



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wapato Lake

Land Protection Planning Study

Planning Update 5, December 2005

Greetings

This is the fifth Planning Update from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, designed to inform and involve you in the planning process for the Wapato Lake Land Protection Planning Study in Washington and Yamhill Counties.

The planning updates notify you of opportunities to become directly involved in the planning process and provide a status report of Service activities during development of the Land Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment.

Your input is very important; it helps us identify and analyze information and issues affecting you, your community, and the natural resources of the Wapato Lake area.

Photo USFWS.



Cackling Canada goose hatchling.



Wapato Lake provides foraging and roosting habitat for large numbers of pintail ducks.

Photo USFWS.

What is the Current Status of the Wapato Lake Study?

Since the last planning update, the planning team has been working to finalize the draft planning document with most of our efforts directed at:

- identifying public and agency issues;
- gathering resource data; and
- evaluating environmental and economic impacts.

Following a two-year evaluation process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reconfirmed that Wapato Lake and associated habitats are essential for a variety of fish and wildlife, including endangered species.

Five preliminary alternatives, including a no-action alternative, have been reviewed extensively by the Service, and concerns and comments obtained from public input have been incorporated into the planning process.

The Service is in the process and close to completing the planning document, it will consist of a Land Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the proposed Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge. This document will soon be available for public review and comment.

What is in the Planning Document?

The planning document includes: an Environmental Assessment that evaluates the potential effects that each land protection alternative would have on the physical, biological, social and economic environment; and a Land Conservation Plan (LCP) that describes resource protection needs and the proposed National Wildlife Refuge boundary, identifies the tracts of land that the Service would be interested in acquiring from willing participants, and describes land type protection priorities. In addition, the

Land Conservation Plan describes the habitat goals being considered and how the refuge would be operated and managed until a comprehensive management plan is developed and in place.

You will receive a copy of the planning document to review and comment on, please notify us if you do not want a copy sent to you.

The Service will review public comments on the planning document and recommend a course of action. Final approval of the selected alternative will be made by the Service's directorate.

If the proposed refuge is approved, the Service will begin implementation of the selected alternative based on available funding and willing participants.

Planning Schedule

Planning Update #1	Completed...October 2001
1 st Open House.....	Completed...November 2001
2 nd Open House.....	Completed...December 2001
Planning Update #2.....	Completed...April 2002
Planning Update #3.....	Completed...December 2002
Planning Update #4.....	Completed...December 2003
Planning Update #5.....	Completed...December 2005
Draft Document Released and Public Comment Period Begins.....	Projected...February 2006
Public Meeting/Open House.....	Projected...February 2006
Public Comment Period Ends.....	Projected...March 2006
Final Documents and Notice of Decision Released.....	Projected...May 2006

Important Points of Contact

For Information on the Planning Process:

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For Information on Land Acquisition:

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For Information on the National Wildlife Refuge System:

Ralph Webber, Refuge Manager or
 Christopher Lapp, Deputy Refuge Manager
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