

# Chapter 5: Plan Implementation

## New and Existing Projects

This Comprehensive Conservation Plan outlines an ambitious course of action for the future management of Sherburne NWR. The ability to pro-actively manage wildlife habitats and to maintain existing and develop new public use facilities will require a significant commitment of staff and funding from the Service. Consequently, the Refuge will continually need appropriate operational and maintenance funding to implement the objectives in this plan.



*Douglas Johannsen*

The following provides a brief description of the highest priority Refuge projects (Tier 1), as chosen by the Refuge staff and listed in the Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS). A full listing of unfunded Refuge projects and operational needs can be found in the Appendices.

### Refuge Operating Needs (Highest Priority)

*Improve Visitor Services – New Staff.* Add a visitor services specialist to increase and improve visitor services. Sherburne NWR is located between the growing Twin Cities and St. Cloud metropolitan areas and annual visitation is over 100,000. The addition of a visitor services specialist will allow the Refuge to improve current

public use services and provide additional service directed toward wildlife observation, fishing, hunting, environmental education, nature photography. \$63,500

*Refuge Facility Expenses.* Provide funds to operate the Refuge office including expenses for heating, air conditioning, required safety inspections, electrical expenses, and safety improvements. These funds will also allow for upkeep of Refuge facilities including parking lots, interpretive kiosks, interpretive trails, and water control structures. About 100,000 people visit Sherburne NWR each year and it is important to maintain facilities to provide a quality experience. The project will help pay fuel bills, electric bills and the day-to-day costs of operating a Refuge. \$198,720

*Water Control Structure on Iron Pool.* Install a control structure on Iron Pool to increase the effectiveness of water level manipulation. The original structure, designed in the 1970s has limited water level control capabilities. The new structure will allow the Refuge to manage the pool at lower levels and change water levels in smaller increments, which will benefit many species of migratory and resident wildlife. This capability will allow habitat management for a greater diversity of species during critical periods of the year. \$27,000

*Big Woods Habitat Restoration.* Restore 300 acres of Big Woods habitat on Sherburne NWR. Since settlement of this region of Central Minnesota in 1850, most of the Refuge habitats have been altered or destroyed. A major habitat component of the area that was severely altered was Big Woods forest. The information and techniques are now available to restore this important habitat to the Refuge. The extent and location of the proposed restoration is contained in the document “Landscape Plan for Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.” \$32,400

*New Fire Equipment.* Purchase a bombardier to create fire breaks and allow the Refuge to burn large tracts of land. The habitats on Sherburne NWR, including oak savanna, native prairie and wetlands are fire-dependent and prescribed fire is essential for the health of these lands and the resources they support. Sherburne NWR has an annual prescribed fire goal of 5,000 acres and an active wildfire prevention program. Current equipment is not adequate to meet these objectives on this large, urban Refuge. This same vehicle would provide enhanced fire suppression capabilities in the event of a wildfire and would improve our ability to conduct many of our present prescribed burns under safer conditions. \$125,900

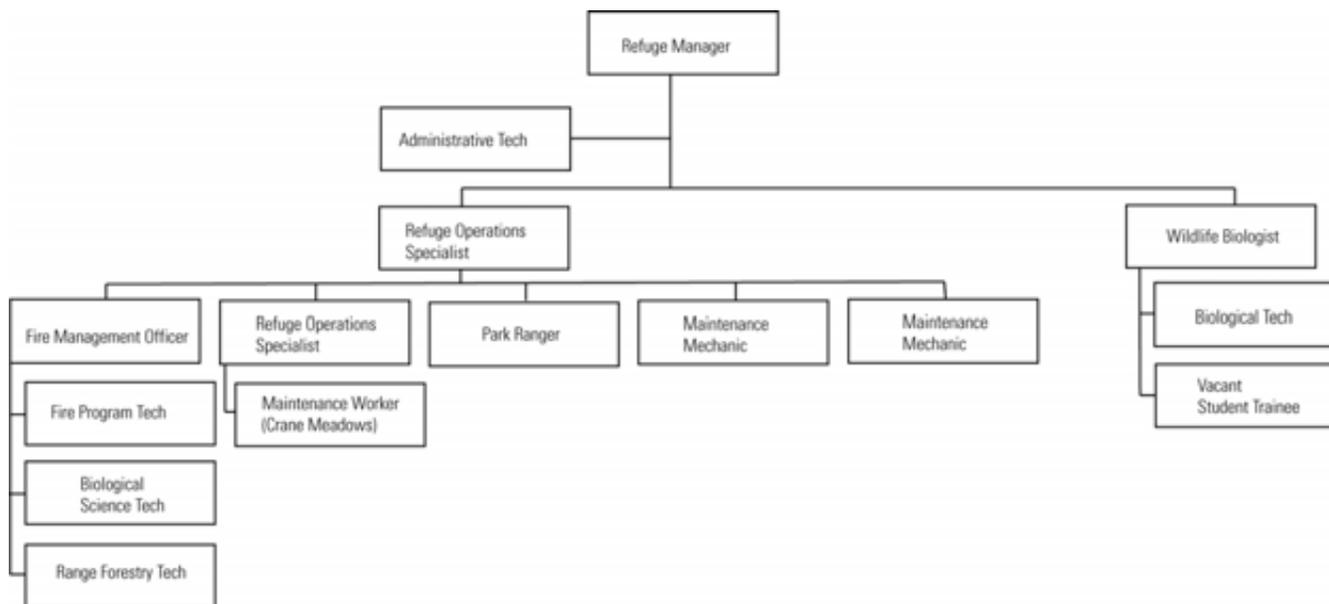
## Future Staffing Requirements

Implementing the vision set forth in this CCP will require changes in the organizational structure of the Refuge. Existing staff will direct their time and energy in new directions and new staff members will be added to assist in these efforts. The following are organizational charts and tables of the current staff of the Refuge, Fiscal Year 2004, as well as staff needed to fully implement this plan by Fiscal Year 2019 (Figure 23, Table 12).

**Table 12: New Staff Required to Fully Implement the Sherburne NWR CCP by 2019**

| Position                               | FTE |
|--|-----|
| Visitor Services Specialist            | 1.0 |
| Fire Technician                        | 0.5 |
| Seasonal Outdoor Recreation Specialist | 0.5 |
| Office Automation Clerk                | 0.6 |
| Law Enforcement Officer                | 1.0 |
| Total                                  | 3.6 |

**Figure 23: Current Staff Chart (2005), Sherburne NWR**



## Partnership Opportunities

Partnerships have become an essential element for the successful accomplishment of Sherburne NWR goals, objectives, and strategies. The objectives outlined in this CCP need the support and the partnerships of federal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations and individual citizens. This broad-based approach to managing fish and wildlife resources extends beyond social and political boundaries and requires a foundation of support from many. Sherburne NWR will continue to seek creative partnership opportunities to achieve its vision for the future.

The Friends of the Sherburne NWR, a non-profit organization comprised of Refuge supporters from many walks in life, has been an important ally and Refuge advocate in the past and will become an increasingly important partner in the future. This association has demonstrated its ability to reach out to the community for support and assistance for Refuge projects and conservation issues. Refuge staff will continue to seek guidance, support, and assistance from the Friends into the foreseeable future.

Other notable partners include The Nature Conservancy, Conservation Fund, Central Minnesota Audubon, Saint Cloud State University, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, and the Minnesota DNR. Conservation organizations and agencies that have been very supportive of habitat restoration efforts on both private and public lands in the Refuge District include Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota Pheasant Forever chapters, and the Benton County and Sherburne County Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

## Step-down Management Plans

Several step-down management plans describe specific actions that support the accomplishment of Refuge objectives. The management plans identified in Table 13 will be reviewed and revised as necessary to achieve the results anticipated in this CCP.

**Table 13: Step-down Management Plans**

| Plan  | Date | Anticipated Revision |
|---|------|----------------------|
| Landscape Plan  | 1999 | 2015                 |
| Refuge Interpretive and Recreation Plan Visitor Services Plan | 1981 | 2010                 |
| Law Enforcement Plan  | 1986 | 2013                 |
| Water Management Plan   | 1988 | Annual               |
| Woodland Management Plan                                      | 1987 | 2015                 |
| Hunting Plan  | 1987 | 2010                 |
| Wildlife Inventory Plan                                       | 1988 | 2018                 |
| Safety Management Plan  | 1990 | 2019                 |
| Grassland Management Plan                                     | 1987 | 2015                 |
| Trapping Plan   | 1986 | 2012                 |
| Sign Plan   | 1988 | 2010                 |
| Disease Contingency Plan                                      | 1987 | 2011                 |
| Fire Management Plan  | 1999 | 2020                 |
| Cultural Resources Plan                                       | 2008 | NA                   |
| Museum Property Scope of Collections Statement                | 2008 | NA                   |
| Fishing Plan  | 1988 | 2010                 |

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The direction set forth in this CCP plus specifically identified strategies and projects will be monitored throughout the life of this plan. Monitoring will be developed to measure progress toward meeting the objectives set forth in this plan. Based on the results of monitoring, the objectives will be reviewed and revised as necessary. In addition, on a periodic basis, the Regional Office will assemble a station review team whose purpose will be to visit Sherburne NWR and evaluate current Refuge activities in light of this plan. The team will review all aspects of Refuge management, including direction, accomplishments and funding. The goals and objectives presented in this CCP will provide the baseline from which this field station will be evaluated.

## Plan Review and Revision

The CCP for the Sherburne NWR is meant to provide guidance to Refuge managers and staff over the next 10-15 years. However, the CCP is also a dynamic and flexible document and several of the objectives contained herein are subject to such things as drought, floods, windstorms and other uncontrollable events. Likewise, many of the strategies are dependent upon Service funding for staff and projects. Because of all these factors, the recommendations in the CCP will be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, revised to meet new circumstances.

## Archeological and Cultural Values

Cultural resources management in the Service is the responsibility of the Regional Director and is not delegated for the Section 106 process when historic properties could be affected by Service undertakings, for issuing archeological permits, and for Indian tribal involvement. The Regional Historic Preservation Officer (RHPO) advises the Regional Director about procedures, compliance, and implementation of the several cultural resources laws. The Refuge Manager assists the RHPO (Regional Historic Preservation Officer) by early informing the RHPO about FWS undertakings, by protecting archeological sites and historic properties on Service-managed and administered lands, by monitoring archeological investigations by contractors and permittees, and by reporting violations.

As part of its larger conservation mandate and ethic, the Service through the Refuge Manager applies the several historic preservation laws and regulations to ensure historic properties are identified and are protected to the extent possible within its established purposes and Refuge System mission.

The Refuge Manager early in project planning for all undertakings, informs the RHPO (Regional Historic Preservation Officer) to initiate the Section 106 process. Concurrent with public notification and involvement for environmental compliance and compatibility determinations if applicable, or cultural resources only if no other issues are involved, the Refuge Manager informs and requests comments from the public and local officials through presentations, meetings, and media notices; results are provided to the RHPO.

Archeological investigations and collecting are performed only in the public interest by qualified archeologists or by persons recommended by the Governor working under an Archaeological Resources Protection Act permit issued by the Regional Director. The Refuge Manager has found this third-party use of Refuge land to be compatible. (The requirements of ARPA apply to FWS cultural resources contracts as well: the contract is the equivalent of a permit.) Too, the Refuge Manager issues a special use permit. Refuge personnel take steps to prevent unauthorized collecting by the public, contractors, and Refuge personnel; violators are cited or other appropriate action taken. Violations are reported to the Regional Historic Preservation Officer.

The Refuge Manager will, with the assistance of the RHPO, develop a step-down plan for surveying lands to identify archeological resources and for developing a preservation program to meet the requirements of Section 14 of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and Section 110(a)(2) of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The Refuge Manager should have and implement a plan for inspecting the condition of known cultural resources on the Refuge and report to the RHPO changes in the conditions.

The Refuge Manager will initiate budget requests or otherwise obtain funding from the 1% O&M program base provided for the Section 106 process compliance:

- # Inventory, evaluate, and protect all significant cultural resources located on lands controlled by the FWS, including historic properties of religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes.
- # Identify and nominate to the National Register of Historic Places all historic properties including those of religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes.
- # Cooperate with Federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, and the public in managing cultural resources on the Refuge.
- # Integrate historic preservation with planning and management of other resources and activities.