

Chapter 5: Plan Implementation

New and Existing Projects

This CCP outlines an ambitious course of action for the future management of the Kirtland's Warbler WMA. The ability to enhance wildlife habitats on the Area and provide additional quality public use opportunities will require a significant commitment of staff and funding from the Service. The WMA will continually need appropriate operational and maintenance funding to implement the objectives in this plan.

The following provides a brief description of the highest priority projects for Kirtland's Warbler WMA, as chosen by the Seney NWR staff and listed in the Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS). Staffing, maintenance and operation needs will change if land consolidation occurs in the future.

Kirtland's Warbler WMA Operating Needs Projects

Enhance Refuge Management and Administration

- Hire an onsite resource specialist to coordinate management efforts, interface with the public and provide oversight of WMA lands. Estimated cost: \$150,000
 - Hire a technician to conduct wildlife surveys, post boundaries and oversee timber harvest and habitat regeneration. Estimated cost: \$120,000
 - Post boundaries of the WMA. Currently no boundaries are posted. Surveys need to be conducted and posts and signs purchased. A contract to post the boundary, in accordance with the Refuge Manual, would be awarded. Estimated cost: \$200,000
 - Provide for public use by designating trails, constructing observation blinds and developing interpretive signs. Estimated cost: \$100,000
- Habitat regeneration is a critical component of managing Kirtland's Warbler populations. Given the current size of the WMA, 300 acres would need to be regenerated annually at a minimum cost of \$100 per acre. Estimated cost: \$30,000
 - Law enforcement is a necessary component of land management at the Kirtland's Warbler WMA. Funds are needed to hire a full-time law enforcement officer to ensure the protection of nesting areas during the breeding season, that hunting regulations are followed and that habitat is not destroyed by illegal timber harvest, off-road vehicles or other means. Estimated cost: \$150,000
 - Fire management is necessary to protect and manage habitat. A Fire Management Officer would be hired to coordinate fire suppression



A contractor plants trees at Kirtland's Warbler WMA. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service photo.

and prescribed burning with State and Service officials. Estimated cost: \$200,000

- Establish an office and hire administrative support. To fully manage the Kirtland's Warbler WMA an office would need to be established to house the Resource Specialist and Technician. This office would need an Office Automation Clerk to manage the office and serve as a contact point for the public. Estimated cost: \$100,000

Current and Future Staffing Requirements

The Kirtland's Warbler WMA does not have a permanent staff. The staff at Seney NWR oversees the WMA and provides limited services on an as-needed basis. These duties include, but are not limited to, administration of timber sales, coordinating with the state on harvesting and replanting efforts, participation in Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team efforts, research, the Kirtland's Warbler census, Cowbird trapping, public education and on-site law enforcement. Full-time oversight may be required in the future if the land holdings of the Kirtland's Warbler WMA are consolidated.

Step-down Management Plans

Step-down management plans describe specific actions that support the accomplishment of objectives. The Kirtland's Warbler WMA does not require many step-down plans due to relatively small size of properties, limited activities and the lack of staff and funding. The objectives and strategies outlined in this CCP will provide adequate detail for most of the programs at the Kirtland's Warbler WMA.

Partnership Opportunities

Partnerships have become an essential element for the successful accomplishments of Kirtland's Warbler WMA goals, objectives, and strategies. The objectives outlined in this CCP need the support and the partnerships of federal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations and individual citizens. This broad-based approach to man-



Baiting a Brown-headed Cowbird trap at Kirtland's Warbler WMA. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service photo.

aging fish and wildlife resources extends beyond social and political boundaries and requires a broad foundation of support. The Kirtland's Warbler WMA will continue to seek creative partnership opportunities to achieve its vision for the future.

Notable existing partners include:

- Michigan DNR
- East Lansing Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Kirtland Community College
- Michigan Audubon Society
- The Nature Conservancy

Wilderness Review

As part of the CCP process, we reviewed lands within the legislative boundaries of Kirtland's Warbler WMA for wilderness suitability. No lands were found suitable for designation as Wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The WMA does not contain 5,000 contiguous, roadless acres nor does it have any units of sufficient size to make

their preservation practicable as Wilderness. Lands acquired for the Kirtland's Warbler WMA have been substantially affected by humans, particularly through intense forestry, agriculture and transportation infrastructure.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The direction set forth in this CCP and specifically identified strategies and projects will be monitored throughout the life of this plan. On a periodic basis, the Regional Office will assemble a station review team whose purpose will be to visit the Kirtland's Warbler WMA and evaluate current activities in light of this plan. The team will review all aspects of management, including direction, accomplishments and funding. The goals and objectives presented in this CCP will provide the baseline from which this field station will be evaluated.

Climate Change Evaluation

The potential impacts of climate change will receive increasing attention and study during the life of this plan. All strategies for plan implementation, including consolidation of land holdings of the Kirtland's Warbler WMA, will be periodically evaluated in the light of new predictions and progress in carbon emission reduction.

Plan Review and Revision

The CCP for Kirtland's Warbler WMA is meant to provide guidance to managers and staff over the next 15 years. However, the CCP is also a dynamic and flexible document and several of the strategies contained in this plan are subject to such things as drought, floods, windstorms and other uncontrollable events. Likewise, many of the strategies are dependent upon Service funding for staff and projects. Because of all these factors, the recommendations in the CCP will be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, revised to meet new circumstances.

