

CHAPTER 2 - DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

I. DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The development of the Union Slough CMP focused around four component parts: reaffirming the Refuge mission, conducting a resource assessment and environmental analysis (internal and external analysis), establishing Refuge management direction (goals and objectives); and developing a range of programs, activities, and projects (strategies) which could apply to Refuge management direction.

Formulating strategies around these component parts was not a hierarchical process, i.e., deciding on management direction, then prescribing strategies, or vice versa. Rather, the development of the CMP was an iterative process, which considered various combinations of the components (mission, opportunities and issues, management direction, programs and activities) that fit logically together.

Management Options Eliminated From The CMP

Based upon suggestions and comments received from the Service, its partners, and the public during scoping and public review of the draft CMP, a wide range of management options were identified. For example, one option considered restoration and preservation of a 24,018 acre area surrounding the Refuge. Another option considered increasing waterfowl breeding pair populations to 8,000-10,000 pairs, rather than 5,000 pairs, while a third considered expanding the proposed buffer around Refuge wetlands to 3/4-mile rather than 1/4-mile. While each of these management options have merit, they could not be recommended for implementation. For instance, restoring and preserving 24,018 acres surrounding the Refuge. The Service eliminated this option from consideration after review of existing and potential habitat values, current land uses such as cropland and homesites, and input received during meetings with the public, local officials, and landowners. Further, it was also felt that this large an area had several thousand acres in excess of what is needed to meet the broad goals and objectives for Union Slough NWR.

II. ALTERNATIVE 1 - No Action (Status Quo)

Under the “No Action” alternative, the Service would not implement the Union Slough CMP.

III. ALTERNATIVE 2 - Implement the Union Slough CMP (PREFERRED).

Under this alternative, the Service would implement the CMP and establish Refuge management direction pursuant to the goals, objectives, and strategies contained in the CMP (see CMP).

Implementation of the Plan would rely on partnerships formed with landowners in the watershed, volunteers and interested citizens, farm and conservation organizations, and with appropriate government agencies. Cooperating landowners within the Refuge watershed would be offered incentives and/or compensated through cost-sharing agreements for applying conservation and environmental farming practices on their lands and for creating, maintaining, or enhancing habitat for wildlife (Appendix).