

Appendix H



Blackpoll Warbler
USFWS

Finding of No Significant Impact

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Wapack National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan

On March 25, 2008, we published a Federal Register Notice (73 FR 58) announcing release of the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (draft CCP/EA) for the Wapack National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). That draft document evaluated two alternatives for managing the refuge over the next 15 years, and carefully considered their impacts on the environment and their potential contribution to the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and refuge purposes and goals. Alternative B was identified as the “Service-preferred alternative.” The draft CCP/EA appendixes provided additional information supporting the assessment. A brief overview of each alternative follows.

Alternative A: The Council of Environmental Quality regulations on implementing the National Environmental Policy Act require this “No Action” alternative. It represents our current management activities, and serves as the baseline against which to compare the other alternative. The Service would continue to manage the refuge in a “wilderness-like” setting, without actively managing habitat, thereby allowing natural succession to continue without human interference. The Service would continue to allow only compatible uses that are consistent with a “wilderness-like” setting and adhere to other deed restrictions. We would not allow hunting, fishing, trapping, driving motor vehicles, or cutting trees (except for maintaining trails) as required by that deed. In addition, we would continue to prohibit camping, mountain biking, horseback riding and dog walking. This alternative would not improve access to the refuge or the visibility of the Service in the area. We would continue our informal relationships with the Friends of the Wapack and the Mountain View Hiking Club to maintain refuge trails. We would also continue to work under a memorandum of agreement with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to resolve inter-jurisdictional issues on the refuge as they arise.

Alternative B (Service-preferred alternative): This alternative includes an array of management actions that, in our professional judgment, work best toward achieving the purpose of the refuge, our vision and goals for those lands, and goals in state and regional conservation plans. We would focus on improving our knowledge of refuge resources and start the development of a baseline biological database. We would inventory populations of plants and wildlife on the refuge in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. That project would also help us identify and monitor threats to the integrity of refuge habitats. Alternative B would also implement projects to enhance visitor services programs by expanding our partnerships with other federal agencies, state agencies, town departments, local

