

National Wildlife Refuge System

Program Code 10001086

Program Title Fish and Wildlife Service - National Wildlife Refuge System

Department Name Department of the Interior

Agency/Bureau Name United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Program Type(s) Direct Federal Program

Assessment Year 2007

Assessment Rating Adequate

Assessment Section Scores

Section	Score
Program Purpose & Design	100%
Strategic Planning	100%
Program Management	86%
Program Results/Accountability	26%

**Program Funding Level
(in millions)**

FY2007	\$398
FY2008	\$434
FY2009	\$434

Ongoing Program Improvement Plans

- Completed Program Improvement Plans
- Program Performance Measures
- Questions/Answers (Detailed Assessment)

Ongoing Program Improvement Plans

Year Began	Improvement Plan	Status	Comments
2007	Developing baselines and targets for new performance goals.	No action taken	For new measures in 2007 PART.

2007	Establishing a system for regularly scheduled independent evaluations.	No action taken	New item in 2007 PART.
2007	Develop a comprehensive tracking list by NWRS division of all new partnership agreements.	No action taken	New item in 2007 PART.
2007	Require contract and grant managers to certify that status reports from partners have been filed in a timely manner and to identify any circumstances that may negatively impact the agreement. Prepare corrective action plans as necessary.	No action taken	New item in 2007 PART.
2007	Improve performance plan linkage to goals by clearly specifying contribution of each individual goal or target to larger performance goals.	No action taken	New in 2007 PART.
2007	Develop system for ensuring individuals and partners are held accountable for their performance goals that are contributing to larger performance goals, that achievement of those contributions are recognized, and failures are adequately addressed.	No action taken	New item in 2007 PART.
2007	Schedule evaluations of two NWRS functions each fiscal year so all functions and NWRS overall are evaluated every three years.	No action taken	New item in 2007 PART.
2007	Establish evaluation criteria for each NWRS function.	No action taken	New item in 2007 PART.
2007	Establish a cost-effective system for internal multi-level operational reviews. Develop a plan and schedule for multi-level internal operational reviews where Regional Refuge Supervisors conduct site reviews at refuges in their Region, Washington Office staff conduct site reviews in the Regions, and Regional staff conduct site reviews at the Washington Office.	No action taken	New in 2007 PART.
2007	Work with Endangered Species program and other FWS programs to develop long-term outcome performance measure for threatened and endangered species.	No action taken	New action in 2007 PART.

Program Performance Measures

Term	Type																						
Long-term	Outcome	<p>Measure: Percent of acres of Refuge System lands and waters with habitat in good condition.</p> <p><i>Explanation:</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Target</th> <th>Actual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>88.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>90.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2007</td> <td>90.4%</td> <td>90.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>90.4%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009</td> <td>91.4%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>91.8%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Target	Actual	2005	n/a	88.5%	2006	n/a	90.0%	2007	90.4%	90.3%	2008	90.4%		2009	91.4%		2010	91.8%	
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Long-term	Outcome	<p>Measure: Percent of all migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels.</p> <p><i>Explanation:</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Target</th> <th>Actual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>61.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>63.3%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Target	Actual	2005	n/a	61.8%	2008	63.3%													
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Long-term	Outcome	<p>Measure: Percent of adult Americans participating in wildlife-associated recreation</p> <p><i>Explanation:</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Target</th> <th>Actual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>39%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>39%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2007</td> <td>42%</td> <td>38%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Target	Actual	2005	n/a	39%	2006	n/a	39%	2007	42%	38%									
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2007	42%	38%																					

2008	38%
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2009	38%
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Long-term

Outcome

Measure: Percent of populations of native aquatic non-threatened and endangered species that are self-sustaining in the wild.

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2005	22%	23%
2006	24%	16%
2007	24%	25%
2008	24%	
2009	24%	

Annual

Efficiency

Measure: Acres of wetlands restored per million dollars expended

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2004	baseline	5,579
2005	5,413	7,592
2006	7,748	8,288
2007	8,321	4,567
2008	4,600	
2009	8,388	
2010	8,421	

Annual

Output

Measure: Percent of baseline acres infested with invasive plant species that are controlled

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2007	Baseline and targets	4.4%
2008	4.4%	
2009	4.4%	

Annual Output **Measure:** Percent of invasive animal populations controlled

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2005	baseline	3.1%
2006	6.1%	6.0%
2007	7.0%	6.8%
2008	6.6%	
2009	7.0%	
2010	7.0%	

Annual Output **Measure:** Percent of NWRS recovery tasks in approved Recovery Plans that are implemented.

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2004	baseline	37.5%
2005	36.0%	41.0%
2006	35.0%	60.0%
2007	97.6%	70.3%
2008	68.9%	

2009	68.9%
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2010	97.9%
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Annual Output

Measure: Percent of refuges/WMDs where water rights are legally protected sufficiently to maintain needed use.

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2006	51.0%	59.11%
2007	59.79%	59.9%
2008	59%	
2009	60%	
2010	60%	

Annual Output

Measure: Percent of refuges that provide compatible wildlife dependent recreation programs where compatibility determinations indicate such programs can exist

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2005	baseline	63%
2006	61%	61%
2007	61.4%	83%
2008	85%	
2009	85%	
2010	85%	

Annual Output

Measure: Condition of priority Refuge System priority buildings and structures as measured by a Facility Condition Index (score of 0.05 or lower is acceptable)

Explanation:

Year	Target	Actual
2007	Baseline and Targets	.15
2008	.13	
2009	.13	

Questions/Answers (Detailed Assessment)

Section 1 - Program Purpose & Design

Number	Question	Answer	Score
1.1	<p>Is the program purpose clear?</p> <p><i>Explanation:</i> Explanation: The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 established that the "mission of the [National Wildlife Refuge] System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans." The Act states that "it is the policy of the United States that -- each refuge shall be managed to fulfill the mission of the System, as well as the specific purposes for which that refuge was established [and that]... compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate general public use of the System, directly related to the mission of the System ..." The 1997 Act defines wildlife-dependent recreational uses as "a use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, or environmental education and interpretation" and a "compatible use" as "a wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a refuge that, in the sound professional judgment of the Director, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the System or the purposes of the refuge." Further, the 1997 Act provides that "in administering the System, the Secretary shall . . . ensure that the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the System are maintained." Numerous other laws directly impact the operation of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS or the Service) is responsible for administering and managing the NWRS.</p> <p><i>Evidence:</i> Evidence: Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997; National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act;</p>	YES	20%

National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Act of 1998; Legislation Dealing with Management of the National Wildlife Refuge System; Refuge Recreation Act, Primary Statutory Compliance Issues Affecting Management of the National Wildlife Refuge System: Service Manual Chapters on Refuge Planning (602FW1 - Refuge Planning Overview, 602FW3 - Comprehensive Conservation Planning Process, 602FW4 - List of Potential Step-Down Management Plans); Service Manual Chapter on the NWRS Mission and Goals, and Refuge Purposes (601FW1)

1.2

Does the program address a specific and existing problem, interest, or need?

YES 20%

Explanation: The NWRS helps to conserve a growing number of aquatic and terrestrial species that are declining at alarming rates. Approximately one-third of the Nation's mammal and bird species are declining or presumed extinct. Forty percent of our reptiles and 80 percent of our amphibians are in decline. Loss or degradation of habitat is a leading cause of the decline in Federal trust species populations (for example migratory birds, interjurisdictional fish, threatened and endangered species). For example, nationwide, 53 percent of all wetlands have been lost, 90 percent of native prairie is gone, 70 percent of riparian habitat has been lost, and 3.6 million miles of streams have been degraded. The 547 refuges and 37 wetland management districts in the NWRS protect 280 endangered species, and safeguard breeding and resting habitats for millions of migratory birds. Wildlife managers on refuges have helped restore populations of whooping cranes, elk, wild turkeys, crocodiles, wood ducks, antelope, Aleutian Canada geese, key deer and other species. As the world's human population continues to grow and attendant stresses on the environment continue to cause the decline of wildlife and associated environmental attributes, the NWRS will increase rather than decline in value.

Evidence: Fulfilling the Promise-Visions for Wildlife, Habitat, People, and Leadership; Annual Report of Lands Under Control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as of September 30, 2005; Fish & Wildlife News - Special Edition on National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial; Wetlands and the National Wildlife Refuge System Protecting and Restoring Wetlands; U.S. Wetlands of International Importance - Under the Ramsar Convention; Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Conterminous United States 1986 to 1997; Endangered Species Bulletin Jan/Feb 2003; Shorebird Migrations - Fundamentals for Land Managers in the United States; Banking on Nature 2004, September 2005

1.3

Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local or private effort?

YES 20%

Explanation: The Refuge System is the only national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. There are other local, state, and Federal agencies, private, and non-profit organizations whose missions are similar to the Refuge System; however, they are not administered as a national network and therefore there are gaps in these non-Federal programs for the purposes of managing lands and waters for fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats in the United States. The mission of the Refuge System is complementary to the mission's of the non-Federal programs who frequently partner with the Refuge System to accomplish mutual goals.

Evidence: The National Wildlife Refuges - Coordinating a Conservation System Through Law (Robert L. Fischman, Island Press 2003); Mission statements for NWRS, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and The Nature Conservancy; Natural Resources Journal - Special Issue on Managing Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health in the National Wildlife Refuges, Fall 2004, Vol. 44, No. 4; America's National Wildlife Refuge System, Celebrating a Century of Conservation; A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment - 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy - Implementation Plan May 2002; Fulfilling the Promise-Visions for Wildlife, Habitat, People, and Leadership.

1.4

Is the program design free of major flaws that would limit the program's effectiveness or efficiency?

YES 20%

Explanation: The Refuge System is basically free of major flaws that would limit the program's effectiveness and efficiency. As evidence, over the past 10 years the Refuge System has been virtually free of any serious GAO corrective actions or Congressional Oversight Hearings. There has been only one multi-refuge lawsuit over the past decade, which challenged the adequacy of the Refuge System's National Environmental Policy Act compliance as it related to hunting on 37 national wildlife refuges. The Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 changed the NWRS from a collection of sites with varying practices guided by local goals to a unified System. Also, NWRS is efficiently leveraging

public funds: Partners/Service spending ratio is 2.5 to 1; approximately 20% of work hours logged in refuges is performed by unpaid volunteers; more than 230 community-based organizations exist to support goals of the NWRS. One possible design flaw is that individual refuge purposes take precedence over the mission of the Refuge System over all, although this occurs only on a small percentage of the nation's 547 national wildlife refuges.

Evidence: Biological Needs Assessment; Fulfilling the Promise-Visions for Wildlife, Habitat, People, and Leadership; Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997; National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act; National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Act of 1998

1.5

Is the program design effectively targeted so that resources will address the program's purpose directly and will reach intended beneficiaries?

YES 20%

Explanation: Approximately 77% percent of the Refuge System's annual budget goes directly to operations and maintenance on national wildlife refuges, where programs are designed to conserve, restore and enhance wildlife species and wildlife habitat for the benefit of present and future generations, and to provide compatible wildlife-dependent recreation. The National Wildlife Refuge System is home to more than 700 species of birds, 220 mammals, 250 reptiles and amphibians, more than 1,000 fish, and countless species of invertebrates and plants. About 39 million people visit national wildlife refuges annually to fish, hunt, observe and photograph wildlife and participate in interpretive programs. More than 280 endangered and threatened species find habitat on national wildlife refuges. The NWRS Strategic Plan established in 2006 is intended to help ensure that program resources reach intended beneficiaries and achieve statutory purposes. In FY2006, the NWRS budget was realigned to have funding directed to Refuge Systems strategic goals.

Evidence: NWRS FY2007 Budget Justification; NWRS Strategic Plan, December 2006; FY2006 Refuge Annual Performance Plan; FY 2008 Budget Justification - Refuge Operations and Maintenance; Five Year Deferred Maintenance Plan, February 2007; Handbook - Writing Refuge Management Goals and Objectives, March 2003

Section 1 - Program Purpose & Design Score 100%

Section 2 - Strategic Planning

Number	Question	Answer	Score
2.1	<p data-bbox="337 289 1214 365">Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program?</p> <p data-bbox="337 432 1214 793"><i>Explanation:</i> The NWRS developed a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that are identified in PARTWeb. These long-term measures focus on the conservation and management of land and water habitats, migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and inter-jurisdictional fish species, as well as the use of refuges by adult Americans. These long-term measures focus on outcomes that meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program. NWRS has also developed a five-year strategic plan (2006-2010) that contains the five specific long-term outcome measures described above. This plan is consistent with the Department of Interior's Strategic Plan (2003-2008).</p> <p data-bbox="337 861 1214 886"><i>Evidence:</i> PARTWeb performance measures; NWRS Strategic Plan - December 2006</p>	YES	12%
2.2	<p data-bbox="337 972 1214 997">Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures?</p> <p data-bbox="337 1064 1214 1283"><i>Explanation:</i> The NWRS has taken a number of steps toward the development of ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures that are identified in PARTWeb. Presently, long-term targets are based on the integration of budget and performance information, and creating performance long-term measures from this information that are ambitious for the Refuge System.</p> <p data-bbox="337 1350 1214 1425"><i>Evidence:</i> PARTWeb performance measures; Strategic Plan for the National Wildlife Refuge System, December 2006; FY2006 FWS Operational Plan</p>	YES	12%
2.3	<p data-bbox="337 1507 1214 1583">Does the program have a limited number of specific annual performance measures that can demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's long-term goals?</p> <p data-bbox="337 1650 1214 1866"><i>Explanation:</i> The program has a limited number of specific annual performance measures that are identified on PARTWeb. These specific annual performance measures demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's long-term measures. The specific and measurable annual goals have been developed recently through the FWS and Refuge System efforts to devise measures for their Strategic Plan and Operational Plan that step up to the</p>	YES	12%

Department's Strategic Plan and long-term PART measures. Many of these measures are output oriented.

Evidence: PARTWeb Performance Measures; Strategic Plan for the National Wildlife Refuge System, December 2006; FY2008 Operational Plan

2.4

Does the program have baselines and ambitious targets for its annual measures?

YES 12%

Explanation: The NWRS has taken a number of steps toward the development of baselines and ambitious targets and timeframes for its annual measures that are identified in PARTWeb. Presently, annual measures are based on the integration of budget and performance information, and creating annual performance targets from this information that are ambitious for the Refuge System.

Evidence: PARTWeb performance measures; NWRS Strategic Plan, December 2006; Refuge Annual Performance Planning Workbook 2006, FY2008 FWS Operational Plan

2.5

Do all partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) commit to and work toward the annual and/or long-term goals of the program?

YES 12%

Explanation: Common goals and measures are developed for many partnership activities. Examples include Blackwater NWR Friends Partnership, the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, a Memorandum of Agreement with the Park Service and USGS on restoration of the Everglades, and work with the National Invasive Species Council to develop a cross-cut budget initiative to control adverse impacts of invasive species on natural resources. Additionally, the NWRS has extensive support through a large network of volunteers and Friends Groups that all commit and work towards accomplishing the goals of the NWRS. Nearly 20% of the hours worked on NWRS field stations are done by volunteers who work directly on priority natural and cultural resource management activities and visitor service programs consistent with goals of the NWRS.

Evidence: Friends of Blackwater NWR web site; Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership 2005 Annual Report; Memorandum of Understanding with NOAA; Friends and Volunteers Annual Report FY2005, July 2006; National Wildlife Refuge System Strategic Plan Summary

Workbook, Friends Workshop 2006 (from Southeast NWRS Friends Workshop, October 2006); Challenge Cost Sharing FY2005 and FY2006 Accomplishments Report; Volunteers and Invasives Program Accomplishments - National Wildlife Refuge System, FY2003 to FY2006; Intergovernmental Agreements with USGS; Cooperative Agreement with National Wildlife Refuge Association; Conservation in Action results; Conservation in Action Summit Final Report, June 18, 2004.

2.6

Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?

YES 12%

Explanation: The NWRS has contracted an independent evaluation of sufficient scope and quality for the entire Refuge System. The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the effectiveness of the Refuge System and how well the program is accomplishing its mission and meeting its long-term goals. The contractor is gathering and analyzing information and input from sources including (1) NWRS and other conservation organization databases, (2) a survey of refuge managers and other refuge staff, State Fish and Game officials, and more than 60 national stakeholders and partners, (3) site visits to refuge field stations, and (4) a Federal Register Notice requesting input as to the effectiveness of NWRS.

Evidence: NWRS evaluation scope of work; Evaluation and Effectiveness of the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System Evaluation Design and Workplan, November 13, 2006; NWRS evaluation progress report

2.7

Are Budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget?

YES 12%

Explanation: The Service has taken a number of steps toward preparing its budget requests so they are explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals. The Service uses its Operational Plan and its Activity-Based Costing (ABC) information as the basis for preparing budget requests. The NWRS has developed a performance infrastructure that can help maximize performance by linking performance results to budgets. The FWS and Refuge System are moving towards using this information to

develop performance-based budget requests.

Evidence: FY 2008 Budget Justification; Operational Priorities - Prioritization Process for the Refuge Operating Needs System [RONS]; NWRS 5-Year Deferred Maintenance Plan, February 2007; FY2006 Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP).

2.8	Has the program taken meaningful steps to correct its strategic planning deficiencies?	YES	12%
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Explanation: The Refuge System has taken meaningful steps to correct strategic planning deficiencies through development of its strategic plan (2006-2010). The NWRS strategic plan provides specific and measurable long-term and annual goals for the Refuge System. These long-term and annual goals are linked to an automated system that allows aggregation of performance data at national and regional levels and at individual refuges. This plan is consistent with the Department of Interior's Strategic Plan (2003-2008) and the long-term and annual PART measures.

Evidence: NWRS Strategic Plan, December 2006; Fulfilling the Promise; Fulfilling the Promise Progress Report, October 1, 2004; FY2006 Refuge Annual Performance Plan, Refuge Annual Performance Planning Workbook 2006

Section 2 - Strategic Planning Score 100%

Section 3 - Program Management

Number	Question	Answer	Score
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3.1	Does the agency regularly collect timely and credible performance information, including information from key program partners, and use it to manage the program and improve performance?	YES	14%
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Explanation: Performance information is collected from a variety of sources. The Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP) is the primary tool for collecting and measuring performance information for the Refuge System, including key program partners. Annual budget increases for Refuge Operations are drawn from the Refuge Operating Needs System which provides an annual listing of priority needs that are identified by field station managers each year. These projects include performance measures and projects are

prioritized based on most urgent contribution of the project to the Refuge System mission. Each year funding increases requested in the Budget Justification are selected and listed by project after an analysis was made to determine the highest-priority needs of the System. NWRS regularly collects timely and credible performance data from key program partners such as the U.S. Geological Survey and State Wildlife agencies and seeks their input on management plans, such as Comprehensive Conservation Plans and Habitat Management Plans.

Evidence: 2006 Refuge Annual Performance Plan; Refuge Annual Performance Planning Workbook 2006; Refuge Management Information System (RMIS) modules; Friends and Volunteers Annual Report FY2005, July 2006; NWRS evaluation contract, statement of work, and progress report

3.2

NO 0%

Are Federal managers and program partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) held accountable for cost, schedule and performance results?

Explanation: Federal managers and program partners are generally held accountable for cost, schedule and performance results. SES level managers, as well as non-SES level managers such as Regional Refuge Chiefs, Refuge Supervisors, and Refuge Managers have annual performance plans that generally link individual performance to the achievement of program goals. More work is needed to clearly define quantifiable performance standards and performance targets. Annual employee performance reviews assess the achievement of the goals and targets established in the annual performance plan but it is difficult to assess if managers are being held accountable for not achieving performance targets. Program partners such as grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners generally have agreements with cost, schedule and performance targets. Grants, contracts, and agreements include achievement reporting requirements. It is also difficult to assess if the partners are being held accountable for not achieving performance targets.

Evidence: FY2006 annual performance plans for NWRS Refuge Chief, Regional Directors, Deputy Regional Directors, Regional Refuge Chiefs, Regional Refuge Supervisors, and Refuge Managers; FY2006 report of accomplishments for deferred maintenance projects,

sample grants, contracts, and agreements with partners

3.3 **Are funds (Federal and partners') obligated in a timely manner, spent for the intended purpose and accurately reported?** YES 14%

Explanation: Although the allowed time span for expenditure of Refuge appropriated resource management funds is 2 years, the expenditure rate for NWRS Operations Accounts in FY2006 was 94% at the close of the first year in which the funds were available. In FY2006 the obligation rate was 91% for the expenditure of maintenance funds due in part to the need for permits, design and large-purchase procurement procedures. Land acquisition funds are multiyear in spending authority and a number of variables exist especially as it relates to conducting negotiations with willing sellers. Funds are tracked on a project by project basis to monitor progress on use of funds. All funding within the NWRS program has received formal independent audit review as part of the annual agency financial audit and transactions are meeting standards.

Evidence: Appropriations Funds Status Report, Year End 2006; Initial Budget Allocations - Fiscal Year 2006 (BAS Report 2006-1); FY 2006 report of accomplishments for deferred maintenance projects; Expenditure rates for Refuge Operations and Maintenance Accounts FY 2006; Annual Financial Report of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

3.4 **Does the program have procedures (e.g. competitive sourcing/cost comparisons, IT improvements, appropriate incentives) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution?** YES 14%

Explanation: The NWRS has a wetlands efficiency measure developed as part of the Administration's common measures activity. NWRS is implementing Activity Based Costing and Management (ABC/M), which is a cost accounting and management tool that provides the Service with improved visibility into the full costs of daily operations. It is the intent that ABC/M data will be used extensively across the FWS and Refuge System for process improvement, performance based budget formulation and justification, and performance measurement. Efficiencies are sought through competitive sourcing reviews such as that of the GS-326 Series (secretarial services) and through consolidation of purchase power and standardization of equipment specifications, such as the consolidated IT contracts. The management structure is de-layered, each Regional Refuge Supervisor. Field stations follow

national and regional policies but operate quite independently on daily activities. The NWRS also has achieved efficiencies through "complexing" (or combining the administration of many refuges into one central refuge office) and by selectively not staffing refuge units (refuges and wetland management districts) based on biological and other considerations. Efficiencies have also been made through the Refuge Law Enforcement Zone System.

Evidence: SOW Competitive Sourcing Review 326 Job Series; National Park Service Interagency Acquisition Agreement for uniform program; Reimbursable support agreement for Department-wide purchase of MAXIMO software to support maintenance program; IT Enterprise Licensing Agreement

3.5 **Does the program collaborate and coordinate effectively with related programs?** YES 14%

Explanation: The Refuge System works effectively with a wide variety of programs within the Fish and Wildlife Service and with state, federal, and private partners. The NWRS has developed a Strategic Plan that includes five specific outcome measures that are common to other FWS programs. Examples of programs internal to the Fish and Wildlife Service include working with the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Joint Ventures, assessing and cleaning up contaminants problems affecting refuges, undertaking a variety of Fisheries projects; and using Refuge heavy equipment to support achievement of the goals in the Partners for Wildlife program. NWRS works closely with state and local counterparts in a variety of ways to include common pursuit of fish and wildlife goals, recreation and education programs, and law enforcement and associated public safety. NWRS also has partnerships with the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to work together on areas of common interest.

Evidence: NWRS Strategic Plan, December 2006; Conserving America's Fisheries; Fisheries/Refuges Cooperation; Habitat Based Conservation Goals Proposal; Integrating HCPs with National Wildlife Refuges; Cooperative Strategic Conservation Planning Proposal

3.6 **Does the program use strong financial management practices?** YES 14%

Explanation: NWRS uses strong financial management practices. In 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received, for the fourth consecutive year, an unqualified audit opinion who concluded that the Service's financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects.

The Independent Auditors' Report for fiscal year 2006 identified no material weaknesses. In fiscal year 2006 the Service performed an evaluation of the Service's internal controls over financial reporting. The evaluation determined that the controls are designed suitably and are operating effectively. Grant agreements with partners also demonstrate the Program's strong financial management by requiring internal monitoring and reporting controls prior to obligation of funds.

Evidence: Shared Commitments to Conservation: 2006 Annual Financial Report of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Service Asset and Maintenance Management System (SAMMS) Business Rules, August 1, 2005; FWS Asset Management Plan, March 2007

3.7	Has the program taken meaningful steps to address its management deficiencies?	YES	14%
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Explanation: The program taken meaningful steps to address its management deficiencies as evidenced by the NWRS efforts to address deficiencies identified in the 2003 PART improvement plan. In December 2006, NWRS completed its five year strategic plan and has also developed baseline data and targets for long-term and annual performance measures. The Refuge Annual Performance Plan system has recently been developed and is the primary tool for collecting and measuring performance of the Refuge System. NWRS has contracted for an independent evaluation of the entire Refuge System and is conducting internal reviews of the Refuge System. The Refuge System has made some progress on linking individual employee performance plans with goal-related performance targets for each fiscal year. Progress has been made on implementing the vision and recommendations in the Fulfilling the Promise document.

Evidence: NWRS Strategic Plan, December 2006; Fulfilling the Promise Progress Report; 2006 Refuge Annual Performance Plan; Contract and statement of work for an evaluation of the effectiveness of NWRS; Progress report on an evaluation of the effectiveness of NWRS

Section 3 - Program Management	Score	86%
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Section 4 - Program Results/Accountability			
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Number	Question	Answer	Score
4.1	Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term	SMALL EXTENT	7%

performance goals?

Explanation: The NWRS program has demonstrated progress in achieving its long-term outcome performance goals that were identified in the 2003 PART. All targets for the three long-term measures were met or exceeded. During the 2007 PART process, the program developed new long-term outcome performance that are new and, therefore, there is no data for them yet. Additionally, new budget performance information has become available that has led to revised ambitious long-term outcome performance goals.

Evidence: PARTWeb performance measures

4.2

Does the program (including program partners) achieve its annual performance goals?

SMALL
EXTENT

7%

Explanation: The NWRS has achieved its annual performance goals that were identified in the 2003 PART. The NWRS met or exceeded its annual targets for 4 of these measures in 2006 and established a baseline for the 5th measure in 2006. During the 2007 PART process, the PART team developed new annual performance goals that are new and, therefore, there is no data for them yet. Additionally, new budget performance information has become available that has led to revised ambitious annual performance goals. Partners contribute to annual goals and report annual accomplishments as demonstrated by the Friends of Blackwater NWR Partnership and the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership.

Evidence: PARTWeb performance measures; partnership agreements

4.3

Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year?

SMALL
EXTENT

7%

Explanation: The NWRS has demonstrated some improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program performance goals each year. The NWRS has one wetlands efficiency measure, which is "Acres of wetlands restored per million dollars expended" that was identified in the 2003 PART. This measure indicates that the NWRS has become more efficient in restoring wetlands. One recent example of a refuge becoming more efficient in wetland restoration through partnerships is Laguna Atascosa

National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. The program does not, however, have other measures to demonstrate improved efficiencies or effectiveness in achieving program performance goals each year.

Evidence: PARTWeb

4.4

Does the performance of this program compare favorably to other programs, including government, private, etc., with similar purpose and goals?

SMALL
EXTENT

7%

Explanation: While the program is not duplicative of other programs, some of the activities conducted on refuges are also conducted by other programs such as restoring wetlands. Data collected for the wetlands common measures exercise indicates that the NWRS compares somewhat favorably to other FWS programs that rehabilitate and restore wetlands. A second area in which the Refuge System demonstrates effective accomplishment of goals is in the production of waterfowl. Data collected by the FWS show that the Refuge system has a disproportionately positive impact on waterfowl. Although waterfowl production areas, easements, and the National Wildlife Refuge system account for less than 2 percent of the landscape in the prairie pothole region, they are responsible for producing nearly 23 percent of this area's waterfowl.

Evidence: Wetlands Common Measures data

4.5

Do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?

NO

0%

Explanation: NWRS has contracted with an independent organization to conduct an evaluation of the entire Refuge System; however, the evaluation has not been completed to indicate whether the program is effective and achieving results.

Evidence: Contract and Statement of Work for NWRS evaluation; Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System Evaluation Design and Workplan, November 13, 2006

Section 4 - Program Results/Accountability

Score

26%