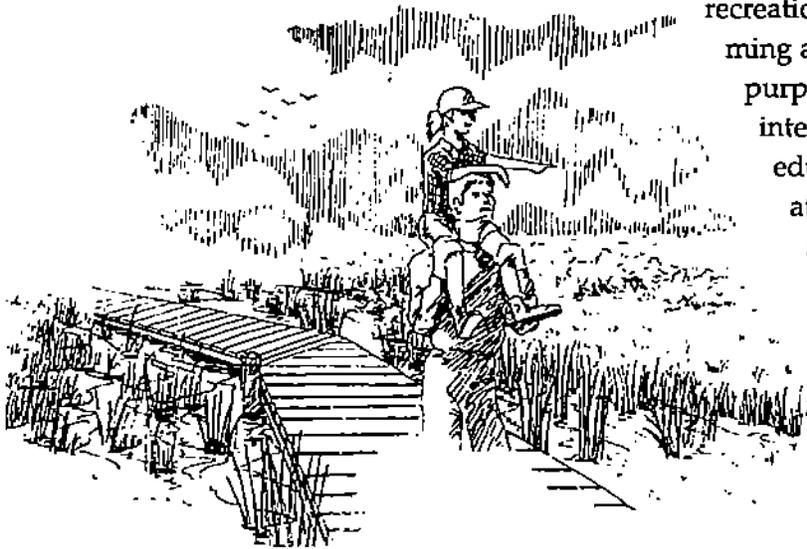


## CHAPTER 5 - PUBLIC USE PROGRAM - THE CONNECTING LINK

The forests and swamps of the Cache River Wetlands are valuable resources for wildlife and people, providing diverse habitats and opportunities for recreation and education. With the growing interest for quality outdoor experiences, the Refuge Public Use Program meets this need through environmental education, interpretation and wildlife-dependent



recreation. These approaches to programming are compatible with the Refuge purpose and accommodate a range of interests and abilities. Environmental education, interpretation and recreation are goals which include strategies to develop visitor appreciation, understanding and support for the natural resource and its long-term protection. The challenge is to develop a link between public use activities and Refuge management.

### *STORYLINE THEMES*

The connection between public use activities and Refuge management activities and policies, is made through a storyline which insures that messages imparted to the public are consistent with the Refuge purpose. The storyline is a series of broad themes that are site-specific and firmly grounded in what is being done to restore, protect, and/or enhance native wildlife and plant communities on the Refuge. These themes are tied to messages and visitor experiences that are conveyed to the public through a variety of media and facilities (signs, trails, boardwalks, special events, publications, and educational units). The storyline includes six themes. They are:

1. *UNDERSTANDING THE PAST*  
(NATURAL & CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE CACHE)

*Sub-theme:* People are dependent on the Cache River Wetlands. The area has served people throughout time. Its history demonstrates how people are connected to the land and how they have changed the landscape.

2. *EXPERIENCING THE ILLINOIS' "BAYOU"*  
(A LOOK AT UNIQUE PLANT COMMUNITIES OF THE CACHE)

*Sub-theme:* Unique natural communities within the Refuge and the Cache River Wetlands are more reminiscent of a Louisiana Bayou than a swamp located in a state better known for its prairies.

3. *EXPLORING THE DIVERSITY OF WILDLIFE -*  
(A HAVEN FOR WILDLIFE)

*Sub-theme:* The Refuge and associated Cache River Wetlands highlights a diversity of waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, neotropical songbirds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals that provides wildlife-oriented experiences for visitors.

4. *PROTECTING A FRAGILE SYSTEM*  
(RESOURCE ISSUES)

*Sub-theme:* The area is an internationally significant site that is threatened by inappropriate land uses within the watershed; solutions to these issues lies with environmentally literate citizens and their actions.

5. *RESTORING THE BALANCE*  
(RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION)

*Sub-theme:* Restoration and management of the Cache River Wetlands is a result of community action, partnerships, and a common vision to protect a unique resource; it provides a model for ecosystem management while accommodating compatible human use.

## 6. *COMMUNICATING VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CACHE RIVER WETLANDS*

*Sub-theme:* The diversity and features of the area provide many opportunities to explore, enjoy, and learn about wildlife, plants, and the human connection to the Cache River Wetlands.

### *VISITOR ANALYSIS*

Who is the visitor or audience that will be exposed to interpretive messages and public use services? As with any effective communicative effort, identifying the audience and their expectations is essential. Individuals visiting the Refuge have different levels of knowledge, different attitudes, and different interests; therefore messages should be tailored to specific visitor characteristics.

### *TARGET GROUPS*

A target group is a definable group of people categorized by their activity interests. Four target groups are defined on the following page, with individual subgroups and characteristics specified under each heading.

### *DELIVERY MATRIX*

A delivery matrix has been developed for the public use program at Cypress Creek (See Appendix B, Public Use Management Delivery Matrix). It is a cognitive map to communicate and link the storylines and themes to specific facilities or information resources such as brochures and signs. The six themes and associated sub-themes are presented in the delivery matrix as well as messages, visitor experiences, media and site-specific facilities. The matrix provides justification for proposed facilities/media.

## VISITOR TARGET GROUPS

<u>TARGET AND SUB-GROUPS</u>	<u>CHARACTERISTICS</u>
<u>I. FAMILIES</u>	
1. With small children	1. <i>Have limited time in one spot</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Prefer large scale displays</i></li><li>• <i>Prefer active, hands-on activities</i></li></ul>
2. With school-age children	2. <i>Prefer to be kept active</i>
<u>II. INDIVIDUALS</u>	
1. Adults (age 16-60)	1. <i>Able to spend more time reading</i>
	1. <i>Can assemble sophisticated information</i>
2. Senior citizens (age 60+)	2. <i>May not be able to walk or hike long distances</i>
	2. <i>Need resting areas</i>
	2. <i>Limited access to some areas</i>
3. Physically challenged	3. <i>Limited access to some areas</i>
<u>III. SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS</u>	
1. Local residents (permanent)	1. <i>Have special interest in the history of the area</i>
	1. <i>Often bring visitors from outside area</i>
2. Sportsmen (fishing, hunting)	2. <i>Have special interest in management/regulation of resource.</i>
	2. <i>Prefer participation in outdoor activities</i>
3. Wildlife observers	3. <i>Seasonal visitors</i>
	3. <i>Interested in secluded, undisturbed areas.</i>
	3. <i>Dislike over-development</i>
4. Archeological enthusiasts	4. <i>Curious about Native American history and locations of artifacts, villages and/or camps</i>
5. Hikers	5. <i>Prefer varied distances (opportunities for long/short distances)</i>
	5. <i>Prefer scenic natural areas</i>
	5. <i>Prefer trails not used by horses and detest ATV's</i>
6. Bicyclists	6. <i>Prefer paved to intermediate aggregate surfaces</i>
	6. <i>Prefer varied distances (opportunities for long/short distances)</i>
	6. <i>Limited access to some areas</i>
<u>IV. ORGANIZED GROUPS</u>	
1. Adult groups	1. <i>Prefer guided tours</i>
2. Youth groups	2. <i>Prefer educational and recreational activities</i>
	2. <i>Enjoy active experiences</i>
3. Student groups	3. <i>Experience must be educational</i>

## *COMPATIBLE PUBLIC USE*

Public use and resource protection of Refuge lands is mandated in the establishing legislation for Cypress Creek. Both can coexist successfully if they are planned and managed well. The Comprehensive Planning process has identified an appropriate balance and the best locations for wildlife-dependent recreation and educational programming. In addition, the plan calls for restricting public use in some areas and seasons to guard against negative impacts to plant and animal communities. An example is the moist soil management units. These areas will be seasonally closed to the public during migration to eliminate disturbance to resting and feeding ducks.

In order to meet compatibility mandates, all uses authorized on a Refuge must be determined compatible with the purposes of the Refuge. An overall compatibility determination is part of this Comprehensive Management Plan (See Appendix C, Compatibility Determination). Once signed, all public use proposals in this plan will have met the compatibility test.

In the interim, public activities are guided by legislation and Executive Order 12996 which includes: Compatible Wildlife-Dependent Recreational Activities - include hiking, wildlife observation, fishing, hunting, nature photography, environmental education and interpretive programming; and Unauthorized Activities - include such activities as motorized vehicles, horseback riding, camping and fires, off-road bicycling, and collecting artifacts or collecting native plants.

## *SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS*

Special restrictions will be imposed on visitor use to shelter threatened or endangered species, protect sensitive natural communities or enhance succession and the health of areas under restoration. Special regulations may be seasonal to limit disturbance in areas where research is taking place or in prime natural habitat that is suitable for migratory and resident wildlife populations (i.e. shorebirds, waterfowl, neotropical songbirds). Special restrictions for the following activities are outlined below.

*Hunting* - this activity will continue to be supported and promoted as a compatible recreational use and management tool. The Refuge made a commitment to provide this opportunity in the final Environmental Assessment that authorized Refuge establishment. The Refuge hunting program follows state seasons and integrates specific recommendations for management. For example, objectives for the hunting program includes: 1). controlling large buildup of wintering populations of Canada geese (large goose buildups would eventually disrupt distribution strategies that have been agreed upon by state and federal flyway groups) and 2). controlling white-tailed deer populations to insure the herd does not exceed the carrying capacity of the Refuge and/or detrimentally impact reforestation. The Hunting Plan, approved in 1992, outlines more specific details for the Refuge's program.

*Bicycling* - this activity is not permitted off-road but is allowed on paved or gravel roads that cross the Refuge. No off-road trails will be developed and bikes will not be permitted on hiking trails. Development of the Rails to Trails corridor through the Refuge will be supported and provide excellent bicycling opportunities.

*Hiking and Wildlife Viewing* - may be seasonally restricted in areas to minimize disturbance to wildlife during nesting and/or migration.

*Boating* - Boats and canoes are permitted on the Cache River. The state has set a 10 horse power motor limit on waters that pass through the Cache River State Natural Area. The Refuge abides by and includes the state limit on waters within Refuge boundaries.

## *FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS*

Facilities and structures will enhance public use opportunities on the Refuge and accommodate a range of interests and abilities. Trails, shelters, parking areas, observation decks, signage and kiosks will provide formal (controlled) access into the Refuge and the Cache River Wetlands.

Currently, there is very little public use development on the Refuge; five gravel parking areas have been established at former homestead sites, and one boat access exists along an old slough of the Cache River at Tamms. The Cache River State Natural Area includes 18 miles of hiking trails, a boat access, and 16 parking areas; these Illinois DNR sites have a clear identity and design. Future development on the Refuge will complement existing facilities administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, tie into the natural landscape, as well as include site design features unique to Cypress Creek and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Access into the Refuge and the Cache River Wetlands will include four levels of development:

1. *Primitive Access*
2. *Outdoor Classrooms*
3. *Public Use Access*
4. *Cache River Wetlands Visitor Center*

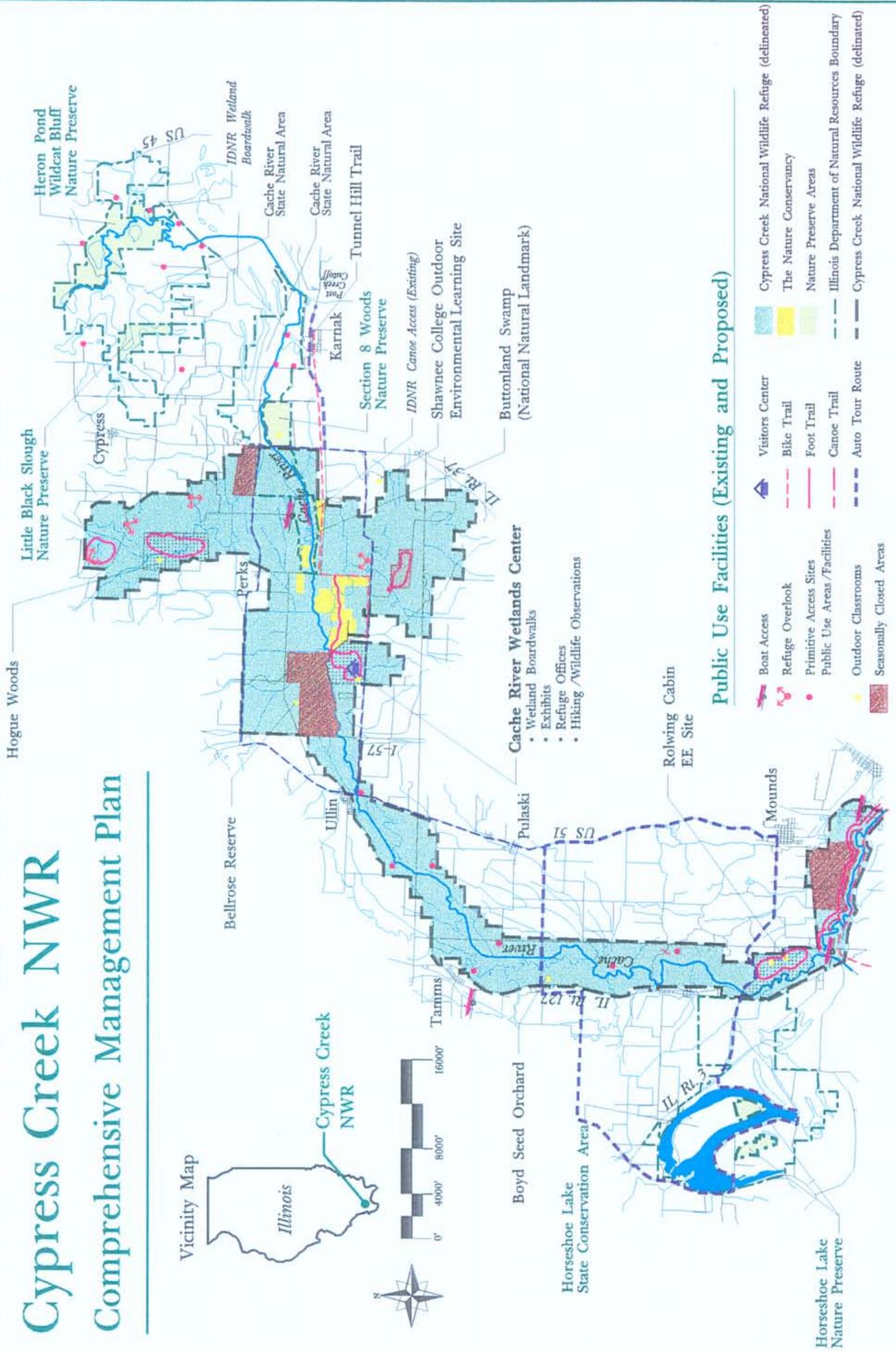
The map on the following page illustrates many of the existing and proposed public use facilities that will ultimately be available within the Refuge.



# Cypress Creek NWR

## Comprehensive Management Plan

Vicinity Map



### Public Use Facilities (Existing and Proposed)

- |  |                             |  |                 |  |   |
|--|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|--|---|
|  | Boat Access                 |  | Visitors Center |  | Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge (delineated) |
|  | Refuge Overlook             |  | Bike Trail      |  | The Nature Conservancy                              |
|  | Primitive Access Sites      |  | Foot Trail      |  | Nature Preserve Areas                               |
|  | Public Use Areas/Facilities |  | Canoe Trail     |  | Illinois Department of Natural Resources Boundary   |
|  | Outdoor Classrooms          |  | Auto Tour Route |  | Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge (delineated) |
|  | Seasonally Closed Areas     |  |                 |  |   |

- Cache River Wetlands Center**
- Wetland Boardwalks
  - Exhibits
  - Refuge Offices
  - Hiking/Wildlife Observations

Rolling Cabin  
EE Site

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### *PRIMITIVE ACCESS*

Primitive access sites have been located throughout the Refuge to accommodate hikers, hunters, and wildlife watchers. Facility development includes a gravel surfaced parking area for 5-10 cars with the perimeter defined with posts. Signage on a single panel kiosk will provide general information to visitors. Trails may be developed at some of these sites depending on future need.

#### *PRIMITIVE ACCESS SITES (PROJECT WORKSHEET B7)*

ACCESS	LOCATION	FACILITIES
Brushy Access	Brushy Unit <i>(South side of Shawnee College Road)</i>	Parking <i>(5-10 car)</i>
Greenberg Access	Greenberg Tract <i>(East of Hwy 127)</i>	Parking <i>(5 car)</i>
Hileman Access <i>(existing)</i>	Hileman Tract <i>(South of Cypress-Dongola Blacktop)</i>	Parking <i>(10 car)</i>
Stuckey Access	Stuckey Tract	Parking <i>(10 car)</i>
Thomure Access <i>(existing)</i>	Thomure Tract <i>(North side of Cypress-Dongola Blacktop)</i>	Parking <i>(5 car)</i>

## OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

These sites are specifically planned to accommodate organized groups and students and to fulfill the goals of the environmental education program. Each site will facilitate formal learning in a setting which represents a unique combination of natural and cultural features on the refuge. Four outdoor classrooms are proposed on the Refuge: Bellrose Reserve, Boyd Seed Orchard, Hogue Woods, and Rolwing Cabin. Each site will include a new environmental education shelter with tables and benches for group activities. A kiosk and trail will connect the parking area and restrooms with the shelter. The sites are dispersed throughout the Refuge, located where diverse plant communities and management features occur and where exploration and discovery are encouraged.

### OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

ACCESS	LOCATION	FACILITIES
Bellrose Reserve (Project A8)	Frank Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve (Off Butler Ridge Road) Waterfowl & shorebird view- ing, moist soil management	Signage/Kiosk Parking (bus) Shelter Observation Deck Trail Restrooms
Boyd Seed Orchard (Project A11)	Boyd Tract (Sandusky) Forest Restoration techniques, tree seed nursery production, spring restoration	Signage/Kiosk Parking (bus) Shelter Trail Restrooms
Hogue Woods (Project B5)	Hogue Tract (North) Mature oak/hickory forest, forest restoration techniques, spring fed bottomland, neotropical migrant songbirds	Signage/Kiosk Parking (bus) Shelter Trail Restrooms
Rolwing Cabin Outdoor Classroom (Project C6)	Rolwing Tract (Near Mounds off IL Rt. 127)	Visitor access road, gravel parking, and interpretive sign

## *PUBLIC USE SITES*

These sites will accommodate the wildlife oriented recreational user. The public use access sites provide opportunities for wildlife observation, hunting, fishing, and canoeing and are near natural features of the Cache River. These sites include well-defined parking, restrooms, interpretive signage, boardwalks, trails, observation platforms and other structures that enhance the visitor's experience.

### *PUBLIC USE ACCESS SITES*

ACCESS	LOCATION	FACILITIES
Bike Trail <i>(Project C4)</i>	Tunnel Hill Connection	Parking Signage/Kiosk
Cache Levee Access & Canoe Trail <i>(Project A10)</i>	Old Cache Channel	Parking & Trail to Access Levee Signage/Kiosk Parking Boat Ramp Restroom
Mounds Boat & Bicycle Access <i>(Project A4)</i>	Mounds <i>(East of Mounds)</i>	Parking & Trail to Levee Signage/Kiosk Boat Ramp Restroom
Refuge Overlooks <i>(Project C7)</i>	Goines Tract Overlook Harris Tract Overlook Rose Tract Overlook Ernhart Wetland Overlook Willingham Wildlife Overlook	Parking (5 Car) Signage/Kiosk Observation Platform
Poole - Wetland Trail <i>(Project B8)</i>	Poole Tract <i>(North Boundary)</i>	Parking (5 Car) Signage/Kiosk Trail Boardwalk Observation Deck
Tamms Boat Access <i>(Project A5)</i>	Tamms <i>(Pumphouse Road)</i>	Parking Signage/Kiosk Boat Ramp <i>(Seasonal)</i> Restroom Trail to access fishing sites

## *DEMONSTRATION PROJECT*

The following page depicts an example of how the public use, hunting areas, and restoration of the Bellrose Reserve can be implemented.



# SITE PLAN

## Legend

- A** - Hunter Access
- a1** - Sign in
- a2** - 15 Car Parking
- B** - Waterfowl Viewing
- b1** - 30 Car Parking
- b2** - Interpretive Boardwalk
- b3** - Group Shelter
- b4** - Viewing Blind
- b5** - Deep Water Habitat
- C** - Gate
- D** - Road
- E** - Concrete Flood Spillway
- F** - Remote Maintenance Storage Complex (Existing)
- G** - Experimental Hawk Roosting Complex
- H** - Forest Restoration
- I** - Moist Soil Unit
- J** - Stream Meander Restoration
- K** - Existing Bridge
- L** - Existing Grain Silos
- M** - Existing Stream

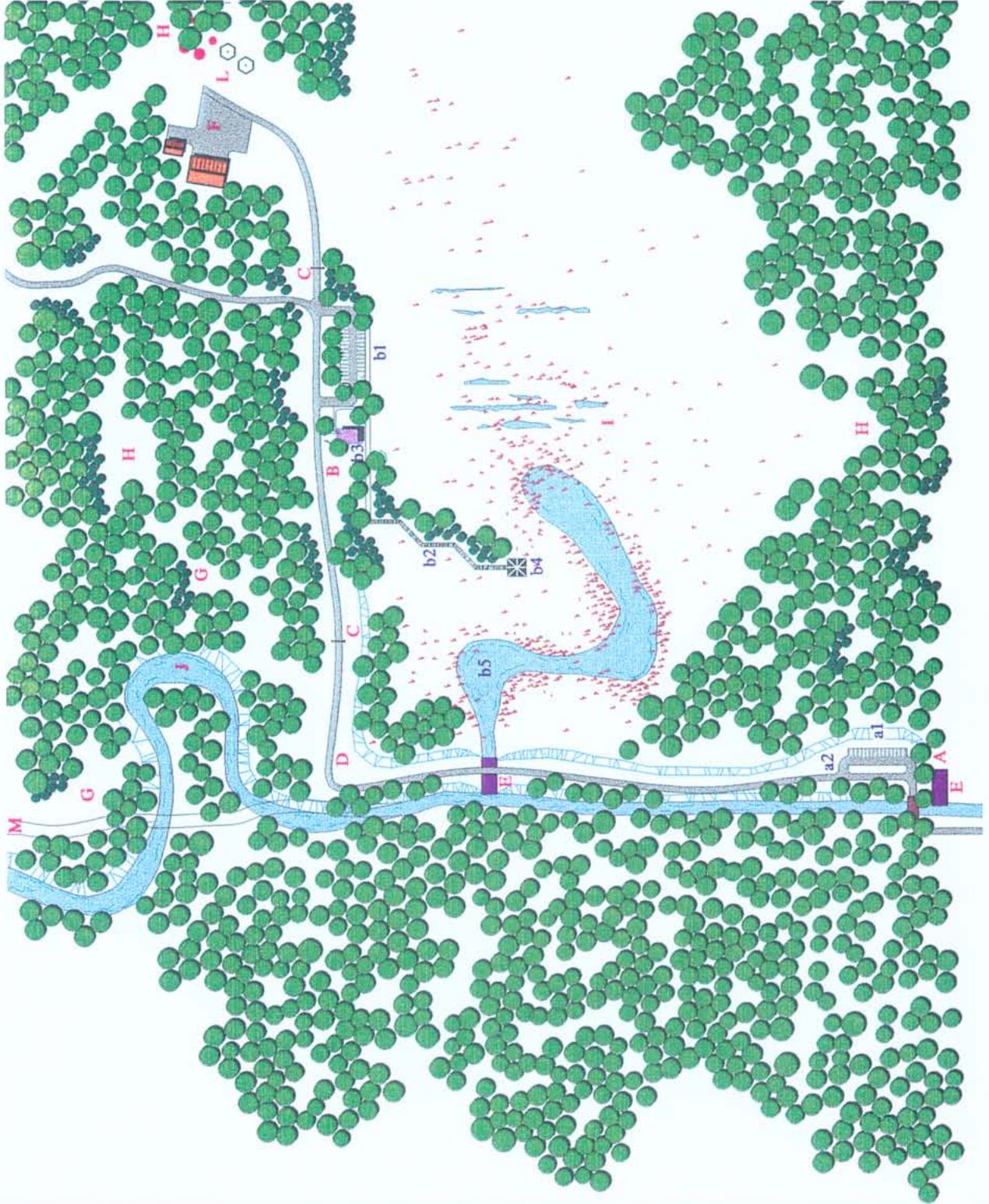


Scale: 1" = 350'

**Cypress Creek**  
National Wildlife Refuge  
Bellrose Public Access Area

Prepared for:  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Booker Associates, Inc.



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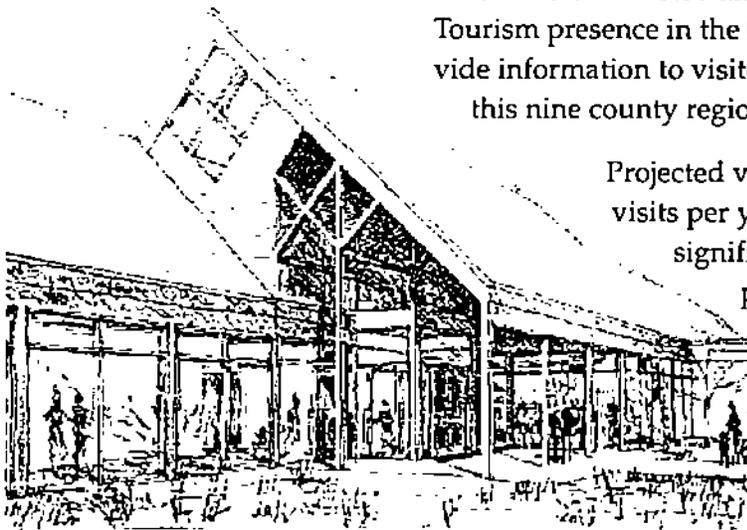
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## CACHE RIVER WETLANDS VISITOR CENTER

No greater opportunity exists to exemplify the Refuge partnership vision than the proposed Cache River Wetlands Visitor Center. When constructed, the Center will demonstrate solutions to global environmental and conservation challenges using the Cache River Wetlands as a model of cooperative action.

As proposed in the 1994 Feasibility Study, the Wetland Center located near Easter Slough, will provide visitors with a clear destination upon arriving at the Refuge. The proposed facility will serve as a visitation focal point for the Cache River wetlands and as a clearinghouse for wetlands and watershed information, education and tourism. The 21,600 square foot center will provide administrative offices, research, and public education through indoor and outdoor experiences and exhibits that describe the history of the Cache River basin and the cooperative efforts to protect and restore this significant resource. Site amenities such as a wetland boardwalk, trails and observation decks around the Center will concentrate visitor use in one area, thus protecting fragile communities in the Cache River Wetlands. In addition, the Center will provide an outstanding environmental experience to those less able to hike trails or traverse difficult terrain. A Southernmost Illinois Tourism presence in the Center will orient, educate and provide information to visitors about the numerous attractions in this nine county region.



Projected visitation is approximately 200,000 visits per year. By creating a destination facility, significant economic benefits to this depressed region will be realized. The

Center has the potential to provide an immediate and long-term economic resource for southern Illinois.

The Service will continue to actively work with its partners and other interest groups to acquire the preferred site at Easter Slough. If not successful, the partners will consider other high priority sites identified in the Feasibility study. More importantly, the Service will work with others to obtain shared funding for the construction, operation and maintenance of the visitor center facility.

### *CONCLUSION*

The public use program and facility guidance provided here is intended to communicate to local communities and Refuge partners the direction and scale of development appropriate for the Refuge. In addition, the document will be used to obtain funding and to proceed to the next step in implementing the Plan. The next steps include producing a more detailed Public Use Plan and related Sign Plan and producing site plans for those sites with funding or a high potential for funding.