

## **Sunkhaze Meadows NWR and Carlton Pond WPA Refuge Vision**

The planning team developed the following vision statement to provide a guiding philosophy and sense of purpose in the CCP.

*Sunkhaze Meadows NWR and Carlton Pond WPA are a tapestry of natural lands within central Maine.*

*The Sunkhaze Meadows Unit supports an expansive, intact peat bog system. The free-flowing Sunkhaze Stream and its tributaries meander through diverse habitats including raised peat domes, grassy wet meadows, and floodplain forests before joining the restored Penobscot River. Mature upland forests surround the wetlands, protecting this unspoiled landscape for future generations of plants, animals, and people.*

*Bobolink and sedge wren sing and woodcock dance in the large contiguous grassland and deer overwinter in the forest mosaic comprising the Benton Unit. Wood turtles and rare mussels are protected by the wide, shaded riparian forests of the Sandy Stream Unit.*

*Carlton Pond WPA is a beautiful wetland jewel amidst a pastoral landscape. Rare black terns nest in the emergent marsh, while bald eagles, bitterns, and marsh wrens forage amid the shallow open waters and emergent pickerelweed and wild rice.*

*Visitors experience wildness and find respite within nature throughout the year. In spring, birders observe migratory waterfowl and songbirds. Wildlife enthusiasts and anglers enjoy fishing, paddling and hiking throughout summer. Hunters spend crisp autumn mornings stalking their prey. In winter, people snowshoe and ski through the silent woods. Through our close partnerships and programs, visitors gain further appreciation of conservation and are inspired stewards of nature.*

## Refuge Goals

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he planning team developed these goals after considering the vision statement, the purposes for establishing the refuge, the missions of the Service and the Refuge System, and the mandates, plans, and conservation initiatives noted above. These goals are intentionally broad, descriptive statements of purpose. They highlight elements that we will emphasize in its future management.

- Goal 1. Sunkhaze Meadows Biological Management. Promote the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of Sunkhaze Meadows NWR wetland, forest, and aquatic habitats to protect water quality and sustain native rare plants, natural communities, and wildlife, including species of conservation concern.
- Goal 2. Carlton Pond WPA Biological Management. Provide open water and emergent wetland habitat at Carlton Pond WPA to sustain a diversity of wildlife, including waterfowl and species of conservation concern.
- Goal 3. Benton and Sandy Stream Biological Management. Promote grassland and shrubland habitat at Benton and Sandy Stream Units to sustain a diversity of wildlife, including species of conservation concern.
- Goal 4. Sunkhaze Meadows Public Use. Provide for a variety of experiences to allow visitors, students and nearby neighbors to enjoy the wetlands, woods and wildlife of the Sunkhaze Meadows Unit, and thereby encourage the development of their environmental awareness, ethics and stewardship.
- Goal 5. Carlton Pond WPA Public Use. Promote enjoyment and environmental stewardship by engaging visitors, students, and nearby residents to experience the wetlands, woods, and wildlife at Carlton Pond WPA.
- Goal 6. Benton and Sandy Stream Units Public Use. Promote enjoyment and environmental stewardship by engaging visitors, students, and nearby residents to experience the wetlands, woods, grasslands, and wildlife at Benton and Sandy Stream Units.
- Goal 7. Partnership Coordination. Communicate and collaborate with local communities, Federal and State agencies, local and Tribal representatives, and other organizations throughout Maine and the region to further the purposes of the refuge and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.