



# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge  
51 E. Fourth Street - Room 101  
Winona, Minnesota 55987

Dear Reader:

We are pleased to provide you this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Established by Congress in 1924, the Refuge remains a national treasure in terms of its importance to fish, wildlife, and people; and in terms of its size, scope, and scenic beauty. The Refuge is also a natural legacy worth conserving through thoughtful planning and management.

The CCP will guide management for the next 15 years and help the Refuge meet its original purpose and contribute to the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The CCP will set a vision, goals, and measurable objectives, and outline strategies for reaching those objectives.

There will now be a 30-day waiting period before a decision is made on which alternative in the Final EIS will be implemented as the CCP for the Refuge. This decision will be documented in a formal Record of Decision signed by the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Twin Cities, Minnesota.

This planning process has been a long and interesting journey. Starting with the first scoping meetings in August, 2002, there have been 46 public meetings and workshops attended by 4,500 people, and dozens of meetings with the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois; Corps of Engineers; and various organizations. A total of 3,230 written comments were received.

Despite an amazing diversity of viewpoints, one thing is clear: citizens love and enjoy the Upper Mississippi River, and many depend on it for livelihood and renewal. This passion bodes well for the future of both the river and the Refuge, and the fish and wildlife which call it home.

Thank you to all who have attended long meetings, voiced concerns, offered suggestions, and stayed engaged over the long haul.

Sincerely,

Don Hultman  
Refuge Manager