



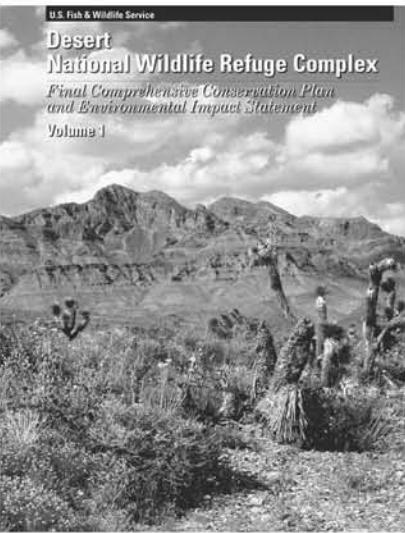
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Winter 2010 – Planning Update No. 6

Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement Approved

CCP Process Completed

The planning process for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex CCP is now complete. The Record of Decision has been signed, and implementation of the CCP can begin. There is, however, still much to accomplish before the vision for the Wildlife Refuges can be achieved. Funding must be identified to conduct and then implement detailed planning for the plan's habitat enhancement and restoration proposals. Other funding must be secured to implement the various public use proposals included in the approved CCP. Accomplishing the proposals included in the CCP will take time, funding, and continued input from you. We look forward to your continued participation as we move forward to implement the Final CCP for the Complex.



I am pleased to announce that the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was signed by Ren Lohofener, Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region, on September 24, 2009. The ROD is the decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for how Ash Meadows, Desert, Moapa Valley, and Pahranagat National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) will be managed over the next 15 years. The signing of the ROD signifies the approval of the CCP and adoption of Alternative C for Ash Meadows, Desert and Moapa Valley NWRs; and Alternative D for Pahranagat NWR. The ROD also verifies that the Final CCP/EIS has adequately addressed the issues identified during the planning process, and that the goals, objectives, and strategies proposed under the selected alternatives are consistent with Service policies, Wildlife Refuge purposes, and sound wildlife and habitat management practices.

We very much appreciate the time that many of you have taken to provide comments and recommendations throughout the CCP process. The involvement of dedicated individuals and various organizations and public agencies was essential to the development and completion of the CCP.

Your input will again be needed as we move forward with our step-down restoration and public use planning.

To keep you apprised of these planning efforts, updates will be included on our Wildlife Refuge Complex website. More information about keeping in touch is provided on page 3.

I thank you for your participation in the CCP process. With your assistance, we have completed the first step towards realizing the Service's vision of conserving the important and unique habitat that occurs within the Wildlife Refuges' boundaries; protecting the listed species and other fish, wildlife, and plants supported by these habitats; and providing compatible public uses that will enable the public to enjoy and appreciate the importance of protecting these resources for future generations.

Cynthia Martinez
Refuge Complex Manager

Selection of Alternatives

The Service will implement Alternative C (Implement Habitat for Endemic Species throughout the Wildlife Refuge and Increase Visitor Services) for Ash Meadows NWR; Alternative C (Moderate Improvement in Wildlife and Habitat Management and Minor Increase in Visitor Services) for Desert NWR; Alternative C (Improve Habitat and Wildlife Management throughout the Wildlife Refuge and Expand Visitor Services) for Moapa Valley NWR; and Alternative D (Moderate Improvements in Water Resource and Habitat Management and Moderate Increase in Visitor Services) for Pahranagat NWR, as described in the Final CCP/EIS. These alternatives best achieve each Wildlife Refuge's purposes and contribute toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife science, conservation, legal mandates, and Service policies.

The selected alternatives recognize the need to provide high quality habitat for the Wildlife Refuge's Federally listed species, while also maintaining and enhancing the habitats needed to support the overall biological diversity of the Wildlife Refuges. The selected alternatives also include expanded opportunities for compatible public use including wildlife observation, environmental education, public outreach, and interpretation; and provisions to protect cultural resources.

Key Components of the Selected Alternatives

Alternative C – Ash Meadows NWR

- Restore 13 spring heads and associated outflow channels
- Restore endemic fish populations to 25-50% of historic range
- Assess and initiate removal of berms, ditches, dams, and unnecessary roads
- Modify or remove Crystal Reservoir
- Reduce salt cedar and Russian knapweed distribution by 75-95 percent
- Construct new headquarters/visitor center
- Develop environmental education program

Alternative C – Desert NWR

- Remove highly flammable vegetation around water catchments
- Collect data on bighorn sheep herd health status, diet composition, nutrient uptake, and genetic diversity
- Close 40 miles of illegal roads and trails along southern boundary and restore desert habitat
- Complete visitor center/office space at Corn Creek
- Develop environmental education program
- Maintain existing bighorn sheep hunt program

Key Components of the Selected Alternatives, *continued*

Alternative C – Moapa Valley NWR

- Restore springs, channels, and associated riparian habitat and uplands
- Expand acquisition boundary by 1,765 acres to protect 90 percent of remaining Moapa dace habitat
- Expand inventory and monitoring program
- Develop new interpretive trails
- Develop environmental education program
- Open the wildlife refuge to the public (beyond seasonal/weekend basis)



Alternative D – Pahranagat NWR

- Complete and implement wetland restoration plan
- Restore riparian habitat and degraded springs
- Construct new visitor contact station/office
- Expand inventory and monitoring program
- Develop new interpretive trails
- Develop environmental education program
- Convert campground to day use area

Staying in Touch

The best way for you to stay in touch with what is going on at the Desert NWR Complex is to check the Complex Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/desertcomplex/>.

Please Feel Free to Contact Us

We are available to provide additional information about the Desert NWR Complex. You can contact us by phone, mail, or e-mail.

Questions regarding CCP planning can be directed to:

Mark Pelz, Refuge Planner
Pacific Southwest Refuge Planning Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825
916.414.6500 phone
916.414.6512 fax
Mark_Pelz@fws.gov

Questions regarding current Complex operations can be directed to:

Cynthia Martinez, Wildlife Refuge Complex Manager
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130
702.515.5450 phone
702.515.5460 fax
Cynthia_Martinez@fws.gov

Obtaining a Copy of the Record of Decision

The Record of Decision is available by contacting the Refuge Planner, Mark Pelz, at the phone or e-mail address provided here.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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Address correction requested