



Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Winter 2003 – Update No. 2

Public Scoping Creates a Picture

Greetings!

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service intends to keep you informed about the Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Complex). The CCPs will guide the management of the four refuges which comprise the Complex for the next 15 years. As part of this process, we have been seeking input from the public, Tribes, and local, state and federal government agencies.

This second *Planning Update* has three purposes: to provide an update on our progress at developing the CCPs/EIS for Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Desert National Wildlife Range, Moapa Valley NWR and Pahrangat NWR, to summarize key issues and concerns identified through the public scoping process, and to encourage you to provide additional input during the development of the CCPs/EIS.

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Winter on Mormon Pass.

Thank You for Participating

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the public scoping meetings held in mid-September in communities near the refuges as well as those individuals and organizations who provided comments electronically and by mail. Over the course of the 60-day public comment period, we received over 400 written and oral comments touching a wide variety of topics.

A summary of the process and the comments received can be found on page 2 of this update. Electronic copies of the Scoping Report and *Planning Update No. 1* can be found at <http://desertcomplex.fws.gov/> and a hard copy is available for review during weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. at our Complex Headquarters (4701 N. Torrey Pines, Las Vegas, NV 89130).

We are now beginning the next phase of planning. We will begin development of vision statements, goals, objectives and strategies for each of the Refuges. Your comments, concerns and the issues raised during the scoping period are providing

Refuge staff with a context and framework within which we are developing a sense of the future, a “vision” of what the Refuges will be like over the next 15 years. Please take a look at page 5 for a “vision of our visions.” As always in this CCP process, we welcome your comments and reactions.

We hope you will continue your interest and involvement in these valued units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. See page 8 for our contact information, including address, phone numbers, e-mail. *Planning Update No. 3* will highlight the development of the goals, objectives and strategies. Look for it in the Spring.

On behalf of the Staff of the Desert NWR Complex we hope you have a successful New Year.

Richard M. Birger
Project Leader, Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Public Scoping Yields a Vision

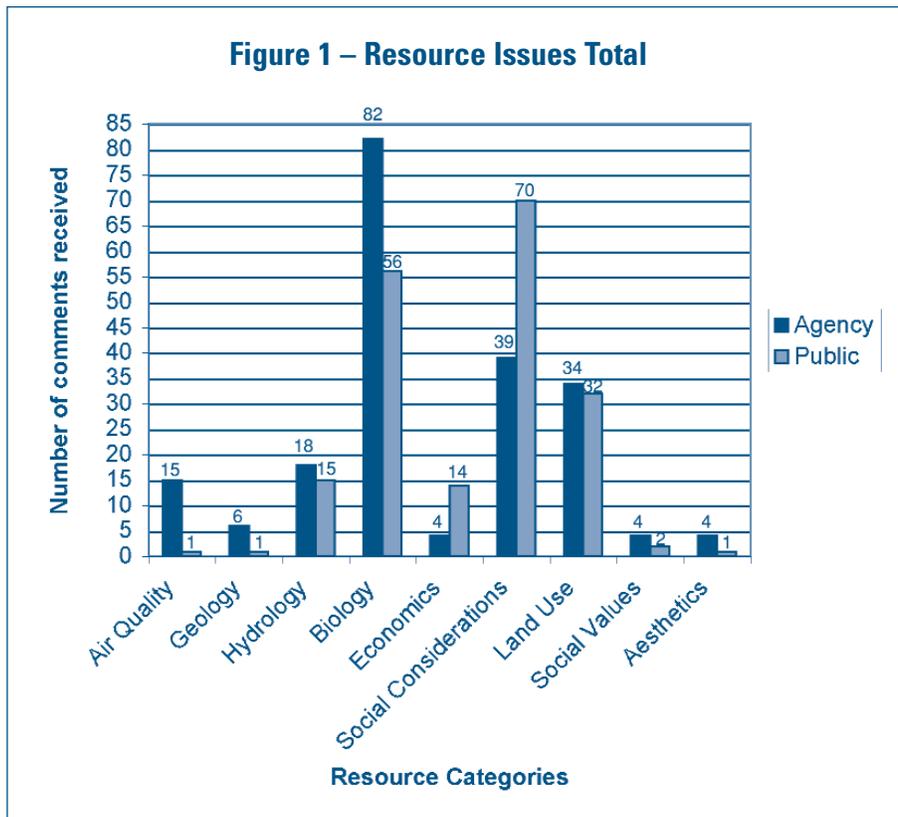


More than 400 comments were solicited during public scoping.

The Service can only fulfill the promise of the National Wildlife Refuge System in partnership with refuge friends and neighbors. Such partnerships help refuge staff develop long-term goals and objectives for refuge management.

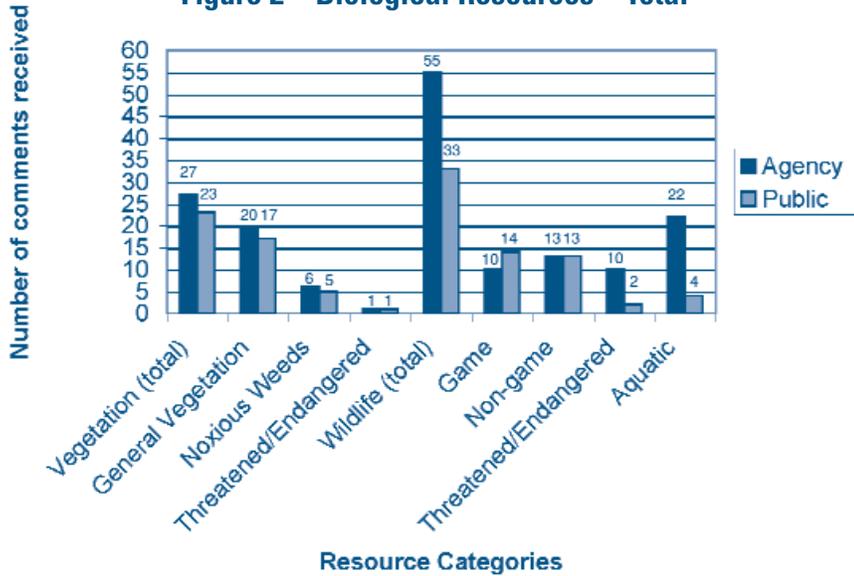
The purposes of scoping are to inform and educate the public about the planning process, provide meaningful and timely opportunities for public input, identify key resource and land use issues to be analyzed, and provide avenues for commentary throughout the decision-making and review process. The 60-day public scoping period was kicked off on August 21, 2002, with a Notice of Intent being published in the Federal Register; a Press Release to 122 media outlets, public agencies, and conservation/sportsman organizations; and a mailing of *Planning Update No. 1* to over 350 individuals, organizations and agencies. Public and agency meetings, which were held in communities near the four refuges, yielded over 400 written and oral comments. Issues identified during scoping will be considered during the EIS analysis of proposed management strategies for the Complex and their potential impacts on natural, cultural and socioeconomic resources evaluated.

Comments are categorized by resource and are graphically represented in the following figures. The bar graph in Figure 1 illustrates the total number of comments received and is categorized by the top nine resource issues.



Continued on page 3

Figure 2 – Biological Resources – Total



Biological resources garnered the most commentary, with a total of 138 comments ranging from invasive vegetation/weed control, native habitat restoration and maintenance, game and non-game species management, to aquatic species research (Figure 2). Wildlife issues top the chart, including desert bighorn sheep management strategies, endangered native fish species research, and waterfowl and migratory bird conservation efforts.

Social Considerations, including archaeological/historic sites, recreation, education, and public access generated 106 comments (Figure 3). Recreation, education and access to facilities were high on the public’s list, whereas agencies shared considerable concerns relative to archaeological resources.

Figure 3 – Social Considerations – Totals

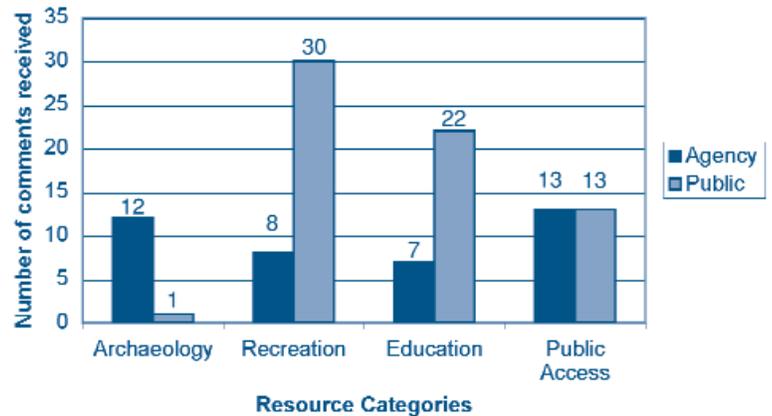
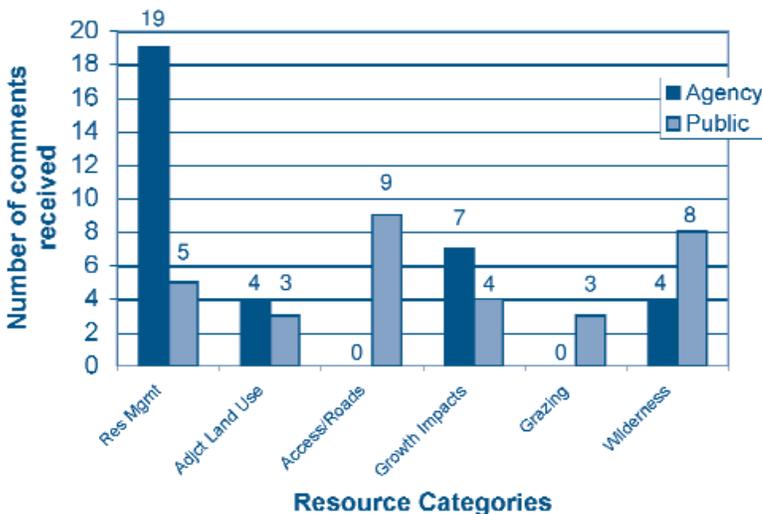


Figure 4 – Land Use – Totals



The 63 comments received on land use fell into several common categories – resources management, adjacent land use impacts, access/roads, growth impacts, and wilderness (Figure 4). Resources management comments ranged from appropriate use of prescribed fires for habitat restoration and maintenance, to road rehabilitation and coordination with other federal land management agencies.

The Legacy of the National Wildlife Refuge System Vision

Refuges are gifts to ourselves and to generations unborn – simple gifts unwrapped each time a visitor lifts binoculars, a child overturns a rock, a hunter sets the decoys, or an angler casts a line.

Each refuge, is above all else, a landscape. They are living, breathing places where the ancient rhythms still beat. They provide a sense of place, a timeless connection to our past and to the future. The NWR System has safeguarded breeding and resting areas for millions of birds and other animals, served to stave-off extinction of some species, and always – a place for people to connect with the natural world. Refuges are national treasures in the truest sense.

After a century of growth, this vision of the NWR System is beginning to be embraced by millions of Americans. The



Desert Range has some of the best desert bighorn sheep habitat in Nevada.

vision for the Complex is being defined during the CCPs/EIS process with the input provided by interested organizations, government agencies, and individual citizens.

Complex staff have crafted vision statements for the four refuges which comprise the Complex. Please provide us with feedback on these visions during the course of the planning process.



Ancient Yucca forests and other unique species thrive within the refuges.

DRAFT VISION STATEMENTS

■ ASH MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

In the Mojave Desert landscape is a unique desert oasis comprised of thermal springs and wetlands restored for the benefit of species found nowhere else in the world. People know and care about this very cool place!

■ DESERT NATIONAL WILDLIFE RANGE

As the largest refuge in the contiguous United States, Desert Range provides and maintains the highest quality, intact habitat for desert bighorn sheep in the Great Basin/Mojave Desert ecosystem. The vast wild spaces provide people and wildlife a refuge and a place for harmonious recreation opportunities.

■ MOAPA VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

In the Moapa Valley is a place that offers a diversity of habitat restoration and recreation opportunities. The public learns about, enjoys, and partners in the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species and their habitats.

■ PAHRANAGAT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Pahranagat is a valley of shining waters found in the Great Basin Desert that provides habitat for migratory birds and wildlife. The lush riparian landscape is a treasure of natural and cultural resources that are enhanced and maintained to offer traditional outdoor pursuits.

A 100 Year Legacy – A Century of Conservation



Water is vital – active volunteers help in wildlife enhancement efforts.

the solitude of these special places. Yet, a large segment of the American people have yet to discover their NWR System.

The Service is undertaking a number of special, nationwide efforts to strengthen the NWR System, and will use the Centennial as a unique opportunity to build broad public understanding and appreciation for these conservation lands and their value to society. These efforts include support for historic legislation, the NWR System Centennial

Commemoration Act of 2000, as well as a special, nationwide outreach campaign.

The Act establishes a Centennial Commission of distinguished private-sector individuals who, with partners, will carry out the public outreach campaign. The Act also endorses a long-term plan to address the major operations, maintenance, and construction needs of the NWR System.

These special efforts will maximize the potential of the NWR System's Centennial, give future generations of Americans respect and pride for our natural heritage, and ensure that Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy will be even stronger in this new century.

We encourage you to join us in commemorating the first 100 years of the NWR System and kick-off the next 100 years by participating in the following local activities:

March 14, 2003 marks a milestone in the history of wildlife conservation in America – the Centennial of the NWR System. The NWR System is America's only network of federal lands dedicated specifically to wildlife conservation, representing our steadfast commitment to protecting our wild heritage.

This vast network of prime habitats provides stepping stones for millions of migrating birds, protects premier fisheries, and gives hundreds of critically endangered species a chance to recover. The NWR System safeguards plants and animals of virtually every variety, from cactus to caribou, butterflies to bison, and salmon to songbirds.

More than 35 million Americans – roughly the same number that visit Las Vegas – visit national wildlife refuges each year to enjoy unique outdoor experiences. Most people come during peak periods of bird migration, when refuges are teeming with wildlife. Hundreds of thousands of school children visit NWRs each year to learn more about our natural world. Sportsmen come to fish or hunt, while others savor

2003 ACTIVITIES

March – Swing into Spring

(All Refuges in Desert Complex)

All the Refuges will gear up for Centennial and host a clean-up event on their refuge, in partnership with the Outside Las Vegas Foundation.

March 1 – Moapa Day

(Moapa Valley NWR)

March 8 – Stewardship Saturday

(Pahranagat NWR)

Volunteers will plant native species in the new Ducks Unlimited wetlands project to help migratory birds as they stop over in the valley.

March 14 – Centennial Celebration

(Pahranagat NWR)

March 15 – Swing Into Spring Cleanup

(Desert NWR Complex)

Volunteers will help to clean up our boundary on the north side of Las Vegas.

March 17 – Centennial Postage Stamp Cancellation

(Desert NWR Complex)

Join us at the Complex Office in Las Vegas, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., for this event. The Post Office will provide a 2nd day pictorial cancellation of the new Pelican Island NWR stamp celebrating the Refuge Centennial.

April 10-13 – Clark County Fair

(Logandale, NV)

FWS staff will join with local, state and federal partners in hosting a booth at the Clark County Fair. More than 65,000 visitors will learn about the refuges right out their back door.

April 12 – Stewardship Saturday

(Ash Meadows NWR)

Volunteers will continue celebrating a Century of Conservation by restoring historically suitable habitat for the endangered pupfish and the other 24 endemic and 12 threatened and endangered species found at Ash Meadows.

April 19 – Clark County ECOJAM

(Sunset Park)

FWS staff will join with the four federal land managing agencies in Las Vegas to host a booth at the County's Earth Day Event. More than 15,000 visitors will learn about the refuges right out their back door.

April 22 – Celebrating a Century of Conservation and Looking into the Future

(Pahranagat NWR)

Ducks Unlimited and other partners will join Refuge staff and the community in celebrating the completion of the new wetlands. To commemorate the moment our partners will unveil a plaque and commit our time capsule.

May 10 – International Migratory Bird Day

(Refuges TBA)

Free posters, bird banding demos, guided bird walks and much more.

To sign up, contact Callie Le'au Courtright at (702) 515-5453.

National Wildlife Refuges: Happy 100th Birthday



Stephan Tuttle

On **March 14, 2003**, the National Wildlife Refuge System will turn **100 years old**. The first national wildlife refuge was established in **1903** by President Theodore Roosevelt. In the early 1900s, many birds like pelicans, egrets, and roseate spoonbills were killed for their feathers. These feathers were used to decorate women's fancy hats, and were worth more than gold!



David Hall

To prevent these birds from going extinct, **President Roosevelt** set aside land where the birds could live and be protected. These lands became the National Wildlife Refuge System. **Pelican Island**, the first national wildlife refuge, is located near Sebastian, Florida. **Paul Kroegel** was a German immigrant and a boat builder. He wanted to protect the pelicans on the island. He became the first national wildlife refuge manager. He was paid \$1 a month.



USFWS

Top to bottom: pelican, egret, roseate spoonbill

Did you know that you probably live within a short drive of a national wildlife refuge? National wildlife refuges are great places to go **canoeing, bird watching, fishing and hunting**. They are some of the best places to learn about nature. National wildlife refuges are also places where endangered species are protected.

Help the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** celebrate the birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System by learning about a national wildlife refuge near you!



George Gentry

Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge



Test Your Knowledge

The photo on the right is of the president who established the first national wildlife refuge. What was his name?

- A) Franklin Roosevelt
- B) Abraham Lincoln
- C) Theodore Roosevelt



Harvard College Library

What is the name of the first national wildlife refuge?

- A) Pelican Island
- B) Horton
- C) Bear Valley

What year was the first national wildlife refuge established?

- A) 1900
- B) 1903
- C) 1910

Approximately how many acres is the refuge system in 2002?

- A) 30 million
- B) 95 million
- C) 190 million

The first national wildlife refuge can be found in which state?

- A) North Dakota
- B) Maryland
- C) Florida

What agency manages the National Wildlife Refuge System?

- A) National Park Service
- B) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- C) U.S. Forest Service

The photo on the right is of the first refuge manager. What was his name?

- A) Theodore Roosevelt
- B) J.N. "Ding" Darling
- C) Paul Kroegel



George Nelson

Name three types of recreational opportunities found on most refuges:

Name the rare tree species (pictured left) found on Desert National Wildlife Range:

- A) Yucca
- B) Piñon Pine
- C) Bristle Cone Pine



(For answers to Test Your Knowledge go to <http://refuges.fws.gov/centennial> or <http://desertcomplex.fws.gov>)



Please feel free to contact us!



Volunteers of all ages help care for the unique desert environment.

We are available to provide additional information about the refuges' resources, visitor services, and accomplishments to date, and answer any questions about the planning process. Feel free to call, write, e-mail, or come see us.

If you did not receive this *Planning Update* through the mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please contact us.

If you would like to be removed from the list or are receiving multiple copies of these notices, please let us know.

Richard Birger, Project Leader

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Or check out the following sites on the Web:
<http://desertcomplex.fws.gov> and
<http://pacific.fws.gov/plan>

Please pass this *Planning Update* along to anyone you think might be interested in the planning process. Thank you!



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Address correction requested