



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Modoc National Wildlife Refuge

March, 2008 Planning Update #2

Thank You for Participating!

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the public scoping meeting held in August 2007, as well as those who provided comments electronically and by mail.



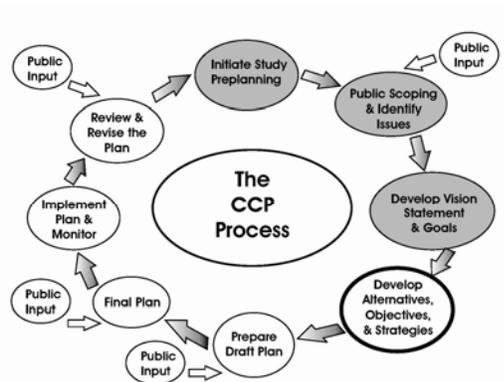
USFWS photo

Comprehensive Conservation Plan: Public Scoping

Greetings from the Refuge

This is the second Planning Update from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to keep you informed and involved regarding the comprehensive conservation planning (CCP) process for Modoc National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) (Figure 1).

The CCP process is outlined in the figure below. With your help, the shaded steps have been completed.



Public Scoping

The Service began the CCP process in August 2007 with a public scoping meeting at the Refuge in Alturas. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce you to the Refuge and the CCP process, and to hear your comments and concerns about the Refuge.

Sixteen people attended the public scoping meeting. Table 1 summarizes the issues, concerns, and opportunities raised in the forty-one comments the Service received during the scoping period. These comments were grouped into five main categories: visitor services, wildlife and habitat, refuge management, partnerships, and other comments. Refuge management received the most comments (12) followed by visitor services (11), wildlife and habitat (10), partnerships (4) and other comments (4).

Comments regarding refuge management included wanting more prescribed burning on the

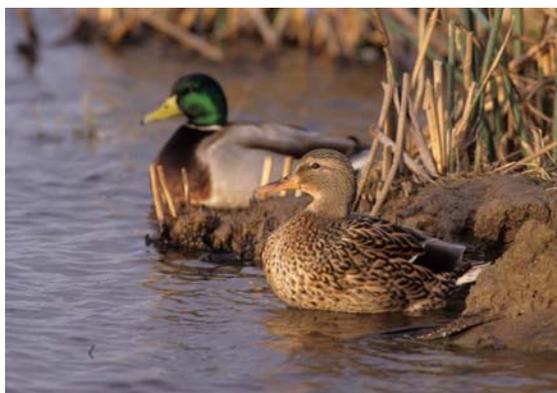
Refuge, opening the Godfrey Tract to public use, maintaining wildlife first philosophy, and analyzing impact of human activities and non-wildlife dependent activities.

Visitor services comments included expanding hunting on the Refuge, prohibiting hunting on the Refuge, adding a bike trail, adding a picnic area, and expanding fishing opportunities.

Comments regarding wildlife and habitat included wanting to see the Refuge continue an invasive species control program, questions regarding habitat management in specific Refuge units, and suggesting additional wildlife inventories.

Partnership comments included a request to use the Refuge to provide grazing opportunities for permittees temporarily displaced by the Modoc National Forest and Alturas Office of Bureau of Land Management Sage Steppe Ecosystem Restoration Strategy.

The Service will consider all of these comments during the planning process. Each will receive in-depth analysis that will help to define the range of alternatives for the Environmental Assessment. Although the official scoping comment period ended on September 30, 2007, comments are welcome at any time during the planning process.



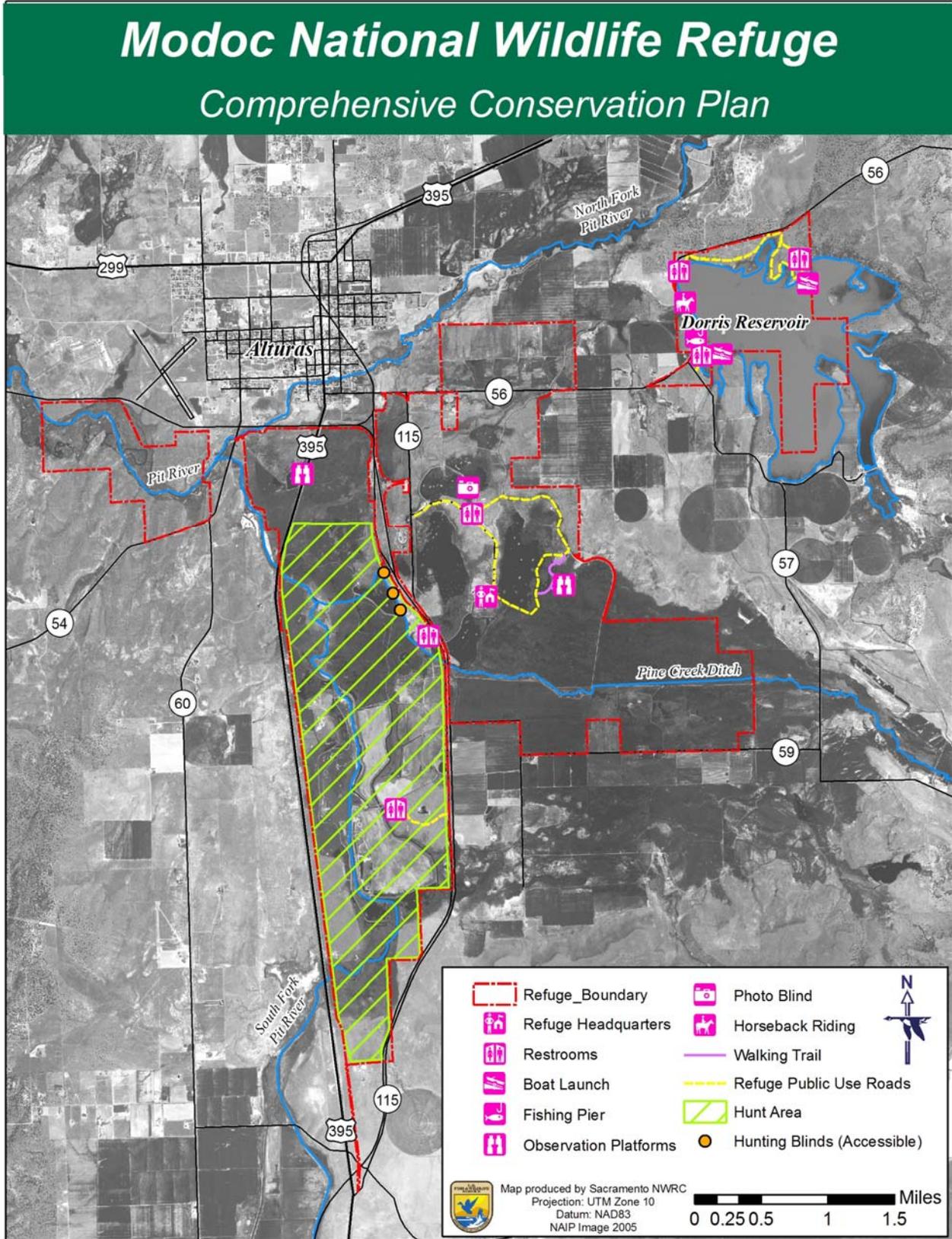
Mallards, Photo by Steve Emmons

Table 1. Refuge Issues Identified Through Public Comment.

Refuge Issue Category	Number of Comments Received (¹)
Visitor Services	11
Hunting	3
Fishing	1
Bike Trail	2
Other	5
Refuge Management	12
Wildlife & Habitat	10
Invasive Species Control	3
Habitat Management	5
Wildlife	2
Partnerships	4
Other Comments	4
Total Comments (Total Number of People/Organizations Commenting)	41 (12)

¹Total number of comments received is greater than the total number of people commenting since each of the letters, emails, faxes, and comments cards may contain more than one comment.

Figure 1. Modoc National Wildlife Refuge.



Draft Vision Statement and Goals

The Refuge has drafted a vision statement and five goals. Vision statements describe the desired future conditions of the refuge in the long-term (more than 15 years) and are based on the refuge’s specific purposes, the resources present on the refuge, and any other relevant mandates.

Draft Vision Statement

“Located near the confluence of the north and south forks of the Pit River, Modoc National Wildlife Refuge will conserve, restore, protect, and manage a mosaic of seasonal wetlands, semi-permanent wetlands, wet meadows, riparian, and sagebrush-steppe habitats. These habitats will provide important resting, feeding, and nesting areas for ducks, geese, and other migratory birds. Modoc Refuge’s high-quality habitat will play a key role in the long-term recovery of Central Valley greater sandhill cranes.

As an integral part of the surrounding community, Modoc Refuge will provide high quality wildlife-dependent recreation including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, and interpretation. The Refuge will continue to be known for its high-quality environmental education program offered to generations of students. Visitors will develop a greater understanding and appreciation for the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and refuge management programs and for the importance of protecting lands for wildlife conservation.”

We welcome any comments or suggestions that you may have on the draft vision statement or goals.

Draft Goals

Goals are broad statements of the desired future conditions for refuge resources. The draft goals for Modoc Refuge are:

- Conserve, manage, and restore a diversity of habitat types native to the Modoc Plateau for the benefit of fish, wildlife, plants and special status species.
- Provide optimum migrating and nesting habitat for greater sandhill cranes.
- Provide quality wildlife-dependent recreation, and interpretation to enhance public appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of fish, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources.
- Provide quality environmental education opportunities focusing on fish, wildlife, and habitats of the Pit River watershed.
- Promote partnerships to preserve, restore, and enhance diverse, healthy, and productive ecosystems of northeastern California.



Red-tailed hawk, Photo by Steve Emmons

Refuge News

Wings Of the Warners Festival

The Refuge participated in the annual Wings of the Warners Festival in September 2007. Approximately 500 people attended the event which took place at the City Park in Alturas. Landscaping for wildlife workshop took place at the Refuge on the second day of the Festival.



Refuge display at Wings of the Warners Festival

Youth Waterfowl Hunt

The Refuge hosted a youth waterfowl hunt in September 2007. Approximately 56 youth hunters participated in the two day hunt and 372 ducks and 26 geese were harvested.

The hunt kicked off with an orientation BBQ at the Refuge Headquarters. Several volunteers, California Waterfowl Association, and Ducks Unlimited helped to make the BBQ and youth waterfowl hunt a great success.



Youth Hunters on the Refuge

Sandhill Crane Update

This was an average year for greater sandhill cranes on the Refuge. The Refuge staff and Youth Conservation Corps members banded ten colts this year. All ten colts survived to begin their migration to the wintering grounds near Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge south of Sacramento, CA.



Sandhill crane colt

What's Next?

The next major step in the CCP process is to generate objectives and strategies, which will provide the foundation of the management plan. Several management alternatives are being developed, including a "no action" alternative, which maintains the existing management direction. Each alternative will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment accompanying the CCP. Preliminary alternatives will be presented for review and comment in the next update.



Pintail, Photo by Steve Emmons

For More Information

If you have questions, comments, concerns, or would like information about the Refuge, please feel free to call, e-mail, or write us:

Steve Clay, Refuge Manager

Modoc NWR
PO Box 1610
Alturas, CA
(530) 233-3572
Steve_Clay@fws.gov

Jackie Ferrier, Refuge Planner

Sacramento NWR Complex
752 County Road 99 W
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-2801
Jackie_Ferrier@fws.gov

Visit us online at <http://www.fws.gov/modoc>

Call or write to us to be placed on our mailing list or to report a change in your mailing address, or if you want to be removed from the mailing list.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Modoc National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 1610
Alturas, CA 96101