

Columbia National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Preliminary Issues That May Be Addressed

A range of alternative management approaches and their effects will be evaluated in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and associated environmental effects analysis, including current management practices. The planning team has identified issues to possibly be considered during CCP development. However, this list may or may not contain the final issues addressed— that’s up to we hear from you during this public scoping period. Please let us know what you think should be included in the CCP. Issues the CCP may address include:

- 1) *The species that should have management priority.* For example, should the refuge manage for species in decline (e.g., American bitterns) or for migratory waterfowl?
- 2) *Seasonal changes in access.* Should the pattern of public access be altered to protect species that are economically important (e.g., lesser sandhill cranes), in decline (e.g., burrowing owls), or of recreational value (e.g., Canada geese)?
- 3) *Adjustment of cropland management.* For example, should the current flooding of marsh areas that benefit some species (e.g., mallards, blue-wing teal) be altered to encourage nesting of other species (e.g., black-necked stilts)?
- 4) *Land acquisition and exchanges.* Are there lands that should be purchased or traded (from willing sellers) to benefit natural resources?
- 5) *Management of rare or threatened species.* How does the refuge protect and enhance populations of Washington ground squirrels, ferruginous hawks, sage sparrows, northern goshawk, sagebrush lizard, etc.?
- 6) *Upland habitat types.* What is the best balance between sagebrush habitats (e.g., supporting sage thrashers) and short-grass habitats (e.g., supporting long-billed curlews)?
- 7) *Appropriate uses of the refuge.* For example, is camping at the Soda Lake Campground an acceptable use under FWS policies?
- 8) *New recreational opportunities.* Are additional recreation opportunities available that do not inhibit the refuge’s primary purpose of migratory bird management (e.g., biking on roads closed to motorized vehicles)?

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- 9) *Changing the balance of existing uses.* For example, what is the proper balance between waterfowl hunting opportunities and waterfowl protection?
- 10) *Changes to the fishing program.* Should more refuge lakes be limited to selective gear, catch and release, or other “quality” management?
- 11) *The proper balance between invasive species management and providing habitat.* For example, should non-native Russian olive trees be removed even though they provide nesting sites for orioles and doves and cover for deer and pheasants?
- 12) *Changes to management of Crab Creek.* What priority should riparian restoration of the Crab Creek floodplain have over the next 15 years?
- 13) *New environmental education opportunities.* What role should the refuge play in education, including involvement in the newly established Ice Age Floods Trail?
- 14) *The refuge’s role outside its boundaries.* How involved should the refuge be in public and private lands cooperative projects?