risks of lethally taking non-target wildlife, the potential does exist for the unintentional take of non-targets during damage management activities.

Under the no involvement by WS alternative, WS would not be directly involved with any aspect of managing damage associated with feral swine; therefore, no direct impacts to non-targets would occur from WS. Under the technical assistance only alternative, WS could provide information on the proper use of methods and provide demonstration on the use of methods but would not be directly involved with using methods to alleviate feral swine damage or threats. Similar to the no WS involvement alternative, under the technical assistance alternative, if methods were applied as intended and with regard for non-target hazards by other entities, those methods would not result in the decline of non-target species' populations. If requestors were provided technical assistance but did not implement any of the recommended actions and took no further action, the potential impacts to non-targets would be lower compared to the proposed action. If those persons requesting assistance implemented recommended

methods appropriately and as instructed or demonstrated, the potential impacts to non-targets would be similar to the proposed action. Methods or techniques not implemented as recommended or used inappropriately would likely increase risks to non-targets. When employing direct operational assistance under the proposed action alternative, WS could employ methods and use techniques that would avoid non-target take as described in Chapter 3 of the EA under the standard operating procedures.

The ability to reduce damage and threats caused by feral swine would be variable and would be based upon the skills and abilities of the person implementing damage management actions under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. If those methods available were applied as intended, risks to non-targets would be minimal to non-existent. If methods available were applied incorrectly or applied without knowledge of wildlife behavior, risks to non-target wildlife would be higher under any of the alternatives. If frustration from the lack of available assistance under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 caused those persons experiencing feral swine damage to use methods that were not legally available for use, risks to non-targets would be higher under those alternatives. People have resorted to the use of illegal methods to resolve wildlife damage that have resulted in the lethal take of non-target wildlife. Under the proposed action alternative, those persons could request direct operational assistance from WS to reduce damage and threats occurring, which would increase the likelihood that non-target species would be unaffected by damage management activities.

The New England Field Office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a website that provides up-to-date species occurrence information and provides an outline for action agencies to assist in determining whether consultation for projects is needed under Section 7 of the ESA. Based on review of the website, if T&E species were not present in the project area, WS would conclude the project would have "*no effect*" on T&E species. The no effect determination would be based on the absence of those species in the project area; therefore, no further consultation would occur with the USFWS as indicated by the website and pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA. If, after review of the procedures on the website, WS determines T&E species may be present in a project area based on information provided on the website, WS would follow those procedures outlined on the website to conclude with a determination of effects and the need for further consultation pursuant to Section 7.

In addition, WS has reviewed the List of Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Fish and Wildlife Species in New York State. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has concurred that for all actions delineated in Alternative 3 and Appendix B of this EA, WS would not likely adversely affect State-listed species.

Issue 3 - Effects of Damage Management Methods on Human Health and Safety

The threats to human safety from methods available would be similar across the alternatives since those methods would be available under all the alternatives. However, the expertise of WS' employees in using those methods available likely would reduce threats to human safety since WS' employees would be trained and knowledgeable in the use of those methods. If methods were used incorrectly or without regard for human safety, risks to human safety would increase under any of the alternatives that those methods could be employed. The EA determined that the availability of immobilizing drugs, euthanasia chemicals, aerial shooting, cable restraints, and foot snares under the proposed action alternative would not increase risks to human safety from the use of those methods under the proposed action alternative. Although risks do occur from the use of immobilizing drugs, euthanasia chemicals, aerial shooting, cable restraints, and foot snares, when those methods were used in consideration of human safety, the use of those methods would not pose additional risks to human safety beyond those associated with the use of other methods. No adverse effects to human safety occurred from WS' use of methods to alleviate feral swine damage in the State from FY 2008 through FY 2012. The risks to human safety from the use of

non-lethal and lethal methods, when used appropriately and by trained personnel, would be considered low.

Issue 4 - Effects on the Aesthetic Values of Feral Swine

Feral swine may provide aesthetic enjoyment to people in the State through observations, photographing, and knowing they exist as part of the environment. Methods available that could be employed under each of the alternatives would result in the dispersal, exclusion, or removal of individuals or small groups of feral swine to resolve damage and threats. Therefore, the use of methods often results in the removal of feral swine from the area where damage was occurring or the dispersal of feral swine from an area. Since methods available for use to manage damage would be similar across the alternatives, the use of those methods would have similar potential impacts on the aesthetics of feral swine. Executive Order 13112 directs federal agencies whose actions may affect the status of invasive species to reduce invasion of those species and the associated damages to the extent practicable and permitted by law. All activities would be conducted where a request for assistance was received and only after agreement for such services had been agreed upon by the cooperator. Some loss of aesthetic value would be gained by the removal of an invasive species and the return of a more natural environment, including the return of native wildlife and plant species that may be suppressed or displaced by the presence of invasive feral swine. The effects on the aesthetic values of feral swine would therefore be similar across the alternatives and would be minimal.

Issue 5 - Humaneness and Animal Welfare Concerns of Methods

The issue of humaneness was also analyzed in relationship to methods available under each of the alternatives. Since many methods addressed in Appendix B of the EA would be available under all the alternatives, the issue of method humaneness would be similar for those methods across all the alternatives. As stated previously, immobilizing drugs, euthanasia chemicals, aerial shooting, cable restraints, and foot snares would be the only methods that would not be available to all entities under the alternatives. The ability of WS to provide direct operational assistance under the proposed action alternative would ensure methods were employed by WS as humanely as possible. Under the other alternatives, methods could be used by other entities inhumanely if used inappropriately or without consideration of feral swine behavior. However, the efficacy of methods employed by a cooperator would be based on the skill and knowledge of the requestor in resolving the threat to safety or damage situation despite WS' demonstration. A lack of understanding of the behavior of feral swine or improperly identifying the damage caused by feral swine along with inadequate knowledge and skill in using methodologies to resolve the damage or threat could lead to incidents with a greater probability of being perceived as inhumane under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Despite the lack of involvement by WS under Alternative 1 and WS' limited involvement under Alternative 2, those methods perceived as inhumane by certain individuals and groups would still be available to the public to use to resolve damage and threats caused by feral swine.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

No significant cumulative environmental impacts were identified from any of the three alternatives, including the proposed action. Under the proposed action, the lethal removal of feral swine by WS would occur within the management objectives established by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for feral swine populations in the State. No risk to public safety was identified when activities are provided and expected by requesting individuals under Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 since only trained and experienced personnel would conduct and/or recommend damage management activities. There is a slight increased risk to public safety when persons who reject assistance and recommendations conduct their own activities under Alternative 2, and when no assistance is provided under Alternative 1.

However, under all of the alternatives, those risks would not be to the point that the effects would be significant. The analysis in the EA indicates that an integrated approach to managing damage and threats caused by feral swine would not result in significant cumulative effects on the quality of the human environment.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Based on the analyses in the EA of the alternatives developed to address the issues associated with meeting the need for action, including individual and cumulative impacts of those alternatives, the following decision has been reached:

Decision

I have carefully reviewed the EA prepared to meet the need for action. I find the proposed action alternative (Alternative 3) to be environmentally acceptable, addressing the issues and needs while balancing the environmental concerns of management agencies, landowners, advocacy groups, and the public. The analyses in the EA adequately addresses the identified issues, which reasonably confirm that no significant impact, individually or cumulatively, to wildlife populations or the quality of the human environment are likely to occur from the proposed action, nor does the proposed action constitute a major federal action. Therefore, the analysis in the EA does not warrant the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Based on the analyses in the EA, the issues identified are best addressed by selecting Alternative 3 (proposed action/no action) and applying the associated standard operating procedures discussed in Chapter 3 of the EA. Alternative 3 successfully addresses (1) damage management using a combination of the most effective methods and does not adversely impact the environment, property, human health and safety, target species, and/or non-target species, including T&E species; (2) it offers the greatest chance of maximizing effectiveness and benefits to resource owners and managers; (3) it presents the greatest chance of maximizing net benefits while minimizing adverse effects to public health and safety; and (4) it offers a balanced approach to the issues of humaneness and aesthetics when all facets of those issues are considered. Further analysis would be triggered if changes occur that broaden the scope of damage management activities in the State, that affect the natural or human environment, or from the issuance of new environmental regulations. Therefore, it is my decision to implement the proposed action/no action alternative (Alternative 3) as described in the EA.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analyses provided in the EA, there are no indications that the proposed action (Alternative 3) would have a significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. I agree with this conclusion and therefore, find that an Environmental Impact Statement should not be prepared. This determination is based on the following factors:

1. Damage management, as conducted by WS in the State, would not be regional or national in scope.

2. The proposed action would pose minimal risk to public health and safety. Based on the analyses in the EA, the methods available would not adversely affect human safety based on their use patterns and standard operating procedures.

3. There were no unique characteristics such as parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic areas, or ecologically critical areas that would be significantly affected. WS' standard

operating procedures and adherence to applicable laws and regulations would further ensure that WS' activities would not harm the environment.

4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial. Although there is some opposition to damage management, this action is not highly controversial in terms of size, nature, or effect.

5. Based on the analysis documented in the EA and the accompanying administrative file, the effects of the proposed damage management program on the human environment would not be significant. The effects of the proposed activities are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks.

6. The proposed action would not establish a precedent for any future action with significant effects.

7. No significant cumulative effects were identified through the assessment. The EA analyzed cumulative effects and concluded that such impacts were not significant for this or other anticipated actions to be implemented or planned within the State of New York.

8. The proposed activities would not affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor would they likely cause any loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

9. WS would review the United States Fish and Wildlife Service website and the online measures described on the website on a site-by-site basis to determine if any T&E species were located within the project area in order to conclude with a determination of effects. Based on a determination of effects, WS would consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with the Endangered Species Act, if required.

10. The proposed action would comply with all applicable federal, State, and local laws.

11. No significant cumulative effects were identified by this assessment or other actions implemented or planned within the area.

Rationale

The rationale for this decision is based on several considerations. This decision takes into account public comments, social/political and economic concerns, public health and safety, and the best available science. The foremost considerations are that: 1) damage management would only be conducted by WS at the request of landowners/managers, 2) management actions would be consistent with applicable laws, regulations, policies and orders, and 3) no adverse effects to the environment were identified in the analysis. As a part of this Decision, the WS program in New York would continue to provide effective and practical technical assistance and direct management techniques that reduce damage and threats of damage.

2/1/13

Charles S. Brown, Director-Eastern Region
USDA/APHIS/WS
Raleigh, North Carolina

Date

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APPENDIX A

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: FERAL SWINE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT IN NEW YORK

During the public involvement process for the EA, WS received six comment letters. WS has reviewed the comment letters to identify additional issues, alternatives, and/or concerns that were not addressed in the EA. Those comments received during the public involvement process are summarized below along with WS' response to those comments.

Comment 1 – A federal/state multiagency approach is necessary to achieve success; support for the involvement of WS, the New York State Invasive Species Council, Invasive Species Advisory Committee, and the environmental, agricultural, and human health communities; support WS and cooperating agencies providing funding, disease monitoring, and strategy development

The EA was prepared by WS, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Wildlife, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to: 1) facilitate planning, 2) promote interagency coordination, 3) streamline program management, 4) clearly communicate to the public the analysis of individual and cumulative impacts of proposed activities; and 5) evaluate and determine if there would be any potentially significant or cumulative effects from the proposed program or the alternatives. The analyses contained in the EA were based on information derived from WS' Management Information System, published documents, interagency consultations, and public involvement. The authorities of the cooperating agencies, as those authorities relate to conducting damage management activities, were discussed by agency in Section 1.5 of the EA.

Comment 2 – Commenter strongly disagrees that WS should be the lead agency in managing feral swine

As stated in Section 1.7 of the EA, based on agency relationships, MOUs, and legislative authorities, WS was the lead agency during the development of the EA. All federal actions are subject to evaluation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (see Section 1.6 of the EA). Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, the EA documents the analyses resulting from proposed federal actions, informs decision-makers, and the public of reasonable alternatives capable of avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts, and serves as a decision-aiding mechanism to ensure that the policies and goals of the National Environmental Policy Act are infused into federal agency actions. When a non-federal entity (*e.g.*, state agency, agricultural producers, counties, private companies, individuals, or any other non-federal entity) takes an action to alleviate feral swine damage or threat, the action is not subject to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act due to the lack of federal involvement in the action. WS was the lead agency during the development of the EA based the actions of WS being subject to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The authorities of WS and the cooperating agencies were discussed in Section 1.5 of the EA.

Comment 3 – Convene a stakeholders meeting to articulate the problem to all groups and seek common ground for solutions

As stated in Section 1.1 of the EA, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, USDA-Veterinary Services, and WS all serve together on the New York State Feral Swine Task Force. The task force serves as a venue to share technical information and expertise between agencies. In addition, WS has participated in numerous public speaking events addressing sportsman's groups, Cornell Cooperative Extensions, state fairs, and

other private interest groups to instill a better understanding of the threats posed by feral swine in New York.

Comment 4 – Feral swine should be added to the list of regulated and prohibited non-native invasive species list by the New York State Invasive Species Council; Invasive Species Prevention Act should be used to list feral swine as a prohibited species and to make it illegal to possess, sell, or release non-domestic swine; demand New York State institute a heavy deterrent to the intentional release of feral swine; support for better oversight of the unintentional and intentional release of feral swine from hunting facilities

The New York State Invasive Species Council is the statutory body that was created in 2008 by Title 17, Section 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL). The Council already lists feral swine on their list of invasive species in New York. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Office of Invasive Species Coordination is evaluating the potential ecological invasivity of non-native animal species and feral swine are among the animal species to be assessed on the draft list to be regulated as a non-native species. The assessment will be completed by April of 2013. Following the assessment, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets may institute regulatory changes for swine at enclosed shooting facilities, breeding farms, or other domestic swine operations, as they deem necessary. WS does not have the authority to change state laws or regulations.

Comment 5 – Direct eradication efforts that do not address the source problem are not fiscally responsible and will result in long-term management difficulties; main vectors include escapes from hunting clubs, intentional releases for hunting purposes, natural movement of feral swine in New York and across state borders

WS agrees direct eradication efforts would be more effective if the source of feral swine was stopped. Otherwise, eradication efforts may be continuous and never meet stated program objectives. Passage of new legislation creates opportunity for state agencies to address importation, transportation, and release of swine in New York. Current legislation does create opportunity to restrict movement of feral swine depending on final classification of swine's invasiveness.

Comment 6 – EA should address the need for better oversight, management, and operation of enclosed shooting facilities in New York; licensing of enclosed hunting facilities should require posting a bond or similar mechanism to fund feral swine removal activities; hunting facilities should be required to sterilize swine on their facility to prevent reproduction if swine escape; require feral swine at hunting facilities to be marked to identify their origin in the event of an escape

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is responsible for the regulation of swine occurring within enclosed shooting facilities and would be responsible for any changes to current law or regulation, including any provisions that would require the sterilization of swine. Currently, the importation of any livestock, including swine, into New York requires an approved Certificate of Veterinary Inspection completed by a category 2 accredited veterinarian. The Certificate must include the name and address of both the origin and destination of each animal, date of issue, and dates and results of qualifying tests. Each animal must be identified by a unique ear tag, registration or premises tattoo or microchip. A copy of the completed certificate of veterinary inspection must be forwarded to the Department of Agriculture of the state of origin prior to shipment into New York.

Comment 7 – Establish a multi-state agreement to limit the migration of feral swine into New York, particularly from Pennsylvania; encourage WS to work with entities in Pennsylvania to remove feral swine within a 100-mile buffer of the New York border

WS has and would continue to work with entities within Pennsylvania to respond to damage caused by feral swine.

Comment 8 – Commenter supports the proposed action alternative

Chapter 3 of the EA contains a discussion of the alternatives that were developed to address the identified issues discussed in Chapter 2. Alternatives were developed for consideration using the WS Decision Model based on the issues identified in the EA. The EA discusses the issues associated with conducting activities to reduce feral swine damage to meet the need for action and evaluates different alternatives to meet that need while addressing those issues.

The proposed action alternative (Alternative 3) would continue the current integrated approach to managing damage by adaptively using those methods available. Methods available under the alternatives, including the proposed action alternative, were discussed in Section 3.1, Section 4.1, Section 4.2, and Appendix B of the EA.

Comment 9 – Commenter supports the goal of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation of eradicating feral swine in the State

As was stated throughout the EA, the goal of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is to eradicate current populations of feral swine from New York. Methods that would be available under the applicable alternatives would be employed to reduce and/or prevent feral swine damage in the State and those activities would be coordinated with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to ensure that actions were consistent with population goals established for feral swine in the State.

Comment 10 – Commenter cannot identify any negative effects that would require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement

The purpose of the EA is to evaluate cumulatively the individual projects conducted by WS to manage damage and threats to agricultural resources, property, natural resources, and threats to humans caused by feral swine. The EA also assisted in determining if the proposed cumulative management of feral swine damage could have a significant impact on the environment based on previous activities conducted by WS and based on the anticipation of conducting addition efforts to manage damage caused by feral swine. WS and the cooperating agencies prepared the EA to: 1) facilitate planning, 2) promote interagency coordination, 3) streamline program management, 4) clearly communicate to the public the analysis of individual and cumulative impacts of proposed activities; and 5) evaluate and determine if there would be any potentially significant or cumulative effects from the proposed program or the alternatives.

Comment 11 – Commenter supports an integrated approach using non-lethal and lethal methods

Methods available to resolve damage or threats to human safety under the alternatives are categorized into lethal and non-lethal methods. When providing technical assistance or direct operational assistance under the alternatives, WS would give preference to non-lethal methods when those methods were deemed practical and effect (see WS Directive 2.101). Under the technical assistance only alternative and the proposed action alternative, WS would recommend or employ an integrated approach to managing feral

swine damage, using those methods that were available and deemed appropriate to resolving a specific damage situation.

Comment 12 – Preference should be given to lethal methods before non-lethal methods

Pursuant to WS Directive 2.101, preference would be given to non-lethal methods when practical and effective to alleviate damage. Under the proposed action alternative, WS could employ only non-lethal methods when determined to be appropriate for each request for assistance to alleviate damage or reduce threats of damage using the WS Decision Model. In some situations, a cooperating entity has tried to employ non-lethal methods to resolve damage prior to contacting WS for assistance. In those cases, the methods employed by the requester were either unsuccessful or the reduction in damage or threats had not reached a level that was tolerable by the requesting entity. In those situations, WS could employ other non-lethal methods, attempt to apply the same non-lethal methods, or employ lethal methods. In many situations, the implementation of non-lethal methods, such as exclusion-type barriers, would be the responsibility of the requestor, which means that, in those situations, the only function of WS would be to implement lethal methods, if determined to be appropriate using the WS Decision Model.

Comment 13 – Using translocation seems counterproductive

An alternative that would have required WS to live-capture and translocate feral swine causing damage was considered during the development of the EA but was not analyzed in detail (see Section 3.3 of the EA). Since WS does not have the authority to translocate feral swine in the State unless permitted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the alternative was not considered in detail.

Comment 14 – Habitat alteration may be a long-term strategy; however, in the short-term, would only move animals and create problems elsewhere

As was stated in the EA, "[m]*odifying a site to be less attractive to feral swine would likely result in the dispersal of those feral swine to other areas where damage could occur or could result in multiple occurrences of damage situations*". The potential for feral swine to disperse to other areas from management activities was identified as an issue during the development of the EA (see Section 2.3 of the EA). The issue was not evaluated in detail for the reasons provided in Section 2.3 of the EA, primarily due to the limited use of methods that would result in the dispersal of feral swine.

Comment 15 – The availability of foot-snares, cable-restraints, and immobilizing drugs to WS provides an unfair advantage over private Wildlife Control Officers

WS would adhere to all applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations in accordance with WS Directive 2.210. Foot-snares and cable-restraints would only be used by WS when permitted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Immobilizing drugs would only be used by WS in limited situations, primarily when swine must be restrained and immobilized during the fitting of a radio collar for tracking purposes. In addition, in accordance with WS Directive 3.101, WS would notify those persons requesting assistance that other services were available, including assistance from private entities.

Comment 16 – The use of foot-snares, cable-restraints, and immobilizing drugs violates the values of New York citizens

As stated previously, WS would adhere to all applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations in accordance with WS Directive 2.210. Foot-snares and cable-restraints would only be used by WS when permitted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Therefore, the New York

State Department of Environmental Conservation would determine the appropriateness and extent of their use by WS to manage feral swine damage. Those immobilizing drugs that would be available to WS are commonly used drugs available to veterinarians and are frequently used to sedate and immobilize animals.

Comment 17 – Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) surveys are recommended in the EA despite previous reports stating that FLIR surveys were not highly effective; if effective, additional evidence should be provided in the EA

WS has used Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) devices as part of a combination of tools to locate feral swine in New York (USDA 2010). In a reported prepared by WS in 2010, WS notes that only one feral swine was documented during FLIR surveys (USDA 2010). WS makes no claims as to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the use of FLIR devices in the report. FLIR devices are merely used as an additional tool to aid in locating feral swine. The type of habitat being surveyed by a FLIR device can influence the detection rates for target species (Bernatas 2006). Dense cover can make it difficult to locate wildlife because target species can be obscured, while open areas such as agricultural fields have higher detection rates (Bernatas 2006). Due to the diverse landscapes in which WS surveys for feral swine, detection rates through the use of FLIR devices are expected to vary, which is why WS uses a combination of tools and strategies to survey for feral swine in New York.

Comment 18 – Wildlife Control Officers are licensed by the State and should be given the opportunity to participate fully in managing feral swine; puzzled why Wildlife Control Officers were not included in the discussions and management planning

An issue identified during the development of the EA was concerns that damage management activities in the State should be conducted by wildlife control agents and/or private entities (see Section 2.3 of the EA). As identified in Section 2.3 of the EA, Problem Animal Control agents and private trappers could be contacted to reduce damage when deemed appropriate by the resource owner. In addition, WS could refer persons requesting assistance to agents and/or private entities under all of the alternatives fully evaluated in the EA.

One reason the EA was developed was to evaluate cumulatively the potential effects of WS' proposed activities, the activities of Problem Animal Control agents, private trappers, and other entities. WS' statutory authority for managing damage associated with wildlife, including feral swine, was discussed in Section 1.5 of the EA. In addition, WS Directive 3.101 provides guidance on establishing cooperative projects and interfacing with private businesses. In addition, in accordance with WS Directive 3.101, WS would notify those persons requesting assistance that other services were available, including assistance from private entities.

Comment 19 – Small businesses know how to provide superior customer service, federal workers do not

WS' statutory authority for managing damage associated with wildlife, including feral swine, was discussed in Section 1.5 of the EA. The need for action to manage damage and threats associated with feral swine arises from requests for assistance received by WS and the cooperating agencies. WS would only conduct activities after receiving a request for assistance. Before initiating activities, a Memorandum of Understanding, cooperative service agreement, or other comparable document must be signed between WS and the cooperating entity, which would list all the methods the property owner or manager would allow to be used on property they own and/or manage. Property owners or managers may choose to implement WS' recommendations on their own (*i.e.*, technical assistance), use services of private businesses, use volunteer services of private organizations, use the services of WS (*i.e.*, direct

operational assistance), take the management action themselves, or take no further action. The EA made no claims regarding the level of customer service provided by small businesses.

Comment 20 – Government agencies should not be competing with private businesses

As identified in Section 2.3 of the EA, wildlife control agents and private entities could be contacted to reduce feral swine damage when deemed appropriate by the resource owner. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation maintains a website of licensed nuisance wildlife control operators in the State[1]. In addition, WS could refer persons requesting assistance to agents and/or private trappers under all of the alternatives fully evaluated in the EA.

WS Directive 3.101 provides guidance on establishing cooperative projects and interfacing with private businesses. WS only responds to requests for assistance received. When responding to requests for assistance, WS would inform requesters that other service providers, including private entities, might be available to provide assistance. As stated in the EA, WS would follow all applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations, including the directives of WS.

Comment 21 – The EA did not give full consideration of the use of Wildlife Control Operators and discredits their participation based on false and misleading information

The commenter made statements that information in the EA regarding Wildlife Control Operators was false and misleading; however, the commenter provided no further information regarding the claims or how any statements in the EA were false or misleading.

The issue that feral swine damage should be managed by wildlife control agents was identified during the development of the EA (see Section 2.3 of the EA). The issue was not analyzed in detail for the reasons provided in Section 2.3 of the EA. WS Directive 3.101 provides guidance on establishing cooperative projects and interfacing with private businesses. WS only responds to requests for assistance received. When responding to requests for assistance, WS would inform requesters that other service providers, including private entities, might be available to provide assistance. In addition, WS could refer persons requesting assistance to agents and/or private entities under all of the alternatives fully evaluated in the EA.

Under the alternatives analyzed in detail in the EA, property owners or managers may choose to implement WS' recommendations on their own (*i.e.*, technical assistance), use services of private businesses, use volunteer services of private organizations, use the services of WS (*i.e.*, direct operational assistance), take the management action themselves, or take no further action.

Comment 22 – Commenter recommends inserting "*feral swine are also threats to watersheds, ecosystems, and listed species*" on page *i* of the EA after the first sentence of the first paragraph under the section titled "*Conflicts and Damage*"

WS appreciates this comment. To better reflect the potential damage that could occur from feral swine to watersheds, ecosystems, and listed species, WS has modified the sentence by replacing the word "*wildlife*" with "*natural resources*". The sentence previously stated that, "*The establishment of feral swine populations in New York is a concern due to the impacts they can have on resources such as **wildlife**, agriculture, property, and human health and safety* [emphasis added]". The sentence was modified to state, "*The establishment of feral swine populations in New York is a concern due to the impacts they can have on resources such as **natural resources**, agriculture, property, and human health*

[1]The website can be accessed at http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/81548.html; accessed January 16, 2013.

and safety [emphasis added]". The use of the phrase "*natural resources*" reflects the broad range of resources that could be damage by feral swine, including wildlife, ecosystems, watersheds, and threatened and endangered species.

Comment 23 – Commenter suggest clarification on the definition of feral swine in the third sentence of the first paragraph on page *i* of the EA

WS appreciates this comment. Feral swine populations in the United States are composed of escaped or intentionally released swine that have become feral and free-ranging. Although their appearances can be distinct, feral swine found in the United States are all recognized under the same scientific name *Sus scrofa*. To better clarify that all swine find in the United States, including New York, are known under the scientific name *S. scrofa*, the sentence in the EA was modified. The sentence was modified to read "*Although morphologically distinct, both feral swine and European wild boar are recognized as Sus scrofa. Feral swine are typically black or brown and weigh an average of 130 pounds*" instead of "*Although morphologically distinct, both feral swine and European wild boar are recognized as Sus scrofa; they are typically black or brown and weigh an average of 130 pounds.*"

Comment 24 – The conclusions on page 93 of the EA that "*no cumulative adverse effects on feral swine populations in New York...*" would occur "*...when targeting those feral swine responsible for damage*" appears to contradict the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation goal of eradicating feral swine in the State

As the EA states and the commenter identifies, the goal of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is to eradicate current populations of feral swine in the State and to prevent further establishment of feral swine populations. However, the goal of WS would be to respond to requests for assistance to manage damage or threats of damage. WS' goal would not be to reduce/eliminate feral swine populations in the State.

As discussed in Section 1.5 of the EA, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has management authority over wildlife in New York including free-ranging feral swine, while the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has regulatory authority over swine contained within enclosed shooting facilities and the authority to regulate the importation of swine into New York. As was also stated in Section 1.5 of the EA, the authority of WS is restricted to managing damage or threats of damage caused by animals. Therefore, WS does not have the authority to manage statewide populations of wildlife, including feral swine.

Under the appropriate alternatives, WS would conduct a coordinated program to alleviate damage in accordance with plans, goals, and objectives developed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Therefore, the cumulative take of feral swine annually or over time by WS would occur at the desire of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as part of management objectives for feral swine in the State. Under the relevant alternative, WS' activities associated with feral swine would target single animals or local populations at sites where their presence was causing unacceptable damage or posing threats to agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, or property. In addition, WS would only target those feral swine in areas where requests for assistance were received and only on properties where a cooperative service agreement or other comparable document had been signed between the property owner or manager and WS.

Any damage management activities involving lethal methods by Wildlife Services would be restricted to isolated individual sites. Some local populations may be temporarily reduced because of damage management activities aimed at reducing damage at a local site. Since the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regulates wildlife populations in the State, including feral swine, any

reduction in the feral swine population in New York that might occur under the alternatives would occur within the management objectives established by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Current long-term objectives of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are to suppress or eliminate feral swine from New York. Therefore, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has expressed the intent and desire to suppress or remove feral swine in the State. All activities to manage feral swine in the State would be conducted pursuant to Executive Order 13112 and from the direction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.