

Abstract

Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Type of Action: Administrative
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Abstract

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to implement the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), Iowa. The CCP will guide management for the next 15 years. Three alternatives for future Refuge management are described: A) no action, B) habitat protection emphasis, and C) habitat protection, increased management, and integrated wildlife-dependent recreation. Our preferred alternative is identified as Alternative C. This Final Environmental Impact Statement considers the biological, environmental and socioeconomic effects that the three alternatives would have on the most significant issues and concerns identified during the planning process.

Alternative A: No Action: Status Quo – This alternative assumes no change from past management programs and is considered the base from which to compare the other alternatives. There would be no lands added to the Refuge and no major changes in habitat management or public use programs.

Alternative B: Habitat Protection Emphasis – The primary emphasis of the Refuge would be land acquisition and other forms of habitat protection to expand the Refuge by 3400 acres within 22 counties in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin for endangered species recovery and proactive protection of species of concern. This alternative emphasizes minimal physical disturbance of endangered species habitat. Some aspects of recreation, habitat restoration and control of invasive species would be at current levels and some would be reduced. The amount of public use would be monitored.

Alternative C: Habitat Protection, Increased Management, and Integrated Wildlife-Dependent Recreation – This alternative would provide for expansion of the Refuge by 2,275 acres within 22 counties in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin for endangered species recovery and proactive protection of species of concern. This alternative addresses multiple recovery goals for delisting of the Iowa Pleistocene snail through increased habitat management. Public use would be increased for environmental education and wildlife observation. The amount of public use would be monitored.

