

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Newsletter

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is starting work on a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (Great Swamp NWR). The plan will establish management goals and objectives for all refuge programs over the next 15 years. For example, our habitat management, land protection, visitor services and environmental education programs will all be evaluated during the planning process.

This planning process provides a unique opportunity for the Service to involve all of those interested in the long-term management of the refuge. You can play a significant role in the development of this influential plan!

Who will be involved in developing the plan?

The local refuge staff in Harding Township, NJ will lead the effort, with assistance from the Service's Northeast Regional Office. We have also invited the State of New Jersey, the Delaware Nation, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians to serve on our core planning team.

Public Scoping Meetings

Two Meetings on
Wednesday, July 28th

1:00-3:30 pm & 6:00-8:30 pm

Chatham Municipal Building
58 Meyersville Road
Chatham, NJ 07928

Each meeting will begin with a 30 minute open house, followed by a short presentation. The last hour of each meeting will be reserved for open discussion with the opportunity to ask questions and provide information, feedback and other input.



Robert Johnson/USFWS

Wetlands at Great Swamp

We will engage local residents, community leaders, and non-profit environmental and recreational organizations in discussing ways in which the refuge can serve the needs of both wildlife and people throughout the Great Swamp watershed. Below is a list of forums we will use throughout the planning process. Do you have suggestions for additional forums that can be used to reach out to the community?

- Host open houses
- Develop informational newsletters
- Write feature articles for local newspapers
- Participate in civic and professional group events
- Give presentations at community meetings
- Host working group sessions and technical expert meetings
- Continue partnerships

How Can You Get Involved?

Please help us evaluate current management, envision future desired

conditions on the refuge, plan the future of our public use programs, and identify other important issues. You can start getting involved by attending one of our scoping meetings and/or providing comments to us at the meetings or via one of the other methods outlined on page 4. To stay informed, complete the mailing information on the back of this workbook. We look forward to seeing you at the public scoping meetings (see grey box for details). Please contact us at any time with further questions.

Who is Leading this Effort?

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, part of the Department of the Interior, is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the nation's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

The Service also manages the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest collection of lands and waters set aside specifically for the protection of fish and wildlife populations and habitats. Refuges provide important habitats for native plants and animals, facilitating the preservation of threatened or endangered species. Refuges also offer a wide variety of compatible wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, and many have visitor centers, interpretive trails, and

Draft Vision Statement

Great Swamp NWR is an oasis of nature in the New Jersey/ New York metropolitan area that supports an incredible diversity of habitats and species. The Wilderness area provides a wild and natural setting, where human influence is not apparent. The Refuge works with watershed partners to promote and protect a healthy, naturally functioning watershed. We use the best available science and management practices to maintain, enhance, and restore biological integrity and diversity with a focus on native plants and wildlife. While maintaining this focus, we provide appropriate and compatible public use opportunities.

Visitors to Great Swamp NWR experience first class interpretive facilities and programs to gain an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System on natural, cultural, and scientific levels. The experiences connect diverse populations with the natural world using all their senses to foster their own environmental ethics. As the refuge was created through citizen action; refuge volunteers, community and conservation organizations, educational institutions, and governmental agencies work together to support the Refuge and its programs.



Bog Turtle - Pete Pattavina/USFWS

Refuge Overview

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1960 in response to a major airport proposal that threatened to displace native wildlife. Many dedicated volunteers facilitated the purchase and donation of almost 3,000 acres of land to the Department of the Interior to become a national wildlife refuge. Today the refuge protects over 7,700 acres of swamp woodlands, hardwood ridges, cattail marshes, grasslands, streams and ponds. The Refuge is a National Natural Landmark and the eastern half of the refuge is a Congressionally designated Wilderness Area.

The refuge is home to 945 different wildlife and plant species, including 244 bird and 600 plant species. Four federally-listed species occur on the refuge, including the threatened bog turtle and endangered Indiana bat. With help from our partners and volunteers, we are managing the wetlands, uplands, and early successional habitats within the refuge to provide for a wide variety of these important species.

Biological surveys are routinely conducted on Refuge lands to inform management decisions. In conjunction with the CCP process, Great Swamp NWR is also developing a Habitat Management Plan that will guide future habitat enhancement.

While wildlife and habitat conservation come first on refuges, excellent opportunities for wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, interpretation, and hunting also exist on the refuge.

The refuge headquarters is located on Pleasant Plains Road in Harding Township, New Jersey. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Visitor Center is open Thursday through Sunday. Please visit or contact the refuge for information.

Draft Refuge Goals

Goal 1: Provide high quality diverse freshwater emergent wetlands with naturally varying hydric regimes, including wet meadows, freshwater emergent marsh, and open water wetland habitats dominated by native plants for migratory waterfowl, waterbirds, marshbirds, and herptiles.

Goal 2: Create and maintain an interspersion of brushlands and successional wet meadows comprised of native vegetation in varying levels of succession within the Great Swamp NWR wetland complex to enhance the quality of breeding and foraging habitat for priority conservation species.

Goal 3 : To maintain a mosaic of wetland and upland forest with the patch size and connectivity maintained to highest practicable level and consisting of native understories of varying densities and structure to maximize the potential utilization of priority resources of concern.

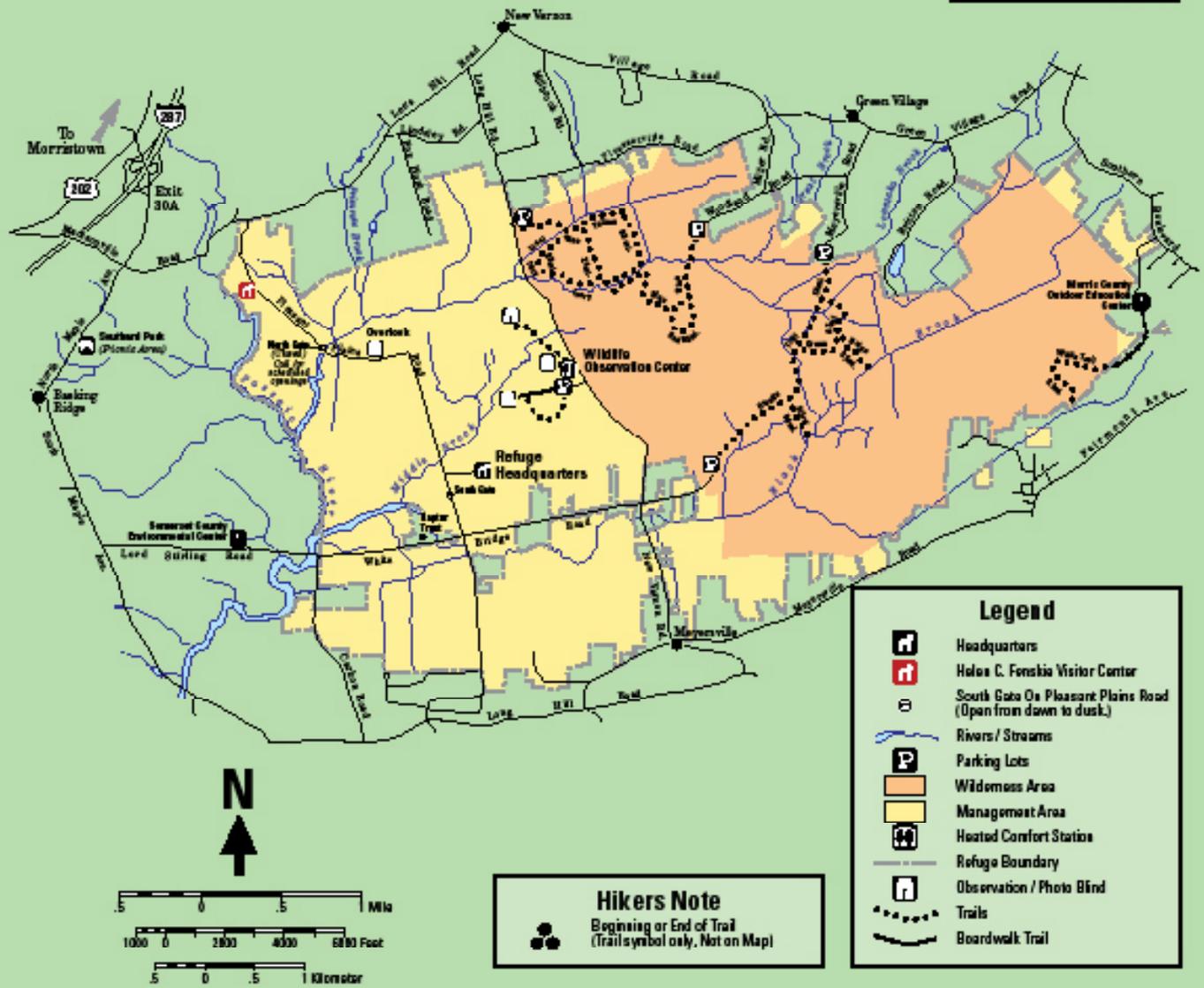
Goal 4: Visitors of all ages and abilities will enjoy wildlife-dependent recreation, appreciate the cultural and natural resources of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, and increase their understanding and support of the refuge mission.

Goal 5: Refuge staff will collaborate with the local community and partners to complement habitat and visitor services programs on the refuge and surrounding landscape.

Great Swamp

National Wildlife Refuge

Morris County, New Jersey



For More Information

We look forward to seeing you at the refuge and our public meetings. To learn more about the refuge, or the planning process please contact us at:

Phone: 973 425-1222

Email: greatswamp@fws.gov

Address: Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
241 Pleasant Plains Road
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

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If you wish to receive future "Planning Updates" about the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge comprehensive conservation plan, please fill in the appropriate information below and return it to the Refuge or email northeastplanning@fws.gov.

Name: _____
(Please Print)

Address: _____

City: _____

State _____ Zip Code: _____

If you are acting in an official capacity as the representative of an organization please complete the following two items.

Organization: _____ Title: _____

IMPORTANT: Please note that names on the CCP mailing list become part of the public record for this project. The Service must release names, only if requested, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of 1974. To retain you on our mailing list we need your permission. Please sign below.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

You may provide comments via any of the following methods:

Email: northeastplanning@fws.gov

Fax: Attn: Great Swamp CCP
413-253-8468

U.S. Mail: Great Swamp NWR
241 Pleasant Plains Road
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920