



Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update 3, July 2009



Western snowy plover / ©Rudy Schuver

Preliminary Management Alternatives for Willapa NWR

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) process for the Willapa NWR is moving forward into the next phase of planning.

In this Planning Update, we present our preliminary versions of the three management alternatives which are being

considered in the Willapa NWR CCP/EIS and the management direction for the refuge over the next 15 years.

These three Alternatives have been designed to meet Refuge purposes, the Refuge System mission, the vision for the refuge, and meet various policy requirements while also addressing the issues and ideas raised during the public scoping process.

This Planning Update presents a summary of the current refuge management and a comparison of each of the proposed alternatives.

In This Update

- Revised draft refuge goals
- Overview of the Preliminary Alternatives
- Comparison of alternatives - summary table
- Web link to the planning site for downloadable maps of the Preliminary Alternatives
- Who to contact for more information



Kayaking around Long Island.
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Revised Draft Refuge Goals

Goal 1

Protect, maintain and restore ecologically functional late-successional forest habitats (mature and old growth forest) characteristic of the low-elevation temperate forests in the southwest Washington coastal region for the benefit of endangered and threatened species, migratory and resident birds, and a diverse assemblage of other native species.

Goal 2

Protect, maintain, and restore estuarine habitats historically characteristic of the southwest Washington coastal region for the benefit of salmonids, Pacific brant, other waterfowl, shorebirds, seabirds and a diverse assemblage of other native species.

Goal 3

Protect, maintain and restore freshwater habitats historically characteristic of the southwest Washington coastal region for the benefit of migratory birds, salmonids, amphibians, mussels, lamprey, and a diverse assemblage of other native species.



Chum salmon. ©Rudy Schuver

Goal 4

Protect, maintain and restore coastal beach and dune habitats historically characteristic of the southwest Washington coastal region for the benefit of the western snowy plover, streaked horned lark, pink sand verbena, Oregon silverspot butterfly and a diverse assemblage of other native species.

Goal 5

Provide short-grass fields (improved pastures) and grasslands for the benefit of Canada geese, Pacific jumping mouse and other grassland-dependent species and restore grasslands for the Oregon silverspot butterfly.

Goal 6

Promote the recovery of federally threatened and endangered as well as federal candidate and state-listed species.

Goal 7

Gather scientific information (inventories, monitoring, research, studies) in support of adaptive management decisions on the refuge under Goals 1–6.

Goal 8

Foster a connection between refuge visitors and nature. Visitors will have the opportunity to participate in safe, quality wildlife-dependent recreation activities located throughout Willapa NWR. These activities and programs include wildlife observation, hunting, fishing, interpretation/education and photography.

Goal 9

Protect and preserve the cultural resources of the refuge for the benefit of present and future generations.

Goal 10

Contribute to the protection of the long-term environmental health of the Willapa Bay ecosystem.

Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan Coming Soon

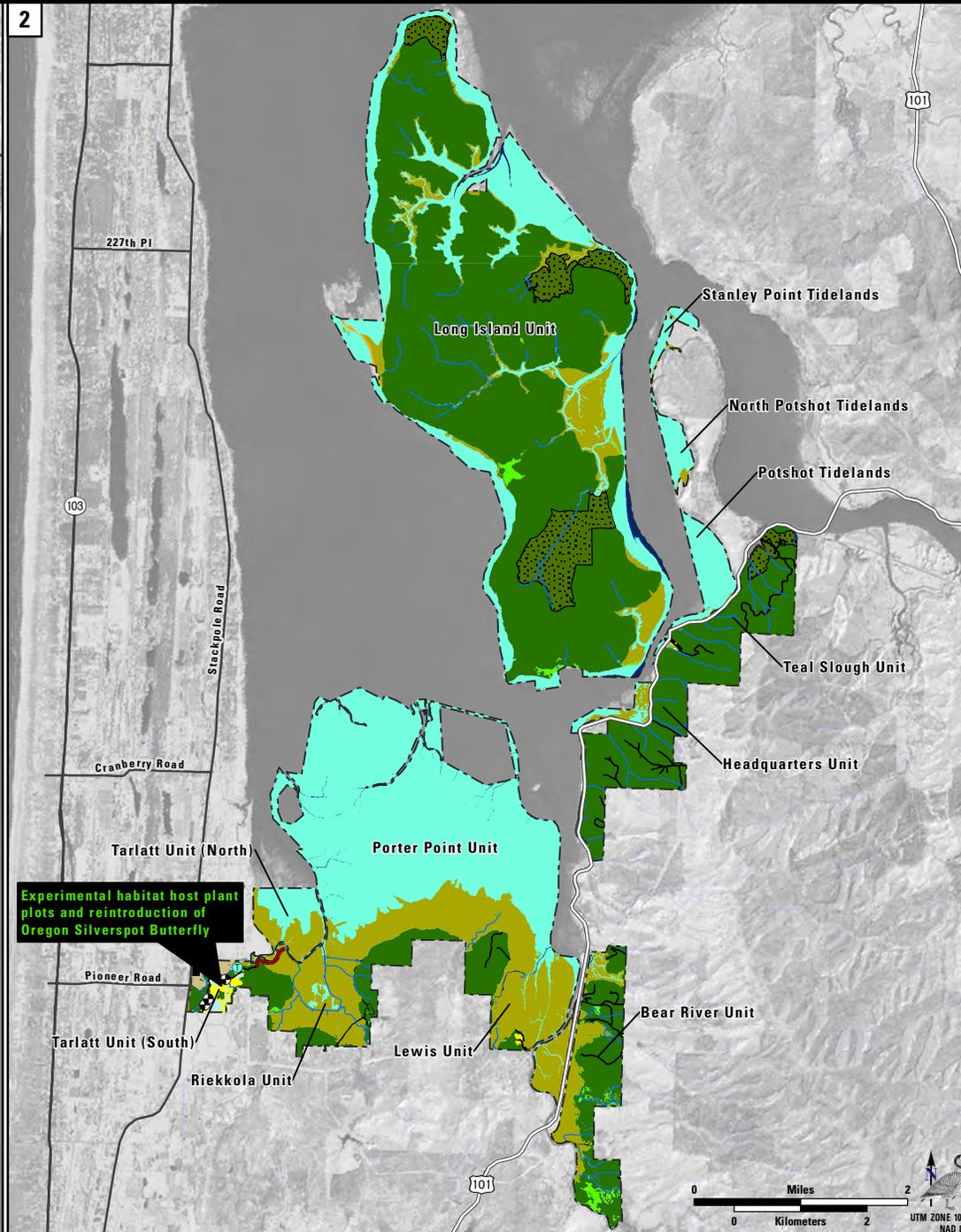
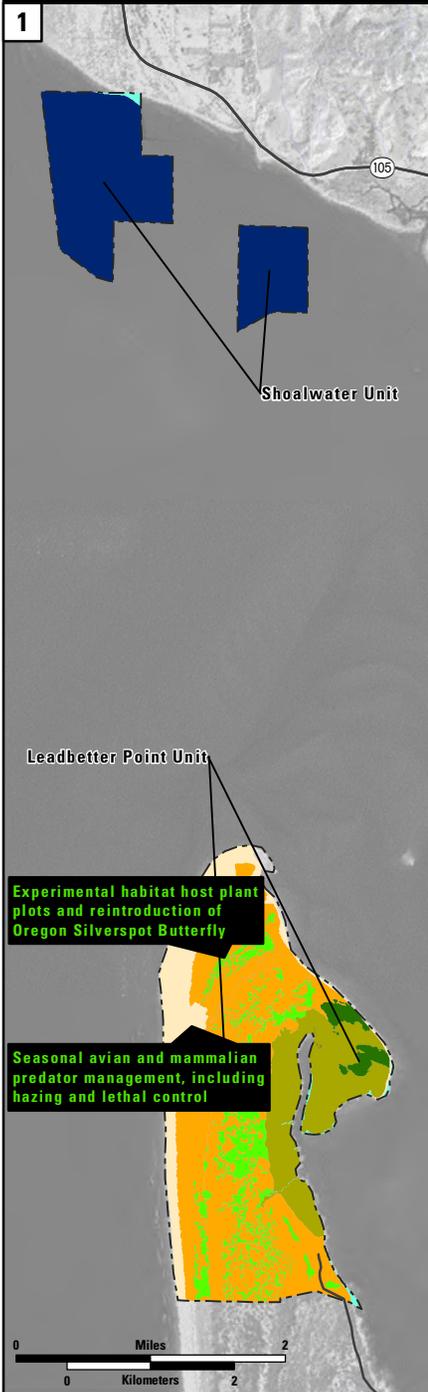
Over the next year, the planning team will be preparing the draft CCP/EIS. The Draft document will provide a detailed analysis of the management alternatives presented here.

The planning team anticipates that the draft CCP/EIS will be available for public review and comment in the Spring 2010. The final CCP (alternative) selected by the Service will be determined, in part, by the comments received on the Draft CCP/EIS. Thank you for taking time to review these alternatives.

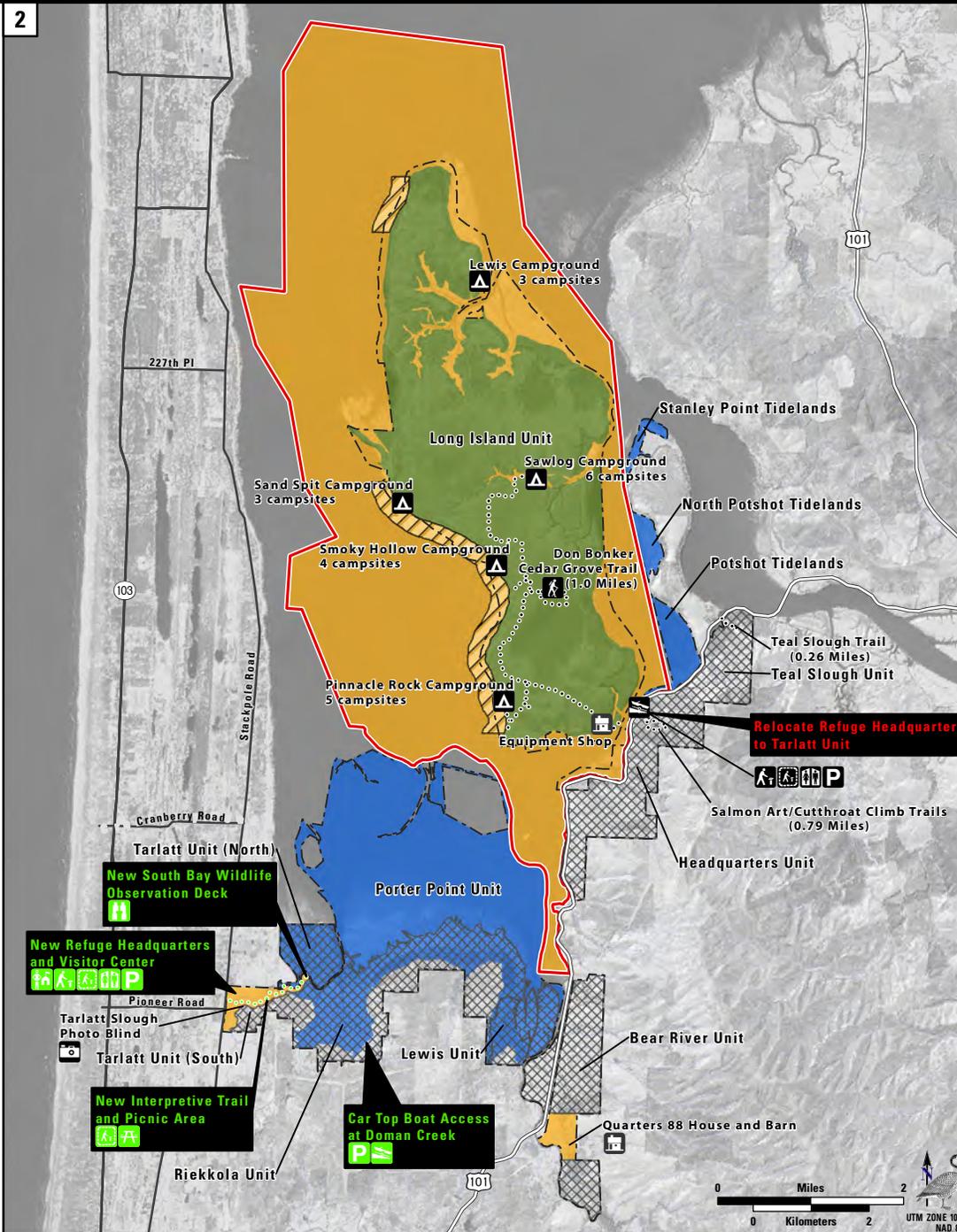
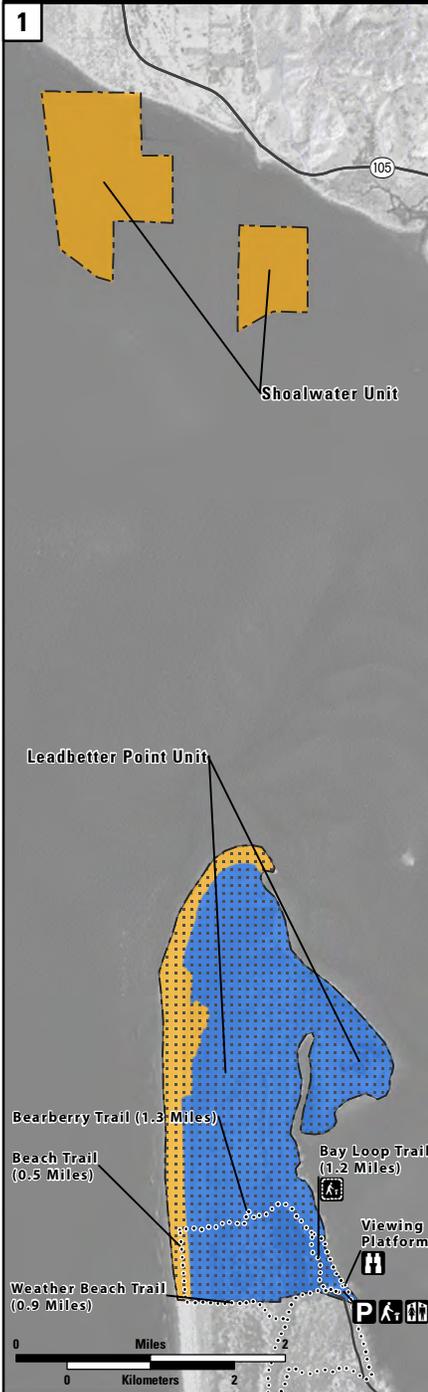
Table 1. Draft Preliminary Alternatives Summary-Willapa CCP/EIS

Theme/Issue	Alternative 1 Continue Current Management	Alternative 2 Healthy Wildlife Habitats, Endangered Species and Biodiversity Gains, focused Refuge Expansion, Simplified expanded Public Use	Alternative 3 Partial Restoration of Habitats, Endangered Species Gains, Limited Refuge Expansion, Moderate Public Use
Forest Habitat			
Late-successional Sitka Spruce Zone Forest	Protect and maintain 557 acres of existing late-successional Sitka spruce zone forest, while implementing forest management techniques where necessary to accelerate development of late-successional condition in 6178 acres of second growth forest	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
Estuarine Habitats			
Open Water	Annually protect and maintain 878 acres of open water and channel habitat	Same as Alternative 1 and increase open water on the Lewis/ Porter Point and Riekkola units to County Road (0.2 acres)	Same as Alternative 1, Open Water Lewis Unit/Porter Point (0 acres); Riekkola untouched
Intertidal Flats	Annually protect and maintain 4178 acres of intertidal flats	Same as Alternative 1 plus Increase Intertidal Flats (11 acres)	Same as Alternative 1 plus Increase Intertidal Flats (<11 acres)
Salt Marsh	Annually protect and maintain 1636 acres of salt marsh	Same as Alternative 1 Increase Salt Marsh (749 acres)	Same as Alternative 1 Increase Salt Marsh (429 acres)
Freshwater Aquatic Habitats			
Riverine	Protect, maintain and conduct restoration activities within the 27 miles of riverine habitats	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
Wetlands - Seasonally Managed	Annually protect and maintain 317 acres of seasonal, managed freshwater wetland habitats on Tarlatt, Riekkola, Porter Point and Lewis units	Annually protect and maintain 17 acres of seasonal, managed freshwater wetland on the Tarlatt unit	Annually protect and maintain 25 acres of seasonal, managed freshwater wetland on the Riekkola and Tarlatt units
Wetlands - Naturally Occurring	Annually protect and maintain 610 acres of permanent and semi-permanent, naturally occurring freshwater wetlands	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
Coastal Habitat			
Coastal Dune Ecosystem	Maintain and protect 1581 acres at Leadbetter Point Unit (not including wetlands)	Same as Alternative 1 plus restore 350 acres	Same as Alternative 2
Upland Field Habitats			
Short-grass Fields	Maintain 250 acres of short-grass fields on Riekkola and Tarlatt units	Restore pasture on the Riekkola Unit to Salt Marsh	Same as Alternative 1
Grassland	Maintain 33 acres of grassland habitat through Integrated Pest Management control at the Tarlatt Unit	Establish 15-33 acres of habitat for Oregon silverspot butterfly at Tarlatt and Leadbetter Point units	Same as Alternative 2

Federal and State Listed Species			
Western Snowy Plover	Protect western snowy plover and their habitat from human disturbance, nest predation and invasive species	Alternative 1 plus avian and mammalian predator management as necessary	Alternative 1 plus avian predator management as necessary
Oregon Silverspot Butterfly	Current management has limited management focus for this species	Reintroduce Oregon silverspot butterfly to successful host plant habitat (15-33 acres)	Same as Alternative 2
Recreation			
Wildlife Observation and Photography	Maintain opportunities for self-guided wildlife observation and photography on the Leadbetter Point, Long Island and Mainland units	Same as Alternative 1 plus expanded at Tarlatt Unit, new trail and South Bay observation deck, concurrent with tidal restoration	Same as Alternative 1
Interpretive Trails	Maintain three miles of existing interpretive trail	Add one mile of new interpretive trail and South Bay observation deck, concurrent with tidal restoration	Same as Alternative 1
Waterfowl Hunting	Regulated goose hunting on Riekkola Unit (currently two days/week). Leadbetter Point/Stanley Point (currently seven days/week). Porter Point (currently three days/week)	All areas of the Refuge (excluding the Presidential Proclamation Boundary and Tarlatt slough) open in accordance with State season	Limited expansion of hunting on South Bay and regulated goose hunting on Riekkola
Big Game Hunting (Archery only on Long Island)	Long Island and mainland portion of the Refuge (excluding Headquarters) open	Same as Alternative 1 plus expanded elk and deer hunting in South Bay and regulated elk hunt on Leadbetter Point Unit	Same as Alternative 1 plus Limited elk and deer hunting in South Bay and regulated elk hunting on Leadbetter Point Unit
Fishing	Maintain Refuge portion of Willapa Bay and channel portion of Bear River open for fishing	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
Environmental Education and Interpretation	Maintain current program providing on and off-site environmental education and interpretation programs	Same as Alternative 1 with increased on-site environmental education program with addition of new visitor facility	Same as Alternative 1
Camping	Maintain five campgrounds with 21 campsites on Long Island	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
Office/Maintenance Visitor Contact Station Facility	Maintain current site and existing facilities	Construct new office/visitor contact facility at Tarlett Unit	Same as Alternative 2
Cultural Resources			
Cultural Resource Protection	Protect Cultural Resource sites through best management practices	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
Refuge Boundary Expansion			
North Bay	Maintain ownership of Cape Shoalwater and Wheaton units	Divest property Cape Shoalwater and Wheaton units	Same as Alternative 2
Nemah/Naselle	No expansion of Refuge acquisition boundary	Proposed expansion 1909 acres	Same as Alternative 2
East Hills	No expansion of Refuge acquisition boundary	Proposed expansion 4334 acres	Same as Alternative 2
South Bay	No expansion of Refuge acquisition boundary	Proposed expansion 561 acres	Same as Alternative 2



Data Sources: Refuge Boundaries from USFWS/R1; Hydrology from NHD USGS; Roads from ESRI; Imagery fom 07/01/2001 Landsat



Refuge Boundaries

- Refuge Managed Lands (Fee Title or Easement)
- Proclamation Boundary

Public Use Facilities

- Headquarters
- Refuge Building (Closed to Public Use)
- Bathroom
- Parking Area
- Boat Launch
- Campground
- Wildlife Viewing Area
- Interpretive Sign
- Interpretive Trail
- Wildlife Photography Blind

Trails

- Trails

Hunting Status

- Deer and elk hunting. All State regulations apply.
- Waterfowl hunting. All State regulations apply.
- Regulated elk hunt area. Refuge permit required.
- Archery Hunting for elk, deer, and black bear only. Refuge permit required.
- Refuge lands, tidelands, and water closed to all hunting.
- Areas Open to Clamming

Fishing is permitted from the shores of Willapa Bay. Fishing is not permitted on refuge streams or interior sloughs.

WILLAPA NWR

WASHINGTON

0 10 Miles

VICINITY MAP

Map current to 07/21/2009

Data Sources: Refuge Boundaries from USFWS/R1; Roads from ESRI; Imagery fom 07/01/2001 Landsat

Overview of Preliminary Alternatives

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 is the “no change” alternative which is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The refuge would continue programs and operations at current levels as shown in the summary table. The refuge would maintain, and where feasible, restore habitats including forest stand improvement, wetlands enhancement, beach dune enhancements, and habitat improvements for federally and State listed species. Existing public uses, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, interpretation, environmental education, boating and camping would continue. The Presidential Proclamation Boundary would remain closed to waterfowl hunting in all of the alternatives.



Old growth forest. ©Rudy Schuver

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 describes the highest level of habitat improvement of the three alternatives. Intensively managed pastures and impoundments would be restored to estuarine habitats and create approximately 760 acres of open water, intertidal flats and salt marsh.

On the Leadbetter Point Unit, as necessary, a predator management program would be implemented to help meet western snowy plover recovery goals; this program would include avian and mammalian predators.

Successful establishment of the early-blue violet host plant on 15-33 acres would serve the future reintroduction of the federally threatened Oregon silverspot butterfly.

Improvements to the wildlife dependent public uses would include; a new interpretive trail and wildlife observation deck along the south bay which would be tied to the proposed maintenance/office/visitor contact facility on the Tarlatt Unit. All areas of the refuge would be opened to waterfowl hunting in accordance with the state season; with the exception of the Presidential Proclamation Boundary. A boat launch access point (car top only boats) would be developed to access the South Bay. A regulated elk hunt is proposed for managing herd size on the Leadbetter Point Unit. Elk and deer hunting would be expanded in South Bay in accordance with the state seasons.

Within a newly approved land acquisition boundary, 1908 additional acres would be acquired from willing property sellers in the Nemah and Naselle areas and an additional 561 acres in South Bay and 4334 acres in the East hills. The Cape Shoalwater and Wheaton properties would be divested from the refuge.

Alternative 3

Under alternative 3, intensively managed pastures and impoundments would be restored to estuarine habitats and create approximately 429 acres of open water, intertidal flats and salt marsh. Restoration efforts would occur in the Lewis and Porter Point units only. Approximately 30 acres of managed freshwater wetlands would remain on the Riekkola and Tarlatt units. Predator management for the threatened western snowy plover on the Leadbetter Point Unit would occur on an as needed basis to control avian predators. Grassland restoration and reintroduction of the Oregon silverspot butterfly would be the same as Alternative 2.

Wildlife-dependent public use activities under this alternative would include expanded waterfowl hunting in accordance with the State season that would include approximately 5,450 acres through estuarine restoration efforts. The Riekkola Unit goose hunt would be the same as Alternative 1. Expansion of hunting opportunities would occur at the Leadbetter Point Unit to include a regulated elk hunt. Elk and deer hunting opportunities would occur in the South Bay in accordance with the State seasons. New refuge facilities would include a maintenance/office/visitor contact station and would be constructed at the Tarlatt Unit .

Within a newly approved land acquisition boundary, 561 acres would be acquired in South Bay, and 4334 acres in the East hills. Cape Shoalwater and Wheaton properties would be divested from the refuge.



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For information regarding the planning process
contact: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov or visit our website:
<http://www.fws.gov/willapa/>

Alternatives Maps available on the Refuges website:
<http://www.fws.gov/Willapa/ccp/ccp.html#CCP>

