

Chapter 5



Swallow Hollow Ribbon Cutting

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Consultation and Coordination

Public Involvement Summary

Effective conservation usually begins with effective community involvement. To ensure that future management of the refuge considers the issues, concerns, and opportunities expressed by the public, we used a variety of public involvement techniques in our planning process.

Public Scoping: In the spring of 2008, staff at Iroquois Refuge sought public input on all aspects of refuge management as part of the CCP process. In April 2008, an introductory newsletter was mailed to over 360 refuge neighbors, sporting groups, local politicians, conservation groups, and State agencies to inform them of the planning process. Copies of the newsletter were also available at the refuge visitor contact station, through the refuge Web site, and at community outreach events. Iroquois Refuge hosted public meetings on April 8, 9 and 10, 2008 in Batavia, Albion, and the refuge headquarters in Alabama, respectively. Each day the public could attend either an open house style meeting in the afternoon, or a more structured meeting in the evening. Approximately 20 people attended over the three days. Participants were encouraged to actively express their opinions and suggestions. The public meetings allowed us to gather information and ideas from local residents, adjacent landowners, and various organizations and agencies. A written public comment period was also open from February 26 through April 30, 2008 during which time people could mail, email, or drop off comments.

Newsletters: In addition to the introductory newsletter described above, we distributed planning newsletter updates in September 2008 and January 2009. In these newsletters, we shared the refuge vision statement and goals, summarized the comments received in scoping, and described our progress through the process. In October 2010 we distributed a newsletter for the release of the draft CCP for public review and comment.

Federal Register Notice: We published our Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on February 26, 2008 stating we intended to prepare “a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and an associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document for Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge).” We subsequently published our Notice of Availability (NOA) for the draft CCP on October 4, 2010.

Workshops: The rationale of our workshops was to generate a range of possible solutions that would address issues of resource management and public use at the refuge. In 2008 and 2009, we held workshops with various biological and public use experts from governmental and other organizations in discussing the vision, goals, objectives, strategies, and consequences at the heart of this plan.

The input we obtained from our public meetings, newsletters, and workshops has been used to prepare this CCP, which was released for 30 days of public review and comment between October 4, 2010 and November 3, 2010. During that period, we held an additional public meeting on October 20, 2010 to give the public opportunity to comment. We received a total of 37 written, oral, and email comments that were reviewed and considered for the final CCP.

Thomas Bonetti, Planning Team Leader
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 5
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589
northeastplanning@fws.gov

List of Preparers

Core Planning Team

Thomas Bonetti, Senior Refuge Planner and Planning Team Leader

Affiliation: USFWS Region 5 Regional Office
Education: B.S. Biology, M.S. Recreation Administration
Experience: USFWS, Region 5 Refuge Planner 1998-present
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Contribution: Participated completely in the planning and writing of CCP.

Thomas Roster, Refuge Manager

Affiliation: Iroquois NWR
Education: B.S. Wildlife Management
Experience: Managed natural resources and public uses on national wildlife refuges for over 20 years.
Contribution: Participated completely in the planning and writing of CCP.

Dawn Washington, Supervisory Wildlife Refuge Specialist

Affiliation: Iroquois NWR
Education: B.S. Forest Resources Management and Wildlife Science, M.S. Forestry
Experience: 10+ years managing natural resources and public uses on National Wildlife Refuges.
Contribution: Participated completely in the writing of CCP.

Paul Hess, Wildlife Biologist

Affiliation: Iroquois NWR
Education: B.S. Environmental and Forest Biology
Experience: Wildlife Biologist, USFWS, Iroquois NWR for 9 years
Fish and Wildlife Technician, NYSDEC for 10 years
Contribution: Participated in the writing of CCP.

Tuneeshaw Jepsen, Biological Science Technician

Affiliation: Iroquois NWR
Education: B.A. in Environmental Science
Experience: Biological Technician Iroquois NWR January 2008-present
Contribution: Assisted with writing chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Kelly Chase, Supervisory Wildlife Refuge Specialist Title, former

Affiliation: Iroquois NWR
Education: B.S. Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism
Experience: 8+ years experience working on national wildlife refuges
Contribution: Participated in planning team, writing, and reviewing.

Dorothy Gerhart, Visitor Services Manager

Affiliation: Iroquois NWR
Education: B.S. Plant Biology
Experience: Outdoor Recreation Planner Iroquois NWR since 1991
National Park Service 1976-1991
Contribution: Wrote Visitor Services section of CCP. Prepared public outreach material including Web site updates, CCP newsletter articles, and database.

Heidi Kennedy

Affiliation: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 8 Wildlife
Education: B.SC Pure and Applied Ecology, M.S. Wildlife Biology
Experience: Biologist for NYSDEC Region 8
Contribution: Participated on the core planning team.

Jenny Landry

Affiliation: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 8 Wildlife
Experience: Biologist for NYSDEC Region 8
Contribution: Participated on the core planning team.

Assistance from Other Service Personnel

Sue McMahon, Lamar Gore, Tony Leger

Cynthia White, STEP Assistant Outreach Coordinator

Affiliation: Region 5 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Education: B.S. Environmental Earth Science, M.R.P. Regional Planning
Experience: Region 5 STEP program since August 2009
Contribution: Assisted with writing and editing CCP

Teri Neyhart, Senior Asset Management Coordinator

Affiliation: Region 5 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Education: B.S. Civil Engineering, M.S. Structural Engineering
Experience: 15 Years as Engineer for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Contribution: Compiling RONS and SAMMS

John Wilson, Regional Historic Preservation Officer,

Affiliation: Region 5 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Education: M.A. Anthropology
Experience: Approximately 23 years at Service
Contribution: Edited text of Historical and Cultural Resources section of CCP.

Assistance from Other Partners

Oliver Van Den Ende, Environmental Scientist

Affiliation: Dynamac Corporation

Education: B.S. Marine Biology, M.S. Zoology

Experience: Environmental Scientist Dynamac October 2005-present
Research Support Scientist Bionetics Corporation 1995-2005

Contribution: Contracted Project Manager for chapter 4 of the CCP.

Phone: 301-417-6134