

Patuxent Research Refuge Alternatives - October 2011

Common to all alternatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to acquire land within the approved acquisition boundary. • Maintain current facilities. • Monitor and control non-native invasive species. • Develop a separate Land Protection Plan with public and agency involvement in compliance with Service policy and the National Environmental Policy Act. • Implement provisions of the Facilities Modernization Plan. • Protect cultural resources, including National Register of Historic Places eligible buildings and historic district. • Coordinate with USGS to house and support research efforts; encourage basic and applied scientific work on the refuge that furthers the goals of USFWS and USGS in coordination with refuge management (ie. Propagation of ES). • Work with Ft. Meade to ensure protection of cemeteries that are surrounded by refuge lands. 	

Refuge Resource or Program	Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Preferred Alternative	Alternative C Maximize Forest Interior
Goal 1: Protect, maintain, and restore, where possible, the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of Chesapeake Bay Lowlands forested ecological communities to provide habitat for species of conservation concern; including migratory birds, forest mammals, amphibians and reptiles, and invertebrates.			
Floodplain Forests and Forested Wetlands	Objective 1.1 Maintain 2,700 acres of native floodplain forest.	Objective 1.1 Increase to 3,000 acres of native floodplain forest.	Same as Alternative B.
Upland Forests and Forested Wetlands	Objective 1.2: Maintain 8,300 acres of native upland forest.	Same as Alternative A.	Objective 1.2: Increase to 8,600 acres of native upland forest.
Savannah	Objective 1.3: Manage 135 acres for dry Savannah habitat.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Goal 2: Protect, maintain, and restore, where possible, the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of Refuge aquatic habitats, including the Patuxent, Little Patuxent, and Anacostia River Watersheds, and impoundments to provide habitat for species of conservation concern; including fish, invertebrates, and plants.			
Coastal Plain River and Stream Habitats	Objective 2.1: Maintain and protect the aquatic habitat of the Patuxent, Little Patuxent, and Anacostia River Watersheds within the Refuge.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Emergent Wetlands (impoundments)	Objective 2.2: Manage 542 acres in 61 impoundments.	Objective 2.2: Restore 110 acres of impoundments to forest and scrub shrub habitat.	Objective 2.2: In addition to alternative B, restore 50 acres of impoundments to forest.
Goal 3: Manage Refuge non-forested upland communities to provide ecological structure, composition, and function to support native plants and wildlife, including species of conservation concern. Where appropriate, restore the biological integrity and diversity of these habitats.			
Scrub-Shrub	Objective 3.1: Manage the 5.5 mile Baltimore Gas Electric and 3.5 mile PEPCO power line right-of-ways to provide scrub-shrub habitat.	Objective 3.1: In addition to alternative A, restore 20 acres of grassland to scrub-shrub habitat.	Objective 3.1: In addition to alternative B, restore an additional 30 acres of grassland and impoundment land to scrub-shrub habitat.
Grasslands	Objective 3.2: Maintain existing 575 acres of grassland.	Objective 3.2: Manage grasslands in large blocks (>40 acres). Restore 150 acres of grassland to forest through natural succession.	Objective 3.2: Eliminate grassland on PRR except around administrative buildings (approximately 180 acres).

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Goal 4: Refuge visitors will understand and appreciate fish and wildlife conservation through high quality recreation, environmental education and interpretive programs.			
Wildlife Observation and Photography	<p>Objective 4.1: Continue to provide opportunities for wildlife observation and photography on the refuge.</p> <p><u>Opportunities include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation Towers • Trails (25 miles) • Wildlife drive • Observation areas • Viewing blinds 	<p>Objective 4.1 Expand wildlife observation and photography opportunities.</p> <p><u>Additional opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create additional trail at North Tract (Telegraph Road, 2-3 miles). • Create opportunities for photo exhibits with local photo clubs. 	Same as Alternative B.
Interpretation	<p>Objective 4.2: Over the life of the plan, continue to offer a cadre of seasonally related interpretive programs year-round. (Offered 353 interpretive programs with 9,761 total participants for FY2010)</p> <p><u>Opportunities include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer interpreter-led tram tours from mid-March through mid-November. • Continue to utilize outreach tools to enhance interpretive programs and special events. • Continue to maintain and utilize outdoor exploration areas, such as SYH. • Continue to offer major special events. (7 offered FY2010) • Continue to offer summer series of youth camps, including one week camp for underserved youth. 	<p>Objective 4.2: Promote a stewardship ethic and instill a sense of wonder and appreciation of natural resources, wildlife and research in visitors by providing engaging interpretive programs and activities for visitors of all abilities, ages and community groups.</p> <p><u>Additional opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and offer limited historical/interpretive guided tours on Central Tract and North Tract. • Revamp viewing tower at the Wildlife Viewing Area on the North Tract to provide enhanced experience. • Designate and develop an additional outdoor nature exploration area for visitors on the South Tract. 	<p>Objective 4.2: Promote a stewardship ethic and instill a sense of wonder and appreciation of natural resources, wildlife and research in visitors by providing engaging interpretive programs and activities for visitors of all abilities, ages and community groups.</p> <p><u>Differences from Alternative B:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore fee options. • Reduce interpretive public programs and special events offered at the refuge.
Environmental Education	<p>Objective 4.3: Continue to provide environmental education programs. (14,736 EE participants both on and off-site for FY2010, and includes both students and teachers)</p> <p><u>Opportunities include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturalist led programs for school groups year round. • Environmental education opportunities both on-site and off-site. (approx. 10 per year off-site) • Provide workshop opportunities for scouts and scout leaders to meet advancement requirements. • Provide scout program links to scout leaders. • Support MD and DC Jr. Duck Stamp Program. 	<p>Objective 4.3: Promote a stewardship ethic through environmental education with students, teachers and organized community groups to understand and appreciate ecological relationships and the role of refuges nationwide and understand the role of Patuxent Research Refuge.</p> <p><u>Additional opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase involvement in off-site conservation related programs and number of visiting schools by 10%. • Explore grant and sponsorship opportunities for transportation. • Increase teacher workshops by 50%. 	Same as Alternative B.

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Non-wildlife Dependent Public Uses	<p>Objective 4.4: Continue to allow non-wildlife dependent uses that are listed below.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to allow horseback riding on the North Tract. Continue to allow dog walking with current stipulations on the North and South Tracts. Continue to allow search and rescue training via Special Use Permit on the North and South Tracts. Continue to provide primitive camping opportunities for scout and 4H groups on the North Tract. Allow limited dog training in designated areas. Under SUP, continue to allow soft ball fields and their use on the North Tract. 	<p>Objective 4.4: Support non-wildlife dependent uses when deemed to be an appropriate use and compatible with the refuge purpose and mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.</p> <p><u>Changes from Alternative A:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horseback riding allowed with clean-up or “horse-diaper” at the North Tract. Allow limited virtual and no-impact geocaching along designated trails, if found compatible at North and South Tract. Allow waterfowl related dog training with hunting permit in designated areas. 	<p>Objective 4.4: Reduce or eliminate dispersed non-wildlife dependent public uses of the refuge, while allowing opportunities for organized events.</p> <p><u>Changes from Alternative B:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit horseback riding, dogs, search and rescue training, and dog training. Expand visitor use opportunities to include non-traditional refuge uses. (ex. Birthday parties and weddings)
Conference Facilities	<p>Objective 4.5: Continue to provide conference facilities for scientific, educational, agency and partner related information exchange.</p>	<p>Objective 4.5: Same as A</p>	<p>Objective 4.5: Allow use of conference facilities to non wildlife/scientific opportunities.</p>
Goal 5: Hunters and anglers will enjoy and support programs designed to provide high quality hunting and fishing experiences.			
Hunting	<p>Objective 5.1: Over the life of the plan, continue to provide opportunities as currently offered. The Wildlife Viewing Area (in Area I) on the North Tract is currently open for wildlife viewing except during firearms season. Area W on the North Tract is closed every other week to allow hiking on Forest Trail.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide hunting opportunities for upland game, migratory game birds, and white-tailed deer from September through January; and select days in April and May for wild turkey hunt. 	<p>Objective 5.1: Provide robust and diverse hunting opportunities to hunters of all ages while promoting hunter and visitor safety, and wildlife health and increasing other public use opportunities.</p> <p><u>Strategies same as A, except:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase specialty hunts/organized hunts for youth and persons with disabilities. Eliminate woodchuck hunt season. Open trails at WVA with 50 yard buffer during bow and small game hunting for hiking/other public uses. 	<p>Objective 5.1: Same as B.</p> <p><u>Strategies same as B, plus:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep Little Patuxent River Trail open during hunting with 50 yard buffer. Evaluate the need to close some hunt areas seasonally to allow for other permitted uses. Eliminate January hunt season refuge wide with the exception of Jan. firearms season.
Fishing	<p>Objective 5.3: Over the life of the plan, continue to provide fishing opportunities at established sites and according to state regulations.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide year-round fishing opportunities, including Lake Allen, New Marsh, Cattail Pond, Rieve’s Pond, Bailey Bridge Marsh, the Little Patuxent River, and Cash Lake. 	<p>Objective 5.3: Provide additional fishing opportunities to anglers of all ages while promoting angler and visitor safety, and wildlife health.</p> <p><u>Additional opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Blue Heron Pond to fishing. Expand fishing areas and/or days. 	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>
Goal 6: Enhance partnerships with local communities and various organizations to garner support and promote Refuge programs and resources.			
Volunteer opportunities	<p>Objective 6.1: Provide a wide variety of volunteer opportunities to support Patuxent Research Refuge and to encourage community involvement and support of Refuges and natural resources.</p> <p><u>Strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue current volunteer program to assist the Refuge 	<p>Objective 6.1: Provide a wide variety of high quality volunteer opportunities to support Patuxent Research Refuge and to encourage community involvement and support of Refuges and natural resources.</p> <p><u>In addition to Alternative A:</u></p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>

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	<p>in all aspects of day-to-day operations (28, 140 volunteer hours for FY10).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue coordination between PWRC, MNHA and PRR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation with youth volunteers and youth community service organizations by 10%. Recruit 2-4 service related organizations per year for work projects. 	
Outreach	<p>Objective 6.2: Continue to foster community relations and recruit visitors through outreach and community involvement.</p> <p><u>Strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send notices and press releases to local media and partners about upcoming events and programs. Participate with an information table and/or activities at community events. Participate in events/meetings of county conference and visitors' bureaus, local Chambers of Commerce, MD Tourism industry and other organizations. Encourage Friends and staff to utilize social media to market refuge events and programs. 	<p>Objective 6.2: Continue to foster community relations and recruit visitors through outreach and community involvement.</p> <p><u>Strategies, same as A plus:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase outreach referenced above by at least 10% per category. Investigate highway radio announcement opportunities. (on special frequency) Reorganize Refuge Website. 	Same as Alternative B.
Goal 7: Support research, inventories and monitoring to support adaptive management decisions on PRR and throughout the Refuge System and that improves techniques of land management or conservation of priority species for the FWS.			
Research	<p>Objective 7.1: Conduct high-priority inventory and monitoring (survey) activities that evaluate resource management and public use activities to facilitate adaptive management.</p>	<p>Objective 7.1: Conduct high-priority inventory and monitoring (survey) activities that evaluate resource management and public use activities to facilitate adaptive management.</p> <p>Same as A, plus: Develop and strengthen partnerships with USGS and other agencies, state partners, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations.</p>	Same as Alternative A.
	<p>Objective 7.2: Conduct high priority research projects that provide the best science for habitat and wildlife management on and off the Refuge.</p>	<p>Objective 7.2: Conduct high priority research projects that provide the best science for habitat and wildlife management on and off the refuge.</p> <p>Same as A, plus: Work with PWRC to develop refuge based collaborative research opportunities.</p>	Same as Alternative A.
	<p>Objective 7.3: Facilitate scientific assessments to provide baseline information to expand knowledge regarding the status of Refuge resources to better inform resource management decisions.</p>	<p>Objective 7.3: Facilitate scientific assessments to provide baseline information to expand knowledge regarding the status of Refuge resources to better inform resource management decisions.</p> <p>Same as A, plus: Work with PWRC to develop refuge based collaborative research opportunities.</p>	Same as Alternative A.