



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Pacific Region National Wildlife Refuge Workforce Plan

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# Pacific Region National Wildlife Refuge Workforce Plan - Background

- The National Wildlife Refuge System in the Pacific Region started restructuring in fiscal year 2005 to manage effectively in an era of tightening Federal budgets.
- While the Refuge System's annual budget remains higher than it has been for most of the past decade, the Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that it needs \$16 million in additional funding each year just to meet increases in salary and benefit costs, energy, and other uncontrollable inflationary costs.
- Since 2001, funding for the Refuge System has increased from \$300 million to \$383 million in fiscal year 2006, an overall increase of \$83 million, or 28 percent. Despite this, continued inflationary costs are eroding base funding for resource management and public use programs throughout the Refuge System.
- If the Service does not act decisively, we will become unable to effectively operate most national wildlife refuges within a few years— even if budgets remain level. To cope with this reality, the Service's Pacific Regional leadership has been reducing its Refuge System workforce and increasing management efficiencies, to free up funding for on-the-ground refuge management and operations.



# Pacific Region National Wildlife Refuge Workforce Plan - Background

- In November 2004, the Pacific Region's National Wildlife Refuge System program conducted a budget analysis of its 64 national wildlife refuges located in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands. The results illustrated that over 90% of field stations' budgets were encumbered by salary and benefits costs and that by 2012, these costs would comprise over 95% of refuge budgets, leaving little to no resource management funding available to operate refuges.

The Pacific Region initiated several actions to avoid a looming financial crisis. We have:

- 1) Implemented "base budgeting" to monitor and adjust operations as costs rise;
  - 2) Improved operational efficiencies by unifying management for stations in close proximity and/or with similar ecological missions (known as Refuge Complexes);
  - 3) Implemented "zone" management for certain functions (e.g., fire management, maintenance); and
  - 4) Established service centers for administrative functions.
- This effort has resulted in 32 vacancies during fiscal years 2005 and 2006, effecting activities at 34 refuges. The result is an improvement in the overall regional budget so that we currently average 20% of funds being available for resource management costs to operate refuges.



# **Pacific Region National Wildlife Refuge Workforce Plan - Management Principles**

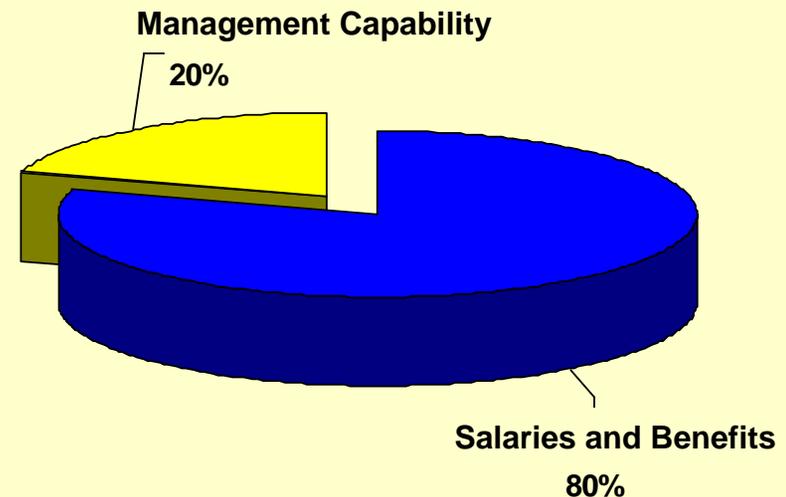
During our analysis we used the following management principles:

- Evaluate proposals for the greatest cost savings and long-term cost efficiencies;
- Evaluate proposals that best meet the Refuge System's mission and goals;
- Emphasize unified management proposals ('complexing') based on geographical proximity and/or ecological similarity;
- Emphasize proposals that flatten the organization (i.e., fewer middle managers);
- Emphasize the viability of zones and service centers for certain functions (e.g., fire management, maintenance, and administrative functions);
- Match staff talent to resource management challenges/opportunities; and
- Consider employee development and maintain career paths within the Region.



## Pacific Region National Wildlife Refuge Workforce Plan - FY '06 Field Allocation (\$20.6M)

- Due to our efforts over the past 2 years, salaries and benefits comprise 80% of the fiscal year 2006 funding allocation to Pacific Region refuges.
- This provided 20% for management capability.
- This level of funding covered only 75% of projected fixed costs.





## **Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan Planned Actions for FY 2007 to 2009**

- As illustrated in the previous slide, FY 2006 funding provided the Region's Refuge operating budget a ratio of 80 percent salary to 20 percent management capability.
- The Region's goal is to have an operating budget ratio of 75 percent salary to 25 percent management capability by 2009 for refuges in Idaho, Oregon and Washington.
- For refuges in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, due to higher travel and transportation costs for example, our goal is to have an operating budget ratio of 65 percent salary to 35 percent management capability by 2009.
- Overall for the Region, this requires an additional 17.5 positions be left vacant from fiscal years 2007 to 2009.
- In summary, from fiscal years 2005 to 2009, the Region will have experienced a total reduction of 49.5 positions or 20%, of its refuge field workforce for a net estimated salary savings of \$3.2 million. Savings are being used for management capability throughout the Region.

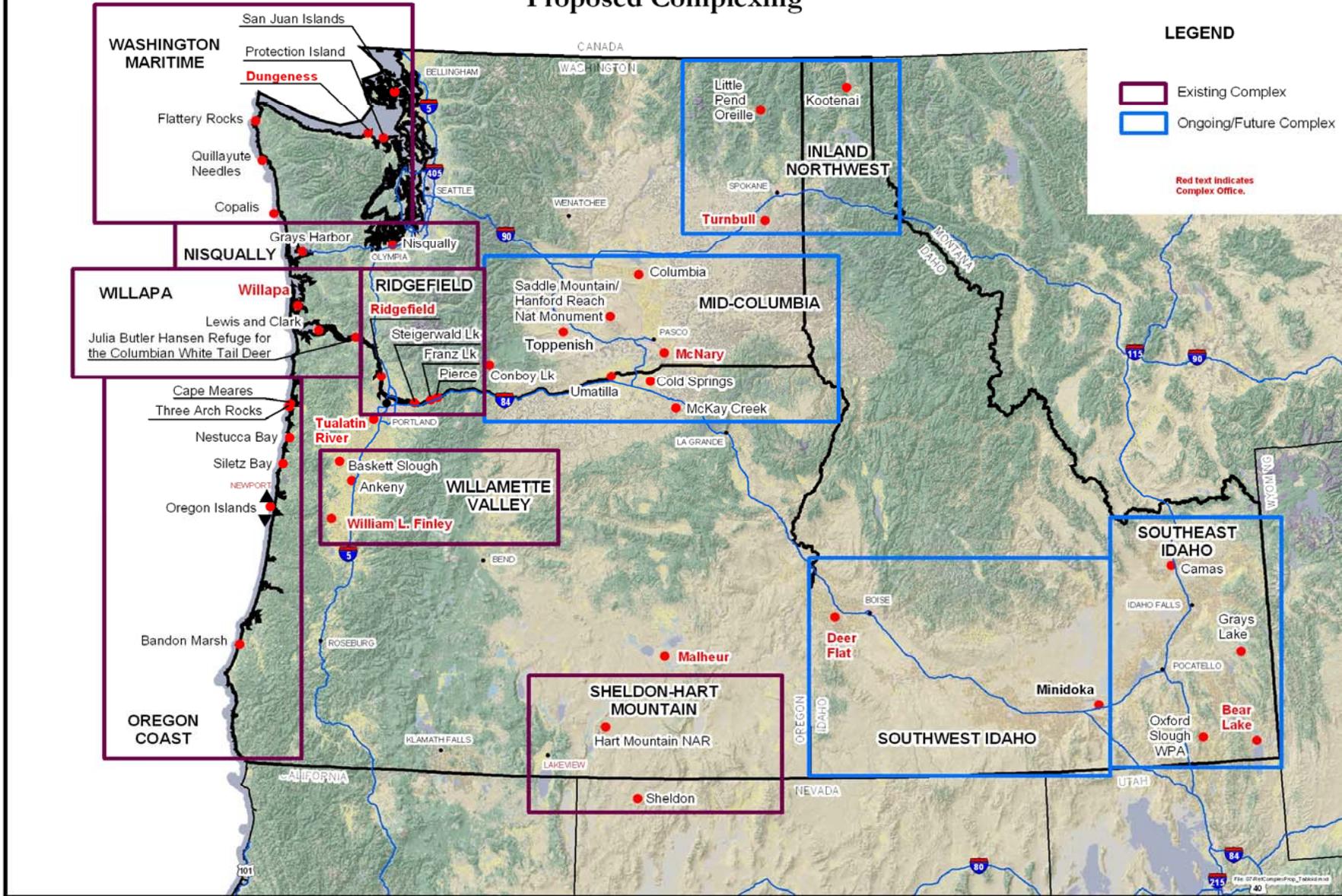


# Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan

## Three Year Plan (FY '07 – '09)

- Management actions may include:
  - The creation of service centers for administrative functions;
  - The creation of “zones” for fire management, maintenance, and law enforcement;
  - Unifying management of refuges in close proximity to one another, and/or for ecologically similar refuges (known as Refuge Complexes).
- Reductions will occur through retirements, transfers, and possible incentive programs.
- The Pacific Region contains 64 refuges classified as:
  - Focus refuges (15 refuges, 23% of the total)– for FY 2007-2009, no further staff reductions planned at these refuges. This includes: Ankeny NWR, Bandon Marsh NWR, Baskett Slough NWR, Bear Lake NWR, William L. Finley NWR, Guam NWR, Hart Mountain NAR, Hawaiian Islands NWR, Malheur NWR, McNary NWR, Midway Atoll NWR, Ridgefield NWR, Sheldon NWR, Tualatin River NWR, and Turnbull NWR.
  - Refuges targeted for reduction (21 refuges, 33% of the total)– staff reductions are planned in the FY 2007-2009 time period; and
  - Unstaffed refuges (28 refuges, 44% of the total)– none of these unstaffed refuges are a result of the workforce plan (entire time FY 2005-2009 time period). In most cases these refuges have never been staffed due to remoteness and/or the lack of facilities for on-site staffing. For example, many are small islands and atolls that support seabird and marine mammal colonies.
- New work priorities such as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, and spartina eradication in Washington would be covered by a 10% reduction of Regional Office Refuge staffing and budget in fiscal years 2007 and 2008.

# Region 1 Pacific Northwest Refuges Proposed Complexing





## Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan

### Total Positions Lost by Job Series, FY 2005-2009

*(-49.5 Staff = +\$3.2M for Management Capability)*

<b>Position Type</b>	<b>FY '05 – '06</b> <i>(Beginning total: 251 positions)</i>	<b>FY '07 – '09</b> <i>(Beginning Total: 219 Positions)</i>	<b>Total</b> <i>(201.5 FTE)</i>
Project Leader, Deputy Project Leader, Manager, & Refuge Operations Specialist Positions	-4	-7.5	-11.5
Outdoor Recreation Planner, Archeologist Positions	-2	-	-2
Biologist & Technician Positions	-10	-1	-11
Maintenance Positions	-11	-4	-15
Admin & Clerk Positions	-5	-5	-10
<b>Total</b>	<b>-32 (-12%)</b>	<b>-17.5 (-8%)</b>	<b>-49.5 (-20%)</b>



# Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan

## Percentage Reduction to Job Series, FY 2005-2009

	Mgrs	Outdoor Recreation Planners	Law Enforcement	Biologist	Maintenance	Admin	Total
Staffing Baseline	71	17	6	47.5	63.5	46	251
Staff Reduction	-11.5	-2	0	-11	-15	-10	-49.5
Percent of Workforce Reduced	<b>-16%</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>-22%</b>	<b>-20%</b>



# Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan

## Total Staff Reductions by State FY 2005-2009

*(-49.5 Positions = +\$3.2M for Management Capability)*

<p><b>Idaho</b></p> <p>Number of Refuges: 7</p> <p>Total Number of Positions: 28</p> <p><b>Percentage of Workforce Reduced in State: -29% (8/28)</b></p> <p>The 8 position reductions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Management Staff: -4 Positions</li><li>Maintenance Staff: -3 Positions</li><li>Administrative Staff: -1 Position</li></ul>	<p><b>Oregon</b></p> <p>Number of Refuges: 15</p> <p>Total Number of Positions: 57</p> <p><b>Percentage of Workforce Reduced in State: -18% (10/57)</b></p> <p>The 10 position reductions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Management Staff: -1 Position</li><li>Biological Staff: -4 Positions</li><li>Maintenance Staff: -4 Positions</li><li>Administrative Staff: -1 Position</li></ul>
<p><b>Pacific Islands</b></p> <p>Number of Refuges: 19</p> <p>Total Number of Positions: 73</p> <p><b>Percentage of Workforce Reduced in State: -8% (5.5/73)</b></p> <p>The 5.5 position reductions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Management Staff: -1.5 Positions</li><li>Biological Staff: -1 Position</li><li>Maintenance Staff: -1 Position</li><li>Administrative Staff: -2 Positions</li></ul>	<p><b>Washington</b></p> <p>Number of Refuges: 22</p> <p>Total Number of Positions: 93</p> <p><b>Percentage of Workforce Reduced in State = 28% (26/93)</b></p> <p>The 26 position reductions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Management Staff: -5 Positions</li><li>Public Use Staff: -2 Positions</li><li>Biological Staff: -6 Positions</li><li>Maintenance Staff: -7 Positions</li><li>Administrative Staff: -6 Positions</li></ul>



# **Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan**

## **What it Means on the Ground**

Examples of affects include:

- Reducing the number of partnership opportunities;
- 20 programs that monitor, evaluate, and survey biological communities will be reduced in frequency or abolished;
- 30+ programs that eradicate or control invasive plants and/or other species will be reduced in frequency or abolished;
- 9 projects to enhance or restore wetland acres will be reduced or abolished;
- 15 environmental education programs will be reduced in frequency or abolished; and
- 12 opportunities for public interaction and use of refuges will be minimized or abolished.



# Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan

## Next Steps

- We will re-evaluate workforce planning annually. Future funding increases, if available, may preclude some positions from being eliminated.
  - Future budget increases would be directed to focus refuges; and
  - Future budget decreases would be directed to all refuges, including focus refuges.
- We will continue to manage resources responsibly.



# **Pacific Region Refuge Workforce Plan**

## **In Closing**

We appreciate the significant support of Refuge Friends Groups, volunteers, Congress and local elected officials, Refuge system supporters and other partners in conservation as we manage through the workforce plan.

While these are challenging times, refuge managers and staff across the Refuge System have a long tradition of remarkable conservation accomplishments under difficult conditions. The Service leadership strongly supports the conservation mission of the Refuge System and the men and women in the field who deliver it.