



Ohio

National Wildlife Refuge System Workforce Planning

Background

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System is the only network of federal lands dedicated specifically to wildlife conservation.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is currently undergoing a nationwide workforce planning effort. This effort is being conducted to help ensure the Refuge System is able to complete its high priority mission activities in the face of relatively flat annual budgets and increasing personnel and operational costs.

Ohio

The National Wildlife Refuge System in Ohio employs people at three national wildlife refuges. These employees manage approximately 9,000 acres of land and host 268,000 visitors annually.

Workforce Planning

In order to keep personnel costs from completely absorbing required refuge operational funds, the Region must reduce refuge staff by 20 percent, a total of 71 positions.

To meet this target, the Refuge System staff in Ohio will be reduced by one position; from 10 in 2004 to nine in 2009.

Reduction in Management Capability and Visitor Services

Due to this reduction in staff, Ohio's refuges will not be able to maintain their current level of fish and wildlife management activities or provide the same level of public use opportunities.

It is estimated that a 15 to 20 percent reduction in performance measures involving habitat management and visitor services will occur as a result of these reductions.

Personnel Losses

The Region is planning to eliminate these positions through natural attrition, retirement and relocations if needed.

Ohio Personnel Losses

1 position

10% reduction

1 Maintenance Worker



What This Means on the Ground

Habitat management, visitor services and educational programs across the state will be impacted. Each state, refuge and wetland management district in the Midwest Region is going to feel the effects of these personnel reductions.

Impacts in Ohio

Ottawa National Wildlife

Refuge: The refuge is a nationally recognized Important Bird Area in northwest Ohio and is a key migration and staging area for waterfowl, shorebirds and numerous songbirds. The refuge currently has one vacant equipment operator position.

A key task of this position had been to take information from an intensive invasive species mapping program on the refuge to effectively control the spread of invasive plant species. With the loss of this position, the ability to “gain the upper hand” is lost and the refuge area infested with invasive plants is increasing. This results in poor habitat for migrating birds and also results in greater costs to reach adequate levels of control.

The ability to maintain refuge roads and dikes, another key task of this position, will also be decreased by the loss of this position. Roads and dikes are integral to habitat management and visitor services. Lack of road and dike maintenance can result in loss of quality habitat and reduction of public access to refuge facilities.