Draft CCP/WSP/EA is Available for Public Comment

Your comments are important

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (Service) Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Wilderness Stewardship Plan, and Environmental Assessment (CCP/WSP/EA) for the Protection Island and San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges) is available for public review and comment between now and September 15, 2010. We value your comments and encourage you to share them with us. See page 4 for options for sending your comments to us.

In 2008, we requested and received your comments on the preliminary alternatives for the refuges. We considered those comments during the development and analysis of the Service’s three alternatives for refuge management summarized on the following pages. Alternative A is our “no action” alternative, which describes current refuge management. Alternative B is our preferred alternative. Management actions common to all alternatives, and actions for protecting refuge habitats and wildlife populations, are identified in the Draft CCP/WSP/EA. The refuges’ priority public use programs – wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation – are also evaluated in the Draft CCP/WSP/EA.

At the end of the comment period, the planning team will evaluate your comments and address them in the final CCP. The final CCP will be published and distributed, and will guide the management of Protection Island and San Juan Islands Refuges over the next 15 years. Actions will be implemented as funding becomes available.

Comments are due September 15, 2010.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Protection Island and San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuges
Planning Update 3, August 2010

Draft CCP/WSP/EA is Available for Public Comment

Your comments are important

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (Service) Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Wilderness Stewardship Plan, and Environmental Assessment (CCP/WSP/EA) for the Protection Island and San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges) is available for public review and comment between now and September 15, 2010. We value your comments and encourage you to share them with us. See page 4 for options for sending your comments to us.

In 2008, we requested and received your comments on the preliminary alternatives for the refuges. We considered those comments during the development and analysis of the Service’s three alternatives for refuge management summarized on the following pages. Alternative A is our “no action” alternative, which describes current refuge management. Alternative B is our preferred alternative. Management actions common to all alternatives, and actions for protecting refuge habitats and wildlife populations, are identified in the Draft CCP/WSP/EA. The refuges’ priority public use programs – wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation – are also evaluated in the Draft CCP/WSP/EA.

At the end of the comment period, the planning team will evaluate your comments and address them in the final CCP. The final CCP will be published and distributed, and will guide the management of Protection Island and San Juan Islands Refuges over the next 15 years. Actions will be implemented as funding becomes available.

Comments are due September 15, 2010.
Overview of Draft CCP/EA Alternatives

Alternative A: Current Management

Under Alternative A, the refuges would continue with current management which focuses on stewardship, including removing unnecessary roads and human structures; allowing natural processes to occur with minimal human intervention; monitoring wildlife species; and working with partners to reduce the risk of oil spills, clean up marine debris, and educate boaters to minimize human-caused wildlife disturbance. Recreational activities would continue as they have in the past and be facilitated through a State Parks partnership.

Alternative B: Preferred Alternative

This Alternative would continue many of the activities in Alternative A, but would also include more active habitat management projects, such as removing deer from Protection Island to enhance seabird nesting habitat and forest habitat; restoration projects on the spits, grasslands, and forests to increase native plant diversity; and the facilitation of research studies that answer refuge management questions. Public use changes include enforcing no-pets regulations on all San Juan Islands Refuge lands, and closing some areas on Turn Island, including all of the rocky shoreline to the east and the southeast “pocket” beach as well as some of the Island’s interior. Overnight camping on Turn and Matia Islands would be limited to visitors arriving by human-powered craft only, and a camping reservation system would be initiated. There would be more emphasis on enhancing the public’s understanding and appreciation of the refuges’ natural, cultural, and wilderness resources through both on- and off-refuge interpretation and education programs. There would be fewer large signs, but more medium sized signs installed on San Juan Islands Refuge units to discourage close approach or trespassing on closed islands. There would also be more emphasis on working with existing partners and developing new partnerships to accomplish objectives.

Alternative C

This Alternative is very similar to Alternative B. In Alternative C, there would be fewer acres of native habitat restoration, as well as fewer research studies and surveys compared to Alternative B; camping would continue with fewer campsites on Matia Island, and Turn Island would be limited to day-use only. Compared to Alternative B, fewer and mostly smaller signs would be used in Alternative C to identify closed refuge islands and reduce human-caused wildlife disturbance.

Tentative Planning Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Step</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Update 1 (issued)</td>
<td>September 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Update 2 (issued)</td>
<td>August 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Meetings (completed)</td>
<td>September 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Update 3 (issued)</td>
<td>August 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft CCP/WSP/EA Public Comment Period</td>
<td>August 15-September 15, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final CCP/WSP/EA</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schedule dates are tentative and subject to change as the planning process progresses.

Copies of the Draft CCP/WSP/EA are available as follows:

Copies of the DCCP/WSP/EA on CD-ROM may be obtained by contacting:
Kevin Ryan, Project Leader
Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex
715 Holgerson Road
Sequim, WA 98382
Phone (360) 457-8451.

Review or download the DCCP/WSP/EA from the following Internet site:
http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning

A printed copy of the DCCP/EA is available at each of the following libraries:

- Anacortes Public Library
- Bellingham Public Library
- Clinton Public Library
- Coupeville Public Library
- Evergreen State College Library
- Island Public Library
- Jefferson County Cental Library
- Lopez Island Public Library
- North Olympic Public Library
- Oak Harbor Public Library
- Orcas Island Public Library
- Peninsula College Library
- San Juan Islands Library
- Shaw Island Library
- University of Puget Sound Library
- University of Washington Library
- Waldron Island Library
- Washington State University Library

Your Refuge Leaner, Greener and Reaching Out

To promote the availability of the DCCP/EA to a wider audience, and to reduce our use of the natural resources used to produce paper and CD-ROM copies of our documents, we will be posting the DCCP/EA on one Website and providing each of the listed libraries a printed and CD-ROM copy. Limited printed and CD-ROM copies are available. Please contact us if you would like to obtain a copy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Management Topics</th>
<th>Alternative A (Current Management/No Action)</th>
<th>Alternative B (CCP Team Preferred)</th>
<th>Alternative C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Multiple Habitats                                 | - Work with partners to minimize human disturbance to wildlife and habitats.  
- WDNR tideland lease and bedland withdrawal on PI.  
- Participate in oil spill prevention and preparedness planning and activities near PI.  
- Opportunistic shoreline clean-up activities with volunteers and partners.  
- Survey and use integrated pest management strategies on invasive species, except as prescribed burning. | Same as Alt. A, plus:  
- Increase efforts to work with partners to minimize human disturbance to wildlife and habitats.  
- Work with WDNR to renew and enhance the Service’s ability to manage the tidelands and protect bedlands up to 200 yards waterward from the low water line around PI and SJ.  
- Participate in oil spill prevention and preparedness planning and activities in PI and SJ vicinity.  
- Regularly work with partners and volunteers to conduct yearly shoreline clean-up activities on all Refuge islands. Support off-Refuge efforts to remove derelict fishing gear from the marine environment surrounding the Refuges.  
- Include prescribed burning as a potential restoration and integrated pest management tool.  
- Work with WDFW to reduce deer impacts by removing deer from PI.  
- Monitor for and remove non-native rats, rabbits, and red fox.  
- Conduct a survey of mammalian predators, assess impacts, and develop a management plan if necessary. | Same as Alternative B, except:  
- Limited monitoring  
- As strategies are implemented, monitor progress toward meeting CCP objectives under Goals 1-8. |
| Shoreline                                         | - Occasional mowing of spits on PI.  
- Periodic shoreline nourishment with gravel on PI. | - Restore a total of approximately 41 acres of spit habitat on PI and up to 20 acres on Smith and Turn Islands to increase native species-dominated strand community and manage spits for more open vegetation.  
- Continue shoreline nourishment with gravel stockpiles on PI.  
- Remove marine debris and contaminated materials.  
- Conduct a survey of herbivores and predators of management concern, assess impacts, and develop a management plan if necessary. | Same as Alternative B, except:  
- Only up to 15 acres of spit restoration. |
| Sandy Bluffs                                      | No specific habitat enhancement actions.  
- Control invasive plants and increase native plants.  
- At end of lease term, remove structures and improve habitat conditions in the expanding area of the alkali colony.  
- Enhance vegetation characteristics on up to 20 acres of bluffs on PI. | | |
| Savanna Grasslands and Herbaceous Balds           | Removal of unnecessary roads and structures on PI.  
- Remove up to 200 acres of savanna grassland on PI and up to 20 acres on Smith and Turn Islands to increase native species composition to benefit a variety of wildlife.  
- Maintain herbaceous bald patches and where appropriate, associated rare plants on 28 islands within SJ. | Same as Alternative B, except:  
- Manage/restore up to 40 acres of savanna grassland on PI and up to 10 acres on Smith and Turn Islands.  
- Maintain herbaceous bald patches on 14-28 islands within SJ. | |
| Forests and Woodlands                             | Removal of unnecessary roads on PI.  
- Restore connectivity, crown closure, regeneration, and associated understory of 90 acres of forest and woodland on PI.  
- Increase protection and maintenance of mature and old-growth forests and associated understory on 6 islands within SJ. | | |
| Wetlands                                          | No specific habitat enhancement actions.  
- Determine if it is feasible to restore part of the historic wetlands on PI.  
- Conduct hydrologic study, and if needed, restore natural hydrology to Smith and Matia Islands wetlands.  
- Monitor and control invasive plants and animals. | | |
| Research and Monitoring                           | **Research Program Management**  
- Good collaboration between the Service and long-term PI researchers.  
- Old buildings used by researchers in 2 separate locations on PI. | Same as Alt. A, plus more emphasis on the following topics:  
- Conduct research to determine best habitat restoration methods.  
- Study erosion rates of bluffs and deposition on spits.  
- Research to evaluate wildlife response to habitat restoration.  
- Demography studies of seabirds and marine mammals.  
- Hydrology studies of wetlands. | Same as Alternative B, minus:  
- Manage/restore up to 40 acres of savanna grassland on PI and up to 10 acres on Smith and Turn Islands.  
- Maintain herbaceous bald patches on 14-28 islands within SJ. |
| Surveys                                           | - Glaucous-winged gull behavior studies.  
- Studies on a variety of other topics. | Same as Alternative A, plus:  
- Refuge and ecosystem-wide monitoring of nesting seabirds and black oystercatchers.  
- Bald eagle surveys.  
- Periodic surveys for rare butterflies and rare plants.  
- Winter wildlife surveys.  
- Breeding bird survey on PI. | Same as Alternative B, minus:  
- Winter wildlife survey.  
- Bald eagle survey.  
- Breeding bird survey on PI. |
| Scientific Assessments                            | - Some assessments conducted and species lists developed. | - Systematically complete plant surveys on SJ.  
- Determine and map Refuge vegetation types to the association level.  
- Conduct assessment of reptiles and amphibians.  
- Conduct assessment of invasive wetland species as well as herbivores and predators of management concern. | Same as Alternative B, minus:  
- Reptile and amphibian assessment. |
| Cultural and Palaeontological Resources           | - Cultural resource surveys of mostly project-specific locations.  
- No palaeontological studies conducted. | Same as Alt. A, plus complete prioritized systematic cultural resource surveys of all Refuge lands and resurvey known sites approximately every 5 years.  
- Systematic palaeontological survey on PI.  
- Develop GIS layer for palaeontological resources. | |
| Effectiveness Monitoring                          | - Limited monitoring | | |
### ON-REFUGE VISITOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES

| Protection Island | SJ Refuge entry areas and open and closed areas. | Turn Island - All beaches are Refuge entry and boat landing areas. - All island areas except steep slopes are open. | Matia Island - Rolfe Cove dock and beach are the only authorized entrances to the island. - Refuge access and camping prohibited at or from the 4 other pocket beaches. -2 acre public use area adjacent to Rolfe Cove is open to day-use and camping. - Wilderness loop trail is open to visitors; the rest of the island (wilderness area and island perimeter) is closed. - All other Refuge islands and rocks are closed. |
|SJ Public Use Times and Other Restrictions | Turn and Matia Island open year-round, 24 hours per day. - Turn - Pets allowed on leash. - Matia - Pets allowed within 2-acre picnic/campground area only. | Camping allowed only in designated campsites: Turn Is - 13 campsites. Matia Is. - 6 campsites. Visitors arriving by motorized or nonmotorized boats are permitted to camp on the Refuge. | Camping allowed only in designated campsites: Turn Is. - 8 campsites. Matia Is. - 6 campsites. Only visitors arriving by human-powered boats are allowed to camp on the Refuge. New camping reservation system initiated. |
|SJ State Parks Seasonal Dock and Mooring Buoys | Dock on Matia Island at Rolfe Cove from mid-March to mid-late-October. Turn – 3 buoys off N. beach – available year round. Matia – 2 buoys in Rolfe Cove - available year round. | SJ - Camping Liquid fuel or gel camp stoves allowed. Some unauthorized charcoal and wood campfires occurring. | Matia and Turn – Better enforcement of no fires. Liquid fuel or gel camp stoves allowed. |
|SJ Trails | Turn - 0.9 mile loop trail around perimeter. Matia - 1.2 mile loop trail. | Wildlife Observation, Photography, and Interpretation Unstructured opportunities. No interpretive signs. Infrequent interpretive walks conducted. | SJ - Trails Re-evaluate trail locations for impacts to cultural resources and small meadow. Reroute if necessary but continue to provide a loop trail on both Turn and Matia Islands. |
|Environmental Education - Scientific Studies | Some students given opportunities to do scientific studies on PI and SJ. | Environmental Education - Stewardship Projects PI - 1 project per year. SJ - less than 1 per year. | SJ - Commercial Outfitters Allowed for camping and day-use on Turn and Matia Islands. Special use permit required. |
|Visitor Services Facilities and Maintenance | WA State Parks provides public use facilities (toilets, picnic tables, campsite markers, etc.) and maintenance on Turn and Matia Islands. | SJ - Law enforcement for public safety/resource protection on Turn and Matia. | Same as Alts. A and B, except: The Service/partner others would provide facilities and enforcement on Turn Is. after camping is phased out. |
|SJ - Refuge Visitor Services | SJ Refuge post at marinas. | Wildlife Observation and Photography Some staff coordination with Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PI) and SoundWatch (SJ) to facilitate wildlife observation and minimize human-caused wildlife disturbance. | SJ - Refuge visitor services Same as Alt. A, plus additional Refuge staff time, volunteers, and partners facilitate and educate many individuals, organizations, and ecotourism businesses to enhance wildlife observation and appreciation of Refuge wildlife and minimize human-caused wildlife disturbance. |
|Natural and Cultural Resource Interpretation | PI - 1 panel at John Wayne Marina and no other interpretive activities. SJ - no interpretive panels or activities. | Same as mentioned above. | Same as Alt. A, plus: PI - 1 more panel (Port Townsend area) and 2 additional interpretive venues. SJ – Panels at 5 marina locations and 2 additional interpretive venues. |
|Environmental Education Materials | SJ - Refuge poster at marinas. | Same as Alt. A, plus educational materials prepared for use by local teachers. Provide information at local community events, tourist agencies, ferries, etc. | SJ – Refuge post at marinas. |
|Boater Education to Reduce Human-Caused Wildlife Disturbance | PI - Direct boater education. SJ - Posters at marinas and some coordination with partners to provide boater education regarding human-caused disturbance to wildlife. | Same as Alt. A, plus educational materials prepared for use by local teachers. Provide information at local community events, tourist agencies, ferries, etc. | SJ - Refuge visitor services Same as Alt. A, plus additional Refuge staff time, volunteers, and partners facilitate and educate many individuals, organizations, and ecotourism businesses to enhance wildlife observation and appreciation of Refuge wildlife and minimize human-caused wildlife disturbance. |

### SAN JUAN ISLANDS WILDERNESS

Many of the above actions apply to wilderness as well as non-wilderness lands. The following items are more specific to wilderness concerns.

| Refuge Signs to Reduce Human-Caused Wildlife Disturbance | Standard text and 11” x 14” size Refuge boundary/closure signs used on most islands. Very large (4’ x 6’)* “stay away 200 yds” signs on approximately 15 islands. | Improve text and increase size of boundary/closure signs to medium (15” x 20”) on most islands and a larger version (22” x 28”) on some islands. Use very large “stay away 200 yds” signs on up to 10 of the most sensitive islands. | Improve text of boundary/closure signs, but use standard 11” x 14” size only. Use very large “stay away 200 yds” signs on up to 10 of the most sensitive islands. |
|Sights and Sounds | Use only tools authorized for wilderness areas to maintain a narrow and natural appearing trail on Matia Island. - Conduct garbage and marine debris cleanups. - Promote 2000-foot aircraft ceiling over wilderness islands. | Same as mentioned above. | Same as mentioned above. |
|Solitude and Numbers of Visitors | Boat landing limited to Rolfe Cove only, but not well enforced. - No number limits on commercial day-use groups. | Limit the size of commercial day-use groups to not more than 20 people. | Limit the size of commercial day-use groups to not more than 20 people. |
|Wilderness Education | Limited wilderness education. | Same as mentioned above. | Same as mentioned above. |