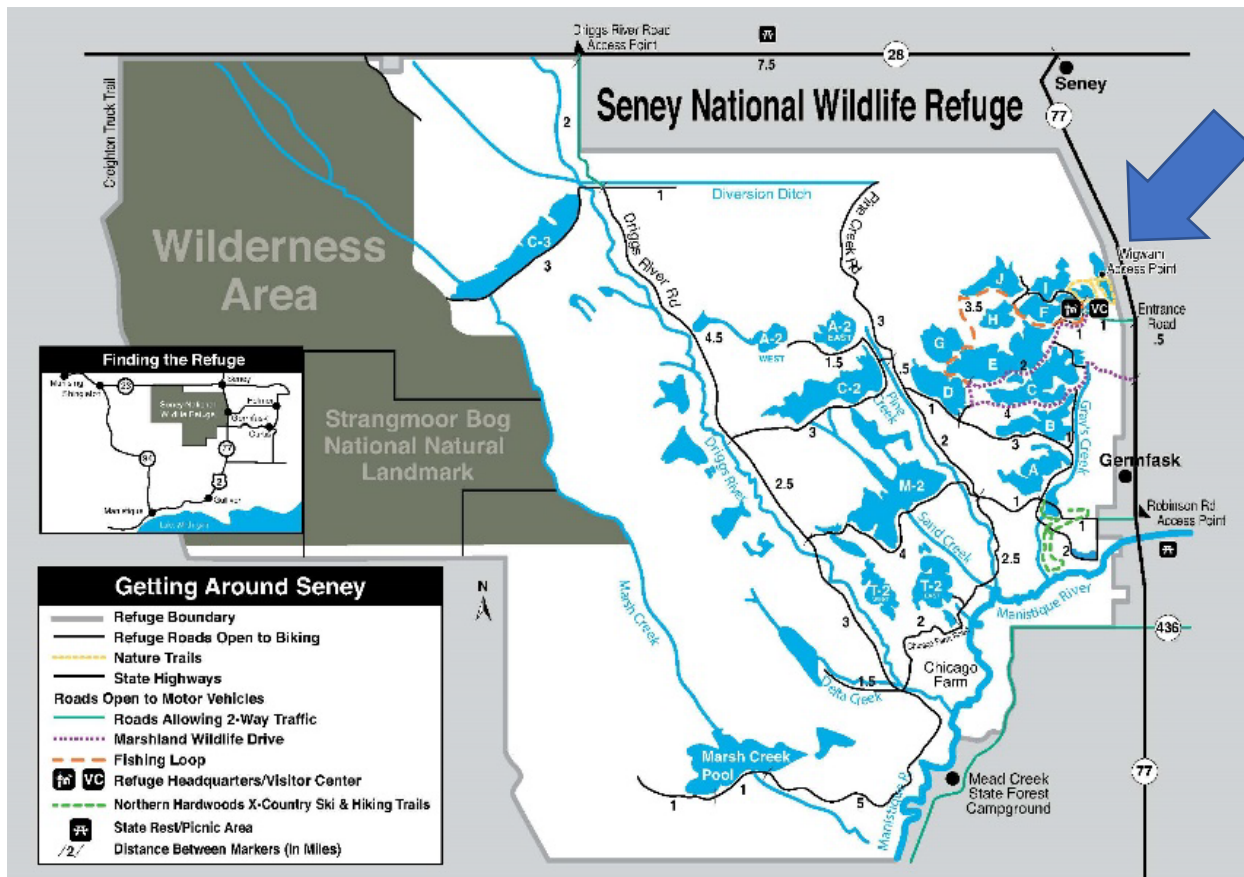


# Summary of Alternatives for the Draft Environmental Assessment for Seney National Wildlife Refuge Structural Improvements to the Show Pool Historic Wildlife Observation/Picnic Shelter (Show Pool Shelter)

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to complete structural improvements to the existing historic wildlife observation/picnic shelter located approximately 2.5 miles north of Germfask, MI on the west side of M-77. The structure traditionally known as “the Wigwams” was renamed the Show Pool Shelter in 2018. The Show Pool Shelter was completed in 1937 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA). It currently sits on 1.4 acres which includes picnic tables, grills, a pit toilet, information kiosks and foot trails. The rustic architecture reflects the initial development period of the refuge and is a significant contribution to the refuge’s eligibility as a potential historic district.



## **Purpose**

The purpose of this proposal is to consider the potential impacts to the historical integrity of the structure as plans are made to repair the deteriorating structure. With the already existing need for structural repairs, the project provides an opportunity to simultaneously improve the usefulness of the structure, enhance wildlife viewing opportunities and visitor experience, and considers the appropriateness of the original architecture. The Service has been awarded funding from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) to improve the shelter and public access area.

Please refer to the draft environmental assessment (EA) for the full consideration of impacts to the following alternatives.

## **Alternative A – Continue Current Management – [No Action Alternative]**

This alternative consists of continuing current management of the existing wildlife observation/picnic shelter as it appears today and is now identified as the Show Pool Shelter. See photographs of the building through the years in Appendix A of the EA. Deteriorated materials would be replaced with in-kind or similar looking materials to ensure the shelter remains structurally sound and that the remaining historic integrity of the building meets the National Register of Historic Places standards.

Initial maintenance to address deteriorated materials work would involve replacing the cedar shake roof, replacing any rotten log timbers in the frame or other wooden structural features, staining all lumber components, maintenance and repair of existing concrete floor foundation, cleaning and repairing the stone fireplace and repairing any other current deficiencies found upon further inspection. Interpretive panels are present on the stone fireplace and would be upgraded as appropriate and needed. Additional regulatory, interpretational, and orientation signage in the vicinity of the structure would be upgraded and could reflect the Works Progress Administration (WPA)/Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) history in developing the refuge.

The fireplace would remain closed/inoperable for cooking. This is the same for all alternatives.

Initial repairs would take approximately 1-3 months to complete and may occur in phases as funding and workers are available, starting as early as possible in 2022. Long term routine maintenance would involve monthly site inspections and

mitigation for damage to the structure caused from pests, severe weather, or visitors as well as routine litter clean up and concrete cleaning. Eventually, the structure will require repainting again, a new roof, and perhaps concrete and stone repairs.

To provide for visitor and worker safety and site security during maintenance, demolition, and/or construction activities, the shelter and parking area would be closed to visitors. The site may be temporarily reopened between phases of work when visitor safety, worker safety, or site security is not at risk. Once initial repairs are complete, long term maintenance closures would range from a couple hours for minor repairs and up to several weeks for more extensive projects that may become necessary. This is the same across all alternatives.

When the site reopens and if other refuge access sites are closed, it will likely get more visitation. However, this visitation is not likely to increase substantially due to the small size of the site and limited site amenities. There are only four picnic sites outside of the shelter, one single toilet outhouse and a small parking lot supporting less than 10 vehicles. Increases in visitation at the Show Pool Shelter Site due to other refuge closures would also be short term and likely subside when other access areas reopen. This is the same for all alternatives.



Photo: The Show Pool Shelters in 2015.

## **Alternative B – Remove Walls and Conical Roofs (preferred alternative)**

Under this preferred alternative, the Service proposes to remove the conical roof tops and walls of the Show Pool Shelter while retaining the central portion of the structure with the stone fireplace and existing roof. The roof would be extended to replace the conical roof portion. Cedar shakes would be replaced on the existing roof, rotten log timbers in the frame or other features would be replaced with like materials, maintenance and repair of the existing concrete floor foundation, and cleaning and repairing the stone fireplace.

Initial repairs would take approximately 1-6 months to complete and may occur in phases as funding and workers are available. This alternative would include work on the shelter as soon as possible in 2022 but may be delayed with construction starting in 2023. Long term routine maintenance would be similar to Alternative A.

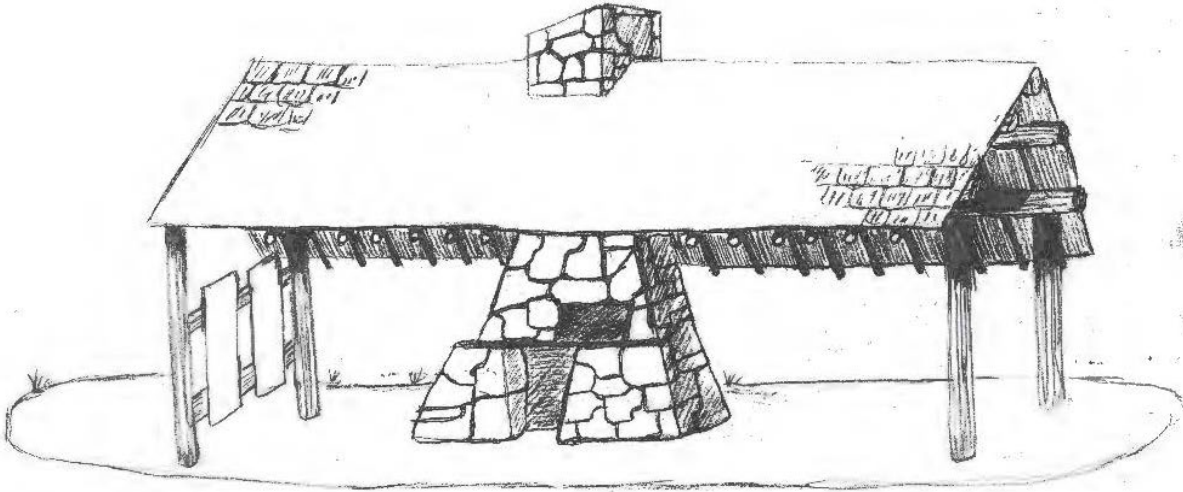
This alternative offers a compromise that will maintain some of the historical characteristics representing WPA and CCC significance of the structure while improving experience and access for wildlife-dependent recreational activities and eliminating problematic design for refuge compliance and cultural sensitivities.

Changes to the structural framing will require architectural engineering to design alterations that are structurally sound. The fireplace and central roofing structure would remain intact while the conical portions of the roof and walls of the building would be removed. The look and feel of the central portion of the roof with open rafters and whole logs would remain. The goal is to open the ends up in a way that allows the space to be better utilized for wildlife observation, environmental education programs, law enforcement compliance and a better-quality experience for the public. The look of the modified structure has not been designed and may include keeping a few angled support posts at either end as a legacy to the original teepee construction or by adding a wind break and/or additional interpretive panels to new vertical end posts. See two possible concept sketches below.

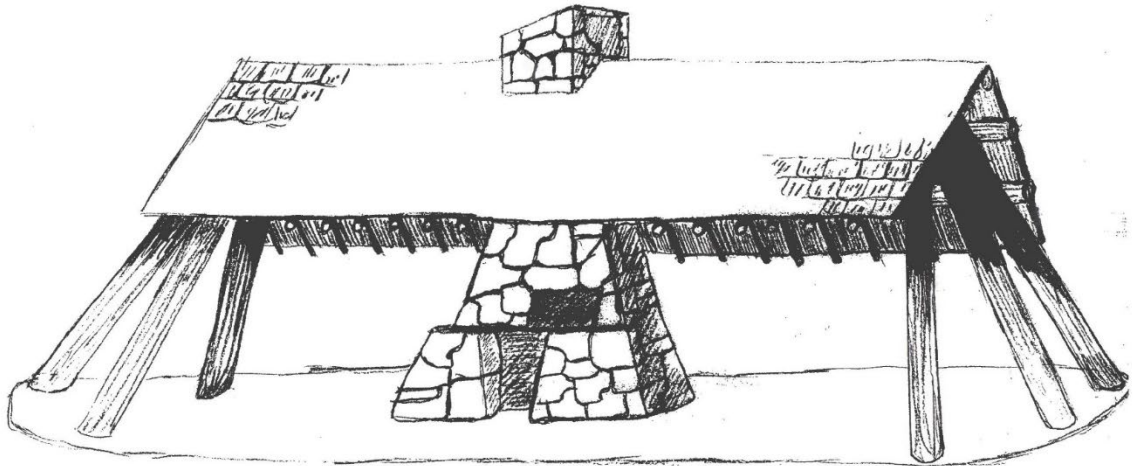
Once the construction plans have been developed, the refuge will announce the specific duration and timing of any closures. This alternative re-evaluates and modifies or abandons the use of similar looking tribal teepee architecture and may help build more meaningful and stronger relationships with tribal governments by creating a more inclusive recreational facility.

This alternative fulfills the Service's mandate under the National Wildlife Refuge System Administrative Act. The Service has determined that removing the conical

portions of the Show Pool Shelter (Alternative B) is compatible with the purposes of Seney National Wildlife Refuge and the mission of the System.



Concept Drawing 1 for Alternative B

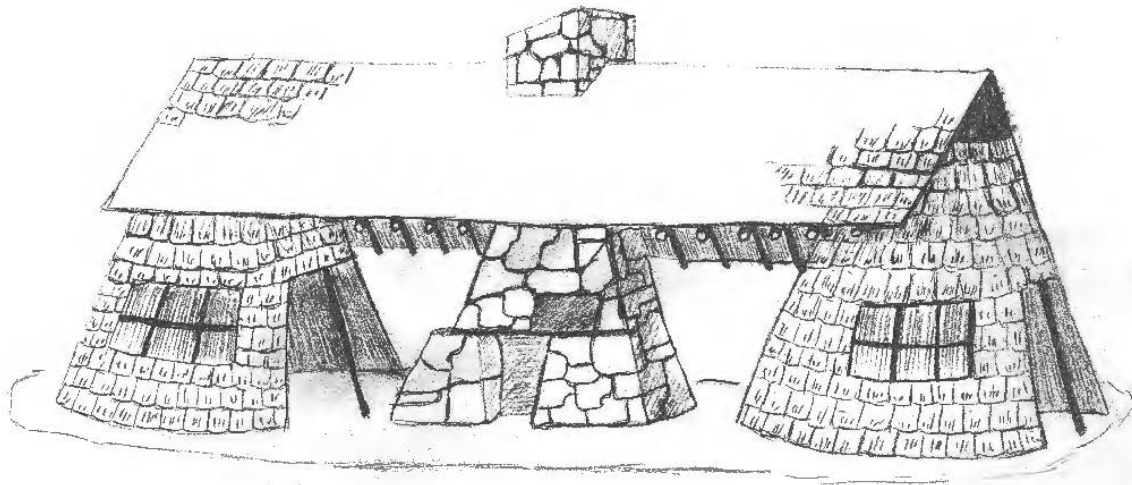


Concept Drawing 2 for Alternative B

### **Alternative C – Retain Conical Bases but Remove Cone Tops**

This alternative consists of altering the framework of the shelter so that it remains unique but has less resemblance to teepees. This alternative would consist of removing the cones from the roofline and retaining the conical base and original framing. This alternative retains the greatest amount of original construction from the WPA/CCC period of refuge development. This would include restoring an open viewing window that has since been closed for each conical component. New materials would be similar to those used currently. Interpretive panels are present on the stone fireplace and would be upgraded as appropriate and needed. Additional interpretational and orientation signage in the vicinity of the structure would be upgraded and could reflect the WPA/CCC history in developing the refuge. See a concept sketch below.

Project duration and timing would be similar to Alternative B.



Concept Drawing for Alternative C