

# Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

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*Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge  
J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge  
Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge*

**January 2007**

**Prepared by**

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

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# Abbreviations

<b>Administration Act</b>	National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966
<b>ATV</b>	all-terrain vehicle
<b>AUM</b>	animal unit month
<b>CCC</b>	Civilian Conservation Corps
<b>CCP</b>	comprehensive conservation plan
<b>CFR</b>	Code of Federal Regulations
<b>cfs</b>	cubic feet per second
<b>CRP</b>	conservation resource plan
<b>CWCS</b>	“Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy”
<b>DNC</b>	dense nesting cover
<b>EA</b>	environmental assessment
<b>EO</b>	executive order
<b>EPA</b>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<b>FHWA</b>	Federal Highway Administration
<b>FMP</b>	fire management plan
<b>FONSI</b>	finding of no significant impact
<b>FTE</b>	full-time equivalent
<b>GIS</b>	geographic information system
<b>GPS</b>	global positioning system
<b>GS</b>	general schedule (employment)
<b>HAPET</b>	“Habitat and Population Evaluation Team”
<b>Improvement Act</b>	National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997
<b>NAWMP</b>	North American Waterfowl Management Plan
<b>ND</b>	North Dakota
<b>NDGF</b>	North Dakota Game and Fish Department
<b>NEPA</b>	National Environmental Policy Act
<b>NOI</b>	notice of intent
<b>NRCS</b>	Natural Resources Conservation Service
<b>NWI</b>	“National Wetland Inventory”
<b>NWR</b>	national wildlife refuge
<b>NWRS</b>	National Wildlife Refuge System
<b>PL</b>	public law
<b>PPJV</b>	“Prairie Pothole Joint Venture”
<b>Refuge System</b>	National Wildlife Refuge System
<b>region 6</b>	“Mountain–Prairie Region” of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>RONs</b>	“Refuge Operating Needs System”
<b>SAMMS</b>	“Service Asset Maintenance Management System”
<b>Service</b>	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>SUP</b>	special use permit
<b>SWG</b>	“State Wildlife Grant”
<b>Three Affiliated Tribes</b>	Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara tribes
<b>USACE</b>	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
<b>USDA</b>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
<b>USFWS</b>	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>USGS</b>	U.S. Geological Survey
<b>VOR</b>	visual obstruction reading
<b>WG</b>	wage grade (employment)
<b>WMD</b>	wetland management district
<b>WUI</b>	wildland–urban interface

*Definitions of these and other terms are in the glossary, located after chapter 5.*



# Summary

North Dakota's Souris River basin is home to three national wildlife refuges, known collectively as the "Souris River basin refuges":

- Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge (NWR); 19,500 acres—extends south from the Canada border along 28 miles of the Des Lacs River in Burke and Ward counties, North Dakota
- J. Clark Salyer NWR; 58,700 acres—extends southeast from the Canada border along 75 miles of the east arm of the Souris River in Bottineau and McHenry counties, North Dakota
- Upper Souris NWR; 32,092 acres—extends south-southeast along 35 miles of the west arm of the Souris River in Renville and Ward counties, North Dakota

As stated in the executive orders establishing these refuges in 1935, the purpose of each refuge is for a "refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife."

The Souris River basin refuges are located in a critical area of the Central Flyway, providing resting and breeding habitat for migrating and nesting waterfowl. The J. Clark Salyer NWR, in

particular, is one of the most important duck production areas in the United States.

The American Bird Conservancy recognizes all three refuges as "Globally Important Bird Areas." In addition, J. Clark Salyer NWR is designated as a regional shorebird site in the "Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network." Lake Darling at Upper Souris NWR is designated critical habitat for the federally threatened piping plover.

Representing a comprehensive collection of most North Dakota plant communities, these refuges include important remnants of the Drift Plain prairie, which could be considered a threatened resource.

## SETTING

The Souris River basin extends from North Dakota into the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Souris River is the main watercourse in the basin and the Des Lacs River is its primary tributary. Until widespread cultivation of prairie soils beginning nearly a century ago, the major ecological community in the basin was northern mixed-grass prairie.



*The Souris River basin refuges provide breeding grounds for migratory birds including Canada goose.*

The contemporary landscape of the Souris River basin is dominated by annually tilled cropland. Most remnants of the basin's once vast native prairie are substantially invaded by introduced grasses and native shrubs and trees. Several breeding bird species characteristic of northern mixed-grass prairie—such as burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, and Baird's sparrow—are now uncommon or absent throughout the basin. The Souris River has been significantly modified by drainage, channelization, and construction of numerous low-head dams, such that few natural riverine wetlands remain.

Within this basin, the three national wildlife refuges provide extensive breeding and migration habitat for grassland- and wetland-dependent birds. The refuges have potential for restoration of reasonably intact communities of native plants and animals. In addition, the refuges provide a wide variety of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities and facilities for visitors including the following:

- Hunting of deer and upland birds
- Wildlife observation and wildlife photography—auto tour routes, hiking trails, viewing and photography blinds
- Interpretive information—kiosks, panels, and headquarters' exhibits

In addition, fishing is offered at J. Clark Salyer NWR and at Upper Souris NWR. A canoe trail and an outdoor classroom can be found at J. Clark Salyer NWR. Des Lacs NWR and Upper Souris NWR also offer canoeing opportunities.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a draft comprehensive conservation plan as the foundation for management and use of the three Souris River basin refuges. The purposes of this plan are as follows:

- to identify the role that the three Souris River basin refuges will play in support of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System;
- to provide guidance for managing refuge programs and activities during the next 15 years.

In 2003, a planning team of refuge and other Service staff gathered and began to analyze resource information. The planning process included designing a vision for the three refuges, along with goals to reach the vision. After identifying key issues related to achieving the vision, the team developed management alternatives.

The team invited the public to participate in the planning process and public scoping. A mailing list

of about 220 names was created and included private citizens; local, regional, and state government representatives and legislators; other federal agencies; tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations.

## VISION AND GOALS

The vision describes what the refuges will be and what the Service hopes to do, and is based primarily on the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and specific purpose of the refuges.

### Vision

*From Paleo-Indians on the tails of the Ice Age—to the Assiniboine and Chippewa, early fur trappers, explorers, and naturalists; eminent bison herds and astoundingly abundant bird life; fires stretching for miles to revitalize treeless prairie; and determined homesteaders and vanquished farms of the Dust Bowl era...*

*The Souris River basin figures prominently in the cultural and natural history of midcontinent North America's plains and prairies. Three national wildlife refuges of the Souris River basin—Des Lacs, J. Clark Salyer, and Upper Souris—will conserve much of the ecology and natural character of the northern plains region while helping sustain populations of migratory birds and other wildlife native to the landscape.*

*The refuges will create a sense of awe and wonder by providing an array of wildlife-dependent recreational and educational experiences that enhance visitor awareness of the splendid natural and cultural heritage of the northern plains.*

*Functioning as integral parts of the ecosystems and human communities to which they belong, the Souris River basin refuges will seek collaborative partnerships to attain common goals.*

*A diverse and passionate refuge workforce will rely on sound science to understand and restore or emulate natural processes essential to the integrity and perpetuation of major biological communities with which the refuges are entrusted.*

The following goals will direct work toward achieving the vision for the refuges.



### **Drift Prairie Goal**

Restore and maintain extensive examples of plant communities dominated by native flora characteristic of the mid-1800s drift prairie. Create the temporally and spatially dynamic habitat conditions that will attract most breeding bird species and other vertebrate fauna characteristic of that era.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

### **Prairie Slope Goal**

Restore representative examples of prairie slopes to preserve some of the most pristine plant communities that remain in the *Souris River basin* and promote appreciation and stewardship of prairie resources.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

### **Prairie Parkland Goal**

Restore and maintain extensive examples of plant communities characteristic of the mid-1800s prairie parkland. Create the temporally and spatially dynamic habitat conditions that will attract most breeding bird species and other vertebrate fauna characteristic of that era.  
(Applies only to *J. Clark Salyer NWR*.)

### **Sandhills Goal**

Restore and maintain plant communities characteristic of the mid-1800s sandhills within the prairie parkland landscape.  
(Applies only to *J. Clark Salyer NWR*.)

### **Old Cropland Goal**

On high-priority old cropland areas, establish native-dominated, perennial herbaceous cover that, with modest management, resists invasion by introduced cool-season grasses and noxious weeds. This seeded cover will help form extensive, contiguous blocks of structurally diverse, open grassland for grassland-dependent, breeding bird species.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

## **Coulee Woodland and Coulee Woodland Edge Goal**

Acknowledge a nearly irreversible, localized establishment of mature, contiguous woodland and minimally manage these areas as breeding and migration habitat principally for forest-interior, migratory bird species such as veery and ovenbird. Strive to eliminate remaining, noncontiguous, edge-dominated tree and tall shrub cover, particularly near high-priority drift prairie and the largest, most contiguous grassland tracts.  
(Applies only to *Des Lacs NWR* and *Upper Souris NWR*.)

### **Riparian Woodland Goal**

Maintain the approximate presettlement extent of green ash–American elm riparian woodland within the floodplain of the *Souris River* to benefit a broad suite of woodland-associated, breeding bird species.  
(Applies only to *J. Clark Salyer NWR* and *Upper Souris NWR*.)

### **Meadow Goal**

Restore and maintain extensive examples of plant communities dominated by native flora characteristic of seasonally flooded meadows within the *Souris River floodplain* to attract grassland- and wetland-dependent bird species and other wildlife.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

### **Wetland Goal**

Manage riverine wetlands, including marshes and lakes, to sustain the long-term capacity of riverine wetlands to support diverse plant and wildlife communities. Restore ecological processes that sustain long-term productivity of wetlands.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

### **Island Goal**

Manage islands to attract waterfowl and increase nest survival, especially during drought years when wetland habitat outside of the *Souris River basin refuges* is limited.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

### **Cultural Resource Goal**

Discover and protect cultural resources and interpret sites when the interpretation does not adversely affect habitat management.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

### **Visitor Service Goal**

Provide wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities to a diverse audience when the administration of these programs does not adversely affect wildlife and habitat management.  
(Applies to all three *Souris River basin refuges*.)

## Research and Science Goal

Conduct innovative natural resource management using sound science and applied research to advance the understanding of natural resource function and management within the northern Great Plains.

*(Applies to all three Souris River basin refuges.)*

## Operations Goal

Efficiently use funding and staffing for the benefit of all natural and cultural resources, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and present and future generations. Effectively manage visitor service programs that complement habitat management.

*(Applies to all three Souris River basin refuges.)*

## ISSUES

The following key issues were identified during analysis of concerns raised by refuge staffs, along with analysis of 57 public comments collected during scoping.

### Habitat and Wildlife Management

Dynamic ecological processes are fundamental to the evolution and maintenance of prairies and wetlands in the northern Great Plains. Processes such as fire, grazing, and drought shaped plant communities of the region. Before Euro-American settlement, the basin was a vast mosaic of prairie and broad, shallow wetlands. Most of this landscape has been drained and cultivated to produce crops. Many plant communities and wildlife populations have been negatively affected—some refuge habitats are so degraded that they may not be restorable.

Trees and tall shrubs have expanded, fragmenting much prairie that provides breeding habitat for grassland birds (most of which are exhibiting continental population declines). Introduced species such as smooth brome and Kentucky bluegrass, and noxious weeds such as leafy spurge and Canada thistle have devalued refuge habitats for wildlife. In addition, programs to control these plants divert important resources from other habitat management.

Refuge staffs suggest that (1) goals and objectives need to emphasize management of vegetation communities as habitat for wildlife, and (2) research and monitoring should be used to predict and validate wildlife response to management.

Too often, biological needs of wildlife and their habitats receive less consideration than socioeconomic and political factors in the decision-making process.

Prescribed fire, haying, and grazing can be controversial management tools, especially when objectives for their use are unclear. Control of predators is controversial—some groups or individuals question the ethics of killing one group of species to increase another group, especially to increase recreational hunting.

### Water Quality and Management

The public is mainly interested in having a high-quality water source within the Souris River basin. Pesticides are widely used in the area, especially for oil seed crops, and may enter the rivers along with heavy metals and other contaminants.

Wetland productivity is likely compromised by modifications of the Souris River, as well as by political constraints associated with management of the river such as flood control. Historically, the Souris River had a meandering river channel, characterized by overbank flooding and the development of oxbow ponds. Today, with three major dams and channelization of much of the mid-river section, the river system is more static than dynamic.

A major reservoir, Lake Darling, occurs behind a dam at Upper Souris NWR. Water levels of this reservoir have been regulated for flood control and to support a recreational fishery. However, the timing of water releases from this and upstream reservoirs does not coincide with that of historical spring flood events, with negative implications for nesting by migratory birds downstream. One of the challenges to attain long-term productivity in the entire system is the ability to manage water to promote natural marsh cycles.

The role of drawdowns (lowering of water levels) to maintain marsh productivity is poorly understood by the public. Some refuge visitors see a dry wetland and conclude that this condition is not beneficial to wildlife.

### Public Outreach and Partnerships

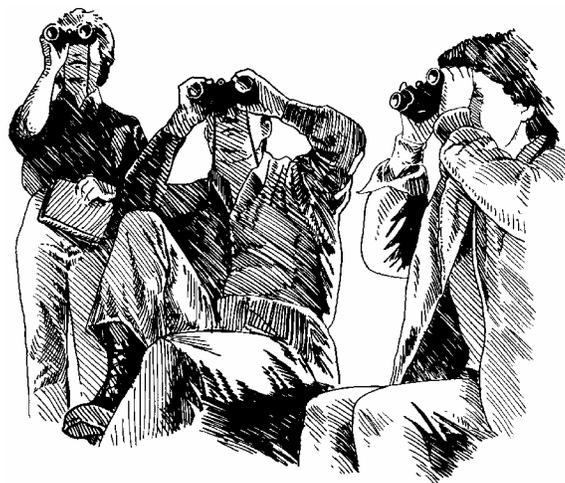
Refuge managers and the public underutilize opportunities for the public to understand refuges and their management. Partnerships with local schools, universities, special interest groups, and state and local governments need to be strengthened. Opportunities for outreach and partnerships are constrained by declining rural populations. In addition, relatively few nongovernmental organizations in North Dakota have an interest in wildlife and habitat.

## Public Use

America's mobile society is demanding increased use of refuges for uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and environmental education. Increased levels of these uses may exceed the capacity at which these services can be provided, unless refuge staffing and budgets increase. Increased public use could enhance awareness of refuge issues and activities.

## Refuge Operations

The Souris River basin refuges are currently understaffed and poorly funded relative to the scope and responsibility of management.



## ALTERNATIVES

The planning team developed the following four alternatives as management options for addressing the key issues.

### Alternative A (Current Management, No Action)

This no-action alternative reflects the current management of the Souris River basin refuges. It provides the baseline against which to compare the other alternatives.

Refuge habitats would continue to be managed on an opportunistic schedule that may maintain—or most likely would result in further decline in—the diversity of vegetation and wildlife species. The Souris River basin refuges would continue to perform only limited research and would monitor only long-term vegetation change.

Outreach, partnerships, and priority public uses (fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation) would continue at present minimal levels.

### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

Alternative B is the Service's proposed action and basis for the draft comprehensive conservation plan.

This "ecological triage" alternative would prioritize habitats with high probability of restoration for management. Triage is defined here as the assignment of priority order to habitats or habitat types on the basis of where funds and resources can be best used, are most needed, or are most likely to achieve success in meeting stated goals and objectives. Other habitats may only be partially restored or minimally managed. Collaborative research and monitoring would increase and

scientific knowledge required to restore upland and wetland plant and animal communities would be shared (with the public and other resource managers).

Some visitor services would be expected to decrease as more staff and funding shifts to habitat restoration. Environmental education would be emphasized, but would rely on volunteers and other groups to contribute more time.

### Alternative C

In alternative C, waterfowl habitat management and waterfowl production would be emphasized over other refuge programs. Research and monitoring would focus on actions that enhance waterfowl habitat, increase waterfowl nest densities, and increase nest and brood survival.

Visitor service programs that use or enhance waterfowl-related activities such as hunting, wildlife viewing, or environmental education would be emphasized over other activities.

### Alternative D

Management under alternative D would restore, to the fullest extent, ecological processes, vegetation communities, and wildlife characteristic of the presettlement period. Research and monitoring efforts would focus on strategies that enhance native plant and animal communities.

Public uses that are compatible with or that support restoration efforts would be emphasized. Interpretation and environmental education would be expanded, with an emphasis on natural plant and animal communities, ecological processes, and restoration.



# 1 Introduction

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has developed this draft comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) to provide a foundation for the management and use of three national wildlife refuges located in the Souris River basin in north-central North Dakota (figure 1). The CCP is intended as a working guide for management programs and actions over the next 15 years for the following national wildlife refuges (known collectively as the “Souris River basin refuges”):

- Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge (NWR); 19,500 acres—extends south from the Canada border along 28 miles of the Des Lacs River in Burke and Ward counties, North Dakota
- J. Clark Salyer NWR; 58,700 acres—extends southeast from the Canada border along 75 miles of the east arm of the Souris River in Bottineau and McHenry counties, North Dakota
- Upper Souris NWR; 32,092 acres—extends south-southeast along 35 miles of the west arm of the Souris River in Renville and Ward counties, North Dakota

The CCP was developed in compliance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Improvement Act) and Part 602 (National Wildlife Refuge System Planning) of “The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual.” The actions described within this CCP also meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Compliance with the NEPA is being achieved through the involvement of the public and the inclusion of an integrated environmental assessment (EA).

The final CCP will specify the necessary actions to achieve the vision and purposes of each refuge. Wildlife is the first priority in refuge management; public use (wildlife-dependent recreation) is allowed and encouraged, as long as it is compatible with the refuge’s purpose.

A planning team of representatives from various Service programs and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) has prepared the CCP. In developing this plan, the planning team used input from local citizens and organizations. Public involvement and the planning process are described in “The Planning Process” section of this chapter.

After reviewing a wide range of public comments and management needs, the planning team developed the “proposed action” alternative. This action



Donna Dewhurst/USFWS

*Habitats at the Souris River basin refuges support the gadwall and many other migratory ducks.*

addresses all substantive issues while determining how best to achieve purpose of each refuge. The proposed action alternative is the Service’s recommended course of action for the management of these refuges.

*NOTE: The Des Lacs NWR Complex includes Des Lacs NWR, Lostwood NWR, Lostwood Wetland Management District (WMD), and Crosby WMD. The J. Clark Salyer NWR Complex includes J. Clark Salyer NWR, Upper Souris NWR, J. Clark Salyer WMD, Wintering River NWR, Cottonwood Lake NWR, Buffalo Lake NWR, Willow Lake NWR, Lords Lake NWR, School Section Lake NWR, and Rabb Lake NWR. This draft CCP and EA addresses management for only Des Lacs NWR, J. Clark Salyer NWR, and Upper Souris NWR and does not include any of the other units within the complexes.*

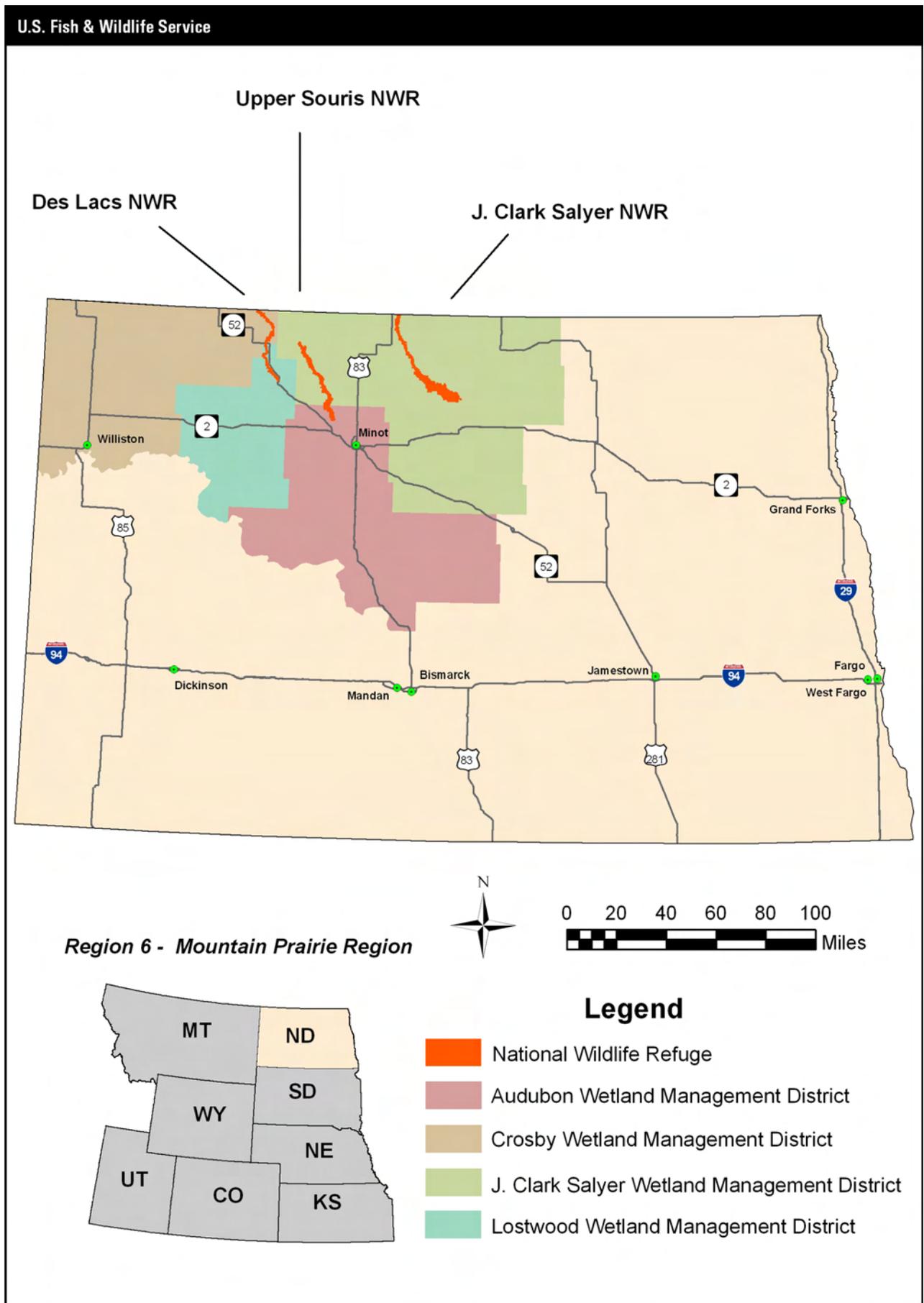


Figure 1. Vicinity map for the Souris River basin refuges, North Dakota.

## PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR PLAN

The purpose of this draft CCP is to identify the role that the three Souris River basin refuges will play in support of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System), and is to provide long-term guidance for managing refuge programs and activities.

The CCP is needed

- to provide a clear statement of direction for the future management of the refuges;
- to ensure that the Service's management actions are consistent with mandates governing management of the Refuge System;
- to ensure that management of these refuges is consistent with federal, state, and county plans;
- to provide a basis for development of budget requests for the refuge's operation, maintenance, and capital improvement needs;
- to provide neighbors, visitors, and government officials with an understanding of the Service's management actions at and around these refuges.

Sustaining the nation's natural resources is a task that can be accomplished only through the combined efforts of governments, businesses, and private citizens

## THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND THE REFUGE SYSTEM

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for fish, wildlife, and plant conservation. One of the major programs of the Service is the National Wildlife Refuge System.

### The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.*

About a century ago, America's fish and wildlife resources were declining at an alarming rate. Concerned citizens, scientists, and hunting and

angling groups joined together to restore and sustain America's national wildlife heritage. This was the genesis of the Service.

Today, the Service enforces federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores vital wildlife habitat, protects and recovers endangered species, and helps other governments with conservation efforts. In addition, the Service administers a federal aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars to states for fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, and related programs across America.

### Service Activities in North Dakota

Service activities in North Dakota contribute to the state's economy, ecosystems, and education programs. The following activities were reported in the 2000 briefing book, "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Presence in North Dakota":

- employed 242 people in North Dakota
- 497 volunteers donated more than 17,990 hours to help Service projects
- contributed 13.4 million fingerlings to North Dakota waters
- managed 62 national wildlife refuges encompassing 296,000 acres (0.7% of the state)
- managed 12 wetland management districts
- managed 254,000 acres of fee-title, waterfowl production areas (0.6% of the state)
- hosted more than 478,500 annual visitors to Service-managed lands in North Dakota
- provided education programs for more than 17,000 school children participants
- provided \$2.7 million to NDGF for sport fish restoration and \$2.1 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education
- helped about 2,500 landowners enhance wildlife habitat on 162,000 acres since 1987
- paid North Dakota counties \$427,400 under the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act (funds that are used for schools and roads) in 2000

### The National Wildlife Refuge System

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt designated the 5.5-acre Pelican Island in Florida as the nation's first wildlife refuge for the protection of brown pelicans and other native nesting birds. This was the first time the federal government set-aside land for the sake of wildlife. This small but significant designation was the beginning of the Refuge System.

One hundred years later, this Refuge System has become the largest collection of lands in the world specifically managed for wildlife, encompassing

more than 96 million acres within 545 refuges and more than 3,000 small areas for waterfowl breeding and nesting. Today, there is at least one refuge in every state in the nation including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In 1997, a clear mission was established for the Refuge System through the passage of the Improvement Act.

*The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.*

The Improvement Act further states that each refuge shall be managed

- to fulfill the mission of the Refuge System;
- to fulfill the individual purpose of each refuge;
- to consider the needs of fish and wildlife first;
- to fulfill the requirement of developing a CCP for each unit of the Refuge System and fully involve the public in the preparation of these plans;
- to maintain the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge System;
- to recognize that wildlife-dependent recreation activities including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation are legitimate and priority public uses;
- to retain the authority of refuge managers to determine compatible public uses.

In addition to the overall mission for the Refuge System, the wildlife and habitat vision for each national wildlife refuge stresses the following principles:

- Wildlife comes first.
- Ecosystems, biodiversity, and wilderness are vital concepts in refuge management.
- Refuges should ensure biological integrity and environmental health.
- Growth of refuges must be strategic.
- The Refuge System serves as a model for habitat management with broad participation from others.

Following passage of the Improvement Act, the Service immediately began efforts to carry out the direction of the new legislation, including the preparation of CCPs for all refuges. The development of these plans is now ongoing nationally. Consistent with the Improvement Act, all refuge CCPs are being prepared in conjunction with public involvement, and each refuge is required to complete its own CCP within the 15-year schedule (by 2012).

## People and the Refuge System

The nation's fish and wildlife heritage contributes to the quality of American lives and is an integral part of the nation's greatness. Wildlife and wild places have always given people special opportunities to have fun, relax, and appreciate the natural world.

Whether through bird watching, fishing, hunting, photography, or other wildlife pursuits, wildlife recreation also contributes millions of dollars to local economies. In 2002, approximately 35.5 million people visited a national wildlife refuge, mostly to observe wildlife in their natural habitats. Visitors are most often accommodated through nature trails, auto tours, interpretive programs, and hunting and fishing opportunities. Significant economic benefits are being generated to the local communities that surround the refuges. Economists have reported that national wildlife refuge visitors contribute more than \$792 million annually to local economies.

## ECOSYSTEM DESCRIPTION AND THREATS

The Souris River basin lies near the junction of two ecosystems currently defined by the Service as the Mississippi headwaters/tall-grass prairie and main stem Missouri River ecosystems. However, neither ecosystem, as defined and delineated, includes or adequately describes the Souris River basin area.

The Souris River basin is 15–80 miles north of a continental divide formed by a major moraine, the Missouri Coteau. Drainage of the basin is neither east–southeast toward the Mississippi River nor south toward the Missouri River. Instead, the basin drains north into the Assiniboine River–Red River–Hudson Bay system. Furthermore, the Souris River basin area is mixed-grass prairie, not tall-grass prairie. The area is characterized here more appropriately as the Hudson Bay headwaters/ mixed-grass prairie ecosystem (figure 2).

In the United States, the Hudson Bay headwaters/ mixed-grass prairie ecosystem includes north-central North Dakota north of the Missouri Coteau and east to the edge of the Red River Valley. In Canada, it includes southern Manitoba and

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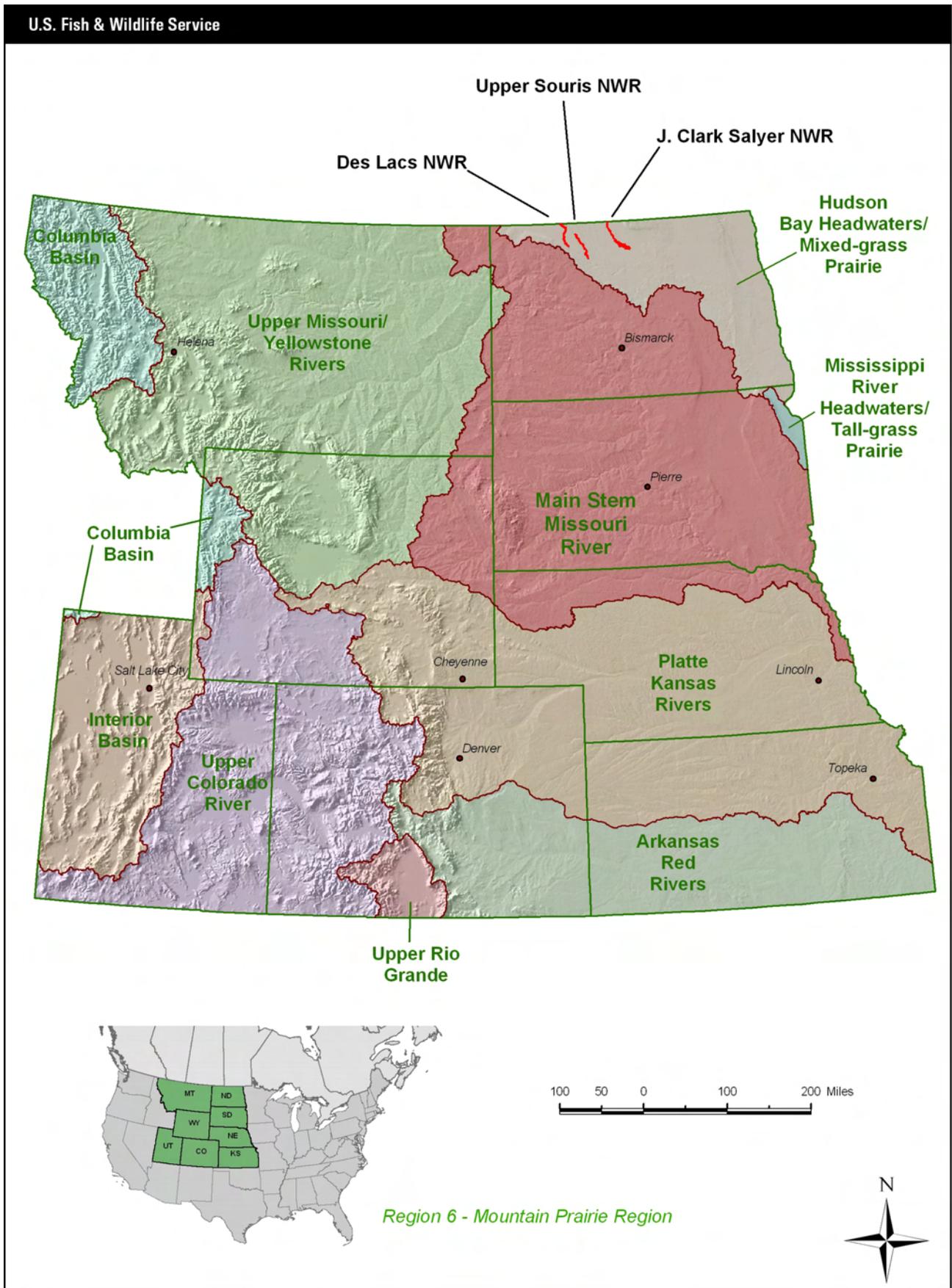


Figure 2. Ecosystem map.

southeastern Saskatchewan. The Souris River basin lies within a major physiographic subregion known as the “Drift Plain,” which generally is characterized by flat to gently rolling, moderately deep, loamy soils that originated from glacial till. The basin is at the center of North America’s extensive “Prairie Pothole Region,” which annually produces 20–25% of the continent’s ducks and geese.

Until widespread cultivation of prairie soils beginning nearly a century ago, the major ecological community of the Hudson Bay headwaters/mixed-grass prairie ecosystem was northern mixed-grass prairie. Characteristic plants were grasses, especially needlegrasses, wheatgrasses, and big bluestem. Bur oak and quaking aspen dominated the Turtle Mountains, along the present-day Manitoba border. Woodland also occurred along much of the Souris River; some stunted bur oak and aspen was scattered among sandhills of present-day McHenry County (includes the southern one-third of J. Clark Salyer NWR); patches of trees and shrubs were infrequently encountered at Des Lacs NWR; and woody vegetation was rare elsewhere.

The contemporary landscape of the Souris River basin is dominated by annually tilled cropland (figure 3). Major crops include cereal grains, principally wheat, and various oilseeds. Some cropland areas classified as “highly erodible” have been seeded to perennial, herbaceous cover (“old cropland in seeded herbaceous cover” in figure 3) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Hay is harvested from seeded upland areas once annually, usually in early to mid-summer. Native meadows along the Souris River also supply annual hay crops. In addition, some seasonally flooded wetland basins supply hay (typically late summer). There is almost no irrigated cropland. Ranching for beef cattle (usually cow–calf operations) is common locally, especially in the hilly, sandy area of McHenry County (the southeastern part of the basin) and along the lower half of the Souris River.

Population growth is not an important issue in the area. Rural towns are small (populations are typically less than 1,000) and widely scattered. Most people are concentrated in the south-central part of the area—in a small city (Minot) and the nearby Minot Air Force base, totaling about 40,000 people.

Major threats to the ecosystem’s natural resources mostly are related to agriculture. Before Euro-American settlement, the basin was a vast mosaic of prairie and broad, shallow wetlands. Most of this landscape has been drained and cultivated to produce crops. Elevated levels of wind- and waterborne sediments enter the Souris and Des Lacs rivers via intermittent streams. This sedimentation is a major threat to the ecological function and biodiversity of riverine wetlands. Scientists currently are assessing the magnitude of this threat.

Pesticides are widely used in the area, especially for oil seed crops, and may enter the rivers along with heavy metals and other contaminants.

Invasion by introduced and woody plant species is a major threat to the area. Trees and tall shrubs have expanded, fragmenting most remnant prairie that provides breeding habitat for grassland birds (most of which are exhibiting continental population declines). Leafy spurge has garnered most attention in the area as a noxious weed species of management concern. However, smooth brome (an introduced grass) probably is the most significant, long-term threat to the floristic diversity of remnant native prairies in the area.

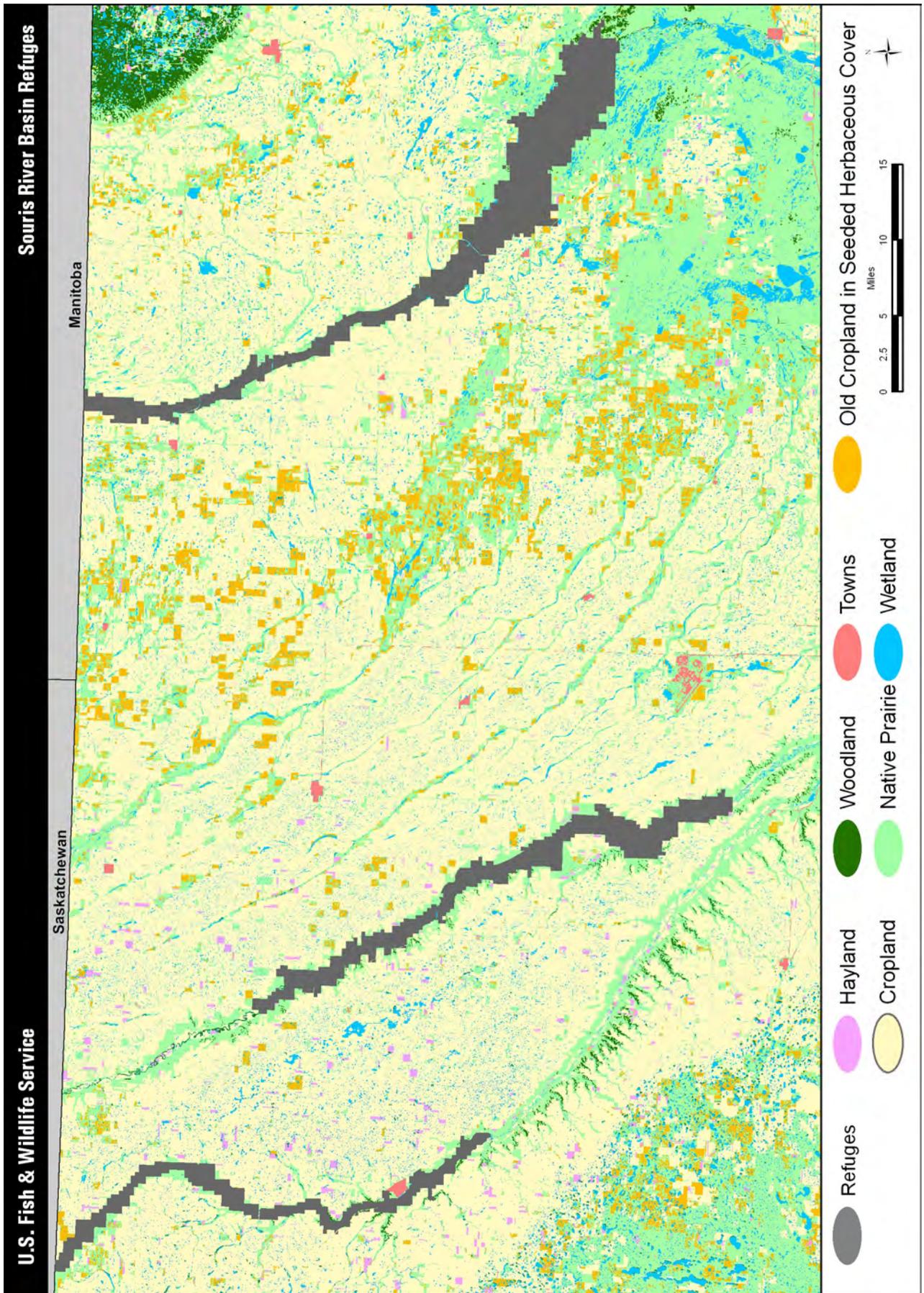
The ecological function and productivity of the Souris River is significantly compromised by three major dams along its course. Historically, the Souris River was a broad, temporally dynamic river, heavily braided along much of its course in present-day North Dakota. The meandering main river channel often was indistinct, characterized by overbank flooding and the development of oxbow ponds. Today, the river system is more static than dynamic. A major reservoir occurs behind a dam at Upper Souris NWR. Water levels of this reservoir have been largely regulated for flood control and water storage. However, the timing of water releases from this and upstream reservoirs does not coincide with that of historical spring flood events, with negative implications for nesting by migratory birds downstream. Much of the mid-river section is channelized. Natural processes such as streambed scouring and silt transport are inhibited.

## NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MANDATES

This section presents highlights of legal mandates, Service policy, and existing resource plans that directly influenced development of this CCP.

Refuges are managed to achieve the mission and goals of the Refuge System and the designated purpose of the refuge unit as described in establishing legislation or executive orders, or other establishing documents. Key concepts and guidance of the Refuge System are provided in the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (Administration Act), Title 50 of the “Code of Federal Regulations,” “The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual” and most recently through the Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.

The Improvement Act amends the Administration Act by providing a unifying mission for the Refuge System, a new process for determining compatible public uses at refuges and a requirement that each refuge will be managed under a CCP. The Improvement Act states that wildlife conservation



**Figure 3. Landscape of the Souris River basin in north-central North Dakota** (Des Lacs NWR, Upper Souris NWR, and J. Clark Salyer NWR are represented west to east by long, gray polygons).

is the priority of Refuge System lands and that the Secretary of the Interior will ensure that the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of refuge lands are maintained. Each refuge must be managed to fulfill the Refuge System mission and the specific purposes for which it was established. The Improvement Act requires the Service to monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants at each refuge.

The Improvement Act declares that compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are legitimate and appropriate, priority public uses of the Refuge System. Six uses (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation) are to receive special consideration, in planning and management, more than all other general public uses of the Refuge System.

A detailed list of these and other laws and executive orders that may affect the Souris River basin refuges' CCP or the Service's implementation of the CCP is provided in appendix A.

Service policies providing guidance on planning and the day-to-day management of a refuge are contained within the "National Wildlife Refuge System Manual" and "The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual."

## REFUGE CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANS

The Souris River basin refuges contribute to the conservation efforts described here.

### Fulfilling the Promise

A 1999 report, "Fulfilling the Promise, The National Wildlife Refuge System" (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 1999), is the culmination of a year-long process by teams of Service employees to evaluate the Refuge System nationwide. This report was the focus of the first national Refuge System conference (in 1998)—attended by refuge managers, other Service employees, and representatives from leading conservation organizations.

The report contains 42 recommendations packaged with three vision statements dealing with wildlife and habitat, people, and leadership. This CCP deals with all three of these major topics, and the planning team looked to the recommendations in the document for guidance throughout the plan.

## Partners in Flight, Conservation of the Land Birds of the United States: Northern Mixed-grass Prairie

The "Partners in Flight Program" began in 1990 with the recognition of declining population levels of many migratory bird species. The challenge, according to the program, is managing human population growth while maintaining functional natural ecosystems. To meet this challenge, Partners in Flight worked to identify priority, land bird species and habitat types. Partners in Flight activity has resulted in 52 bird conservation plans covering the continental United States.

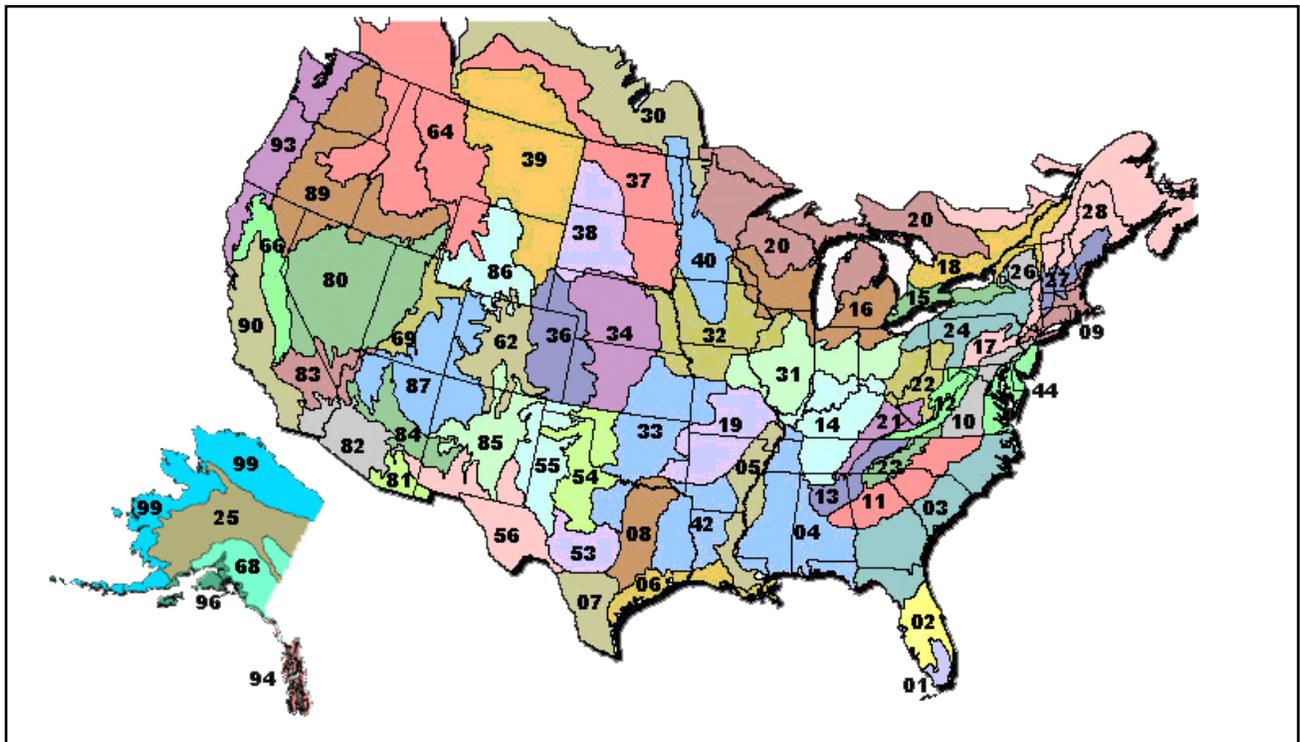
The primary goal of Partners in Flight is to provide for the long-term health of the bird life of this continent. The first priority is to prevent the rarest species from going extinct. The second priority is to prevent uncommon species from descending into threatened status. The third priority is to "keep common birds common."

There are 58 physiographic areas, defined by similar physical geographic features, wholly or partially contained within the contiguous United States and several others wholly or partially in Alaska. The Souris River basin refuges lie within the northern mixed-grass prairie, which is physiographic area 37 (figure 4).

The area includes almost the entire eastern half of South Dakota and central North Dakota, from the Red River Valley on the east, to the Missouri River and Montana border on the south and west. In Canada, it includes a small portion of southern Manitoba and a swath that crosses Saskatchewan and extends into Alberta. The southern edge of this physiographic area is the terminus of a glacial moraine parallel to the course of the nearby Missouri River. To the north, prairie gives way to aspen parkland.

Precipitation declines and evaporation rates increase from east to west across the northern mixed-grass prairie, resulting in differences in the height of dominant grasses. To the east, the mixed grass begins as topography rises out of the tall-grass prairie of the Red River Valley. Grass height gradually decreases toward the western boundary of this physiographic area.

Because of the glacial history of the northern mixed-grass prairie and the relationship between precipitation and evapotranspiration, the area is dotted with thousands of depressions that range from permanently to periodically wet. This area is known as the Prairie Pothole Region. Internally, the various moraines are particularly rugged and marked by potholes.



**Figure 4. Physiographic areas of the United States.**

Priority bird species and habitats of the northern mixed-grass prairie include the following:

*Grassland*

- Baird’s sparrow
- greater prairie-chicken
- McCown’s longspur
- Sprague’s pipit
- Le Conte’s sparrow

*Wetland*

- yellow rail
- Nelson’s sharp-tailed sparrow
- marbled godwit

*Riparian  
Woodland*

- Bell’s vireo

*River Sandbars*

- piping plover
- waterfowl
- shorebirds

Several high-priority species of shorebirds breed in the northern mixed-grass prairie, and huge numbers of more northerly breeding bird species pass



*Marbled Godwit*

Lee Karney/USFWS

through during migration. This includes most of the global population of very high-priority species such as buff-breasted sandpiper and Hudsonian godwit.

Maintenance of large, unfragmented, grassland ecosystems is the conservation objective for areas such as the Missouri Coteau where agriculture is not dominant. On the drift prairie and other agricultural areas, conservation of discrete blocks of grassland-wetland complexes is recommended.

## North American Waterfowl Management Plan

The “North American Waterfowl Management Plan” (NAWMP) was originally written in 1986. The plan envisioned a 15-year effort to achieve landscape conditions that could sustain waterfowl populations. Specific NAWMP objectives are to increase and restore duck populations to the average levels of the 1970s—62 million breeding ducks and a fall flight of 100 million birds.

By 1985, waterfowl populations had plummeted to record lows. Habitat that waterfowl depend on was disappearing at a rate of 60 acres per hour. Recognizing the importance of waterfowl and wetlands to North Americans and the need for international cooperation to help in the recovery of a shared resource, the United States and Canadian governments developed a strategy to restore waterfowl populations through habitat protection,

restoration, and enhancement. Mexico became a signatory to the plan in 1994.

The plan is innovative because its international scope, plus its implementation at the regional level. Its success depends on the strength of partnerships called “joint ventures,” involving federal, state, provincial, tribal, and local governments; businesses; conservation organizations; and individual citizens.

Joint ventures are regionally based, self-directed partnerships that carry out science-based conservation through a wide array of community participation. Joint ventures develop implementation plans focusing on areas of concern identified in the plan.

To date, the NAWMP contains 12 habitat joint ventures and 2 species joint ventures with a wide variety of public and private partners. As of the end of 2003, plan partners have invested more than \$3.2 billion to protect, restore, or enhance more than 13.1 million acres of habitat. The Souris River basin refuges lie within the “Prairie Pothole Joint Venture” (PPJV).

## Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Implementation Plan

The Prairie Pothole Region remains the most important waterfowl-producing region on the continent, generating more than half of North America's ducks. Nearly 15% of the continental waterfowl population comes from the PPJV region (Montana, the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Iowa). As many as 10 million ducks and 2 million geese use this region during migration or for nesting. The wetlands and associated grassland in the PPJV region provide breeding habitat to more than 200 species of migratory birds.

The PPJV implementation plan was prepared in 2005, and outlined a mission, vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for joint venture activities. Individual state action groups and steering committees prepared state action plans that “stepped down” joint venture activities to the state and local level.

The goal of the PPJV is to increase waterfowl populations through habitat conservation projects that improve natural diversity across the prairie pothole landscape of the United States. The joint venture attempts to carry out landscape-level habitat projects so that waterfowl populations increase during the wet years and stabilize under moderate wetland conditions. Since little can be done to stabilize breeding populations across the Prairie Pothole Region during extended drought, joint venture strategies are designed to carry out actions that take advantage of years when precipitation is at least normal.

### *Wetland Protection Objective*

Protect in perpetuity 1.4 million acres of high-priority wetlands at risk, including 1.2 million acres through perpetual easements and 200,000 acres through fee-title acquisitions.

### *Grassland Protection Objective*

Protect in perpetuity 10.4 million acres of priority (over 55 acres in size) native prairie, including 10 million acres through perpetual easements and 400,000 acres through fee-title acquisitions.

### *Wetland Restoration Objective*

Restore wetlands sufficient to carry an additional 492,000 total breeding duck pairs over the capacities identified in table 1 of the “Prairie Pothole Joint Venture 2005 Implementation Plan, Section II—Waterfowl Plan.”

### *Grassland Restoration Objective*

Restore 393,000 acres of grasslands associated with high-density wetland communities.

## Recovery Plans for Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species

Where federally listed threatened or endangered species occur at the Souris River basin refuges, management goals and strategies in their respective recovery plans will be followed. The list of threatened or endangered species that occur on the refuges will change as species are listed or delisted, or as listed species are discovered on refuge lands.

At the time of plan approval, Upper Souris NWR is following the draft recovery plan for piping plovers in the northern Great Plains (USFWS 1994). Lake Darling at Upper Souris NWR is within the area as designated critical habitat for the federally listed piping plover.



*Piping Plover*

Edward Henry/USFWS

## State Wildlife Grants Program

Over the past several decades, documented declines of wildlife populations have occurred nationwide. The

State Wildlife Grant (SWG) program was created by Congress in 2001. This program provides states and territories with federal dollars to support conservation aimed at preventing wildlife from becoming endangered and in need of protection under the Endangered Species Act. The SWG program represents an ambitious endeavor to take an active hand in keeping species from becoming threatened or endangered in the future.

According to the SWG program, each state, territory, and the District of Columbia must complete a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy (CWCS) by October 1, 2005 to receive future funding.

These strategies will help define an integrated approach to the stewardship of all wildlife species, with additional emphasis on species of concern and habitats at risk. The goal is to shift focus from single species management and highly specialized individual efforts to a geographically based, landscape-oriented, fish and wildlife conservation effort. The Service approves CWCSs and administers SWG program funding.

The State of North Dakota CWCS was reviewed and information was used during development of the CCP. The goals and objectives of the State of North Dakota CWCS are supported by the CCP through implementation of habitat goals and objectives.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

This draft CCP and EA for the three Souris River basin refuges are intended to comply with the Improvement Act, the NEPA, and the implementing regulations of the acts. The Service's policy establishes requirements and guidance for Refuge System planning, including CCPs and step-down management plans to ensure that planning efforts comply with the Improvement Act. The planning policy identifies several steps of the CCP and EA process (also see figure 5):

- Form a planning team and conduct preplanning.
- Initiate public involvement and scoping.
- Draft the vision statement and goals.
- Develop and analyze alternatives, including the proposed action.
- Prepare the draft CCP and EA.
- Prepare and adopt the final CCP and EA and issue a "finding of no significant impact" (FONSI) or determine if an environmental impact statement is needed.
- Implement the CCP; monitor and evaluate.
- Review the CCP every 5 years and revise it every 15 years.

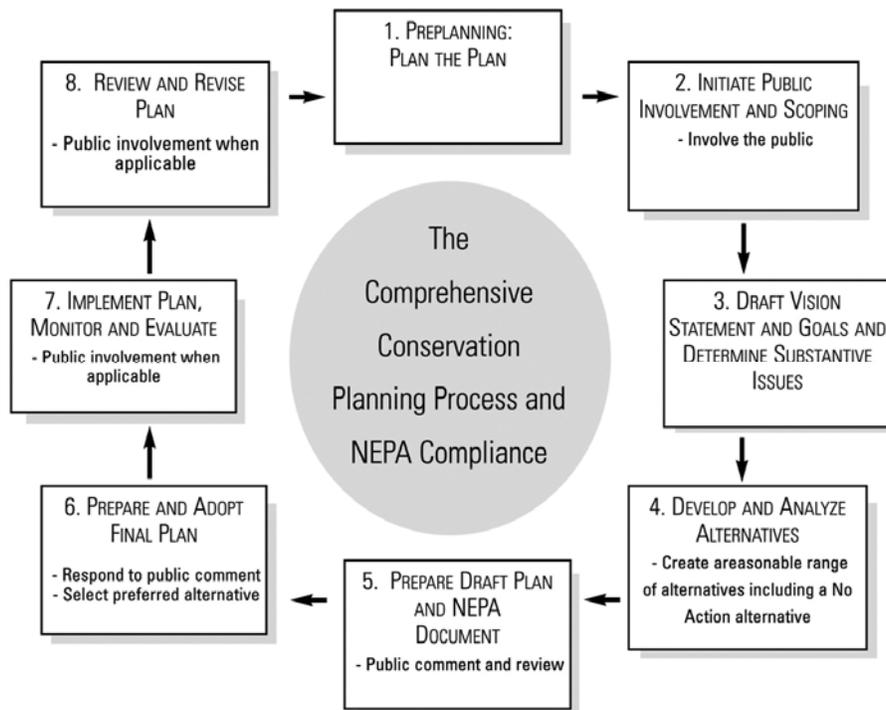


Figure 5. The planning process.

Table 1 displays the details of the planning process to date for this draft CCP and EA. The Service began the preplanning process for the refuges in June 2002. A planning team was developed shortly after an initial kickoff meeting, which included the following team members:

- Service personnel from the refuges and division of refuge planning (region 6, Lakewood, Colorado)
- personnel from NDGF

- personnel from the U.S. Geographical Survey's (USGS) biological resources division

A list of planning team members and other major contributors to development of this document are found in appendix B. Several items were addressed during preplanning including the development of a mailing list, planning schedule, and public involvement plan. Internal scoping was conducted by identifying refuge qualities and issues over a course of several meetings.

**Table 1. Planning process summary for the Souris River basin refuges, North Dakota.**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
June 3–6, 2002	CCP kickoff meeting	Toured refuges. Kickoff meeting (CCP overview; establishment of planning team; identified purpose of the refuges, history, and establishing authority; developed planning schedule).
January 2003	NOI (to prepare the CCP) published in “Federal Register”	Notified the public of the upcoming preparation of the CCP.
January 14–15, 2003	Vision and goals workshop	Conducted internal scoping by developing initial issues and qualities lists. Developed a vision statement and goals.
March 18–20, 2003	News releases for public meetings sent to local newspapers, and radio and television stations	Notified public of opportunities for involvement in the CCP process.
March 24, 2003	Public open house in Mohall, ND	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP.
March 25, 2003	Public open house in Bowbells, ND	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP.
March 26, 2003	Public open houses in Bottineau and Kenmare, ND	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP.
March 27, 2003	Public open houses in Towner and Minot, ND	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP.
March 2003	Site visit to refuges by USGS–Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center	Toured refuges. Met with refuge staff. Collected data for assessment of wetland conditions at the refuges.
April 2003	Site visit to refuges by Fort Collins Science Center, policy analysis science assistance branch	USGS researchers met with refuge staff to understand refuge needs, visitation, and management issues to design a public use survey.
August 2003–August 2004	Survey distributed to refuge visitors	Conducted research to assess (1) visitor experience, perceptions, and preferences, and (2) visitor spending in relation to recreation.

**Table 1. Planning process summary for the Souris River basin refuges, North Dakota.**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
September 2–4, 2003	Wetlands biological workshop; field assessment	Planning team toured refuges with representatives from Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center and discussed wetland conditions.
December 2003	Assessment of wetland conditions	Report issued by USGS–Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center: “A Biological Assessment of Wetland Conditions on the Souris River National Wildlife Refuges.”
January 25–26, 2005	Alternatives workshop	Developed a range of alternatives for the refuges.
March 15–16, 2005	Environmental consequences workshop and identification of the proposed action	Reviewed the anticipated environmental consequences. Identified alternative B as the proposed action.
May 26, 2005	Objectives workshop	Reviewed the proposed objectives, strategies, and rationale for implementation of the proposed action (draft CCP).
June 2006	Internal review of draft CCP and EA	Received comments on the draft CCP and EA.
Summer 2006	Release of draft CCP and EA for public review	Received comments on the revised draft CCP and EA.
Summer 2006	Public open houses	Increased public understanding of the draft CCP and EA. Received public comments about the draft CCP and EA.

## Coordination with the Public

Public scoping began January 17, 2003, with publication in the “Federal Register” of the notice of intent (NOI) to prepare CCPs and associated environmental documents for the three refuges.

A mailing list of more than 220 names was created and includes private citizens; local, regional, and state government representatives and legislators; other federal agencies; and nonprofit organizations (see appendix C).

In March 2003, a planning update was sent to each individual on the mailing list. Information was provided on the history of the Refuge System and the CCP process, along with a schedule of and invitation to upcoming open houses. Open houses were announced in local newspapers, on radio stations, and on television stations. Flyers were posted at local businesses throughout the region. Announcements were made at local organizations including, Minot City Council, Bottineau County Wildlife Club, and Rotary Club meetings.

Six open houses were held March 24–27, 2003. At each meeting, the CCP planner or refuge personnel gave a presentation on the history of the program along with an overview of the CCP and NEPA processes. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and offer comments. Attendees were invited to submit additional thoughts or questions in writing and each was given a two-page comment form to complete. The turnout was mixed, from a few attendees to 18 individuals at a single-refuge meeting.

In addition to scoping meetings, postage-paid comment forms were sent to everyone on the mailing list with an April 30, 2003 response deadline.

A second planning update (with comment form) was sent to each individual on the mailing list in November 2003. This update provided information on the ongoing public involvement effort and a summary of the public comments received during the open houses.

Input obtained from open houses and planning updates was considered in developing this draft CCP and EA.

## State Coordination

In July 2002, an invitation letter to participate in the CCP process was sent by the Service's regional director (region 6), to the director of the NDGF. Local NDGF wildlife managers and refuge staff maintain excellent and ongoing working relations that precede the start of the CCP process. An NDGF representative is part of the core CCP planning team and has been a participant in each workshop. The NDGF's mission is to "protect, conserve, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive uses." The NDGF is responsible for managing natural resource lands owned by the state, in addition to enforcement responsibilities for the state's fish, wildlife, and endangered species. The state currently manages about 78,000 acres in support of wildlife, recreation, and fisheries.

In November 2002, an invitation letter to participate in the CCP process was sent by the regional director to the state engineer of the North Dakota State Water Commission. A commission representative is part of the CCP planning team, but has not been a participant in the planning workshops. The commission will provide input through review of the CCP documents.

The refuge managers initially contacted elected officials in January 2003. They were contacted again via two planning updates that provided information on the CCP process, outlined the public meeting schedule, and included a summary of public comments received.

## Coordination with other Federal Agencies

In July 2002, an invitation letter to participate in the CCP process was sent by the Service's regional director to the colonel of the St. Paul District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). A representative was assigned to the core planning team. Input has been provided to the CCP through attendance at planning workshops and review of planning documents.

## Tribal Coordination

On July 26, 2002, six Native American tribal governments in North Dakota and South Dakota (Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux, Spirit Lake Tribal Council, Standing Rock Sioux, Three Affiliated Tribes [Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara], Fort Peck Tribal Executive Board, and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa) were contacted through a letter

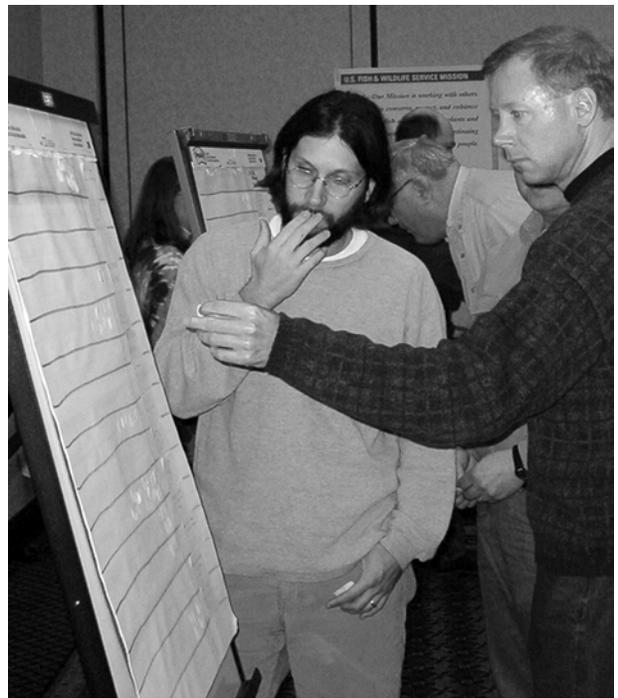
from the Service's regional director. The letter provided information about the upcoming CCP and invited recipients to serve on the core planning team. Responses were as follows:

- The Service received a response from the chair of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas and a tribal representative was assigned to the planning team. Tribal input has been obtained through the review of CCP documents.
- The Service also received a response from the Three Affiliated Tribes and two tribal representatives were assigned to the planning team. A tribal representative attended the vision and goals workshop. Additional input was obtained through review of CCP documents.

## Results of Scoping

Comments collected from scoping meetings and correspondence were used to help develop key issues. The planning team determined which alternatives could most appropriately address these issues.

The proposed action alternative formed the basis for the draft CCP, with its objectives and strategies to achieve the goals developed by the planning team. This process ensures that key issues are resolved or given priority over the life of this CCP. Chapter 2 provides a summary of these issues and the associated resource ramifications.



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*The Service received 57 comments during scoping.*

## Decision to be Made

The decision to be made by the Service's regional director is the selection of an alternative that will be carried out as the CCP for the Souris River basin refuges. This decision will be made in recognition of the environmental effects of each alternative considered. The decision will be disclosed in a FONSI included in the final CCP. Implementation of the CCP will begin on signature and publication of the final CCP.

### The CCP

- provides long-term guidance for management decisions;

- sets forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish the purpose of the refuges;

- identifies the Service's best estimate of future needs.

The draft CCP details program-planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning purposes. This CCP does not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.