

Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Greetings from the refuge!

We are pleased to announce the release of our final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (refuge). We thank everyone who provided comments and input on our draft CCP/ Environmental Assessment (EA) released in September 2010. These comments provided us with valuable information for preparing our final document.

The CCP is our 15-year management plan for this refuge.

It furthers the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, provides direction to achieve the purposes, vision, and goals of the refuge, and contributes to state and regional conservation plans. Implementing the plan will enable us to fulfill the refuge's important role in conserving and managing wildlife resources.

You may view or download the final CCP from our website at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/SupawnaMeadows/ccphome.html>.



Northern Diamondback Terrapin

USFWS

You may also obtain a print copy or CD-ROM version of the CCP by contacting the refuge headquarters (see contact information below).

Background

The Service acquired Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in 1971 with the purpose to conserve and protect wetlands and fish and wildlife resources. Refuge habitats include tidal waters and marsh, grassland, shrubland, and forest habitats on 3,016 acres.

Public Comment on Draft Plan

We greatly appreciated the public interest and involvement in our planning effort, and benefited from the discussions during public meetings.

We released the draft CCP/EA for public comment from September 27, 2010 to October 26, 2010. We also held afternoon and evening public meetings on October 12, 2010 in Pennsville, New Jersey.

We received 11 sets of comments on the draft CCP, both written and oral, during the comment period. Comments covered a wide range of topics including our hunting program, fishing access, and new facilities and infrastructure. Additionally, responses from several State agencies emphasized coordination between agencies.

We evaluated all substantive comments received during the comment period, and include our responses to them as appendix H, "Summary and Response to Public Comments," in the final CCP.



Marsh habitat

USFWS



Great blue heron

Steve Hillebrand



Lighthouse

Highlights of the CCP

The final CCP is based on alternative B, which we had identified as the Service-preferred alternative in the draft CCP/EA.

However, we made a few changes in response to public comments.

Changes included in the final plan:

1. We inserted language discussing the potential for including a black bear hunt if state regulations are changed and if there is sufficient interest to accommodate hunting this species at Supawna Meadows NWR (see General Refuge Management).
2. We added a paragraph stating that, although we are not proposing

to open the refuge to turkey hunting at this time, we are willing to further discuss opening the refuge to spring turkey season with assistance from the state. (see General Refuge Management).

3. We inserted language clarifying why we are changing hunting safety zones and removing hunting closure signs (see goal 4, objective 4.1).

4. We added a Finding of Appropriateness to appendix B for the release of *Rhynoncomimus latipes* weevil for the biological control of mile-a-minute weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum*).

5. We corrected omissions in appendix A.

6. We corrected all formatting and typographical errors that were brought to our attention.

The Regional Director's decision to adopt the plan, including the changes below, is documented in appendix I, "Finding of No Significant Impact," of the final CCP.

We believe the final CCP represents the array of management actions that best work towards achieving our vision and goals. Our first priority is protecting and restoring the refuge's native tidal marsh habitat to benefit Pea Patch Island colonial-breeding wading birds, secretive marsh birds, migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and other birds of conservation concern.

Our second priority is to manage a diversity of other refuge wetland



Tundra swan

and upland habitats to benefit breeding and migrating songbirds, waterfowl, and raptors as well as amphibians, reptiles, and mammals of conservation concern.

In 2005, the Northeast Regional Visitor Services Review Team identified visitor programs of emphasis for each refuge. The programs identified for this refuge were interpretation and wildlife observation and photography. The CCP objectives related to these areas of emphasis include:

- Expanding wildlife observation, photography, and interpretation opportunities.

Supawna Meadows CCP Goals

Goal 1: Protect, enhance and restore biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of tidally-influenced habitats to support native wildlife and plant communities including species of conservation concern.

Goal 2: Protect, enhance, and restore biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of upland habitats to support native wildlife and plant communities with emphasis on migrating and wintering birds and other species of concern.

Goal 3: Protect, enhance and restore biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of non-tidal wetland habitats to support native wildlife and plant communities with emphasis on breeding, migrating and overwintering birds and other species of conservation concern.

Goal 4: Provide opportunities for compatible, high-quality, wildlife-dependent public uses.

Goal 5: Protect cultural resources on the refuge.

Goal 6: Enhance refuge management through partnerships, friends, volunteers, and community outreach.

Vision for Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge will continue to provide essential tidal marsh habitat to feed and shelter migrating waterfowl and to feed nearby colonial-nesting wading birds, thereby maintaining its significant role as part of the Delaware Bayshore system of wetlands and upland buffers that is one of the most important migratory bird habitats in the nation.

The refuge will continue to serve as an oasis of native biotic communities within sight of the burgeoning industrial, transportation, and residential developments of the lower Delaware River Basin and South Jersey by providing an array of wetland and upland habitats that support a diverse community of breeding and migrating birds, native mammals, and other species.

Refuge visitors will be able to hunt and fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and learn of the ecological importance and diversity of wildlife at Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. They will understand the refuge as part of a larger network of protected lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System, set aside specifically for wildlife.



Service personnel on the refuge

- Expanding and enhancing environmental education and outreach programs.
- Maintaining and protecting Finns Point Rear Range Light.

Opportunities for visitors to experience the refuge will also be improved by:

- Revising and expanding hunting opportunities for deer and waterfowl hunters.

- Reorganizing areas open to fishing and crabbing on the refuge.
- Opening one impoundment to fishing.

What's Next?

Implementation of priority projects decided upon by the refuge manager can begin immediately. We encourage you to stay involved during the plan's implementation. To be successful, we must continue to develop partnerships, enhance our volunteer program, and support our Friends Group.

Hope to see you soon!

We also encourage you to visit us at the refuge. To learn more about the refuge, please visit our website: <http://www.fws.gov/supawnameadows/>.

Contact Information

Copies of the final CCP can be obtained by downloading a digital version from the website (listed above) and also by contacting refuge staff.

You may reach Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge staff by telephone at (609) 463 0994.



Pine Barrens Tree Frog

You can send mail to:

Supawna Meadows
National Wildlife Refuge
c/o Cape May National Wildlife
Refuge
24 Kimbles Beach Road
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
NWRS - Refuge Planning
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

