

- 5.2.3 Work with the City of Bloomington to fully develop City property along the Minnesota River into good quality wildlife habitat.
- 5.2.4 Enhance Refuge GIS capability for assessing impacts of adjacent or upstream land use on Refuge flora and fauna.
- 5.2.5 Work with Friends of the Minnesota Valley to increase landowner participation in private land stewardship through the Heritage and Corporate Registry programs.

**5.3 Objective:** Continue to acquire, restore, and manage fee and easement lands within the Wetland Management District.

*Discussion:* The Waterfowl Production Areas, wetland conservation easements and Farmer's Home Administration easements of the 14-county District provide habitat for nesting waterfowl and grassland songbirds, as well as public recreation opportunities, in areas that are often under widespread agricultural production or are subject to suburban growth. Established in 1994, the District is relatively new and opportunities abound for growth. The working relationship with local governments, conservation organizations and private landowners is very solid. The District grew an average of 500 to 1,000 acres per year through fee and easement acquisitions during the 5-year period ending in 2001. The District should strive to maintain the top end of this growth rate, if measured on a 5-10 year average, if adequate funding is available.

*Strategies:*

- 5.3.1 In cooperation with the MnDNR and private conservation organizations, delineate and submit acquisition proposals for no fewer than 750 acres annually.
- 5.3.2 In cooperation with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, identify quality habitats where Wetland Reserve Program funds can be combined with Duck Stamp funds for the purchase of Waterfowl Production Areas.
- 5.3.3 Pursue all available sources of funds for land acquisition and habitat restoration including the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, North American Wetland Conservation Act grants and private donations. A limited amount of Refuge Mitigation funds could be made available for specific acquisitions.

**5.4 Objective:** On an annual basis, and in partnership with others, restore 1,000 acres of habitat located on private lands through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

*Strategies:*

- 5.4.1 Continue to work with other agencies and organizations in the restoration and protection of wildlife habitats. Where possible, continue to broker and assist with programs of others including the Wetland Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Conservation Reserve Program, and the Reinvest in Minnesota Program.
- 5.4.2 Continue to closely work with Soil and Water Conservation Districts to assist in restoring and protecting wildlife habitats on private lands.
- 5.4.3 Continue to work directly with landowners on habitat restoration projects through the use of the Service's private landowner agreements.
- 5.4.4 Seek opportunities to obtain financial assistance and administrative support for field biologists within the Partners program through creative partnerships with conservation organizations and others.

**5.5 Objective:** Protect the cultural, historic, and prehistoric resources of federally-owned lands within the Refuge and District.

*Discussion:* The overview study (Godfrey 1999) drew upon a substantial yet limited number of cultural resources reports for the Minnesota River Valley. Some 31 other studies cover portions of the Wetland Management District. Completed cultural resources surveys as reported in some of these studies have covered 1,500 acres of Refuge and District land. Eighty cultural resources sites have been identified or recorded on Refuge and District land. The vast majority of Refuge and District land has never been subject to a cultural resources survey and many more sites are expected to be located on this land.

The large land base and the presence of two large cities make a search of and comparison with the list of National Register properties a meaningless exercise for this purpose. Nevertheless, the Refuge is surrounded by numerous properties on the National Register including some right adjacent to the boundary. No sites in the Refuge have been nominated but several have been determined eligible and most of the others are considered eligible until determined otherwise.

*Strategies:*

- 5.5.1 Describe, identify and take into consideration all archeological and cultural values prior to implementing construction or other ground-disturbing projects. Notify the Regional Historic Preservation Officer early in project planning or upon receipt of a request for permitted activities.

- 5.5.2 By 2006, develop a step-down plan for surveying lands to identify archeological resources and for developing a preservation program to meet the requirements of Section 14 of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and Section 110(a)(2) of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**5.6 Objective:** Protect Refuge lands and resources from damaging uses adjacent to Refuge boundaries.

*Discussion:* Outdoor amphitheaters: Written comments were received from representatives of a citizens group opposed to the construction of outdoor amphitheaters in the Minnesota River valley. The group requested that we address the potential impacts of proposed amphitheaters on Refuge resources. At the time of this writing, two amphitheater proposals are being considered by local governments within the river valley: the Black Dog Amphitheater in Burnsville and the Q-Prime Amphitheater adjacent to the Louisville Swamp Unit.

The Service has publicly gone on record opposing the use of the Refuge as a “noise dump” for large outdoor concert arenas. We do not believe that the construction and use of amphitheaters that intentionally direct noise toward Refuge lands is consistent with Congress’ intent in establishing the Refuge. We also do not believe that these facilities are in the best long-term interest of citizens who enjoy wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities within the Minnesota Valley.

Concert events will project significant amounts of amplified music and related crowd noise. Without question, public use activities at the Black Dog and Louisville Swamp units such as bird watching and wildlife interpretation will be affected by these noise generating facilities. In addition, these facilities have great potential to affect the use and distribution of wildlife on Refuge lands. Just as the State of Minnesota has determined that noise is a pollutant subject to regulation, we classify noise as pollutant and that the dissipation of noise from amphitheaters as proposed is an inappropriate use of National Wildlife Refuge System lands.

*Strategy:*

- 5.6.1 Continue to monitor amphitheater proposals and actively participate in any public hearings, focus group discussions, and/or provide written comments to appropriate local government agencies. If constructed, retain a working relationship with amphitheater owners and local regulatory agencies to reduce impacts to Refuge users and resources.

## Goal 6. Public Use:

*To provide quality wildlife-dependent recreational and environmental education opportunities to a diverse audience. These activities will promote understanding, appreciation and support for Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the Wetland Management District as well as the entire National Wildlife Refuge System.*

### ***Hunting***

**6.1 Objective:** Provide no less than 14,000 quality hunting experiences for area residents per year. Seventy-five percent of hunters will report no conflicts with other users, a reasonable harvest opportunity and satisfaction with the overall experience.

**Discussion:** Providing opportunities for hunting is consistent with the Refuge and District mission and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. Service-owned lands in the Refuge and District will be open to hunting, subject to state and local regulations and public safety concerns, where conflicts with other users will not occur, and where biologically feasible. Waterfowl Production Areas are open to hunting subject to state regulations unless there is a significant safety issue. Where needed, Refuge staff will seek ways to ensure that hunters have the opportunity for quality experiences.



USFWS File Photograph

#### *Strategies:*

- 6.1.1 By 2005 and in cooperation with the MnDNR, develop a plan to improve waterfowl hunting on Rice Lake of the Wilkie Unit. The plan will explore alternatives such as hunter education and the use of limited permits to improve the quality of hunting at this location.
- 6.1.2 By 2005, through revision of the Refuge Hunting Plan, examine opportunities to expand bow hunting for deer on the Refuge to assist in maintaining deer densities between 15-25 deer per square mile. Coordinate efforts with the MnDNR and cities adjacent to the Minnesota River Valley.
- 6.1.3 Maintain disabled hunting opportunities in cooperation with Capable Partners or another suitable organization. Expand disabled hunting opportunities to include turkey and deer in designated areas on the Refuge.
- 6.1.4 Continue to improve the Refuge's youth waterfowl hunting program. Provide this opportunity to no fewer than 25 young people each year and seek to enroll disabled and disadvantaged youth plus youth of single-parent households located in urban areas.

- 6.1.5 Enhance public understanding of Refuge hunting opportunities by increasing the quality of maps, signs and wording within brochures and on the Refuge web page.
- 6.1.6 Increase the visibility of Refuge law enforcement and hunter adherence to federal and state regulations to ensure quality, ethical hunting.
- 6.1.7 At least one parking lot will be developed on each Waterfowl Production Area to allow for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent activities.
- 6.1.8 Where appropriate, a Waterfowl Production Area entrance sign will be erected to recognize contributions from private conservation organizations and agencies.
- 6.1.9 Obtain operational funding amounting to approximately \$100,000 a year to employ a full-time law enforcement officer to enhance the Refuge's law enforcement and public use programs.
- 6.1.10 Each Waterfowl Production Area will be clearly posted to avoid any potential landowner/visitor conflicts.

### ***Fishing***

#### **6.2 Objective:**

By 2005, provide for 6,000 quality fishing visits per year to the Refuge by Twin Cities residents. Seventy-five percent of anglers will report no conflicts with other users and will recollect awareness that they were fishing on a national wildlife refuge.

**Discussion:** Bank fishing will be allowed on all Refuge lands where this activity does not interfere with wildlife conservation. Boating will continue to be restricted on Refuge-interior waterways other than the Minnesota River to reduce disturbance of migratory birds. The public will be encouraged to practice catch and release in light of the fish consumption advisories for the Lower Minnesota River.

#### *Strategies:*

- 6.2.1 Promote catch and release fishing opportunities on Refuge waters through the development and maintenance of good quality maps, signs, multilingual brochures, and the Refuge's web page. Ensure that the fishing public clearly understands the fish consumption advisories for the Lower Minnesota River through signs and brochures.
- 6.2.2 In cooperation with the MnDNR and the City of Bloomington, maintain existing boat ramp and parking facilities located at Lyndale Avenue. Likewise, cooperate with the City of Shakopee, the MnDNR, and others to develop an additional boat ramp near State Highway 101.

- 6.2.3 In cooperation with the MnDNR and Federal fish hatcheries, optimize Refuge fishing opportunities for youth and the disabled by annually stocking, in order of priority, Youth Fishing Pond, Cedar Pond, and Hogback Ridge Pond. Maintain the two existing accessible fishing piers at these locations.
- 6.2.4 In cooperation with other partners, continue to promote fishing opportunities for disadvantaged persons and others through activities such as Youth Fishing Day.

**Wildlife Observation**

**6.3 Objective:** By 2005, provide for 180,000 wildlife observation visits per year to the Refuge and Waterfowl Production Areas. Ninety percent of all visitors will report a memorable wildlife observation and that it occurred on land managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

*Strategies:*

- 6.3.1 Promote public use of the new Audubon-sponsored Minnesota Valley Birding Trail. The trail includes wildlife observation stops on the Refuge.
- 6.3.2 With Refuge staff and/or volunteers, conduct no fewer than six birdwatching/wildlife observation programs for the public each year. In addition, conduct no fewer than two birdwatching/wildlife observation tours for disabled visitors per year. A portion of these wildlife observation tours will be conducted from canoes or other suitable water craft.
- 6.3.3 Explore the possibility of developing a wildlife observation tour of the Minnesota River Valley using a van or motorized tram.
- 6.3.4 Modify the Refuge web site to include current and accurate information about wildlife observations and opportunities available to the public. Link Refuge web site to other important wildlife observation web sites.
- 6.3.5 Maps and information describing Waterfowl Production Areas and their appropriate uses will be continuously updated on the Refuge’s web site.
- 6.3.6 Establish state-of-the-art bird feeding stations at existing and future Refuge visitor centers. Manage these stations as dynamic exhibits that promote wildlife observation opportunities to the public.



USFWS File Photograph

- 6.3.7 Maintain strong partnership with the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter and the Native Plant Society and continue to provide them monthly meeting space. Seek ways to coordinate organized wildlife and plant observation activities with those of the Refuge.
- 6.3.8 Enhance wildlife observation opportunities on Refuge wetlands by designing, constructing and installing elevated observation decks at several locations. at a minimum, observation decks will be installed at Fisher lake, Rapids Lake, and Long meadow Lake at locations that would enhance visitor opportunities to view waterfowl and waterbirds.

### ***Wildlife Photography***

**Discussion:** The Refuge will encourage wildlife photography at locations and times that do not conflict with wildlife conservation needs. Access to sensitive wildlife habitats and seasonal concentration areas, such as wading bird nesting colonies and Bald Eagle nest sites, will continue to be restricted to reduce disturbance to wildlife.

**6.4 Objective:** On an annual basis, provide for 3,000 quality wildlife photography visits to the Minnesota River Valley and adjacent areas.

#### *Strategies:*

- 6.4.1 Provide the public with no fewer than two portable photography blinds to be used at specific sites throughout the Refuge. In addition, allow the public to use existing hunting blinds during off-season for additional wildlife photography sites.
- 6.4.2 In cooperation with the Minnesota Nature Photography Club and others, enhance and promote the annual Refuge photography contest and display winning photos in Refuge Visitor Center for a 45-day period each year.
- 6.4.3 Maintain strong partnership with the Minnesota Nature Photography Club and continue to provide monthly meeting space for this organization.

### ***Wildlife Interpretation***

**Discussion:** Several of the strategies presented in the following five objectives were developed to address the issue of eliminating confusing rules and regulations, which was highlighted in Chapter 2. Due in part to the land ownership patterns within the Minnesota River Valley, there is some public confusion about what type of recreation is appropriate on Refuge lands and where this recreation is allowed. Some additional strategies aimed at this issue can be found under the Public Use Facilities and Land Protection Goal.

**6.5 Objective:** By 2004, provide for 30,000 quality wildlife interpretive visits per year to the Refuge and Waterfowl Production Areas. Fifty percent of visitors will independently report that “wildlife comes first” on System lands and understand the need for seasonal closures on sensitive wildlife habitats.

**Discussion:** Through the use of brochures, kiosks, web sites, and interpretive programs, the Refuge and District have a great opportunity to interpret the value of wildlife and their habitats to historic cultures and today’s society. Interpretive products will be dynamic, of quality, and will articulate the importance of Service lands to local and national conservation efforts. The foundation of these programs and activities will be a revised and upgraded interpretive plan for the Refuge that will address both on-site and off-site opportunities.

*Strategies:*

- 6.5.1 By 2004, review, revise, and upgrade the Refuge’s Interpretive Plan to reflect Refuge contribution to local and national conservation efforts. The plan will identify a Refuge theme that will be promoted in all interpretive products.
- 6.5.2 Upgrade and/or replace Refuge Visitor Center exhibits consistent with the Refuge theme. New exhibits need to be dynamic, affordable, and easy to repair and replace if needed.
- 6.5.3 Upgrade and replace all interpretive and information panels that exist on Refuge kiosks consistent with the Refuge theme. The panels and kiosks will conform to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 3, policy and will be environmentally sensitive in their design and placement.
- 6.5.4 Develop appropriate signs and materials which interpret the cultural and historic sites located on the Refuge and their relationship with historic wildlife populations. Six kiosks that serve this purpose have been identified in the current Refuge Sign Plan.
- 6.5.5 In cooperation with Refuge volunteers and others, conduct no fewer than 125 quality interpretive programs annually. Keep interpretive programming fresh by continually upgrading, improving, and/or replacing individual programs.
- 6.5.6 In cooperation with the Friends of the Minnesota Valley, upgrade the interpretive and educational materials offered for sale in the Blufftop Bookshop.
- 6.5.7 Upgrade audio visual equipment in the Visitor Center auditorium, update the content of the orientation slide show

and offer a variety of wildlife-related videos for the visiting public.

6.5.8 Write and distribute no fewer than 24 news releases each year that increase the public's understanding and knowledge of the Refuge and its programs.

6.5.9 In cooperation with many partners, sponsor no fewer than 10 special events annually that engage the public in Refuge activities and increase people's knowledge and understanding of wildlife conservation and associated issues.

### ***Environmental Education***

**6.6 Objective:** By 2004, provide environmental education programming to no less than 12,000 students per year followed by 2 percent annual growth until 2017. Eighty percent of students will report an increased desire to protect fish and wildlife habitats as a result of the programs.

**Discussion:** Consistent with the Refuge Mission, Refuge staff will provide quality environmental education services to teachers and school districts throughout the urban and suburban Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The curriculum will directly relate to Refuge management activities and it will meet the State of Minnesota environmental education graduation requirements. In order to keep it fresh and dynamic, the curriculum will be continually improved in concert with area teachers.

#### *Strategies:*

6.6.1 The Refuge's environmental education curriculum will be thoroughly reviewed by 2003 and every 4 years thereafter with the assistance of local educators. Ensure curriculum is fresh and dynamic and meets the needs of students in preschool on up to high school seniors.

6.6.2 Effectively promote the environmental program through a number of mediums including an annual syllabus, maintaining current information on the Refuge's web page, and periodic distribution of CDs for use on computers.

6.6.3 Refine and expand the use of Partnership Agreements with area schools in order to clearly articulate program goals and objectives and to build strong educational partnerships.

6.6.4 Emphasize the delivery of environmental education services to inner-city schools with both on-site and off-site programming. Secure funding through partnerships for busing for those schools that do not have the ability to assume those costs on their own.

- 6.6.5 Develop and strengthen internships/work study opportunities through partnerships with academic institutions. In partnership with local universities, hire interns in the natural resource field using funds provided to the Refuge annually through the Jack Lynch Endowment. Where possible, leverage these funds with those provided by the universities.
- 6.6.6 Following completion of a new environmental education facility, expand environmental education programming to suburban and rural schools and incorporate the use of waterfowl production areas in curriculum.
- 6.6.7 Administer the Regional Resource Center as an integral component of the Refuge's environmental education program by providing appropriate educational and interpretive materials to area schools.

***Inappropriate Recreational Uses:***

The Refuge Improvement Act established six priority uses of the Refuge System (which includes Waterfowl Production Areas). These priority uses all depend on the presence of, or expectation of the presence, of wildlife, and are thus called wildlife-dependent uses. These uses are hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. As outlined in Chapter 2, unauthorized biking on Refuge lands and horseback riding beyond the State Trail have been identified as two uses that are not wildlife-dependent and will be evaluated in this plan.

Mountain Biking

**6.7 Objective:** By 2005, working with the MnDNR, the City of Bloomington, mountain biking organizations and others, eliminate inappropriate biking on Refuge lands and concentrate this activity on authorized and designated trails only.



Photograph by Rick Schultz

**Discussion:** For a number of reasons, including a collective inability to complete the State Trail, portions of the river valley and the Bloomington Bluffs have been used for several years by mountain biking enthusiasts. This area is very popular and, due to extensive and virtually unrestricted mountain bike use, considerable bluff and trail erosion has occurred over time. Unfortunately, significant unauthorized mountain biking currently occurs on Refuge lands. This situation must be corrected in the near future if we are to remain responsible natural resource managers.

*Strategies:*

- 6.7.1 If possible, and in cooperation with the City of Bloomington, eliminate mountain biking on the Bloomington Bluffs between Indian Mounds School and I-35W. In addition, develop

and implement a plan to address the environmental degradation that currently exists throughout this area.

- 6.7.2 In cooperation with others, monitor and enforce appropriate trail usage on Refuge lands.

### Horseback Riding

**6.8 Objective:** By 2003, eliminate horseback riding on all Refuge and District lands and trails except on the State Trail.

**Discussion:** A limited amount of horseback riding occurs on Refuge lands beyond the State Trail. It occurs on specific trails on both the Wilkie and Louisville Swamp units consistent with the 1984 Master Plan. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 called for a focus on wildlife-dependent activities and a re-examination of other recreational uses. Horseback riding is not considered to be a wildlife-dependent activity and may conflict with other priority recreational uses. In light of the Act, the Refuge will limit horseback riding to lands that are part of the State Trail System.

*Strategies:*

- 6.8.1 Following appropriate public notice, and the installation of signs, restrict horseback riding to the State Trail within the Louisville Swamp Unit.
- 6.8.2 Consistent with the Refuge web site and its brochures, ensure that good quality information about horseback usage on Refuge/State Trail lands is provided to the public.
- 6.8.3 In cooperation with the MnDNR and the horseback riding community, monitor and, if needed, strictly enforce appropriate trail usage of the Louisville Swamp Unit.

### ***Volunteer and Intern Programs:***

**6.9 Objective:** Provide a highly visible and dynamic volunteer and intern work force to assist in all aspects of Refuge and District operations including environmental education, habitat improvement and visitor facility maintenance.

*Strategies:*

- 6.9.1 Seek opportunities to increase coordination between Refuge volunteers and Friends of the Minnesota Valley.
- 6.9.2 Enhance communication with Refuge volunteers through various forums including periodic newsletters, a volunteer hotline, the Refuge's web site, and recognition picnics, dinners and socials.

- 6.9.3 Renew efforts to provide quality training to Refuge volunteers so they are able to effectively and efficiently complete projects and responsibilities.
- 6.9.4 Expand efforts to provide volunteer opportunities to members of the disabled public.
- 6.9.5 Continue to provide Refuge projects for kids at risk through a variety of programs including the Twin Cities Tree Trust, Skills for Tomorrow, and community programs like Sentenced to Serve.
- 6.9.6 Seek to expand volunteer opportunities for retired citizens and explore the possibility of developing trailer pads and a septic system for seasonal retiree volunteers with recreational vehicles.
- 6.9.7 Employ interns as needed through the use of the Jack Lynch Endowment Fund. Leverage the use of these funds by entering into agreements with universities and colleges.

### ***Public Use Facilities***

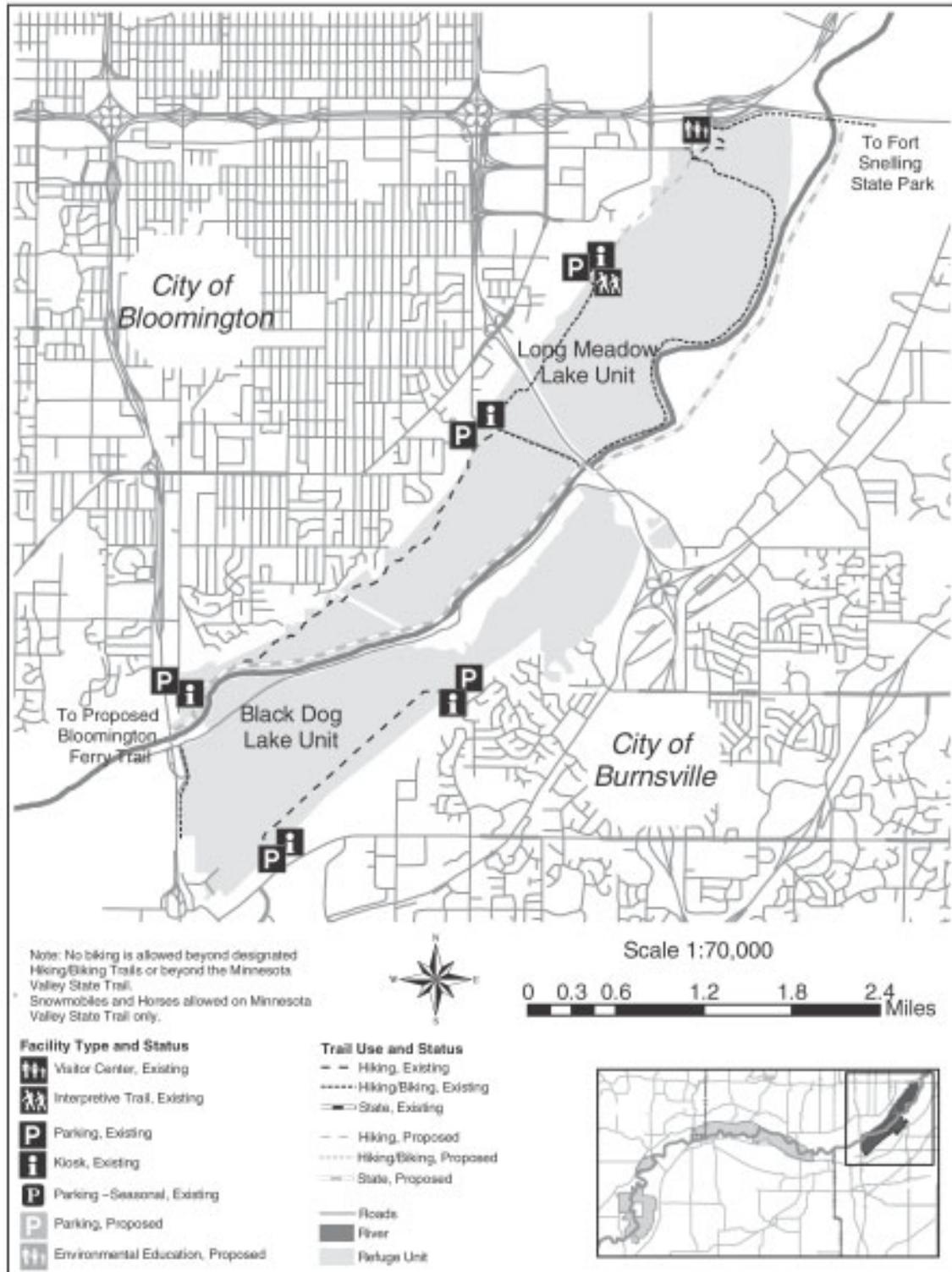
**6.10 Objective:** By 2005, develop new and maintain existing facilities to promote public advocacy and use of the Refuge and Waterfowl Production Areas. Ninety percent of visitors will report satisfaction with the safety, comfort and functionality of these facilities and express a desire for a return visit.

**Discussion:** Public use facilities will be developed and maintained at a high standard ensuring public safety and a positive reflection upon the Service. Included on this list of facilities are Refuge trails and parking lots, the existing and future visitor centers, the Rapids Lake historic home, historic buildings and structures, and the Minnesota Valley State Trail. To the extent practical, all facilities will be made accessible to disabled Refuge visitors. Please note that Strategies 3, 4, and 5 will be completed with Refuge Mitigation funds. Existing and proposed trails, parking lots and facilities are depicted in Figures 13-16.

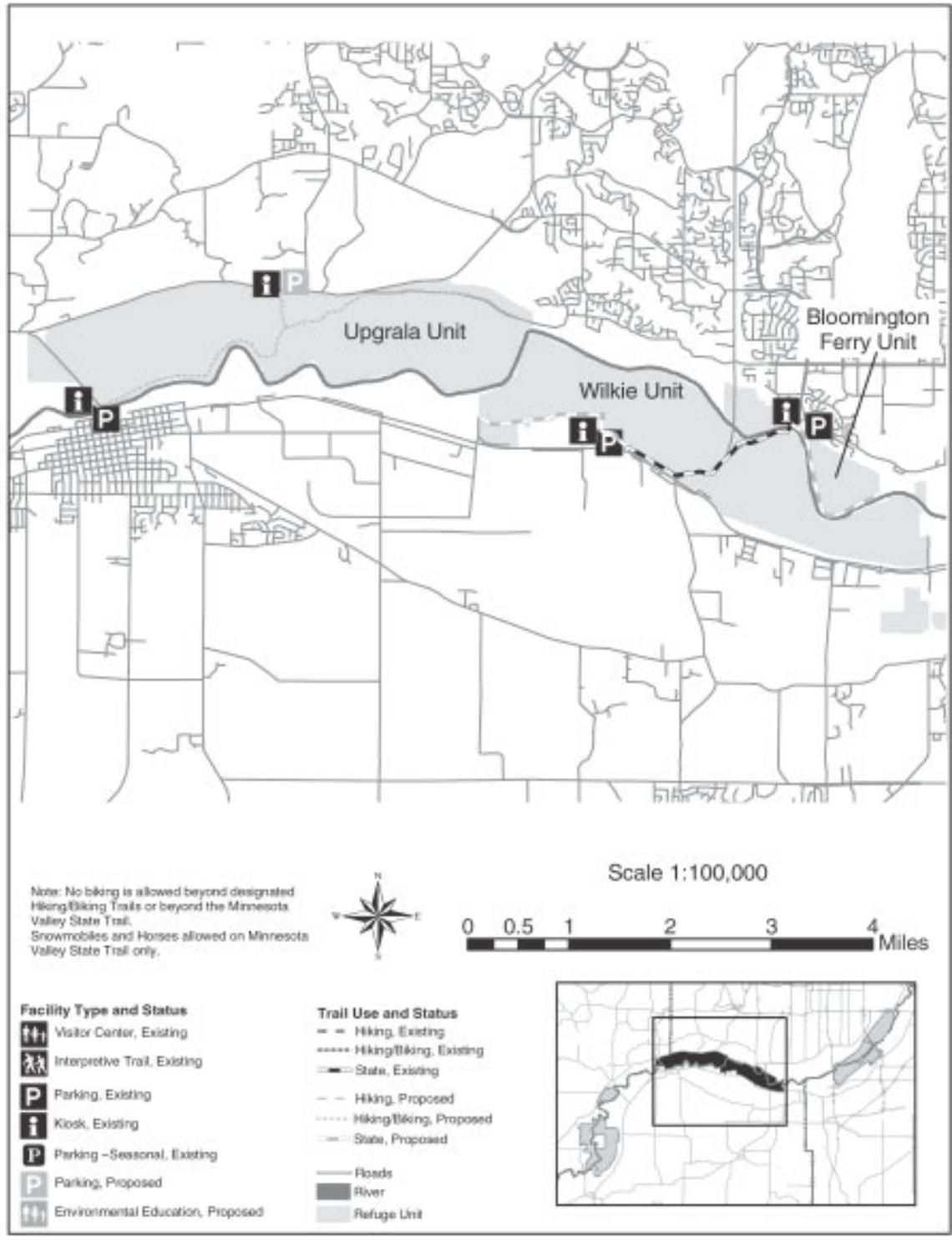
#### *Strategies:*

- 6.10.1 By 2004, submit a major Visitor Center upgrading package that addresses current outstanding maintenance needs and that will serve to keep this facility in excellent condition for the next 10 years.
- 6.10.2 By 2004, all Refuge facilities will be reviewed to determine what measures need to be taken to make them more accessible to disabled persons. Following this review, an implementation plan will be developed and funding will be sought to upgrade these facilities.

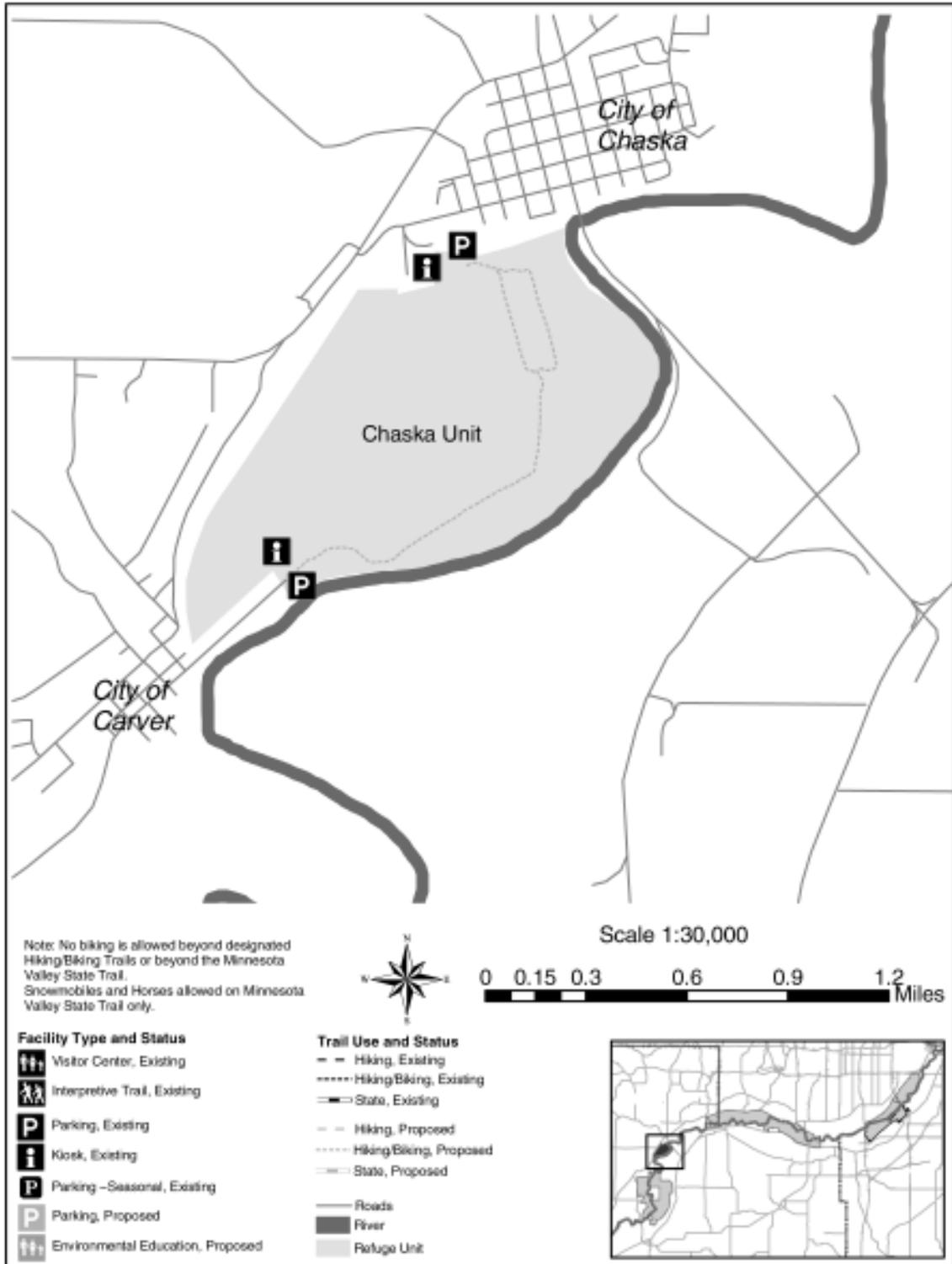
**Figure 13: Existing and Proposed Trails and Facilities: Long Meadow Lake and Black Dog Units**



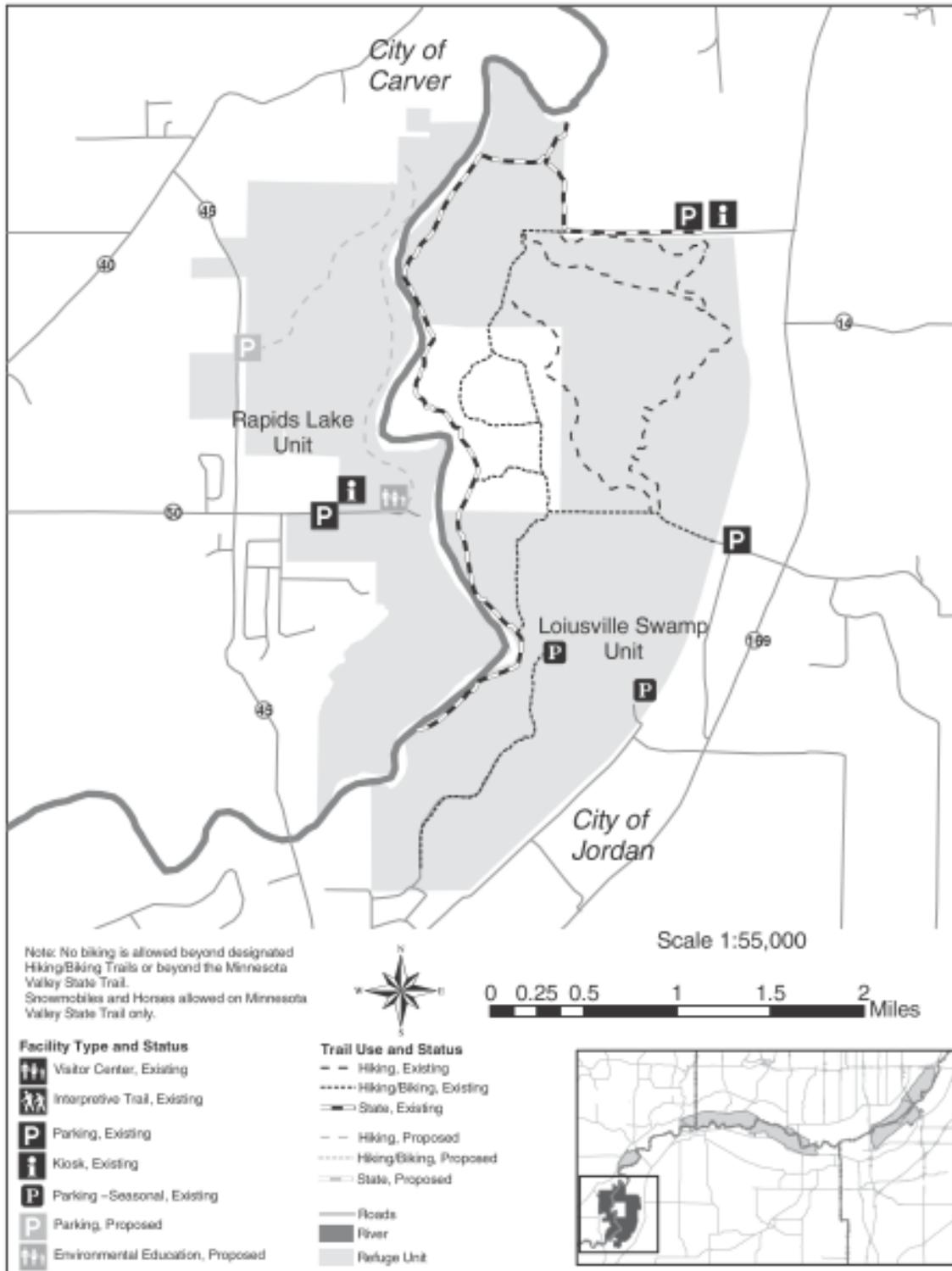
**Figure 14: Existing and Proposed Trails and Facilities: Upgrala, Wilkie and Bloomington Ferry Units**



**Figure 15: Existing and Proposed Trails and Facilities: Chaska Unit**



**Figure 16: Existing and Proposed Trails and Facilities: Rapids Lake and Louisville Swamp Units**



- 6.10.3 By 2004, begin the conversion of the historic Rapids Lake home into an environmental education and interpretive site. As part of this effort, design and build trails, interpretive kiosks, and parking lots in support of this project. Upon completion, allow this site to be used by local governments, non-profit organizations and others for meetings and natural resource-related workshops and conferences.
- 6.10.4 Obtain or construct intern housing on or near the Rapids Lake Unit to meet expanded responsibilities for wildlife interpretation and environmental education as well as to attract candidates of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.
- 6.10.5 Stabilize the historic buildings on the Jabs and Ehmler farm sites to ensure their longevity and their historic interpretive value.
- 6.10.6 Obtain operational funding to employ a maintenance worker (WG- 4749-6/7) to enhance the Refuge's capability to address its maintenance needs.
- 6.10.7 Establish a hard surfaced trail open to hiking and bicycling between the Refuge Visitor Center and the Bass Ponds.
- 6.10.8 In cooperation with the cities of Chaska and Carver, develop a plan for the Chaska Unit and nearby city lands that addresses wildlife interpretive trails, public parking, and related interpretive facilities and programming.
- 6.10.9 Seek a sufficient increase in operational funds to maintain, to a high standard, the existing Refuge Visitor Center, parking lots, kiosks, and signing.
- 6.10.10 Seek annual funding to enter into contracts for routine mowing, snow plowing, and custodial services for the Refuge's visitor centers, parking lots, and nature trails.
- 6.10.11 Using Trust funds, employ a supervisory park ranger (GS-025-11/12) who will initiate early planning for new environmental education center(s) and associated facilities. Following completion of the center, this employee will assume responsibility for operations of these facilities.
- 6.10.12 Using Trust funds, employ up to two park rangers (GS-025-5/7/9) and one maintenance worker (WG-4749-6/7/8) to assist in planning and conducting environmental education programming and in the management of new Refuge units.
- 6.10.13 Seek construction funding to replace the existing Shakopee shop facility with a combination cold storage/heated staff building. The new building would also contain a small office

suitable for two staff. The commercial lot owned by the Service near the Savage Fen would be a likely location for this facility.

6.10.14 Seek construction funding to replace the existing Rapids Lake maintenance facility. The new facility would contain office space suitable for three Refuge maintenance staff and three District employees.

6.10.15 Enhance the Refuge's capability to reduce the amount of vandalism and arson that occurs on Refuge facilities. Seek funding for installation and use of remote sensors designed to detect damage to facilities and apprehend those responsible for such activities.

**6.11 Objective:** To work in partnership with the MnDNR, cities, and other organizations to finish the Minnesota Valley State Trail and to provide appropriate public access to the trail from Refuge lands.

**Discussion:** This objective addresses the issue of completion of the Minnesota Valley State Trail, a primary issue highlighted in Chapter 2. We hope that preparation of this CCP will prompt a renewed effort by citizens, public agencies, private conservation organizations, and recreational users of the valley to place a high priority on the completion of the Minnesota Valley State Trail. Upon its completion, there is great potential for recreational users of this trail to develop an enhanced appreciation for the cultural and natural resource values of the Refuge as well as the greater Minnesota River Valley.

*Strategies:*

6.11.1 In cooperation with the MnDNR, identify the State Trail corridor across the Wilkie Unit, which will connect this part of the Refuge with the City of Shakopee.

6.11.2 In cooperation with the MnDNR, identify the State Trail corridor across the Long Meadow Lake Unit between Old Cedar Avenue and Lyndale Avenue. Seek sources of funding to construct access across at least two large gullies that occur along this section of the trail.

6.11.3 Working with partners, seek sources of funding (TEA-21, etc.) for the replacement of the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge with a pedestrian bridge that will connect Old Cedar Avenue with the State Trail.

6.11.4 Working with partners, acquire in fee or easement remaining lands on the Bloomington Ferry Unit that will allow the completion of the State Trail between I-35W and the Bloomington Ferry Bridge. Work with the City of

Bloomington and the MnDNR to specifically identify the corridor on this section of the State Trail.

- 6.11.5 In cooperation with the City of Eden Prairie, develop a hiking and bicycling trail on the north side of the Minnesota River connecting River View Road with the Bloomington Ferry Bridge.
- 6.11.6 Following Service acquisition of the Upgrala Unit, develop a hiking and bicycling trail connecting River View Road with the City of Shakopee trail facilities located near U.S. Highway 101. This work will be completed in cooperation with the cities of Eden Prairie and Shakopee.
- 6.11.7 As soon as practicable and in cooperation with all appropriate parties, develop a brochure that specifically identifies all trails within the Lower Minnesota River Valley and their allowed uses. This information will also be made available on the Refuge's web site.