

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 or operational and maintenance increases. These decisions are at the discretion of Congress in overall appropriations, and in budget allocation decisions made at the national and regional levels of the Service.

New and Existing Projects

This CCP outlines an ambitious course of action for the future management of Muscatatuck NWR. It will require considerable staff commitment as well as funding commitment to actively manage the wildlife habitats and to add/improve public use facilities. The Refuge will continually need appropriate operational and maintenance funding to implement the objectives in this plan. A full listing of unfunded Refuge projects and operational needs can be found in Appendix G.

Staffing

Implementing the vision set forth in this CCP will require changes in the organizational structure of the Refuge. Existing staff will direct their time and energy in new directions and new staff members will need to be added to assist in these efforts.

In March of 2008 a national team of Refuge System professionals developed a staffing model to estimate the personnel required to effectively operate and manage the existing 589 field stations of the NWRs. Fifteen factors were used in the evaluation, covering the following topics:

- total acres, acres actively managed, and number of easement contracts
- endangered and invasive species populations



Little Blue Heron. Photo credit: Mark Trabue

- biological management and monitoring, threats and conflicts
- wilderness management
- visitor services: visitation, education programs, volunteers, Friends
- maintenance needs and existing assets

The model attempts to project staffing levels in a systematic, qualitative manner. No model is perfect or the final word in estimating staffing needs, but this type of model is useful for supporting personnel actions and fosters consistent staffing decision-making. The 2008 model projected only the total maximum number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions needed at each station, not the individual disciplines or specialties. Law enforcement positions were not included in the assessment. In order to implement the staffing model, the final report recommended that each Region adjust the final model numbers as necessary and identify the most appropriate position types for each station.

Table 5: Additional Staffing as Indicated by the 2008 Refuge System Staffing Model

PROPOSED NEW POSITIONS	FTE	RANK
Wildlife Biologist (Invasive Species Management)	1	1
Equipment Operator	1	2
Park Ranger (Interpretation/Volunteer Coordination)	1	3
Biological Science Technician (Invasive Species Management)	1	4
Biological Science Technician (Forestry & Invasive Species)	1	5

The 2008 staffing model results for Muscatatuck NWR included a total of 14 FTE positions, with a subsequent adjustment at the regional level to 11. Using a 2008 baseline staffing of 6 FTE positions the Refuge was asked to identify five additional positions and rank them from greatest to least priority (see Table 5). The additional personnel would expand and improve the quality of the field program, especially invasive species control, the forestry program, water resource management, and environmental education on the Refuge.

The staffing model results illustrate full staffing at Muscatatuck NWR under optimum conditions. Due to the reality of financial constraints and operating budgets within the Service, it may not be possible to reach full staffing levels immediately. However, the amount and quality of management on a refuge heavily depends on the personnel resources available to implement the plan.

Partnership Opportunities

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

We expect to work with the following notable partners while continuing to develop new partnerships:

- Muscatatuck Wildlife Society
- local Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- local city governments
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Purdue Extension
- local Ducks Unlimited chapters
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- local Resource Conservation and Development Councils
- area conservation and birding clubs
- sporting good stores
- Scouting and civic groups
- local Visitor Bureaus
- U.S. Forest Service
- Hayden School Refuge Rangers
- local universities
- The Nature Conservancy
- Sycamore Land Trust

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 Refuge staff will revise or develop the following step-down plans:

- Habitat Management Plan, including a forest component (5 years)
- Water Management Plan for Restle Unit (2 years)
- Integrated Pest Management Plan (5 years)
- Visitor Services Plan (2 years)
- Fishery Management Plan (5 years)
- Habitat and Wildlife Monitoring Plans (3 years)

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 Refuge and evaluate current 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 for evaluation of this field station.

Plan Review and Revision

While comprehensive conservation plans are designed to provide guidance for Refuge management over a 15-year period, they are also dynamic and flexible documents that are reviewed regularly and modified when plan review or other Refuge monitoring and evaluation determines that it is necessary.

Service policy calls for an annual review of these plans and revision when significant new information or events necessitate change in order to achieve refuge purposes, vision, and goals. The policy calls for revision, "...when significant new information becomes available, ecological conditions change, major refuge expansion occurs, or when we identify the need to do so during plan review" [602 FW 3].

Plan revisions follow the same procedures and processes used to develop the original CCP. As with a standard CCP planning effort, revisions must follow NEPA requirements and include opportunities for public review and comment. Minor plan revisions that meet the criteria for a categorical exclusion in an EAS may be made in accordance with 550 FW 3.3C.

