

Strategies

- Hire a public use specialist with to plan and carry out an intensive public awareness program to educate the public about habitat restoration efforts.
- Hire one full-time wildlife biologist and two permanent seasonal technicians to monitor wildlife and habitat responses to habitat protection, management, and restoration efforts.
- Hire a full-time fire management specialist to manage the fire program necessary for habitat restoration.
- Hire an administrative clerk to assist with additional administrative duties.
- Maintain 40% of equipment and facilities to Service standards within 5 years of CCP approval.
- Replace 25% of worn-out equipment within 5 years of CCP approval, as needed.

Rationale and Assumptions

There are limited resources (funds and staff) allocated yearly to the refuge. The priority for these resources is to manage upland and wetland habitats. If the target (minimum) staffing level and funding are not reached or only partially reached, fewer accomplishments would be achieved.

Objective 2

Within 15 years of CCP approval, secure additional funding necessary to complete habitat restoration on 100% of high-priority habitat units and 50% of moderate-priority habitat units. Include restoration with (1) native prairie reseeding; and (2) intensive management of existing native prairie including woody plant reduction, invasive species control, and increased prescribed fire and grazing activities.

Strategies

- Use additional funding to purchase native grass and forb seeds for reseeding former cropland and planted cover.
- Use additional funding to purchase herbicides to control invasive species and remove/control woody plant expansion.
- Continue to use maintenance management funding to maintain or replace equipment and facilities, as needed, to Service standards.
- Secure additional funding to enhance streamflow monitoring and water management and develop new area-capacity data for refuge marshes.
- Use additional funding to purchase facilities to increase the environmental education program and expand outreach activities.

- Maintain existing facilities and equipment to Service standards, including necessary roads, dikes, water control structures, buildings, and fences (all of which are critical in habitat management and protection).

Rationale and Assumptions

There are limited resources (funds and staff) allocated yearly to the refuge. The priority for these resources is to protect and manage upland and wetland habitats for wildlife. Operational funding would be targeted to work on the highest priority habitats and habitat units at the refuge. Management intensity would be increased on those habitats and units and would require additional personnel and funding to restore native prairie.

STEP-DOWN MANAGEMENT PLANS

The CCP for the Souris River basin refuges is intended to be a broad umbrella plan (1) that outlines general concepts and objectives for habitat, wildlife, visitor services, cultural resources, and partnerships; and (2) that guides refuge management for the next 15 years. Step-down management plans provide greater detail for carrying out specific actions authorized by the CCP. Tables 21–23 present step-down management plans for each refuge that are anticipated to be needed, along with their current status and next revision date.

PERSONNEL

Currently, the Des Lacs NWR has a staff of 13 full-time employees. Two employees are directly assigned to Des Lacs NWR, and the remaining 11 employees work in the Des Lacs NWR Complex with duties at Des Lacs NWR in addition to duties at three other stations in the refuge complex. Table 24 lists these positions along with six new positions (three specifically assigned to Des Lacs NWR) that are needed for full implementation of the CCP.

Currently, the J. Clark Salyer NWR Complex has a staff of 16 full-time employees to manage the refuge, seven easement refuges, and the J. Clark Salyer WMD. Table 25 lists these positions along with six new positions that are needed for full implementation of the CCP (those positions needed only for the refuge).

Currently, the Upper Souris NWR has a staff of seven full-time employees. Table 26 lists these positions along with four new positions that are needed for full implementation of the CCP.

Table 21. Step-down management plans for Des Lacs NWR, North Dakota.

<i>Step-down Management Plan</i>	<i>Completed Plan, Year Approved</i>	<i>New or Revised Plan, Completion Year</i>
Fire management plan	2003	2007
Habitat management plan	—	2010
Habitat management plan (annual)	2006	2007
Hunting plan	1993	2010
Integrated pest management plan	2005	2010
Law enforcement plan	—	2010
Predator management plan	1985	2010
Safety plan	1995	2007
Visitor service plan	1990	2010
Water management plan	2006	2007

Table 22. Step-down management plans for J. Clark Salyer NWR, North Dakota.

<i>Step-down Management Plan</i>	<i>Completed Plan, Year Approved</i>	<i>New or Revised Plan, Completion Year</i>
Cropland management plan	1997	2008
Development plan	1985 (obsolete)	2009
Duck viral enteritis contingency plan	1973 (obsolete)	2012
Fire management plan	2001	2006
Habitat management plan (annual)	2006	2006
Hunting and fishing plan	1986	1993
Integrated pest management plan	2005	2010
Law enforcement plan	—	2011
Predator management plan	1985	2012
Safety plan	1998	2008
Trapping plan	1968	2010
Visitor service plan	—	2014
Water management plan (annual)	2006	2006

Table 23. Step-down management plans for Upper Souris NWR, North Dakota.

<i>Step-down Management Plan</i>	<i>Completed Plan, Year Approved</i>	<i>New or Revised Plan, Completion Year</i>
Fire management plan	1999	2007
Grassland management plan	1995	2008*
Habitat work plan (annual)	2006	2007
Hunting plan	1993	2009
Integrated pest management plan	2000	2006
Law enforcement plan	—	2006
Predator management plan	1985	2006
Safety plan	2005	2006
Sign plan	1986	2012**
Visitor service plan	—	2006
Water management plan (annual)	2006	2007
Water management plan (long-range)	1968	2010*

* Year dependent on hiring a biologist.

** Year dependent on hiring a public use specialist.

Table 24. Current and proposed staff for Des Lacs NWR, North Dakota.

	<i>Current Positions</i> GS=General Schedule Position WG=Wage Grade Position	<i>Additional Proposed Positions</i> (Unfunded Staffing)
Management Staff	Refuge project leader, GS-14* Deputy project leader, GS-13*	Refuge operations specialist, GS-11 Resource specialist, GS-11*
Biological Staff	Wildlife biologist, GS-12*	Wildlife biologist, GS-11 Biological science technician, GS-7*
Visitor Service Staff	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
Administrative Staff	Administrative officer, GS-9* Administrative support assistant, GS-5*	<i>No additional positions</i>
Maintenance Staff	Engineering equipment operator, WG-10 Maintenance worker, WG-8	Tractor operator, WG-7
Fire Management Staff	Fire management officer, GS-11* Supervisory range technician, GS-7* Prescribed fire specialist, GS-7* Range technician, GS-6* Range technician, GS-5* Dispatcher, GS-6*	<i>No additional positions</i>
Law Enforcement Staff	<i>None</i>	Park ranger, GS-9*

* This position supports the refuge but is assigned to the Des Lacs NWR Complex, working at all four stations.

Table 25. Current and proposed staff for J. Clark Salyer NWR, North Dakota.

	<i>Current Positions</i> GS=General Schedule Position WG=Wage Grade Position	<i>Additional Proposed Positions</i> (Unfunded Staffing)
Management Staff	Refuge complex project leader, GS-14 Deputy project leader, GS-13 Supervisory refuge operations specialist, GS-12* Refuge operations specialist, GS-5/7/9	Refuge operations specialist, GS-9/11 Refuge operations specialist, GS-9/11
Biological Staff	Refuge complex biologist, GS-12 Private lands biologist, GS-11*	Wildlife biologist, GS-11 Resource specialist, GS-11
Visitor Service Staff	<i>None</i>	Law enforcement officer, GS-9
Administrative Staff	Administrative officer, GS-9 Administrative support assistant, GS-6	Clerk, GS-5
Maintenance Staff	Auto mechanic, WG-10 Engineering equipment operator, WG-8 Engineering equipment operator, WG-8* Biological science technician, GS-8*	<i>No additional positions</i>
Fire Management Staff	Fire management officer, GS-11 Prescribed fire specialist, GS-9 Fire program technician, GS-7 Range technician, GS-5	<i>No additional positions</i>
Law Enforcement Staff	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

* This position supports the refuge, but primary duties are within the wetland management district.

Table 26. Current and proposed staff for Upper Souris NWR, North Dakota.

	<i>Current Positions</i> GS=General Schedule Position WG=Wage Grade Position	<i>Additional Proposed Positions</i> (Unfunded Staffing)
Management Staff	Refuge project leader, GS-13 Deputy project leader, GS-12	<i>No additional positions</i>
Biological Staff	Wildlife biologist, GS-11*	Biological science technician, GS-9 (permanent career-seasonal, 0.5 FTE)
Visitor Service Staff	<i>None</i>	Outdoor recreation planner, GS-11
Administrative Staff	Administrative support assistant, GS-7	Clerk, GS-5 (permanent career-seasonal, 0.5 FTE)
Maintenance Staff	Maintenance worker, WG-8 Biological technician (wildlife), GS-9	<i>No additional positions</i>
Fire Management Staff	Fire program technician, GS-7	<i>No additional positions</i>
Law Enforcement Staff	Park ranger, GS-9	Park ranger, GS-9 (permanent career-seasonal, 0.5 FTE)

*Refuge operations needs system (RONS) position: currently unfunded (transferred to Lost Trail NWR in 2004).

FUNDING

Projects required to carry out the CCP are funded through two separate systems, as follows:

- The refuge operations needs system (RONS) is used to document requests to Congress for funding and staffing needed to carry out projects above the existing base budget.
- The Service asset maintenance management system (SAMMS) is used to document the equipment, buildings, and other existing properties that require repair or replacement.

Lists of the RONS and SAMMS projects required to carry out this draft CCP (including maintenance of structures and equipment to a safe and productive standard for the 15 years of the CCP) are in the following appendices: Des Lacs NWR (appendix S), J. Clark Salyer NWR (appendix T), and Upper Souris NWR (appendix U).

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist near the Souris River basin refuges to establish partnerships with sporting clubs, elementary and secondary schools, and community organizations. A strong partnership already exists between the Service and the NDGF.

At regional and state levels, partnerships might be established with organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, National Wild Turkey Federation, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, wildlife societies, Delta Waterfowl, and many others.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Adaptive management is a flexible approach to long-term management of biotic resources. Adaptive management is directed, over time, by the results of ongoing monitoring activities and other information. More specifically, adaptive management is a process by which projects are carried out within a framework of scientifically driven experiments to test the predictions and assumptions outlined within a CCP (figure 16).

To apply adaptive management, specific survey, inventory, and monitoring protocols would be adopted for the Souris River basin refuges. The habitat management strategies would be systematically evaluated to determine management effects on wildlife populations. This information would be used to refine approaches and determine how effectively the objectives are being accomplished. Evaluations would include participation by the HAPET, the ecosystem team, and other appropriate partners. If monitoring and evaluation indicate undesirable effects

for target and nontarget species or communities, alterations to the management projects would be made. Subsequently, the CCP would be revised.

Specific monitoring and evaluation activities will be described in the step-down management plans (tables 21–23).

PLAN AMENDMENT AND REVISION

The final CCP will be reviewed annually to determine the need for revision. A revision would occur if and when significant information becomes available. The final CCP will be supported by detailed step-down management plans to address the completion of specific strategies in support of the Souris River basin refuges’ goals and objectives. Revisions to the CCP and the step-down management plans will be subject to public review and NEPA compliance.

At a minimum, the final CCP will be evaluated every 5 years and revised after 15 years.

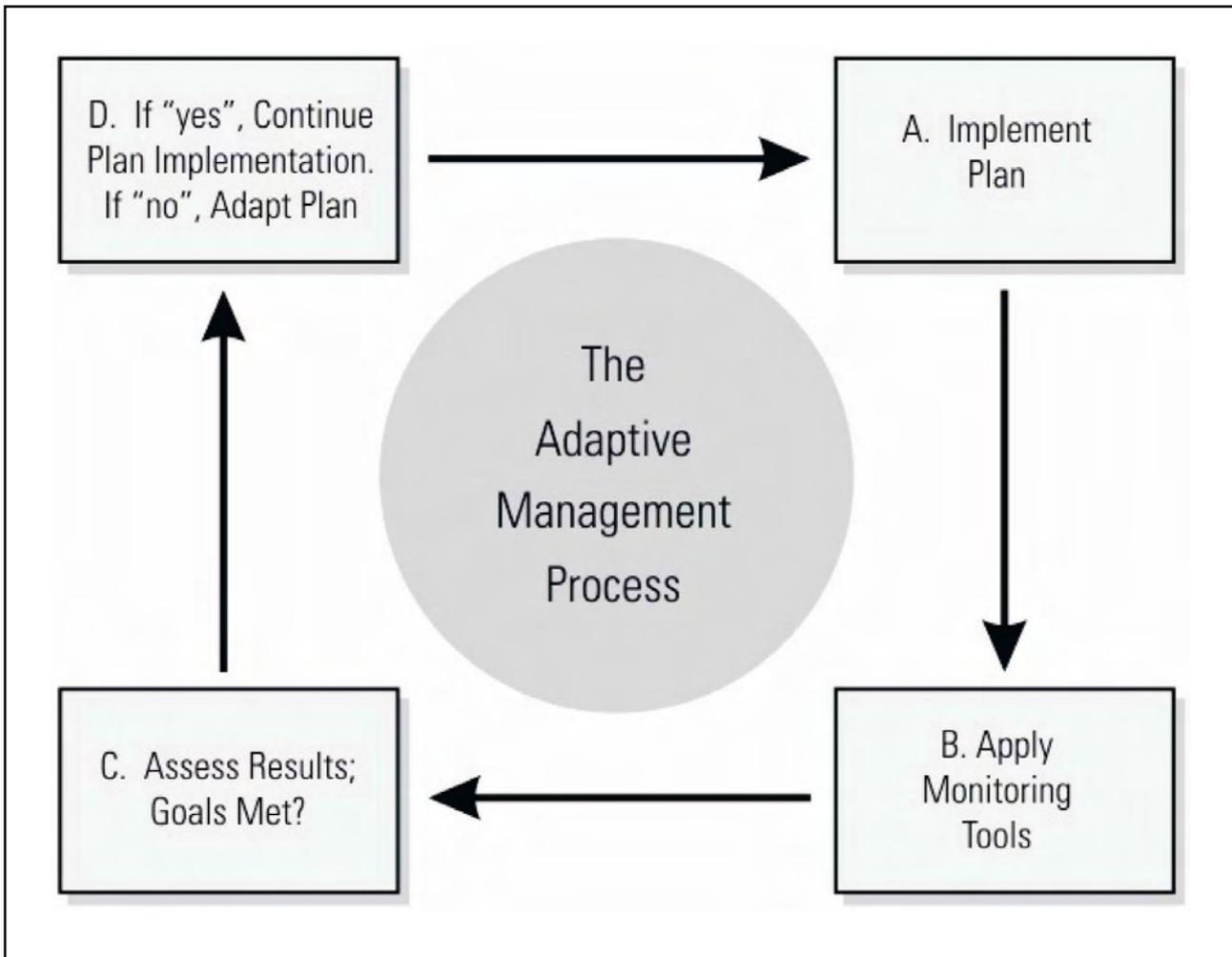


Figure 16. The adaptive management process.