

# **Appendix K: Summary and Disposition of Comments on Draft CCP**



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The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, three organizations, and ten individuals commented on the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan. The following organizations submitted comments: Emiquon Audubon (A Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society), Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy.

We considered the comments as we prepared the final Comprehensive Conservation Plan. The following paragraphs summarize the comments and our response. In addition to the comments, some reviewers noted typographical errors and minor editing needs. We thank the reviewers for catching these errors and we have corrected them.

### Water Management

The State commented that the management of Meredosia Lake and the associated weir is not addressed in the plan and more detail should be provided. Meredosia Lake is a meandered lake and the State claims ownership of the lake and controls the weir. Management of the lake is not the Service's responsibility. We will cooperate and provide technical expertise, as requested, in aiding in the State's management of the area.

Our management of the Quiver Creek water control structure on Lake Chautauqua was an issue raised during scoping and addressed in the environmental assessment. Some individuals disagreed, others agreed, with our decision to not maintain open water beyond natural freeze-up in an effort to keep waterfowl in the area. We expect to keep the management outlined in the CCP.

### Habitat Management

The State suggested that the State, The Nature Conservancy, and the Service work jointly to develop management plans for the lands owned by The Nature Conservancy at Emiquon and Spunky Bottoms. We will continue to work cooperatively in these particular areas and the river basin, in general. With respect to The Nature Conservancy lands, at their request we will continue to serve on their science advisory board and provide technical expertise to assist them in making their management decisions. Because The Nature Conservancy owns the land, they are the lead in how it will be managed.

The State asked that the Service consult with a state biologist before using any biological control agent in pest management. We have added a sentence to the strategy of integrated pest management that says we will consult with a state biologist before using a biological control agent.

An organization encouraged us to include wildlife, as well as habitat, objectives in the plan. We have chosen not to include wildlife objectives because so many factors beyond our control affect whether or not they are achieved. Our reason-

ing is that we can manipulate the habitat and that if we achieve our habitat objectives, then wildlife will be provided for.

An individual thought that we should not manage the refuge to provide food for waterfowl, because the ducks will not leave the refuge when there is adequate food and their availability to hunters is reduced. We understand the purpose of the refuge is to provide feeding and resting habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. We think the goals and objectives of the CCP reflect that purpose.

### Wildlife Management

An individual suggested that we control beaver on the refuges. Another suggested that we implement deer control at Meredosia NWR. We currently issue special use permits to control beaver to address management needs. We plan to continue beaver control through the issuance of permits. We agree that deer control is needed. We will address this need in the revision of the Hunting Plan.

### Listed Species

The State questioned some of the strategies associated with protection of Bald Eagles and water management and reforestation. We have deleted or changed the strategies to address the questions raised by the State. We will, of course, continue, to protect the Bald Eagle, as required by law. The State recommended that we add a strategy that incorporates site disturbance as a strategy for the management of decurrent false aster. We recognize that disturbance is a possible management technique, which is being evaluated by a cooperating researcher on the Refuge. We expect to implement the best strategy for management of the decurrent false aster based on scientific evaluations. We have modified the strategy in the CCP to indicate explicitly that disturbance is a possible technique that is being considered.

### Visitor Services Management

The State commented that the plan was not clear about whether or not currently planned strategies would be implemented in the draft plan as well. The State suggested that the plan should clearly state that the draft plan will substantially expand the hunting and fishing opportunities beyond 2003 levels. We have edited the environmental assessment to indicate that currently planned activities would be implemented in the CCP. We think that rather than make a general statement about expansion of hunting and fishing opportunities, the specific strategies 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13 under the Wildlife Dependent Recreation Objective that detail the expansion of hunting and fishing opportunities does a better job of communicating the expansion of the program.

Two organizations commented and made detailed recommendations about facility development on the Refuges. These comments will be considered when the more specific Visitor Services Plan is written.

## Land Acquisition and Focus Area

One organization expressed disappointment that the Service was not proposing an expansion of the authorized boundary. One individual thought we should not acquire any more land. Another organization would like to see an expanded refuge focus area. Our intent is to complete acquisition within our current boundaries before further expansion. And, the more limited focus area outlined in the plan will allow us to concentrate our efforts. As with all aspects of the plan, we will continue to evaluate our position through adaptive management principles throughout the life of the plan.

