



View from Ted's Trail
Lelaina Marin/USFWS

Management Direction and Implementation

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Management Direction and Implementation

This CCP includes an array of management actions that, in our professional judgment, work towards achieving the refuge purpose, the vision and goals for the refuge, and State and regional conservation plans. In our opinion, it effectively addresses the key issues. We believe it is reasonable, feasible and practicable.

In all program areas, this CCP will enhance the quality and sustainability of current compatible activities, develop long-range and strategic step-down plans, and promote partnerships.

General Refuge Management

Introduction

This plan includes the array of management actions that, in our professional judgment, work best toward achieving the purpose of the refuge, our vision and goals for the refuge, and state and regional conservation plans. In our opinion, this plan effectively addresses the key issues the Service, the state, and the public identified (see chapter 2).

This plan focuses on improving our biological and visitor services programs by expanding our partnerships with other federal and state agencies, town departments, local conservation organizations, and individuals. We will assess and monitor threats to the integrity of refuge habitat by gathering baseline data on plant and wildlife populations on the refuge. We will use partnerships to continue to maintain trails and to develop and maintain a refuge parking area. We will also work to increase the visibility of the Service and the refuge in the local community, and better communicate information about the refuge, its rules, regulations, and contact information to the public.

Although we cannot acquire more land for the refuge at this time, we will offer our support in protecting other land in the area. We will help our partners identify land that merits protection, and help them choose the best methods or techniques for managing it. Please refer to goal 3 for additional information about partnerships for protecting land.

Controlling Invasive Plant Species

One national priority of the Refuge System is to manage and control the spread of invasive plants. We have not inventoried invasive species on the refuge; however, we recently began a partnership with the USFS to conduct one.

One particular concern is glossy buckthorn, which is well established near the refuge. That invasive plant rapidly forms dense, even-aged thickets in both wetlands and woodland understories. Its seedlings invade apparently stable habitats, and grow most successfully where there is ample light and exposed soils, such as along woodland edges and in forest openings created by windfalls (Nashua Conservation Commission 2004).

Those are the areas we will focus on in the future. Our objectives are to ensure that no new invasive plants establish themselves, and to control the spread of any that the USFS inventory may find.

Maintaining Partnerships

We will maintain our present partnerships with the Friends of the Wapack (FOW), the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG), and the Mountain View Hiking Club. Those three groups are particularly important and valued partners, whose contributions are vital to our success in managing many aspects of the refuge. For example, the FOW maintains the 4-mile section of the Wapack Trail and the 1.1-mile Cliff Trail where they run through the refuge. The Mountain View Hiking Club maintains the combined

5.15-mile Ted's and Carolyn's trails where they run through the refuge. The NHFG assists us with law enforcement.

Permitting Special Uses, Including Research and Economic Uses

The refuge manager will evaluate the appropriateness and compatibility of all activities that require a special use permit. All research and commercial or economic uses require special use permits.

Research

Research on species of concern and their habitats will continue as a priority. We will continue to approve permits that provide a direct benefit to the refuge, or for research that will strengthen our decisions on managing its natural resources. The refuge manager may also consider requests that do not directly relate to refuge objectives, but rather to the protection or enhancement of native species and biological diversity in the region.

We will require all researchers to submit detailed research proposals following the guidelines established by Service policy and refuge staff. Special use permits will also identify the schedules for progress reports, the criteria for determining when a project should cease, and the requirements for publication or other interim and final reports. All publications must acknowledge the Service and the role of Service staff as key partners in funding or operations. We will ask our refuge biologists, other divisions of the Service, the USFS, select universities or recognized experts, and the State of New Hampshire to review as peers and comment on research proposals or draft publications, and will share the research results both internally and externally with those reviewers and other conservation agencies and organizations.

Some projects, such as depredation and banding studies, require additional Service permits. The refuge manager will not approve those projects until all their required permits have been received.

Commercial and Economic Uses

All commercial and economic uses will adhere to Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subpart A, §29.1 and Service policy, which allow those activities if they are necessary to achieve the Refuge System mission or refuge purposes and goals. Allowing those activities also requires the Service to prepare a finding of appropriateness, a compatibility determination, and an annual special use permit outlining the terms, conditions, fees, and any other stipulations to ensure compatibility.

We will consider issuing a special use permit to commercial operators for each activity, such as guided wildlife viewing, that takes place completely on refuge lands, if that activity meets the thresholds noted above, including compatibility. In addition, we will require all operators to complete a detailed summary of their activities on the refuge each year, and require that they conduct periodic visitor satisfaction surveys using a survey method we review and approve prior to its use. We will modify or deny any subsequent issuance of annual permits based on annual reports, our field reviews and inspections, and the results of those surveys.

Distributing Refuge Revenue Sharing Payments

In accordance with the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act (16 U.S.C. 715s), Congress appropriates funds each year for refuge revenue sharing payments, which are calculated by a formula based on the acreage and value of refuge land in each taxing jurisdiction. Those payments change with changes in the appraised market values of refuge lands and new appropriations by Congress. This plan will continue the payments described in chapter 3 to the towns of Greenfield and Temple.

Protecting Cultural Resources

As a federal land management agency, we are responsible for locating and protecting all historic resources on the refuge or on land affected by refuge activities: specifically, archeological sites and historic structures

eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and any museum properties. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires our evaluation of the effects of our actions on any archeological and historical resources on the refuge, and our consultation with respective State Historic Preservation Offices. Our compliance with the act may require any or all of the following: a State Historic Preservation Records survey, literature survey, or field survey.

We know of no archeological or historic sites on the refuge. Should we find any, we will comply with the NHPA.

Managing the Refuge According to Deed Stipulations

Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, the donors who gave the land to the Service for the refuge, stipulated that we preserve it in a “wilderness-like” setting, “as a place where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man is a visitor who does not remain.” That wording in the deed closely resembles the wording of the Wilderness Act of 1964. During the planning process, we established communications with a direct descendant of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall who lives in the area and is very interested in the refuge and its management in compliance with the restrictions in the deed.

We will continue to manage the refuge in a wilderness-like setting and adhere to the restrictions in the deed: the prohibition of hunting, fishing, trapping, traveling in or using vehicles, or cutting trees except to maintain trails. This plan will not result in our manipulating refuge habitat, including selective cutting or prescribed burning. The refuge is not designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

Refuge Trails

Four trails are designated for the refuge: Wapack trail (4.0 miles on the refuge), Cliff trail (1.1 miles), and Ted’s and Carolyn’s trails (3 miles on the refuge). Activities allowed on these trails are documented in Appendix A, “Findings of Appropriateness and Compatibility Determinations.”

This plan does not authorize additional trails on the refuge. Please view all designated refuge trails on map 4-1, below.

Operating Hours and Administration

We will continue to open the refuge for public use from one-half hour before official sunrise to one-half hour after official sunset, seven days a week, to ensure visitor safety and protect refuge resources. At the refuge manager’s discretion, special use permits may allow organized, nocturnal activities, such as celestial observation or wildlife research.

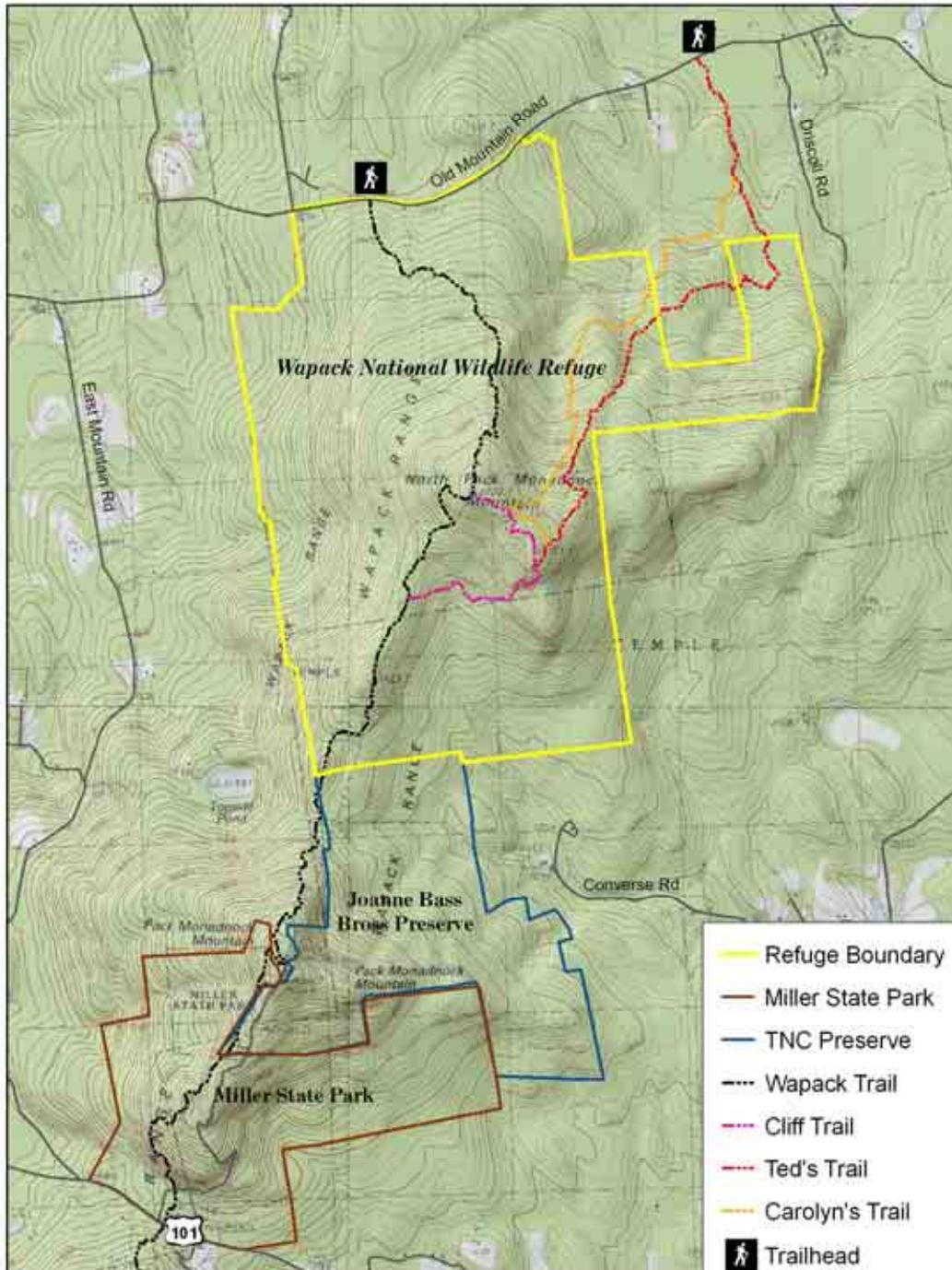
The refuge will be administered from our Parker River refuge office in Newburyport, Massachusetts.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wapack National Wildlife Refuge and Surrounding Conservation Areas
Refuge Trails

Map 4-1



Data Sources:
 USGS - Imagery
 NH GRANIT - Public Roads
 TNC - Joanne Bass Bros boundary
 NH DRED - Miller State Park boundary
 USFWS - refuge boundaries and trails

Map prepared for Wapack National Wildlife
 Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, September 2007.
 This map is for planning purposes only.



Adaptive Management

This plan will implement adaptive management. “Adaptive Management: The U.S. Department of Interior Technical Guide (2007),” promotes flexible decision-making that we can adjust in the face of uncertainties as we better understand the outcomes of management actions and natural events. Carefully monitoring those outcomes helps us adjust our policies or operations in an iterative process to advance scientific understanding.

Adaptive management does not represent an end in itself, but rather, a means to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits (William and Shapiro 2007). The need for adaptive management is even more compelling because our present information on refuge species and habitat is incomplete, provisional, and subject to change as our knowledge base improves.

We realize that we must adapt our objectives and strategies to respond to new information and spatial and temporal changes. We will continually evaluate our management actions, both informally and formally through monitoring or research, to reconsider whether our original assumptions and predictions were valid. In that way, management becomes a proactive process of learning what really works. The refuge manager is responsible for changing management strategies or objectives if they do not produce the desired conditions.

Additional NEPA Analysis

Although NEPA generally requires a site-specific analysis of the impacts of all major federal actions in either an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS), it exempts from further analysis a specific category that includes implementing priority public use programs, developing new visitor services infrastructure, and controlling invasive plants.

Other activities categorically excluded from NEPA requirements to prepare environmental documents generally include routine administrative actions. Normally we can increase monitoring and research that support adaptive management without additional NEPA analysis, and assuming the activities, if conducted by non-Service personnel, are determined compatible by the refuge manager in a compatibility determination. Significant changes may warrant additional NEPA analysis and public comment. Minor changes will not, but we will document them in our annual monitoring, in project evaluation reports, or in our annual narrative report.

The only action in this CCP that will require additional NEPA analysis is the construction of a parking area. We have yet to determine its design and location, so we decided to postpone detailed NEPA analysis until then. Otherwise, the EA that accompanied our draft CCP fulfills our compliance with NEPA.

Refuge Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Relating Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

One of the earliest steps in developing this plan was to formulate refuge goals: the intentionally broad, descriptive statements of the desired future condition of refuge resources. Goals articulate the principal elements of refuge purposes and the vision statement, and provide a foundation for developing specific management objectives and strategies. By design, goals are less quantitative and more prescriptive than their objectives in defining the targets of our management.

Our next step was to develop management objectives to help us meet those goals. Objectives are incremental steps toward achieving a goal; they also further define the management targets in measurable terms. They provide the basis for determining more detailed strategies, monitoring refuge accomplishments, and evaluating our success. “Writing Refuge Management Goals and Objectives: A

Handbook” (USFWS 2004) recommends that objectives possess five properties to be “SMART”: They must be (1) specific, (2) measurable, (3) achievable, (4) results-oriented, and (5) time-fixed.

A rationale accompanies each objective to explain its context and why we think it is important. This will help us determine how to measure our success in achieving each objective.

For each objective, we developed strategies: the combination of specific actions, tools, or techniques we may use to achieve that objective. Subsequent refuge step-down plans will help us further evaluate how, when, and where we should implement most of the strategies.

Goal 1. Allow natural processes and disturbances to enhance the biological diversity and integrity of upland wildlife habitat.

Objective 1. (Collecting Resource Information)

During the 15 years following the approval of this CCP, we will promote a biologically diverse, healthy, mature forest habitat on 1,625 acres that supports breeding and migrating bird species of conservation concern, such as the bay-breasted warbler, black-throated blue warbler, black-throated green warbler, blackburnian warbler, blackpoll warbler, Canada warbler, eastern wood-pewee, ovenbird, veery, wood thrush, and yellow-bellied sapsucker. In addition, we will conserve habitat for other species listed in the NH WAP that may be present on the refuge, such as bobcat, eastern small-footed bat, spotted turtle, and northern leopard frog.

Rationale for Objective

The Service policy “Maintaining the Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health of the National Wildlife Refuge System” provides refuge managers with a process to evaluate their refuge and recommend the best direction for managing it to prevent the further degradation of environmental conditions. To implement that policy fully, we must first assess the current status of the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the refuge through surveys of its baseline vegetation, population surveys and studies, and any other environmental studies necessary. That will give us the information we need to maintain the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the refuge.

Because the refuge is unstaffed, resources are not readily available to conduct biological surveys. Limited refuge budgets also hinder contracting those surveys to other organizations or individuals. In 2003, James Kowalsky completed the most recent surveys of the refuge, which included information on the presence of breeding bird species, but no information on productivity or survivorship. We also have not surveyed the forest health, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, or vegetation on the refuge.

Members of the local community expressed their concern about that lack of biological data and the unavailability of other data to the public. We will obtain more up-to-date data on all refuge resources and make it available to the public.

We will use a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Forest Health Protection Program (FHPP) to complete an assessment of forest health on the refuge. The FHPP works to protect and improve the health of America’s forests. Its goal is to respond rapidly to forest health threats to avoid unacceptable losses of forest resources. The FHPP will compile a list of plant species, identify tree mortality, and determine the presence of any invasive species. That assessment will allow us to identify and monitor any threat to the integrity of the refuge forest habitat.

To gather information about vegetation and wildlife populations on the refuge, we will use partnerships with such organizations as New Hampshire Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, the Keene State College citizen

survey group, local conservation groups, and individual volunteers. That research will focus on species of concern that other state or conservation management plans have identified.

- The NH WAP (NHFG 2005) identifies the bay-breasted warbler, Canada warbler, veery, and wood thrush as forest-dependent species of concern. In addition to bird species, the New Hampshire WAP lists as species of concern some mammals known in the vicinity of the refuge, including the black bear, bobcat, and moose.
- The Atlantic Northern Forest Bird Conservation Region (BCR 14) Blueprint (Dettmers 2005) lists the black-throated blue warbler, black-throated green warbler, blackburnian warbler, blackpoll warbler, eastern wood-pewee, ovenbird, and yellow-bellied sapsucker as moderate to high conservation priority in forest types found on the refuge.

To provide consistent information that we can compare from year to year, the refuge will develop an Inventory and Monitoring Plan (IMP). That IMP will outline the method for assessing whether our assumptions and management actions are, in fact, supporting our habitat and species objectives. An IMP will promote the use of coordinated, standardized, cost-effective, defensible methods for gathering and analyzing population data. It will also allow us to assess new and ongoing surveys and focus our limited resources on collecting data on resources of conservation concern. Our primary interest in establishing a thorough, consistent inventory and monitoring program is that it will allow us to control threats to refuge resources (e.g., a threat from invasive species, or overuse of an area by recreational visitors).

Strategies

Within 2 years of CCP approval

- Meet with various partners (e.g., NHFG, New Hampshire Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, the Keene State College citizen survey group, local conservation groups, and individual volunteers) to discuss possible partnership opportunities for prioritizing, funding, and conducting compatible natural resource surveys.
- The USFS Forest Health Protection Program will complete a full forest health assessment and help us identify what to evaluate and monitor as threats to the biological integrity of the refuge.

Within 7 years of CCP approval

- Use partnerships (e.g., established from those contacts made in strategy above) for resource data collection following peer-reviewed or agency approved protocols. Obtain all required permits prior to field implementation.
- Complete an Inventory and Monitoring Plan (IMP).

Goal 2. Establish a public use program that will encourage compatible, low-impact recreation on refuge trails.

Objective 2a. (Trail Maintenance)

Within 2 years of the approval of this CCP, develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Friends of the Wapack (FOW) for maintaining the segments of the Wapack Trail and the Cliff Trail that cross the refuge, and an MOU with the Mountain View Hiking Club for maintaining the sections of the Ted's and Carolyn's trails that cross the refuge.

Rationale for Objective

Under an informal agreement, the FOW maintains the 4-mile section of the Wapack Trail that crosses the refuge. They also maintain the 1.1-mile Cliff Trail, a spur off that 4-mile segment at the top of North Pack Monadnock. Both the Service and the FOW are interested in formulating a MOU for refuge trail

maintenance. As a template for our final MOU we will use a draft created in 2004 which was never implemented.

Given the amount of work and the help the FOW members provide for the refuge, completing a formal agreement that defines their exact responsibilities is important. Under the final MOU, the FOW will be responsible for removing major obstructions and litter, installing water diversions to minimize erosion, or rerouting the trail if necessary to minimize erosion or mitigate the effects of heavy use. They will assist in marking only what is necessary to keep people on the trail. Yellow triangles painted on trees or rock outcrops will designate the Wapack Trail; blue triangles will designate the Cliff Trail.

We will meet annually with the FOW to discuss plans for trail maintenance for the ensuing year. That will give them and us the opportunity to discuss any concerns about the safety or inappropriate uses of the trail.

The Mountain View Hiking Club maintains the combined 5.15-mile Ted's and Carolyn's trails. Three miles traverse the refuge; the other 2.15 miles cross private land. The Mountain View Hiking Club is very interested in developing a MOU with the Service for the continued maintenance of the sections of the two trails that cross the refuge.

Similar to our agreement with the FOW, the Mountain View Hiking Club will be responsible for removing major obstructions and litter, installing water diversions to minimize erosion, or rerouting the trail if necessary to minimize erosion or mitigate the effects of heavy use. They will also assist in marking the trail. Some of the sections of the Ted's and Carolyn's trails that cross the refuge are designated sporadically with yellow markers stamped with the Service logo. The Service will provide the club with additional trail markers to improve the marking in those sections. We will also meet annually with the club to discuss plans for trail maintenance in the ensuing year.

Strategies

Within 2 years of CCP approval

- Complete a MOU with the Friends of the Wapack for trail maintenance on the refuge.
- Complete a MOU with the Mountain View Hiking club for trail maintenance on the refuge.
- Meet annually with the FOW and the Mountain View Hiking Club to review plans for trail maintenance.
- Establish contact with the Marshall family descendant, or designee, if refuge activities may result in significant removal of vegetation or ground disturbance.

Objective 2b. (Trailhead Improvements)

Within 15 years of the approval of this CCP, work with state and local partners to seek funding for the design, construction, or, if necessary, land acquisition for a trailhead parking area.

Rationale for Objective

The only way that visitors can access the northern end of the refuge is by parking on the shoulder of Old Mountain Road, which can be problematic for several reasons. First, we have seen up to 15 cars parked along the road shoulder during peak season weekends for access to the Wapack Trail. With limited space for cars, visitors are forced to park in unsafe areas or sometimes leave altogether. Once visitors have parked their cars, they have to walk along the road to the refuge entrance. That creates another safety concern, particularly when through-traffic on the road is heavy. Parking on the road also creates a problem for the Town of Greenfield Department of Transportation. In the winter, cars parked on the side of the road make it very difficult for snow plows to safely pass and clear a road that is already narrow. The Town of Greenfield is very concerned about this recurring problem, and will like us to work with them in solving it.

If visitors wanted to access the southern entrance of the refuge, they will have to park at Miller State Park and hike north through the Joanne Bass Bross Preserve (TNC). Parking at Miller State Park can be inconvenient, not only because visitors have to hike a farther distance to get to the refuge, but also because they have to pay for parking. In 2007, admission to the state park cost \$3 for adults and \$1 for children.

By creating a parking area at the northern entrance of the refuge, we will increase visitor convenience, improve public safety, and resolve concerns about snow plowing. We will like to build the parking area on a parcel of land on or near the refuge and the Wapack trailhead. We will consider purchasing a tract from a willing seller at market value to provide adequate space to establish a safe parking area. If possible, we will also like to work with the Town of Greenfield to arrange plowing for the new parking area. We do not have a location or a parking design yet; the location and ownership of the land will dictate the size and configuration of the parking area. Because the Town of Greenfield owns most of the land around the refuge, we will meet with the town to discuss possible options for establishing a parking area.

The Brantwood Camp also owns land next to the refuge. It provides a positive camping experience for boys and girls from various backgrounds who otherwise will miss the opportunity to attend summer camp (Brantwood Camp 2007). We know that campers quite often use the refuge trail, so they may benefit from additional parking. We will meet with the Brantwood Camp to discuss opportunities to work together in establishing the parking area. Since the location of the refuge is so close to Miller State Park, we also propose to meet with the NH Division of Parks and Recreation to discuss partnership and funding opportunities to develop parking.

Over the next 5 years, we will seek sources of funding for the design and construction of the parking area. Two possible sources are the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and the Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program (PLHD).

The RTP is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal transportation funds benefit recreation by making funds available to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational uses. RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund, and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from nonhighway recreational fuel use: fuel used for off-highway recreation by snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, and off-highway light trucks (FHWA 2006).

The PLHD Program was designed to improve access to and within federal lands. PLHD funds are available for transportation planning, research, engineering, and the construction of the highways, roads, parkways, and transit facilities on federal public lands. Those funds are also available for the operation and maintenance of transit facilities. In both programs, the state will assist in applying for a grant, which could propose funds for designing, constructing or, if necessary, acquiring land on which to build the parking area.

Strategies

Within 2 years of CCP approval

- Meet with the Town of Greenfield, Brantwood Camp, and the NH DRED, Division of Parks and Recreation, to discuss possible partnership opportunities for establishing and maintaining a parking area on Old Mountain Road.

Within 5 years of CCP approval

- Determine a specific location for the construction of the parking area on Old Mountain Road.
- Work with the State of New Hampshire to seek funding for the design, construction, or, if necessary, land acquisition for a parking area.
- Work with an engineer to design the layout of the parking area.

Within 15 years of CCP approval

- Complete construction of the parking area.

Objective 2c. (Service and Refuge System Visibility)

Within 5 years of the approval of this CCP, increase the visibility of the Service in the local community and improve public recognition and awareness of the refuge and the Refuge System to the extent that 90 percent of visitors contacted know they are on a national wildlife refuge, can identify its purpose, and know that it is part of a national system of refuges.

Rationale for Objective

Limited resources have prevented us from improving the presence of the Service and the visibility of the refuge to the public as well as its recognition in the local community.

This plan includes actions to increase Service visibility by improving our signage, fostering new partnerships for outreach and education, and communicating regularly with federal, state and local elected officials. We will install a new informational panel at the northern trailhead of the refuge. That panel will provide general refuge resource and contact information. It will also publish refuge rules and regulations, including why keeping dogs on leash is important. Because the refuge does not provide any accessible trails, the panel will also identify the accessible trails in the area.

We will meet with the FOW to discuss providing more signage, and providing information on the refuge and the FOW. We will also work with the Mountain View Hiking Club to install standard “Welcome to your National Wildlife Refuge” signs at the refuge entrances of the Ted and Carolyn’s trails. That sign will simply notify trail users that they are leaving private land and entering a national wildlife refuge.

By posting the rules and regulations on a trailhead sign, we hope to minimize the number of violations on the refuge. We hope that refuge visitors will respect and adhere to all rules and regulations.

We also intend to improve the posting of the refuge boundary. We will post additional signs around the refuge boundary to ensure that they are intervisible.¹ That will help visitors realize that they are on a national wildlife refuge, and reduce the number of trespassers that enter it.

Our proximity to Miller State Park makes it a great asset in our effort to increase our visibility. We plan to meet with the NH Division of Parks of Recreation to discuss developing a MOA for assistance in outreach and education. The MOA will lay the foundation to work with the Miller State Park to increase public recognition and awareness of the refuge. Ideas for further discussion include having park personnel hand out refuge information at the park entrance toll booth. A small information panel might also be constructed and placed at the end of the park’s trail, where visitors leave the park and enter the Joanne Bass Bross Preserve. That panel will explain the detrimental effects of allowing unleashed dogs on the trail system, and will help reduce such violations both on the refuge and in the park.

To help increase knowledge about the refuge in the local community, we plan to develop and distribute at the Wapack trailhead an interpretative brochure describing key habitats, species and sights that visitors should look for as they travel the refuge trails. We hope that the brochure will not only increase public knowledge of the refuge, but also improve the visitor experience.

Strengthening our relationships with federal, state and local elected officials can strengthen political support for the refuge and its programs. We will provide updates on the refuge to Congress each year, or as significant issues arise. We will also work to increase refuge visibility among state and local elected officials by improving our communication about refuge resources, issues, and visitor activities.

¹ **intervisible** *adj.* mutually visible (*surveying*): [I.e., visitors can see from one sign to the next.]

Strategies

Within 1 year of CCP approval

- Meet with the FOW to cooperate in developing an informational panel that includes general refuge information, rules and regulations and contact information at the Wapack trailhead.

Within 5 years of CCP approval

- Install standard “Welcome to the National Wildlife Refuge” signs at the refuge entrances of both the Ted and Carolyn’s trails to notify hikers that they are entering a national wildlife refuge.
- Increase the number of boundary signs posted around the refuge, where necessary to make them intervisible.
- Meet with the NH Division of Parks and Recreation to discuss the possibility of developing a MOA for assistance with outreach and education.
- Develop an interpretative brochure that describes key habitats, species and sights that visitors should watch for as they travel along refuge trails.
- Provide congressional updates each year or as significant issues arise.
- Improve refuge visibility among state and local elected officials through improved communication.
- Create a more informative website to provide better orientation to the refuge.
- Contact various authors of hiking guides that refer to the Wapack refuge to update refuge resource and contact information.
- Contact publishers of regional hiking guides (e.g., Appalachian Mountain Club) to share accurate information about refuge trails.

Objective 2d. (Public Uses on the Refuge)

Within 1 year of the approval of this CCP, communicate our findings of appropriateness and determinations of compatibility for refuge uses to the public, refuge partners, and elected officials.

Rationale for Objective

A compatible use is one “that will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the Refuge System or the purposes of the refuge.” Please refer to “Policy on the Appropriateness of Refuge Uses” and “Policy on Compatibility” in chapter 1 for additional, detailed information.

At least every 15 years, or sooner if new information warrants, we reevaluate our compatibility determinations for the six priority public uses: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation; we reevaluate all other uses every 10 years. Except for wildlife observation, photography and environmental education and interpretation, all of the compatibility determinations previously done for Wapack refuge in 1994 have passed their reevaluation date.

To comply with Service policy on appropriateness and compatibility, we reevaluated all non-priority public uses occurring on the refuge, or those regularly requested, and completed findings for them, including: berry-picking; walking/hiking, backpacking, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing; jogging; organized or facility supported picnicking; dog walking; research by non-Service personnel; the annual Wapack Trail Race, camping; mountain biking; and, horseback riding. Of those activities, we found jogging, picnicking, camping, mountain biking and horseback riding to be inappropriate; we will not allow them on the refuge.

We recognize that some people may be confused as to why we found jogging and picnicking compatible in 1994, but are now prohibiting them. Since 1994, conditions at the refuge have changed, and our new policies have raised the standard for determining appropriateness. We now find the two activities could adversely affect refuge resources and other refuge visitors. An increase in refuge visitation and trail erosion has elevated our cause for concern about the effects on wildlife and public safety. After reevaluating those activities under current conditions and Service policies, we determined that they are not consistent with those policies or public safety, and will hinder our ability to provide quality, wildlife-dependent recreation on the refuge. Furthermore, jogging and picnicking are rarely observed at the refuge, and were not raised as activities of interest at our public scoping meetings. In our opinion, jogging will detract from the enjoyment of the refuge for other visitors engaged in wildlife-dependent activities.

Three of the activities listed above which we plan to allow: dog walking; the annual Wapack Trail Race; and, research by non-Service personnel, were never evaluated previously. We have determined that dog walking on leash, the annual race (with stipulations), and research by non-Service personnel under permit are all compatible.

Appendix A, “Findings of Appropriateness and Compatibility Determinations” documents our decisions and includes all stipulations for activities allowed. The public had the opportunity to comment on all compatibility determinations during the comment period for the draft CCP/EA.

Strategies

Within 1 year of CCP approval

- Develop outreach materials to communicate the prohibition of jogging, picnicking, camping, mountain biking, and horseback riding on the refuge.
- Work with partners and volunteers to monitor refuge uses and step up outreach and education on the reasons these uses are considered incompatible with refuge purposes.

Within 5 years of CCP approval

- With help from our partners, monitor dog walking to determine whether visitors are adhering to the “dog on leash” regulation. If we find that the majority are not complying, then we will prohibit dog walking altogether.

Goal 3. Enhance the conservation, management, and stewardship of wildlife resources through partnerships with public and private conservation groups, private landowners, State agencies and local entities.

Objective 3a. (Partnerships Focusing on Refuge Resources)

Within 15 years of the approval of this CCP, increase our efforts to maintain and expand partnerships with other federal agencies, state agencies, local conservation groups and individuals with similar conservation missions.

Rationale for Objective

The refuge is an unstaffed satellite of the Parker River refuge. Limited resources make it difficult for the Service to address key refuge issues, including data collection on refuge resources, trail maintenance, refuge access, outreach and education, and law enforcement. The refuge can receive help to deal with those issues through partnerships. They will be essential for this unstaffed refuge to accomplish its goals.

Goals 1 and 2 propose several partnerships to fulfill our needs for inventorying and monitoring species and habitat. We propose partnerships with several groups in the local community: the Monadnock Conservancy, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Open Space Committee of Greenfield, Piscataquaog Watershed Association, and local town conservation commissions. We will first contact each of

these groups to converse about possible opportunities for their assistance in monitoring the refuge. That could range anywhere from general observations while hiking the trail, to detail analysis through scientific studies.

The Friends of the Wapack group focuses on maintaining the Wapack Trail both within and outside the refuge. If we discover enough interest in the local community, we may consider forming a Friends of Wapack NWR group with a broader mission to help monitor refuge resources, facilitate visitor service programs, and advocate for the refuge with the local community and elected officials.

Goal 2, objective 2a proposes MOUs with the FOW and the Mountain View Hiking Club for trail maintenance. In conjunction with our improvements to refuge access under goal 2, objectives 2b and 2c, we will identify partnerships with various groups to help establish a parking area and signage at the northern end of the refuge (Old Mountain Road). Those include the Town of Greenfield, Brantwood Camp, the NH Division of Parks and Recreation, and FOW. We will also pursue partnerships with the Harris Center for Conservation Education and the Brantwood Camp. They could play a crucial role in helping with environmental education and outreach.

The Harris Center is dedicated to promoting understanding and respect for our natural environment through education of all ages, direct protection and exemplary stewardship of the region's natural resources, and programs that encourage active participation in the great outdoors (Harris Center 2005). We will contact the Harris Center about distributing refuge information at their facility as well as using the refuge as a site for their outdoor programs and hiking trips. Although the refuge lacks an active environmental education program, the Harris Center could help in using the refuge as an outdoor classroom.

The Brantwood Camp provides a positive camping experience for boys and girls who will not otherwise have the opportunity to afford summer camp (Brantwood Camp 2007). Since the Brantwood Camp is next to the refuge, it provides campers with a great opportunity to learn about nature without their having to travel too far. A part of their camping experience could incorporate a trip to the refuge, where the staff could introduce them to the forest ecosystem and the many species of wildlife that inhabit it. Outreach materials also could be distributed to campers at the main facility.

Our limited law enforcement capabilities are a concern on the refuge. We rely on the local community to be the “eyes and ears” of the refuge and continue to encourage notifying the refuge or the local conservation officer from the NHFG when any violations are observed. We will use that information to focus our outreach and refuge signage, and will continue work under the MOA for cooperative law enforcement with the NHFG. This CCP will also improve communication with the zone conservation officer from NHFG. The Service zone officer, state conservation officer, and refuge manager will discuss any new law enforcement issues, develop contingency plans for search and rescue operations, or discuss concerns that arise in implementing the CCP that affect the NHFG. We will look to the zone conservation officer primarily to enforce the “no-hunting” restriction and to assist in search and rescue operations.

Strategies

Within 1 year of CCP approval

- Meet with the FOW to cooperate in developing an informational sign, including refuge information, at the Wapack trailhead.

Within 2 years of CCP approval

- Complete a MOU with the FOW for trail maintenance on the refuge.
- Complete a MOU with the Mountain View Hiking club for trail maintenance on the refuge.

- Evaluate and monitor threats to the biological integrity of the refuge through a full forest health assessment to be completed by the USFS Forest Health Protection Program.
- Meet with the Town of Greenfield, Brantwood Camp, and the NH Division of Parks and Recreation to discuss possible partnership opportunities for establishing the parking area.
- Improve communication with the zone conservation officer from NHFG to discuss any new law enforcement issues of interest to the state or concerns that arise and possible solutions. Primarily, we will look to these officers for assistance enforcing the “no-hunting” restriction and in search and rescue operations.

Within 5 years of CCP approval

- Meet with the NH Division of Parks and Recreation to discuss the possibility of developing a MOA for assistance with outreach and education.
- Contact various potential partners (i.e. Monadnock Conservancy, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Open Space Committee of Greenfield, Piscataquaog Watershed Association, and local town conservation commissions) to initiate a conversation about possible opportunities for assistance with refuge monitoring and inventories.
- Contact the Harris Center for Conservation Education and the Brantwood Camp to initiate a conversation about possible opportunities for education and outreach.
- Use partnerships (e.g., New Hampshire Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, Keene State College citizen survey group, local conservation groups, and individual volunteers) to collect data on vegetation and wildlife species on the refuge.

Objective 3b. (Partnerships Focusing on the Regional Landscape)

During the 15 years following the approval of this CCP, we will expand our partnerships with state agencies, local conservation groups, town planning commissions, and individuals in support of regional land conservation.

Rationale for Objective

In chapter 2, “The Planning Process,” we describe why we are not pursuing a refuge expansion at this time. In chapter 2, we also identified regional land conservation partnerships that include the refuge. The first is the Quabbin to Cardigan Conservation Collaborative (Q2C). The second is the Temple to Crotched Community Conservation Corridor. The refuge lies in both conservation planning areas.

We value the importance of land protection on the regional landscape, and will support those conservation efforts by offering assistance in identifying lands of high wildlife resource value, providing information for writing any management plans on the regional landscape, or identifying management techniques for various habitats and ecosystems. Although our ability to acquire refuge land is now limited, we believe we can provide unique expertise in support of those larger conservation efforts.

Strategies

Within 5 years of CCP approval

- Meet with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest and the Monadnock Conservancy to apprise them of what data we have available and what resources are available in other Service programs.

Over the next 15 years after CCP approval

- Provide support as requested to regional conservation efforts through identification of areas of high wildlife resource value and determination of proper management techniques for habitats and ecosystems.

