



# Big Muddy

*National Fish and Wildlife Refuge*

## Planning Information

*Comprehensive Conservation Plan*

December 2007

### Comprehensive Conservation Planning Project Launched

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is starting work on a long-term management plan for Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. This plan, known as a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), will guide management of wildlife and their habitats as well as wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities across the Refuge for the next 15 years.

Preparing a CCP typically takes about 3 years. The process begins with listening to everyone interested in Refuge management – from Refuge and Service staff to neighbors, state and federal agencies and non-government organizations.

The Big Muddy NFWR planning effort is beginning with seven public listening meetings scheduled in communities near the Refuge along the Missouri River. What we hear about Refuge management will be the basis for developing different management alternatives, and these alternatives will be evaluated in a document called an environmental assessment. Once we've completed the environmental assessment and selected a preferred alternative for Refuge management, we will release a Draft CCP and invite comment on the document. Then we will revise the plan as necessary based on the comments received and publish the Final CCP.



Big Muddy NFWR. USFWS

### Getting Involved

You can help us by sharing your thoughts and concerns related to Big Muddy NFWR. The participation of everyone who cares about the Refuge and its future management direction is critical to the success of this planning process.

You may submit your comments to us by:

*Mail:*

Tom Bell, Refuge Manager  
Big Muddy NFWR  
Attn: CCP Comment  
4200 New Haven Road  
Columbia MO 65201-9634

*Fax:*

573/876-1839

*E-mail:*

tom\_bell@fws.gov

*Big Muddy NFWR Planning Web Page:*

[www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/bigmuddyccp](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/bigmuddyccp)

Although your comments are welcome anytime, to be most useful as we develop management alternatives we need to hear from you by **January 15, 2008**.

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*Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge*

## About Big Muddy NFWR

Eight units of the Big Muddy NFWR stretch along the Missouri River between Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri. Established in 1994, the Refuge includes more than 11,000 acres and is authorized to expand to 60,000 acres. Expansion will occur by acquiring land from willing sellers.

Restoring the River and its habitat and conserving the wildlife that live there is the predominate goal of Refuge management. Once a broad, slow moving, shallow river with braided channels, today levees, dikes and other containment structures have made the river faster and deeper. The Refuge is trying to restore the floodplain forests, marshes and wet prairies that existed before development.

More than 250 species of migratory birds, 120 species of fish, and other species of wildlife such as Wild Turkeys, bobcats, river otters, white-tailed deer, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates have benefitted from the formation of the Refuge.

Ongoing work conducted in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers has improved fishery habitat in the Missouri River by creating sandbars and slow-flowing waters that are essential to larval and juvenile fish. The first larval pallid sturgeon (an endangered species) found in 50 years in the Lower Missouri River were located on a unit of the Refuge in the shallow, slow-moving water of a side channel.

For more information, visit the Refuge's web site at:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/BigMuddy>

## Big Muddy NFWR Draft Vision

Working with others, conserve and restore sections of the Missouri River and its floodplain from Kansas City to St. Louis. Allow an active river that is diverse in depth, velocity, and course and periodically floods. Through those processes, the river creates and sustains riverine and terrestrial habitat sufficient to support species native to the Missouri River floodplain. Visitors engage in wildlife oriented recreation and understand and actively support Refuge efforts to maintain natural riverine habitats and processes in the Missouri River floodplain.

## Big Muddy NFWR Draft Goals

### Wildlife

Conserve, manage, and restore the biodiversity and abundance of native endemic fish and wildlife populations within the Missouri River floodplain.

### Habitat

Restore native habitat and natural riverine functions sufficient to support species native to the Missouri River floodplain.

### People

Provide public areas where visitors engage in wildlife oriented recreation and understand Refuge resources and efforts to maintain natural riverine habitats and processes in the Missouri River Floodplain.

## Who We Are

The Refuge is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Service is an agency under the direction of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Department of the Interior, the Service, and the National Wildlife Refuge System are described in the following paragraphs.

### U.S. Department of the Interior

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the U.S. Department of the Interior is responsible for about one-fifth of the land in the United States. From its establishment in 1849, the Department has managed many varied programs including Indian Affairs, administering land grants, improving historic western emigrant routes, marking boundaries, and conducting research on geological resources.

The Department's mission is to protect and provide access to our nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to island communities. The Department's goals are:

- Protect the environment and preserve our nation's natural and cultural resources.
- Provide recreation for America.
- Manage natural resources for a healthy environment and strong economy.
- Provide science for a changing world.
- Meet our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to island communities.



*A Refuge biologist surveys flooding in May 2007. USFWS*

The Department collects revenues from the leasing of natural gas and oil resources, both offshore and onshore; from coal, timber, and grazing on Federal lands, and from numerous other sources, such as recreation fees.

The Department of the Interior is comprised of a number of bureaus and offices including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Minerals Management Service, the National Park Service, the Office of Surface Mining, the Office of Insular Affairs, and the Office of the Secretary.

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is:

Working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System of more than 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The Service enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

### National Wildlife Refuge System

Refuges provide habitat for more than 5,000 species of wildlife, and they also provide unique opportunities for people. When it is compatible with wildlife and habitat conservation, refuges offer opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and environmental interpretation.



*Refuge volunteers posting the boundary at Baltimore Bottoms. USFWS*

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) 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 missions of the Service and the Refuge System both reflect how committed the agency is to working with others to conserve resources and, at the same time, to providing places where people can connect with and appreciate the heritage of this nation's diverse natural resources.

## Things You Might Consider

Here are some questions and topics that you might consider as you formulate your comments. We are providing these questions to stimulate your thoughts. Do not feel that your comments need to be limited to any of these questions or topics. Just tell us what is on your mind. We would like you to express your opinion – positive or negative – on any issue important to you.

Some questions that you might consider are:

- What do you value most about Big Muddy NFWR?
- What do you consider to be the most important issues facing Big Muddy NFWR?

- What changes do you see coming that will help or challenge the Refuge?
- How do you see Big Muddy NFWR fitting into the community?
- What is the most important thing the Refuge can do in the next 15 years?
- As the refuge manager, what would you do to improve Big Muddy NFWR?

Some topics that you might consider are:

### Wildlife and Habitat Conservation

- threatened and endangered species
- wildland fire suppression
- scientific studies
- migratory bird conservation
- game wildlife management
- nongame wildlife management
- fishery management
- prescribed fire
- forest management

### Recreation and Public Use

- fishing
- hunting
- wildlife viewing/photography
- hiking trails
- environmental education
- interpretive programs

### Other

- aesthetics
- cultural values
- partnerships

Sharing your views on Big Muddy NFWR will contribute to a comprehensive conservation plan that meets the needs of wildlife and people.

***Thank you for your help!***