

*John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan*  
**Pre-planning Activities, Agency and Public Scoping,  
And, Summary of Issues**

**July 2010**

**Introduction**

The following describes the agency and public scoping process and how others were engaged in developing issues for the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). First, it details pre-planning activities and our efforts to encourage involvement of the public and conservation partners: other federal and state agencies, federally recognized tribes, county and municipal officials, civic groups, non-governmental conservation and education organizations, and user groups. It then summarizes the comments of those attending agency and public scoping meetings or those providing written comment by June 11, 2010, within the 30-day period for public review on issues for consideration at the refuge.

This summary does not detail the dozens of meetings, events, and informal discussions the refuge manager and staff have had since January 2010 where the CCP was a topic of conversation. Those involved a wide range of audiences, including conservation groups, elected officials or their staffs, educators, refuge visitors, Friends of Heinz Refuge members, and other interested individuals. During those discussions, the refuge manager and his staff would provide an update on CCP progress and encourage comments and participation.

**Chronological Summary of CCP Pre-planning and Scoping Process**

Our refuge planning staff began formally on January 21, 2010 during a conference call between refuge staff, regional office staff, and contractors. One of the major outcomes of the meeting was a timetable for accomplishing the major steps in the planning process and determining when and how we should involve others. At this time, the agency scoping meeting was tentatively scheduled for March 31, 2010 and the public scoping meeting tentatively between May 4 to May 6, 2010.

February 2010:

Our pre-planning activities in February included submission of the NOI to the Regional Director, development of a draft communications plan, and finalizing the contact database for notification of the CCP and invitation to the agency scoping meeting. Invitations to the scoping meeting were sent to 55 Federal and state contacts, elected officials, and 13 federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes contacts associated with Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey.

On February 3, 2010 refuge staff met with the contractor to identify data needs, obtain input on the contact database and review the CCP process

On February 18, 2010 refuge staff, regional staff, and the contractor reviewed the agency scoping meeting agenda, meeting logistics, and determined the display maps and presentation materials needed for the meeting. We also discussed finalization of maps to show refuge boundaries, in-holdings, and utility right-of-ways.

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On February 20, 2010 the refuge manager sent letter invitations to the agency scoping meeting with attachments including the meeting time and location, agenda, and guidance on the refuge establishment authority, and the USFWS mission and policy that guides the CCP planning process.

March 2010:

Our pre-planning and scoping activities in March included coordination with the Delaware Nation on participation in the CCP process; holding the agency scoping meeting on March 31, 2010; development, and setting the date for the public scoping meeting for May 11, 2010.

March 23, 2010 refuge staff, regional staff, and the contractor reviewed and commented on the agency scoping meeting presentation, meeting logistics, and display maps and handouts to be provided at the meeting.

March 29, 2010 refuge staff, regional staff, and the contractor met at the Cusano Center to finalize the draft vision and goals, finalize meeting power point presentations, and set the date of May 11, 2010 for public scoping meetings during the afternoon and evening.

The agency scoping meeting was held on Wednesday, March 31, 2010 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Cusano Environmental Education Center and included at total 26 attendees including the JHNWR staff and the core planning team. The list of attendees is attached and a summary of comments from the Federal agencies Representative is provided below. The meeting was an open house format with brief presentations on the CCP process and refuge status, and displays of the refuge context, habitat management units, visitor services and facilities, and handouts on the draft vision and goals.

April 2010:

Our scoping activities in April included notification of the initiation of the CCP for JHNWR in the May 7, 2010 Federal Register (Vol. 75, No. 88).

April 20, 2010 refuge staff, regional staff, and the contractor reviewed and commented on the agency scoping meeting presentation, meeting logistics, and display maps and handouts to be provided at the public scoping meeting.

The press release announcing the scoping meeting and requesting public input was distributed to major media outlets on April 22, 2010.

May 2010:

Our scoping activities in May included two public scoping meetings which were held at the Cusano Environmental Education Center on May 11, 2010 from 2:00-4:00 PM and from 6:30 – 8:30 PM.

The meetings included at total of 18 attendees, including JHNWR staff, and the core planning team. The list of attendees is attached and a summary of comments from the attendees and those providing comments by June 11, 2010 is provided below. The meeting was an open house format with brief presentations on the CCP process and refuge status, and displays of the refuge context, habitat management units, visitor services and facilities, the past and planned marsh restoration projects, and handouts on the draft vision and goals.

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June 2010

Our scoping activities in June included summarizing comments from the public scoping meeting and other written comments submitted before the end of the comment period of June 11, 2010.

June 21, 2010 refuge staff, regional staff, and the contractor discussed the major issues identified in the public scoping meeting, decided on a format for summarizing the scoping comments, follow up with the education community, and discussed the content and deadlines for newsletter. The core planning team also determined that the main objectives of meeting with USFWS hydrologist, Larry Brannaka, will be to assist in evaluating hydrology issues such as control of water in the impoundment, stormwater flowing onto the property from offsite sources, and monitoring needs for climate change and water management.

On June 29<sup>th</sup> the refuge staff, contractor, and Tinicum Township Engineer, Herb McCombie, met with USFWS hydrologist, Larry Brannaka, to review hydrology issues at the refuge, and natural and man-made drainage south of the refuge that connects with or influences stormwater flowing onto the property, and flooding, tidal, and drainage issues in Tinicum Township. On June 30<sup>th</sup> the refuge staff, contractor, and Larry Brannaka discussed the hydrology data needs for evaluating impoundment management options and monitoring needs for climate change and water management.

**Summary of Issues Identified During the Agency and Public Scoping Process**

During the agency and public coping process, the core planning team members, refuge staff, and state and federal agency staff identified numerous issues that generally can be categorized within the following broad issues categories of for consideration in the planning process.

The Service will continue to refine this list of issues as comments are received to determine significant issues to be addressed in the CCP. The John Heinz Wildlife Staff welcomes continued participation of organizations and the public and addition opportunity for public comment will be provided in the upcoming months for completion of the draft CCP.

**1. Landscape Scale/Ecosystem-wide Issues (e.g. climate change, land protection, water quality)**

Agency Scoping Comments

1. The refuge should seek to improve regional connectivity with nearby wildlife habitats and corridors. The refuge can play a leadership role in promoting connectivity of wildlife habitat and good stewardship throughout the region. (PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
2. The refuge should reach out to other open space landowners in the region (i.e. upstream) and help educate them on the invasive species concerns and other threats to the refuge. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)

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**1. Landscape Scale/Ecosystem-wide Issues (continued)**

Agency Scoping Comments (continued)

3. Sea level rise and climate change may cause changes in ecological function and this should be included in restoration planning. Examples include planning for sea level rise and marsh inland migration in adjacent upland areas and creating more islands in current tidal marsh to mitigate losses due to rising water elevations. (PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
4. The refuge should evaluate if there are animals missing from the landscape that would help to maintain the ecological integrity of the marsh and adjacent habitat and consider re-introduction of these species. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
5. The refuge should determine if the existing data show that the refuge is a significant and essential resource or habitat for any particular species, for example, regionally endangered species such as the red knot and red bellied turtle. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
6. The Philadelphia Airport is a significant regional resource and management actions at the refuge must consider potential effects to the property and the flying public. An early 1980's Penn State University study on wildlife impacts on the airport provides information on this topic and should be reviewed to determine if the study is still relevant. (FAA)
7. Organic loading and pathogens are gaining additional importance as measures of sewage treatment facility impacts and regional water quality. The refuge should gather information on these and other water quality issues and the potential impact on wildlife and recreational programs within the refuge. (PA DEP)
8. There was general concern about the Folcroft and Clearfield landfills and general agreement that additional data is needed to evaluate long-term options. (US EPA)
9. The refuge can play a significant regional role in research and education on freshwater tidal marsh and monitoring for effects of climate change, if any. Further research should include baseline and continued monitoring on species location and utilization of the refuge as well as changes in the plant communities and hydrology.
10. The existing SLAMM model should be re-run with more detailed topography to determine what areas of the refuge and surroundings will be affected by sea level rise. (NOAA; USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Service; USFWS Heinz NWR)
11. The refuge should become a focal point for coordination of conservation groups and environmental educators working in the region by promoting partnerships and sharing of information and experience on wildlife management, fresh water tidal wetlands, and the successes and failures of restoration projects. (PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
12. More documentation on wildlife uses of the refuge will further the current understanding the refuge's role in the region. (NOAA; USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Service; USFWS Heinz NWR)

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**1. Landscape Scale/Ecosystem-wide Issues (continued)**

Agency Scoping Comments (continued)

13. The refuge should track its contribution to the economy in terms of “green” jobs (such as conservation professionals, laborers, and internships) and can encourage public involvement and economic value through education and technical training for “green” jobs. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Service)
14. Consider additional streams such as Hermesprota Creek, Muckinipattis Creek, and other direct drainages to Tinicum Marsh and Darby Creek at, or immediately adjacent to the refuge. (PA DEP)

Public Scoping Comments

15. Climate change is among the most “significant problems” affecting plants and animals today, and thus the potential impacts of climate change should be a central consideration in the development of refuge CCPs under provisions of the Refuge Improvement Act. The CCP should initiate a process to define and minimize any foreseeable and manageable stressors impacting wildlife, their health, and their habitats. The CCP should address climate change through goals, objectives, and strategies related to inventory and monitoring, environmental education, and assessing ongoing environmental threats. This includes the following specific recommendations regarding threats posed by climate change and other landscape wide or regional issues:
  - a. The refuge vision should acknowledge the important role that climate change will play in shaping the future conditions of John Heinz NWR and that the Refuge should strive to promote ecosystem resiliency. Kenai National Wildlife Refuge’s vision statement, in seeking to “serve as an anchor for biodiversity on the Kenai Peninsula despite global climate change, increasing development, and competing demands for Refuge resources,” could serve as an example for John Heinz NWR.
  - b. In addition to describing refuge resources and uses, we recommend incorporating information on how climatic changes could affect them. In particular, the CCP should describe potential impacts to priority species (e.g., migratory waterfowl) and their habitats (e.g., freshwater tidal marsh). Anticipating resource changes is an important part of the planning exercise, as it will help identify the need for management action.
  - c. The climatic conditions of the area play an important part in ecosystem processes, and the CCP should consider current and historic temperature and precipitation, observed trends, and projected future conditions.

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**1. Landscape Scale/Ecosystem-wide Issues (continued)**

Public Scoping Comments (continued)

- d. The Refuge System, including John Heinz NWR, should develop a comprehensive research and monitoring program to function as an early warning system for climate-induced changes. Monitoring efforts should track changes in biological resources, such as population size and habitat relationships of indicator wildlife species.
  - e. There is also a need for monitoring changes in the physical resources of the Refuge, as well as climate variables themselves. Factors to consider monitoring include temperature and precipitation, water levels, salinity of water resources, and erosion and sedimentation. Models generate projections of many of these factors, but it is important that data continue to be recorded to assess the accuracy of those models and contribute to the development of more refined models in the future.
  - f. A collaborative program on climate change throughout the region should be established to best equip stakeholders to discern changes in abundance or distribution of indicator species. Because regional data accumulation and analysis is requisite, the FWS should coordinate efforts with other federal agencies, state agencies, conservation organizations, universities, local landowners, and climate change scientists. Such coordinated studies and monitoring data will be of benefit for understanding and appropriately responding to changes throughout the region.
  - g. The CCP should identify and describe specific indicators that will be monitored, explain the reason for selecting these indicators, describe strategies for how to monitor them, and tie monitoring information to management actions. Only through careful and thorough monitoring can the Refuge System be prepared to detect changes and respond using the principles of adaptive management.
  - h. The FWS is well positioned to educate and inform the visiting public about the climate-driven changes impacting the Refuge and its wildlife, and measures the public can take to help protect them. The FWS should develop brochures, interpretive panels, websites, and educational programs that address the vulnerabilities of refuge resources to climate change.
16. Refuge staff should inventory refuge water rights and their quantity and quality, document the types and uses of the rights, determine whether those rights are sufficient to meet the purposes of the Refuge, and describe threats to water quantity and quality. This information will help staff to identify water needs that must be met and to anticipate potential problems in water management.

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**2. Biological Program Issues (e.g. management, restoration, monitoring, inventories, research)**

Agency Scoping Comments

1. Refuge wildlife management objectives should include additional recognition and emphasis on the role of tidal marsh habitat utilization for cover, breeding and nursery function for fish species. In particular, it was noted that smaller channels and shallow water in tidal marsh are important refuge for small fish and sensitive plants. (NOAA; PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
2. Additional maps are needed for evaluating the next restoration priorities including: areas restored, areas planned for restoration or marsh expansion, areas of marsh habitat enhanced (phragmites treatment), and potential tidal restoration areas including fill removal and underwater fill in lagoon areas. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
3. It was suggested that restoration projects include transition areas designed to accommodate species migration inland, if needed, due to the sea level rise. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
4. The refuge should consider restoration and or management of a portion of the impoundment or the entire impoundment as a tidal wetland. Options could include managing it as a “leaky” impoundment. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
5. Species of concern should include plant species, especially state listed species, which will reflect target plant communities and could be used in monitoring and assessment of restoration and management efforts. (DCNR Ecological Services)
6. Invasive species management should consider animal and insect species in addition to plant species. The refuge currently has a trapping program for feral cats. (DCNR Forestry)
7. The primary challenge on the refuge is to control invasive plants and maintain restored areas as well as prevent new introductions. Restoration in highly disturbed areas with established invasive plants will require additional effort to select native plant species that are resilient and competitive with invasive plants. (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services)
8. Restoration projects in fill areas should consider the highly variable nature of the soil substrate, its dynamic hydrology, and should plan for adaptive construction, with long-term monitoring and management. (PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
9. Forest habitats are important for refuge wildlife and there is need for forest health inventory and assessment, management of invasive species and deer population, and to provide structural diversity. (DCNR Forestry)

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**2. Biological Program Issues (continued)**

Agency Scoping Comments (continued)

10. The refuge could have more ambitious goals for refuge tidal marsh restoration and look beyond its boundaries such as lower Darby Creek or other disconnected properties that have potential for restoration as a freshwater tidal wetland. (NOAA)
11. Monitoring and management should be conducted from an ecosystem function (including hydrology) and ecological services context in addition to ecological integrity. The refuge should consider establishing success criteria for tidal marsh and other habitat. (NOAA)
12. Baseline datasets are needed on function and dynamics of tidal marsh and continued monitoring to evaluate tidal marsh integrity. This includes information on tidal marsh hydrology such as channel order, diversity, function, and drainage density. (NOAA)
13. How are completed restoration projects being evaluated and what has been learned from monitoring? More scientific datasets are needed to understand marsh dynamics, for example, is the expansion of wild rice due to storm events disturbing the seed bank or other reasons? (NOAA; USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
14. The Coastal Program is funded to conduct modeling and monitoring for climate change assessment and the refuge should coordinate with them. (PA DEP)
15. Deer management program needs to address at what point management actions are required, what is the prescribed management action, and what effect is it expected to have, including the neighboring properties. (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services)

Public Scoping Comments

16. In addition to the hundreds of species using Tinicum, the CCP should consider acknowledging the thousands of species of insects, plants, microbes, and vertebrates that utilize the refuge and help sustain the various habitats. The Refuge can contribute to the understanding of current signs of ecological problems such as declining bee, frog, and bat populations by data collection, population census, and research activities. The lessons learned about the interaction of the flora, the insects, the microbes and other organisms will help increase conservation success of both target species and other organisms.
17. The refuge could benefit from a buffer around the perimeter, although it will never become a fully functioning ecosystem due to its size and setting. However, the successful bald eagle pair in residence is proof of the wildlife value of the refuge.

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**3. Public Use Programs (e.g. range or quality of programs, access, conflicts, impacts)**

Agency Scoping Comments

1. The refuge should gather and evaluate data on areas of the refuge that currently receive the highest public use. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
2. The refuge should determine public use policies for restoration areas and evaluate the value and compatibility of public access to these areas for interpretation. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
3. The potential opposition to deer management plans provides a good opportunity to educate the public on the effects of deer on habitat quality and the need for deer management. (DCNR Forestry)
4. More public awareness and education are needed about the need for active management in a fragmented landscape and about how the refuge actively manages for wildlife in addition to protection and conservation. This will help to build long-term support and increase public understanding for management decisions. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
5. The refuge is in the position to take a leadership role in research and education on freshwater tidal marsh ecosystems, their restoration, and monitoring related to the effects of climate change, if any. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services; NOAA; PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
6. The refuge is in the position to take a leadership role in promoting connectivity of wildlife habitat and good stewardship throughout the region. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services; NOAA; PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
7. Economic value of the refuge and the benefits to the local community should be part of the public education program. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services; PA DEP)
8. The rarity of tidal fresh water wetlands and the importance of the refuge as stopover or migratory habitat are the chief values of the refuge and this should be emphasized in the education and interpretation programs. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
9. The refuge should coordinate, and potentially partner with Philadelphia City Parks to develop educational and interpretative programs tailored to an urban audience. This could include classroom programs such as seeds/trees to parks projects. (DCNR Forestry)
10. The refuge can be an important distribution point for locally relevant information on invasive plants and insects, particularly on urban forestry issues such as the spread of insects via firewood and deer management. The refuge can also serve as a resource to help the public find and contact other organizations and specialists, educate conservation professionals, and distribute existing stewardship materials from conservation organizations. (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services)

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**3. Public Use Programs (continued)**

Agency Scoping Comments (continued)

11. As outreach is conducted to local communities the refuge should be aware of and consider additional environmental concerns of communities beyond conservation. (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services)
12. Outreach and partnership with other organizations can be used to foster stewardship with events such as Arbor Day tree giveaways, and workshops on schoolyard rain gardens and backyard habitats. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
13. Opportunities for historic programs at the refuge that can be tied in with the Philadelphia region's history including Native American settlement, marsh development, the long history of conservation in Philadelphia region, as well as the cultural history of changing attitudes and uses of the marshlands. The refuge can link to the Cultural Heritage Trail along Route 291 proposed by Delaware County with signage and improved access. (SHPO)
14. If there are species that once utilized the refuge, but are no longer present, these species can be part of the historic interpretation and also helps to deliver an important conservation message. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
15. Exhibits such as dugout canoes will help in relating the history to visitors. Additional research is needed to determine the details and facts for educational and interpretive programs. The historic programs will help reach a different and wider audience and can be used to introduce them to conservation and stewardship values. (SHPO)

Public Scoping Comments

16. Education and outreach programs should be designed with the electronic generation in mind, with interactive and multi-media displays and offsite education such as eagle cam and videos on Goggle Earth. The younger generation knows how to use this media and is already using various outlets for this media.
17. The refuge should consider partnering with neighboring landowners on the far side of Cobbs Creek to plant and maintain a buffer of trees deep enough to be a good visual screen and offer sanctuary to wildlife. The buffers should consist of appropriate native plants.
18. The refuge is limited by it's size and setting within an urban area, but offers the public a good introduction to national wildlife refuges, an opportunity to experience nature and a valuable resource for environmental education. As such the refuge should consider focusing on the needs of the areas youth and families and expanding its use as a venue for conservation events and meetings of a variety of conservation organizations.

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**3. Public Use Programs (continued)**

Public Scoping Comments (continued)

19. Environmental education and reconnection with the outdoors could greatly benefit youth in the Philadelphia area, which contributes to social stability.
20. The refuge should also consider highlighting the Lenni-Lenape history of the site and region, focusing on the conservation values of Native American culture and aide in restoring the nation's balance in regard to nature. This could include developing a permanent Native American display, and hosting an on-going series of Lenni-Lenape events and lectures. The grounded and balanced way of life of the Native American culture meshes nicely with the conservation message of the refuge and the needs of the Nation.
21. The refuge support and implement recommendations for improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the refuge cited in the 2007 report "Improving Pedestrian and Bicycle Links Between the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge and the Surrounding Communities". This includes the following specific benefits consistent with wildlife dependent recreation and environmental education.
  - a. Provides pedestrian and bicycle friendly links from the JHNWR to businesses, including the Philadelphia International Airport, and others within the neighborhoods of southwest Philadelphia and eastern Delaware County.
  - b. Provides public access points to both the Darby and Cobbs Creeks allowing for new opportunities for boating and nature study.
  - c. Provides a safe and appropriate venue for recreational activities such as bicycling, walking, dog walking and running for residents of the adjacent communities of Tinicum, Eastwick, Darby, Folcroft, Norwood, Prospect Park and Eddystone.
  - d. Responds to the need for opportunities for environmental education projects for schools, job training programs and youth groups.
  - e. Promotes physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.
  - f. Gives citizens the choice to either walk or bike to various village centers, reducing the need to drive.
  - g. Encourages physical activity to improve the health and welfare of users of the Wildlife Refuge. (Clean Air Council)
22. There is a need for more EE support at John Heinz. Though Widener Partnership Charter School (WPCS) teachers have been trained in EE and the use of JHNWR as a resource to support their classroom teaching, they need additional help when bringing the children there on field trips. There are typically two teachers per 40-45 children and, in order to do any sort of substantive outdoor lesson, there is a desperate need for volunteers to supplement the EE staff. A systematic approach to volunteers, either through the Friends group or through the FWS staff, would greatly enhance the sorts of EE experiences that teachers could provide for their students as they investigate the wildlife and wetlands of JHNWR.

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23. Curriculum development that is connected to state standards and locally used resources like FOSS and STC kits would entice more teachers and schools to visit JHNWR. Lesson plans, curricular support, and loan boxes are already part of the offerings at JHNWR; building upon what is already there would enhance offerings and bring in more children and their teachers throughout the school year.
24. The refuge should consider the following quote from the Belgrade Charter, 1976, in development and implementation of environmental education programs. “The goal of environmental education is to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.”

**4. Other Refuge Issues (e.g. conflicts, impacts, “not” appropriate uses/activities)**

Agency Scoping Comments

1. The potential for Native American and colonial historic sites at the refuge is high given the historic landscape and location of the refuge and therefore a background historical review should be conducted to identify areas for further archeological evaluation. The EIS for the Philadelphia Airport contains some of this information. This information can also be used for interpretive programs at the refuge. (SHPO)
2. Although there was a general consensus that the refuge should improve its connection with public transit and bicycle trails, and potentially provide additional access points, it was recognized that increased usage at some point will cause conflicts with goals and exceed the capacity to support visitors. (US EPA; PA DEP)
3. The Philadelphia Airport, Route 95, and the rail are potentially in conflict with wildlife, and additional data should be gathered to identify management options. (FAA; PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
4. The project does not appear to endanger archeological sites of interest to the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe. (Stockbridge-Munsee Tribal Preservation Office)

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**5. Facilities, Infrastructure, Staffing Issues (e.g. safety, suitability, accessibility, additional needs)**

Agency Scoping Comments

1. Impoundment Issues include (1) the existing infrastructure and high water conditions limit the refuge's ability to create tidal mud flats and manage habitat for migratory birds, (2) the value of continued habitat manipulation versus value as restoration of partial or complete tidal connection needs to be evaluated, and (3) sea level rise and additional maintenance and modification of the existing dikes and water level controls needs to be considered in planning. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services; USFWS Heinz NWR).
2. Improvements are needed for the impoundment water control gates and other water control structures to provide management options that rely on controlling water elevations. (USFWS Heinz NWR)
3. The refuge has broad and complex goals and objectives and there are concerns if there are enough staff resources to implement priority programs. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
4. The refuge should consider the potential for and compatibility of additional trails or public access to the refuge including Rt. 420, Folcroft landfill, Eastwick train station, and connections with bicycle paths and adjoining neighborhoods. (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services; PA DEP; DCNR Parks; USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
5. Additional signage directing visitors to the refuge should be included along proposed bicycle trails, East Coast greenway, Darby Creek Greenway, and Cultural Heritage Trail. (PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport; USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)

Public Scoping Comments

6. The refuge should consider acquiring land west of Bartram Avenue and East of Bartram Avenue. This land is undeveloped and, with a new trail, could provide convenient access from the Eastwick SEPTA regional rail station. It would also allow the land to be managed naturally and preserve a buffer from the developed city and airport. The Refuge should consider these and other recommendations of the Heinz Refuge Access Study developed by the Clean Air Council with Campbell Thomas and Company.
7. The Refuge should consider a public relations person or firm.
8. The Refuge should consider acquisition of the baseball fields along the Muckinapatis or installation of facilities and signage for use as an outdoor classroom to educate residents and recreational community about the refuge. This will reach a different and wider audience through tournaments held at the ball fields.

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9. The refuge should consider rebuilding the fishing pier that was located off of Route 420. The fishing pier provided access for the disabled and safe access for families with sometimes three generations enjoying the spot.
10. The refuge plans discussed at the scoping meeting are directed at the right areas, however I am concerned about whether the funding is adequate for long term success and meeting the refuge vision.
11. The refuge should consider supporting and implementing recommendations for improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the refuge in the 2007 report “Improving Pedestrian and Bicycle Links Between the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge and the Surrounding Communities”. This includes the recommendations improving public access via physical improvements and through better information systems. Proposed physical improvements include:
  - a. A grade separate crossing underneath the 84th Street Bridge.
  - b. Pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements along PA Route 420, including new side paths linking to existing sidewalks, giving access to the western entrance to John Heinz NWR. These improvements would include safe crossings of Route 420 and the ramps at the I-95 interchange.
  - c. A new grade-separated crossing utilizing the abandoned right-of-way of the former Chester Short Line Trolley that passes underneath Route 420 and I-95.
  - d. An off-road trail from the SEPTA Eastwick station to the John Heinz NWR eastern entrance at 86th St. and Lindbergh Blvd.
  - e. Improved information systems such as way finding signage for walkers, hikers and bikers, as well as motorists and transit riders.

**6. Community Relations/Outreach/Local Economy (e.g. tourism, quality of life, local impact)**

Agency Scoping Comments

1. Additional trails and ways of improving neighborhood access to the refuge were suggested including Rt. 420, Folcroft landfill, Eastwick train station, and connections with bicycle paths and adjoining neighborhoods. (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services; PA DEP; DCNR Parks; USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
2. Agency participants had a number of suggestions for potential partners who could improve outreach and marketing as follows:
  - a. Philadelphia City parks: coordination and marketing of events
  - b. National Park Service: tie in with historic programs, shuttle service
  - c. SEPTA and Airport: Displays and Exhibits
  - d. Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau: marketing of events
  - e. Brandywine Conference and Visitors Bureau: marketing of events

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(DCNR Parks, FAA, PA DEP, PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)

3. Several participants mentioned that the refuge has potential for eco-tourism and it is possible a concession for boat rentals may be compatible. (USFWS Heinz NWR)
4. The participants suggested a number of potential partners who would compliment the public use programs including: (PA DEP; SHPO; PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
  - a. Philadelphia City Parks: education, coordination and marketing events,
  - b. National Park Service (tie in with historic programs)
  - c. East Coast Greenway
  - d. Ft. Mifflin National Historic Landmark

Public Scoping Comments

5. The refuge should consider supporting and implementing the recommendations for improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the refuge in the 2007 report “Improving Pedestrian and Bicycle Links Between the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge and the Surrounding Communities”. These recommendation will benefit the surrounding community and business by:
  - a. Providing a connection for communities north of I-95 to the Delaware River waterfront and its numerous amenities,
  - a. Strengthening existing residential neighborhoods in Tinicum Township and other townships north of Darby Creek,
  - b. Providing a safe, car-free way to link with communities north of Interstate I-95 and centers of employment to the south, such as the Philadelphia International Airport and elsewhere in Tinicum Township, and
  - c. Improving access to and visibility of nearby businesses.
6. The refuge should consider supporting the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin Trail system. This trail system links many significant historic sites including: Fort Mifflin, Bartram’s Garden and the Blue Bell Inn. Increased public access and awareness of these important historic resources encourages historic resource conservation efforts.

*John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan*  
**Pre-planning Activities, Agency and Public Scoping,  
And, Summary of Issues**

**7. Other Service Programs, Other Agencies, and Partner Coordination**

Agency Scoping Comments

1. The refuge should seek to encourage visitors to use regional public transportation to reach the refuge and the refuge should continue to support the efforts of the other organizations that promote regional bicycle trails and greenways. There are opportunities to partner with SEPTA, Philadelphia Airport, regional bicycle organizations, and the Federal Highway Administration to encourage travelers to visit and learn about the refuge. These opportunities include:
  - a. Partner with SEPTA to include a display at the Eastwick Station and market the refuge as a destination. Future planning should consider improving access and connection between the Eastwick Station and the refuge. (USFWS Del. Bay Ecological Services)
  - b. Partner with the Philadelphia Airport on displaying a refuge exhibit, provide viewing areas, and encourage shuttles from the airport and nearby hotels. There is currently a Green Gardens project at the airport for conservation exhibits. (FAA)
  - c. Partner with the Federal Highway Administration and PENNDOT to determine if there is opportunity for improved management of invasive species and right of way adjacent to refuge and the potential for additional signage and creation of viewing areas. (USFWS Heinz NWR; PAQ for PennDOT/PHL Airport)
2. The participants suggested a number of partners with similar habitat and management challenges (NOAA; DCNR Forestry):
  - Little Tinicum Island
  - Upper and Lower Darby Creek Mitigation Areas
  - Hamilton marshes near Trenton, NJ

Public Scoping Comments

3. The Geography Department of West Chester University may be interested in providing their support including student volunteers for activities and summer camp. The refuge can contact Joan Welch, Department Chair or Joy Fritschle.
4. The refuge should consider partnering with regional parks and conservation groups to cross-market events and raise the visibility and viability of the refuge as an attractive venue to hold conservation-oriented gatherings.