



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Modoc National Wildlife Refuge

August, 2007 Planning Update #1

Public Meeting

Please join us!

**We will have a public meeting on:
August 21, 2007
at 6:00 PM.**

See page 6 for details.

**Check out our website at:
<http://modoc.fws.gov>**



Modoc NWR, USFWS photo

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Begins

Help Plan the Future of Modoc National Wildlife Refuge

This is the first in a series of planning updates developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to keep you informed about and invite your participation in the conservation planning process for Modoc National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). Help us shape the future of the Refuge as we develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), to guide its management for the next 15 years.

This planning update provides background information about the Service, the Refuge, the planning process, and public involvement opportunities. We will be sending planning updates periodically to keep you informed and involved throughout the two-year planning process.

Who We Are and What We Do

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the primary federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Specific responsibilities include enforcing federal wildlife laws, managing migratory bird populations, restoring nationally significant fisheries, administering the Endangered Species Act, and restoring wildlife habitat.

The Service also manages the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest collection of lands specifically managed for fish and wildlife. The System is a network of more than 545 national wildlife refuges encompassing over 95 million acres of public land and water. Over 5,000 species of wildlife are found on refuges across the country.

Refuges are also unique places for people. A refuge can provide wildlife-dependant public uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation, when these uses are deemed compatible with wildlife and habitat needs and the purposes for which the refuge was established.



Modoc NWR, *USFWS Photo*

Modoc National Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1961 to protect and manage migratory birds, the 7,021 acre Modoc Refuge is located near the confluence of the north and south forks of the Pit River (see map on page 3). Fed by snowmelt from the Warner Mountains, the Pit River creates an oasis for wildlife in the high elevation, cold desert environment.

The Refuge consists of lake, seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, irrigated meadows, grasslands, and sagebrush/juniper uplands. These habitats provide feeding and resting areas for ducks, geese, and other wetland dependent birds during spring and fall migration. The Refuge's wetlands and adjacent uplands are also an important nesting area for resident and migratory birds including greater sandhill cranes, which are listed by the state of California as a threatened species.

Seasonal wildlife highlights include ducks, geese, tundra swans, and sandhill cranes in the spring and fall; nesting cranes, ducks, geese, and shorebirds in the summer; and bald and golden eagles in the winter.

Recreation Opportunities

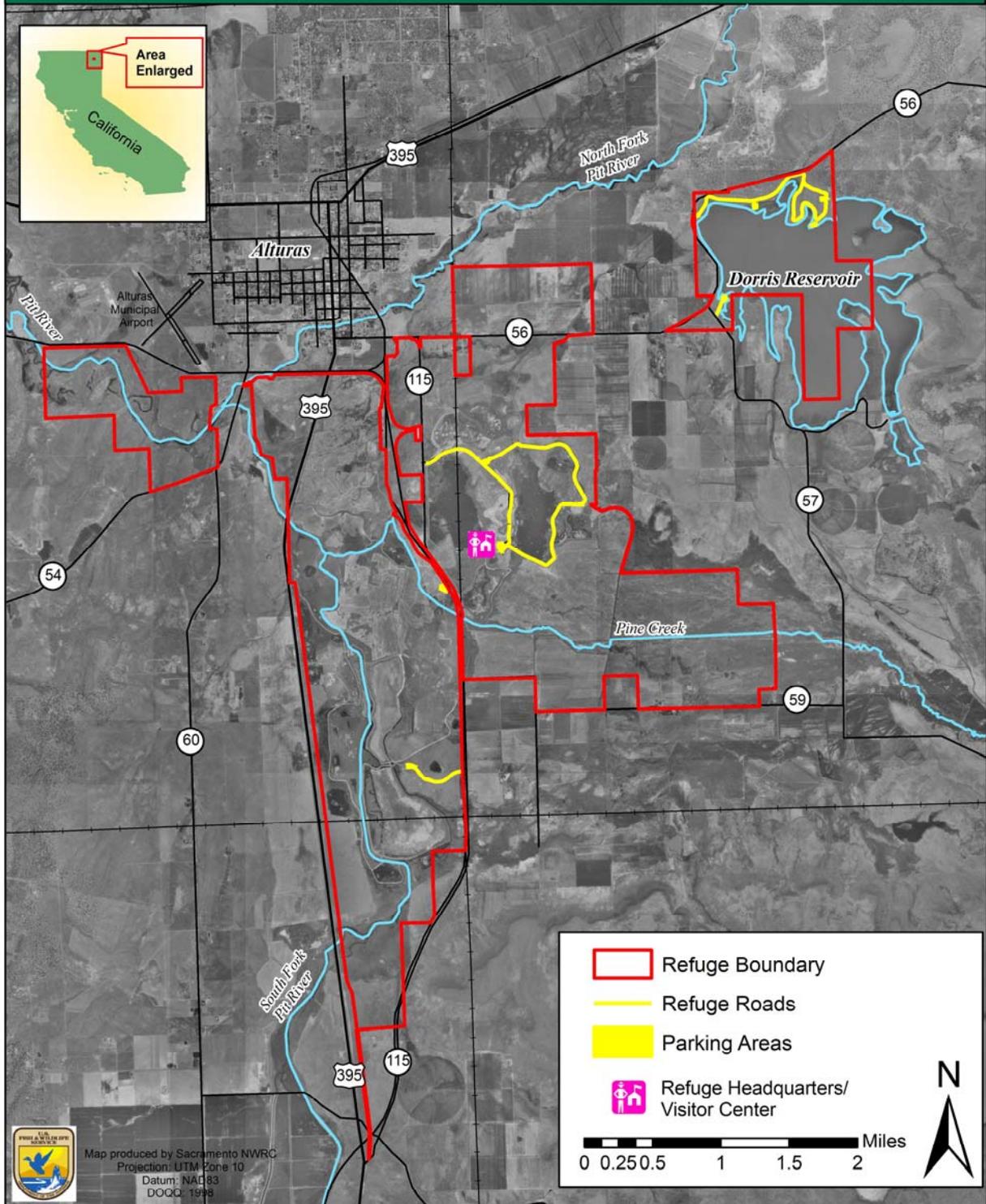
Wildlife-dependant recreational opportunities on the Refuge include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. Environmental education programs and guided tours are available by reservation. Wildlife observation and photography opportunities are available on the Refuge's three-mile auto tour route, paved walking trail, and two overlooks. Waterfowl hunting is available on the western half of the Refuge during the State season. In addition to wildlife observation and photography, fishing, boating, swimming, bicycling, and horseback riding are also allowed on Dorris Reservoir. There are also two designated boat launches, restrooms, and a universally accessible fishing pier at Dorris Reservoir.



Sandhill Crane

Photo by Steve Emmons

Modoc National Wildlife Refuge



The Comprehensive Conservation Plan

In 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. The Act presented the mission for the Refuge System, and states that all refuges must have a CCP in place by the year 2012. These plans provide a 15-year guide, using the best available scientific knowledge, to help refuge managers achieve the purposes for which each refuge was established, and contribute to the mission of the Refuge System. The Act provides the Service with guidance for managing refuges in a way that ensures the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Maintenance of biological integrity and diversity along with facilitating compatible wildlife-dependent recreation in the refuge system are two of the important principles laid out in the Act.

The CCP not only provides refuge managers with a blue print for resource management, it also provides communities in the vicinity of a refuge with a clear picture of what the refuge intends to do in terms of managing habitat, protecting wildlife, and providing a place where people can enjoy wildlife-dependant activities.

Along with the CCP, the Service completes an environmental assessment (EA) that evaluates the impacts of the management direction proposed in the CCP as well as other alternatives.



California quail
Photo by Steve Emmons

Why Does the Service Prepare CCPs?

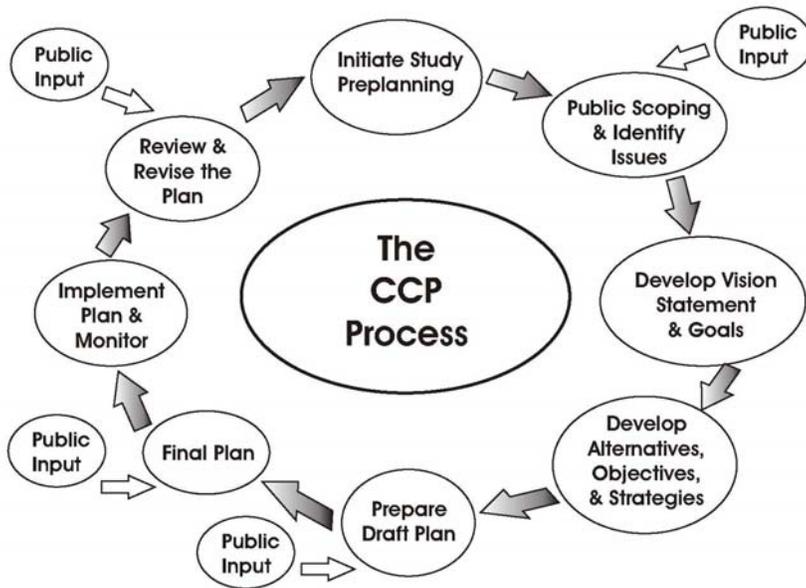
Refuges gain a lot through the CCP process. The opportunity to engage a wide range of people in planning refuge management is perhaps one of the most beneficial aspects of the CCP planning process. We hope to strengthen the partnerships we have today and forge new ones as the process develops.

The CCP will identify goals, objectives, and management strategies for the Modoc Refuge for a 15-year period. The Service is preparing this CCP for the following reasons:

- To ensure that management of the refuge reflect refuge purposes and the mission, policies, and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- To provide the public with information about and opportunities to provide input on management actions planned for the refuge.
- To provide vision statements for the refuge.
- To ensure the compatibility of current and future uses of the refuge.
- To provide long-term continuity in refuge management.
- To provide budget justifications for operation, maintenance, and facility development requests.

The CCP will be flexible. It will be reviewed periodically to ensure that its goals, objectives, and implementation strategies and timetables are still appropriate.

The CCP will provide broad management direction and guidance for the refuge. The accompanying EA will describe the alternatives considered and their environmental effects. During the CCP process, you will have an opportunity to review and comment on the Draft CCP and EA.



Planning Process

Developing a CCP takes a minimum of two years. The key planning steps are listed below. Currently, we are identifying issues and gathering data. This list will be included in future planning updates so you can track our progress through the planning process.

- Identify Public and Agency Issues.
- Gather Data.
- Develop Goals and Objectives.
- Develop Management Strategies.
- Evaluate Environmental Impacts.
- Prepare the Draft CCP/EA.
- Conduct a Public Review of and Comment Period for the Draft CCP/EA.
- Review public comments.
- Prepare Final CCP.
- Issue a Public Notice of Decision.
- Implement CCP.

What Does the CCP Mean to Me?

Comprehensive conservation planning is a way for you to be involved in the future management of the Refuge. Whether you hunt, birdwatch, photograph wildlife, or live next door, this planning project will mean different things to each individual. The Service wants to hear from everyone with an interest in the future of Modoc Refuge. This is a chance to voice your ideas and concerns.



Mallard
Photo by Steve Emmons

Help Us Plan the Future

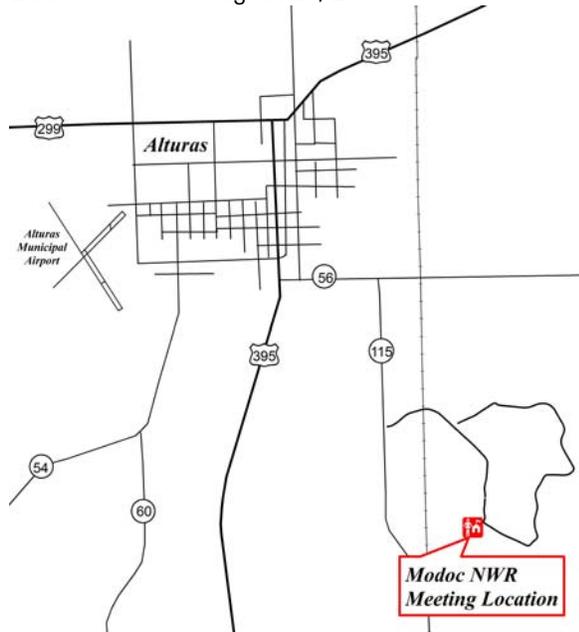
You are invited to our public scoping meeting for the CCP on August 21, 2007. The meeting will be held at the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge in Alturas, CA. The meeting will provide opportunity to meet with refuge staff, learn more about the Refuge, and help us identify issues to be addressed in the planning process.

Public Scoping Meeting Location

Where: Modoc NWR
5364 County Road 115
Alturas, CA

When: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

Date: August 21, 2007



Please join us and share your thoughts about the Refuge. We welcome your suggestions, questions and comments throughout the CCP process. Scoping comments should be received on or before September 30, 2007.

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:

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Visit us online at <http://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.



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