

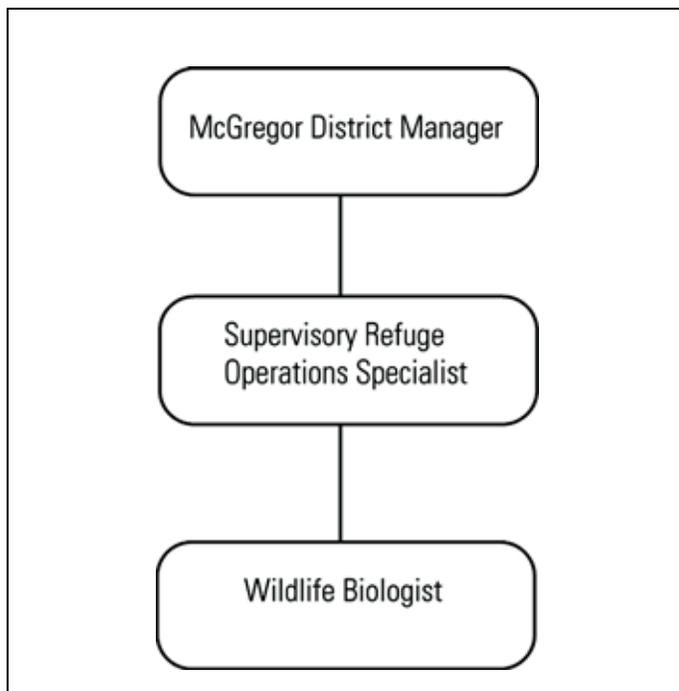
# Chapter 5: Plan Implementation

## Personnel and Office Needs

One Refuge Operations Specialist is currently assigned to the Refuge and supervised by the McGregor District Manager. A wildlife biologist will be added to implement the many goals and objectives identified in this CCP. The Nature Conservancy of Iowa has funded a summer intern to work at the Refuge for the last 3 years and plans to continue this position as funds permit, to assist with endangered species monitoring and other tasks of interest to both the Service and TNC. McGregor District staff occasionally assists with maintenance, prescribed burning and habitat improvements on the Refuge.

Refuge staff currently use a mobile home (obtained as excess property from the Federal Emergency Management Agency) located adjacent to the McGregor District office. It is not clear to visitors that the Driftless Area Refuge office is here and there is only a small display made by Refuge staff in the McGregor District Visitor Contact Station. The Refuge shares limited equipment storage space with McGregor District. A new office located with McGregor District or at a different location is needed to meet basic operational needs.

**Figure 19: Future Staffing Needs, Driftless Area NWR**



## Funding Needs

Land values in northeast Iowa have increased in recent years, at least partly due to an interest in recreational land. The 2003 Iowa State Land Value Survey gives average values of farmland at \$1,645 per acre in Allamakee County, \$2,111 per acre in Clayton County, \$1,904 per acre in Winneshiek County, and \$2,722 per acre in Dubuque County. The Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department in Wisconsin reports farmland values at about \$2,000 per acre. Land values in Olmsted County, Minnesota, in 2004 averaged \$3,236 per acre and in Fillmore County \$1,868 per acre as estimated by county assessors. These values do not distinguish between forested land and cropland. Forested land is often being sold for the same value as cropland because of the recreational interest. Therefore, an average value for northeast Iowa counties, where the majority of land acquisition would occur, would be \$2,095 per acre.

Acquiring 2,275 acres over the course of the CCP would cost approximately \$4,766,125.

## Step-down Management Plans

This CCP provides broad guidance for future management and land acquisition for Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge. Before projects are implemented, additional detailed plans will need to be prepared. Several step-down management plans must be completed to better describe the planned work and to meet Service policy. The following plans will be completed during the life of the CCP:

- # Habitat Management Plan
- # Unit Management Plans
- # Forest Management Plans
- # Endangered Species Site Preservation Plans
- # Visitor Services Plan
- # Funding



*Coyote, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*

Funding will come from a variety of internal and external sources. Refuge maintenance funds are currently used primarily for fencing needs and replacement of tools and equipment. Habitat restoration funds have come from challenge cost share grants or internal funds. All of these funding sources are in short supply. The full implementation of this plan will be dependent on increased traditional funding or new sources of funding as a result of partnerships or grants. In particular, partnerships for land acquisition and habitat restoration may be needed. The Nature Conservancy, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, States, and universities are potential partners that have expressed interest in various actions identified in the plan. Volunteers will also be important in assisting Refuge staff with fulfilling the future vision of the Refuge.

## Partnership Opportunities

Potential partnerships exist with The Nature Conservancy, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, States, universities, and other private conservation groups to accomplish the objectives outlined in the CCP. Partners have specifically expressed interest in assisting with habitat protection, landowner contacts, site preservation plans, habitat restoration, inventory, and study.

## **Volunteer Program**

We will work with volunteers in carrying out the activities of this plan. Likely activities where volunteers can help us include tours, environmental education, habitat restoration, monitoring, and invasive species removal.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring is critical to the successful implementation of the plan. Every five years this plan will be revisited to document progress, reassess direction and determine if any modifications are necessary to meet changing conditions. Public involvement in evaluating progress and plan implementation will be encouraged. Increased public visitation and new facilities will be evaluated for compatibility with Refuge purposes.

## **Plan Amendment and Revision**

The CCP is meant to provide guidance to the Refuge Manager and staff over the next 15 years. However, the CCP is also a dynamic and flexible document and several of the strategies contained in this plan are subject to natural, uncontrollable events such as floods, drought and tornados. Likewise, many of the strategies are dependent upon Service funding for staff and projects. Because of all these factors, the recommendations in the CCP will be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, revised to meet new circumstances. If any revisions are major, the review and revision will include the public.

