

Chapter 5: Implementation and Monitoring

5.1 Personnel Needs

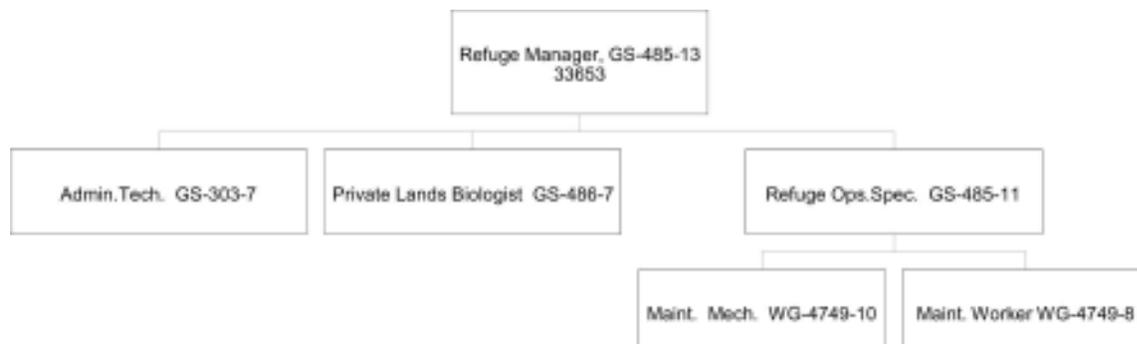
Currently the staff of the Refuge Complex consists of six positions: refuge manager, refuge operations specialist, administrative technician, private lands biologist, maintenance mechanic, and maintenance worker (Figure 25).

As the Refuge Complex activities have expanded and Refuge visitation has increased with a demand for higher quality wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, it has become difficult to efficiently run the Refuge to meet the demands of the resources and the public. To meet these needs, our plan is to add a full-time park ranger to coordinate the public use program, a full-time law enforcement officer, and a full-time private lands biologist.

5.2 New and Existing Projects

The future management of the Refuge Complex will require consistent operational and maintenance funding to implement the strategies in this Plan. The costs to implement the strategies and projects identified in this Plan are captured in Service budget databases, including the Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS), Maintenance Management System (MMS), and Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS). The following list contains examples of the

Figure 25: Illinois River NWR Complex Staffing, 2003



highest priority Refuge projects (Tier 1), as chosen by the Refuge staff. A listing of the top priority unfunded Refuge projects can be found in Appendix F.

Tier 1 RONS projects include:

- Improve Refuge public use and outreach by adding an outdoor recreation planner to the staff (RONS No. 97009).
- Improve resources data analysis on the Illinois River Refuges by adding a biologist position (RONS No. 99005).
- Construct an accessible platform at Chautauqua NWR (RONS No. 99011).
- Undertake prairie restoration on the Shearl and Skinner tracts on Meredosia NWR (RONS No. 97003).
- Improve the entrance road to the Refuge Complex headquarters (RONS No. 99004).

5.3 Step-down Management Plans

Step-down management plans help meet the goals and objectives of the CCP. Some step-down plans are required by Service policy and others are used to specify strategies and implementation schedules beyond the detail of the CCP. The step-down plans identified in Table 3 will be reviewed and revised as necessary to achieve the objectives of the CCP. Although each plan has value, the Habitat Management Plan, Hunting Plan and Visitor Services detailed planning are essential to describe reforestation, hunt expansion and trail development.

Table 3: Step-down Management Plan Schedule

Plan	Completion Date
Safety Program	2004
Hazardous Materials Operations	2004
Law Enforcement	2005
Pest Management/Exotic Species	2005
Hunting	2006
Habitat Management Plan	2006
Inventory and Monitoring	2005

5.4 Partnership Opportunities

Partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, private organizations, and individuals will be essential to the successful implementation of this CCP. Refuge staff will seek out partnerships to fulfill the goals and objectives outlined in this plan to attain the desired future wildlife and habitat conditions. Natural resource issues extend beyond social and political boundaries. Stakeholders with a variety of interests and backgrounds need to be included in the day-to-day management of the Refuge Complex and take ownership in its development.

Voluntary participation from private landowners will be an essential part of the Refuge Complex's emphasis on Illinois River Focus Areas. Nearly all the land in the Focus Areas is in private ownership. In fact, nearly 70 percent of all available fish and wildlife habitat in the United States is in private ownership. With increased demographic trends toward urbanization and suburbanization, there is a tendency for people to lose touch with the land and the goods and services it provides. The Refuge Complex's approach to sustainable management of public and private land will be to actively support a network of lands and waters dedicated to fish, wildlife, and plant conservation. This means that partnerships are not only desirable for accomplishing Refuge objectives, they are necessary.

Natural resources do not organize themselves according to political boundaries. Clean air and water, sustainable populations of wildlife and plants, and positive aesthetic and recreational experiences are a community-wide effort involving multiple federal, state, and local jurisdictions. The Refuge Complex will support other governmental agencies, private organizations and industries, and private landowners in managing natural resources in ways that enhance Service Trust Resources for present and future generations. The Refuge Complex will contribute staff expertise, equipment, and monetary resources, where possible, to individuals and groups requesting assistance with activities beneficial to Service trust resources.

The Refuge Complex's volunteer program will be vital to the fulfillment of the Refuge Complex vision. Volunteers currently assist the Refuge Complex staff with fish and wildlife management, habitat management, education and outreach, administration, and maintenance – in other words, in nearly every aspect of the Refuge's operation.

The Refuge has established partnership relationships with following organizations:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Illinois Natural History Survey
- Forbes Biological Station
- Ducks Unlimited
- Pheasants Forever
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Izaak Walton League of America

- The Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Rural Fire Districts

5.5 Monitoring And Evaluation

Monitoring is critical to successful implementation of this plan. Monitoring is necessary to evaluate the progress toward objectives and to determine if conditions are changing.

Accomplishment of the objectives described in this CCP will be monitored annually by the Refuge Manager and his or her supervisor. The public will be informed about the activities of the Refuge Complex staff through periodic mailings to persons on the mailing list and published on the Refuge Complex website. The techniques and details for monitoring related to specific objectives will be specified in the Inventory and Monitoring Step-down Plan.

The direction set forth in this CCP and specifically identified strategies and projects will be monitored throughout the life of this plan. Periodically, the Regional Office will assemble a station review team to visit the Refuge Complex and evaluate current Refuge activities in light of this plan. The team will review all aspects of Refuge 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.

5.6 Plan Amendment and Revision

The CCP is meant to provide guidance to Refuge 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 the plan are subject to natural, uncontrollable events such as floods and droughts. Likewise, many of the strategies are dependent upon Service funding for staff and projects. Finally, the CCP was developed using the best information available at the time of preparation. As new and better information emerges, the direction and strategies of the CCP may need to be re-evaluated. Because of these factors, the recommendations in the CCP will be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, revised to meet new circumstances. If any revisions are major, the review and revision will include the public.