



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge

*May 2007 Planning Update 2: Public Scoping & Environmental Assessment*

### Thank You for Participating

*We would like to thank everyone who took part in the public scoping meeting held in January 2007, as well as those who provided comments through other means.*



*Bobwhite Quail, Photo by USFWS*

## Comprehensive Conservation Plan: Public Scoping and Environmental Assessment

### Greetings from the Refuge

This is the second Planning Update from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to keep you informed and involved regarding the comprehensive conservation planning process for Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge.

### Public Scoping

We began the Comprehensive Conservation Planning (CCP) process in mid 2006 and held the first public scoping meeting at the refuge on January 25, 2007. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the public to the refuge and the CCP process, and to hear comments and concerns about Pee Dee NWR.

Twenty-one people attended the public scoping session. Approximately 20 comments were received. These comments are grouped into four main categories: wildlife and habitat management, resource protection, visitor services (public use), and refuge administration.

Wildlife and habitat management issues included the need for pine forest thinning, planting warm season grasses, and feral hog and coyote control. Under the resource protection category there were comments regarding expansion of the refuge, including land for timber swaps. The primary public use issue was to continue current hunting programs. Under refuge administration there were suggestions to increase refuge staff.



*Freshwater Mussel, Photo by USFWS*



*Warmouth, Photo by USDA*

### Inter-agency Participation

The intergovernmental scoping phase of the CCP process was conducted in March 2007. Local, state, federal agencies, and Tribe representatives were invited to submit their issues, concerns, and ideas.

### Vision Statement and Goals

The Service has developed a draft refuge Vision Statement, as well as draft refuge Goals.

#### Draft Vision Statement

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1963 was an important resting and feeding area for wintering migratory waterfowl.

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge occupies a unique location where the rolling hills of the Piedmont drain into the wetland and aquatic habitats of Brown Creek and the Pee Dee River. Through the collaboration of inter-agency partners, volunteers and the Service, PDNWR will continue to serve as an important conservation link in the Savannah-Santee-Pee Dee Ecosystem. PDNWR lands and waters will continue to support migratory birds, habitat, and species diversity through sound stewardship and habitat management.

PDNWR is committed to the conservation, preservation, and enhancement of this important biological resource for the people of North Carolina. In this pursuit, the Service will work with partners to provide environmental education and promote quality wildlife-dependent recreation for all visitors. The focus of PDNWR will be to help foster an interest and sense of wonder in nature by future generations.

### Draft Goals

Summaries of draft goals include:

- \* protect migratory birds, biodiversity and threatened and endangered species
- \* work to improve and/or restore water quality and quantity
- \* control exotic species
- \* maintain and protect archaeological and cultural resources
- \* conduct minor boundary expansions and work to create wildlife corridors
- \* provide quality wildlife viewing and photography as well as environmental education and interpretation opportunities
- \* provide quality hunting and fishing opportunities
- \* increase volunteer programs and build support of Friends the Pee Dee NWR group
- \* provide sufficient staff and infrastructure to successfully implement the CCP
- \* expand partnerships

### Environmental Assessment

The Service considered all of these comments to be “issues to resolve” during the planning process. Each received an in-depth analysis that helped to define the range of alternatives for the environmental assessment. Draft alternatives were:

- \* no action (current management)
- \* migratory birds
- \* endangered, threatened, and imperiled species
- \* wildlife and habitat diversity (proposed action)

We continue to welcome comments at any time during the planning process.

*Foam Flower, Photo by NCNatural*



*Fire Pink, Photo by NCNatural*



### Management Objectives and Strategies

Following the environmental assessment, refuge staff developed objectives and strategies which would be implemented over the 15-year life of the CCP to achieve the refuge vision and goals in accordance with the purposes for which the refuge was established. While goals are descriptive and often broad statements of desired future conditions, objectives are concise statements of what the refuge wants to achieve and how. Strategies are specific tools and techniques used to achieve objectives (i.e. prescribed fire, exotic plant removal, biological surveys etc.). Refuge objectives and accompanying strategies were developed for all aspects of the refuge, including management of wildlife and habitat, resource protection, visitor services (public uses), and refuge administration.



### What's Next?

The next major step in the CCP process is the internal review, where Service and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission representatives make comments on the draft CCP and EA. Following that process, the Draft CCP and environmental assessment will be made ready for public review. If you want to be on the mailing list to receive a copy of the draft document, please submit your request using the contact information below. Please indicate whether you want a paper or electronic copy (PDF).



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*Pee Dee River, Photo by Dynamac*