

Chapter 5: Plan Implementation

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the actions, funding, coordination, and monitoring to implement the CCP. As noted in the inside cover of this document, this plan does not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition. These decisions are at the discretion of Congress in overall appropriations, and in budget allocation decisions made at the Washington and Regional levels of the Service.

New and Existing Projects

This CCP outlines an ambitious course of action for the future management of the Leopold Wetland Management District. It will require considerable staff commitment as well as funding commitment to actively manage the wildlife habitats and add and improve public use facilities. The District will continually need appropriate operational and maintenance funding to implement the objectives in this plan. A full listing of unfunded District projects and operational needs can be found in Appendix H. A brief description of the highest priority District projects is listed in the following paragraphs.

Minimum Refuge Operations Needs

The project will provide funds to operate the District office including expenses for heating, air conditioning, required safety inspections, electrical expenses, and safety improvements. These funds will also allow for the upkeep of District facilities including parking lots, interpretive kiosks, interpretive trails, and water control structures. It is important to provide a quality experience for visitors who come to the District each year. The project will help



Building a dike. USFWS photo.

pay fuel bills, electric bills and the day-to-day costs of operating a District. (First Year Cost: \$108,000, recurring annual cost \$108,000)

Prairie Restoration on WPAs and Easements

Quality prairie grassland on the District's WPAs is essential to meet the waterfowl production goals of the District. In addition, numerous species of migratory birds benefit from native prairie grassland. Fully 70 percent (3,425 acres) of the District grasslands are seeded warm-season grasses and forbs or remnant prairie, however only 20 percent (989 acres) is derived from Wisconsin genotype seed. The remaining grasslands are either cool season exotic grasses such as smooth brome, Kentucky bluegrass, and quackgrass, which do not provide diverse habitat for wildlife, or non-Wisconsin varieties of grasses and forbs that do not match the phenology of locally adapted native species. This project will renovate the remaining cool season and grass fields and start to convert non-locally adapted warm-season fields in the District in the next 10 years. This project will address equipment pur-

chase, temporary staff time, chemical, seed and contracts for brush cutting and seed removal. (First Year Cost: \$333,000, recurring annual cost \$67,000)

Savanna Restoration

While not considered prime waterfowl habitat when compared to grassland and wetland habitats, savannas in Wisconsin were an integral part of the historic landscape. The exclusion of fire and grazing over the years have degenerated this unique habitat and allowed invasive tree and brush species to replace the historical overstory and understory vegetation structure and composition. The goal of this project will be to restore and manage remnant oak savanna ecosystems throughout the District using timber harvest, brush removal, chemical treatment, seeding, and prescribed burning. This project will address equipment purchase, temporary staff time, chemical, seed, and contracts for brush removal. (First Year Cost: \$119,000, recurring annual cost \$35,000)

Wetland Restoration

Fully 50 percent of the historical wetland acres in the state have been lost to drainage, agriculture, and development. Because of the potential for agricultural production, and more recently urban development, the lands that fall within the District have been particularly hard hit; losses in some counties are estimated at over 75 percent. Wetlands and associated quality grassland habitats provide pair bonding, breeding, brood rearing, and migrational habitat for several species of waterfowl, however Mallard and Blue-wing Teal are of particular concern to the District. This project is to restore and manage all types of wetlands from shallow tempo-



Blue-winged Teal brood. USFWS photo.

rary basins to deep marsh wetlands for the benefit of waterfowl and other waterbirds. This project will address equipment purchase, temporary staff time, chemical, seed, and construction contracts for wetland restorations. (First Year Cost: \$370,000, recurring annual cost \$81,000)

Enhance Biological Program (District Biologist & Biological Technician)

The biologist positions would enable the District to develop a biological program with an emphasis on evaluating and refining management actions to provide quality habitat for wildlife. With assistance from the biological technician, the biologist would also be responsible for coordinating data collection to monitor waterfowl use and recruitment within the District. The data collected from numerous surveys and biological programs would be very useful in making biologically based decisions within the District. Focus areas for acquisition, restoration and management would be developed and refined using this data. (First Year Cost: \$287,000, recurring annual cost \$74,000)

Enhance Visitor Services Program (Wildlife Refuge Specialist & Seasonal Tractor Operator)

The WPAs in 17 counties provide important recreational opportunities for Wisconsin residents. They also provide an opportunity to reconnect people with nature. The purpose of the project will be to construct and maintain entrance signs, boundary signs, wildlife observation platforms, trails, kiosks, parking lots and boundary fences on WPAs. Some WPAs will also be developed that will provide public opportunities for the Service's six priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, interpretation and environmental education. (First Year Cost: \$207,000, recurring annual cost \$54,000)

Control of Invasive Species, Noxious Weeds and Woody Invaders

Invasive species are detrimental to plant and animal populations. In addition, grassland habitat on the District is negatively impacted by other noxious weeds and woody invaders such as box elder, Canada thistle, and spotted knapweed. The purpose of the project is to control these unwanted plant species and provide quality wetland, grassland and

Table 9: Current and Proposed Staffing Under the CCP

Current Staff- 8.2 FTEs	Proposed Additions – 3.5 FTEs
District Manager	
Wildlife Refuge Specialist	Wildlife Refuge Specialist with emphasis in public use
Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife biologist & Biological Technician
Maintenance Worker	Permanent Seasonal tractor operator
Administrative Technician	
2- Private Lands Wildlife Biologists	
Fire Management Specialist	
Lead Fire Technician (19pp)	

woodland habitat on the District. The project would be in partnership with neighboring landowners and agencies in an effort to take a landscape approach to habitat management. Funds will be used for chemical, contract plant removal and temporary staff. (First Year Cost: \$136,000, recurring annual cost \$45,000)

Replace Facilities (Headquarters and Maintenance Facilities)

The current headquarters and maintenance facilities are inadequate to meet the needs of the Service. The facilities are not universally accessible and are not of an adequate size to support current staffing levels. Presently, the station headquarters is a converted two-story house with little room for interpretive exhibits for visitors, and there are safety concerns. The maintenance facilities consist of two small pole barns and a two-car garage. There is no building to repair and maintain equipment year round. It is important to have adequate indoor secure storage to protect the Service’s investment in equipment and supplies. These proposed facilities would include a headquarters (office) and maintenance shop to store and repair all equipment. (One Time Cost: \$4.0 million)

Staffing

Implementing the vision set forth in this CCP will require changes in the organizational structure of the District. Existing staff will direct their time and energy in new directions and new staff members will be added to assist in these efforts. Table 9 presents current staffing and the increases proposed for the District in this plan. Figure 30 shows the staffing organization at Leopold WMD.

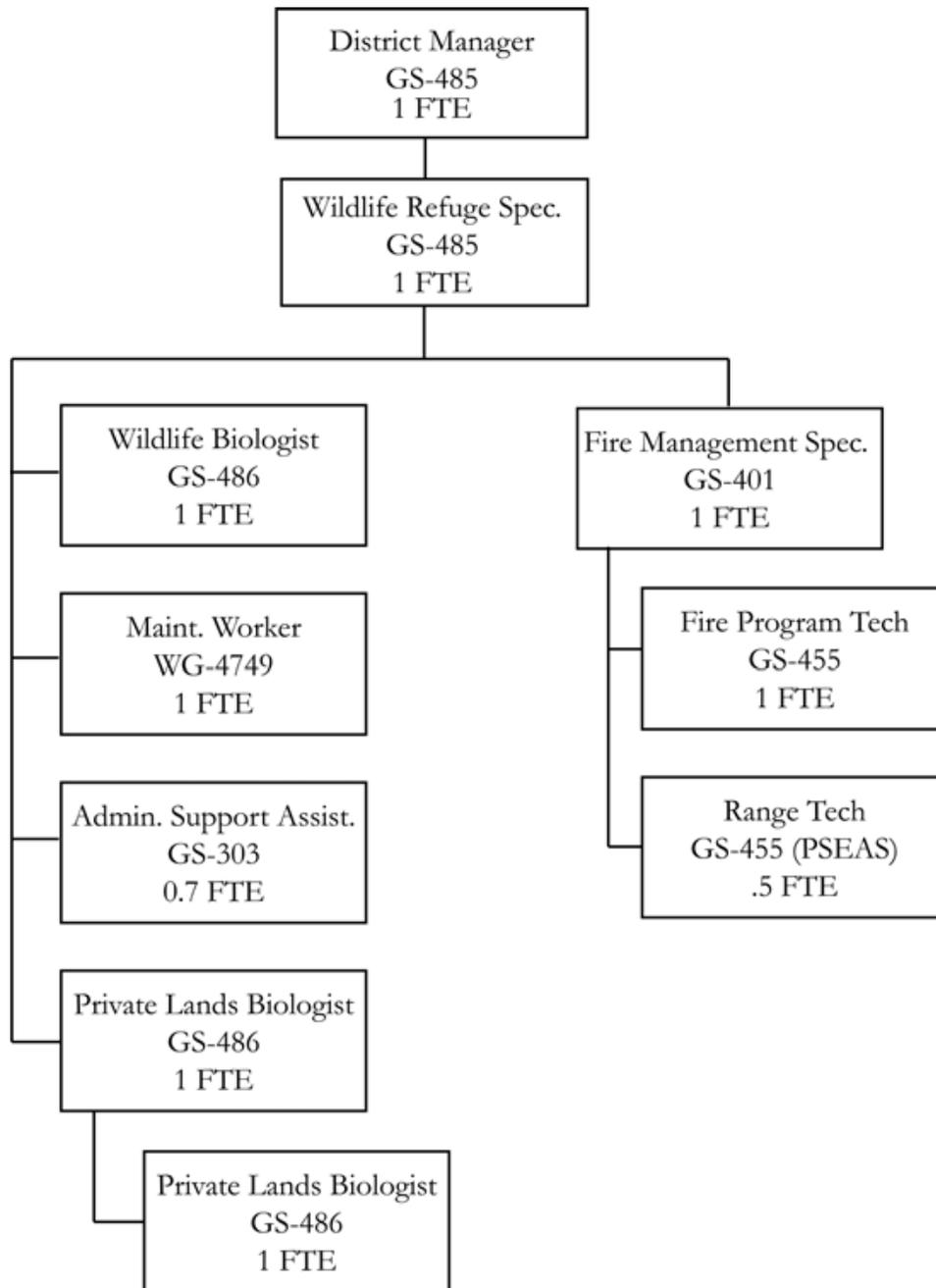
Partnership Opportunities

Partnerships are an essential element for the successful accomplishment of goals, objectives, and strategies at Leopold WMD. The objectives outlined in this CCP need the support and the partnerships of federal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations and individual citizens. District staff will continue to seek creative partnership opportunities to achieve the vision of the District.

We expect to continue to work with the following notable partners, while developing new partnerships:

- County Agencies
- County Land and Water Conservation Departments
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, & Consumer Protection
- National Park Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
- Ozaukee/Washington County Land Trust
- Towns
- Ducks Unlimited
- Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
- Pheasants Forever
- Wings over Wisconsin
- University of Wisconsin Extension
- University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
- Portage Charter School

Figure 30: Current Staff, Leopold Wetland Management District



- Aldo Leopold Foundation
- Sand County Foundation
- Madison Audubon Society

Step-Down Management Plans

The CCP is a plan that provides general concepts and specific wildlife, habitat, and people related objectives. Step-down management plans provide greater detail to managers and employees who will carry out the strategies described in the CCP. The District staff will revise or develop the following step-down plans:

- Habitat Management Plan (within 5 years)
- Visitor Services Plan (within 8 years)
- Habitat and Wildlife Monitoring Plans (within 8 years)

The Fire Management Plan, approved in 2007, provides direction and establishes procedures to guide various wildland fire program activities. The Fire Management Plan covers the historical and ecological role of fire, fire management objectives, preparedness, suppression, fire management actions and responses, fire impacts, use of prescribed fire and fire management restrictions.

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 District and evaluate current activities in light of this plan. The team will review all aspects of District management, including direction, accomplishments and funding. The goals and objectives presented in this CCP will provide the baseline for evaluation of this field station.



Monarch butterfly. USFWS photo.

Plan Review and Revision

The CCP is meant to provide guidance to District 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 uncontrollable events of nature. 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. If any revisions are major, the review and revision will include the public.