



Seney *National Wildlife Refuge*

Summary Comprehensive Conservation Plan

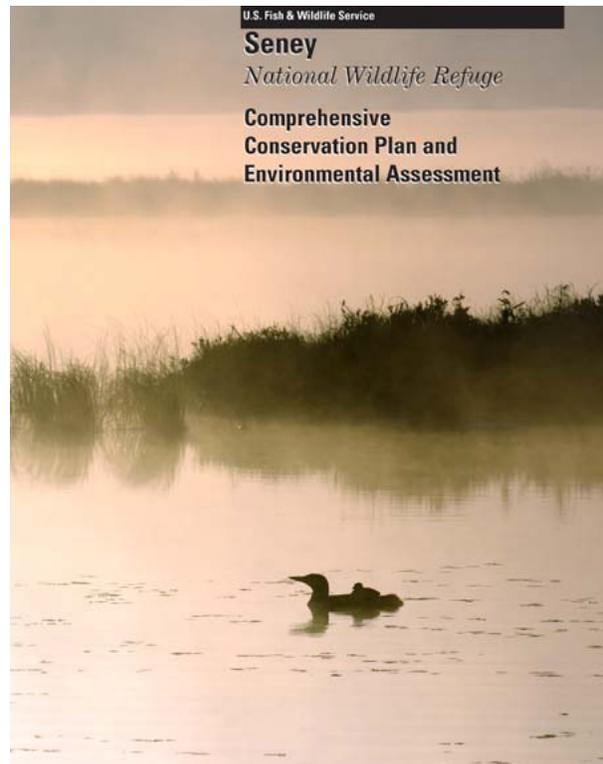
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Introduction

With the completion of its Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), Seney National Wildlife Refuge has established the direction Refuge management will follow over the next 15 years.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) approved the Refuge’s CCP in February 2009. Work on the CCP began in 2006, and the Draft CCP was released for public review and comment in September 2008. The Service is preparing a CCP for every refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System. CCPs outline how a Refuge will fulfill its legal purpose and contribute to the Refuge System’s wildlife, habitat and public use goals. Plans articulate management goals for the next 15 years and specify the objectives and strategies needed to accomplish these goals.

The CCP is a guide, not a promise. It will be used in strategic planning and prioritizing programs, but there are a number of factors outside of the Service’s control that affect the degree to which it can be implemented. Funding for staffing, equipment, or land acquisition may not be available, for example, and acts of nature such as fire and floods can change the course of land management.



In a nutshell, the Refuge will be managed as four distinct segments ranging from wilderness with little human intervention or visitation to more intensely managed habitat with facilities and programs for visitors.

Where to Find the CCP

The CCP is available in a variety of formats and places.

If you have access to a computer, you can see the plan in portable document format (pdf) at the Refuge’s planning website:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/seney>

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Location of Seney National Wildlife Refuge



Paper copies and an electronic version of the plan are available at libraries throughout the area, including:

- Manistique Public Library, Manistique, Michigan
- Tahquamenon Area Public Library, Newberry, Michigan
- Peter White Public Library, Marquette, Michigan
- Curtis Library, Curtis, Michigan
- Engadine School/Public Library, Engadine, Michigan
- Grand Marais Community Library, Grand Marais, Michigan
- Munising School/Public Library, Munising, Michigan

Paper copies are available for individuals who want one. The CCP is also available as a pdf document on compact disk. To request a copy, please call Refuge Headquarters at 906/586-9851.

Vital Statistics

Seney NWR was established in 1935 by Executive Order under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act for the protection and production of migratory birds and other wildlife. The Refuge encompasses approximately 95,238 acres; 25,150 acres comprise the Seney Wilderness Area in which is contained the Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark.

While management for migratory birds is paramount, the Refuge provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife species, both migratory and non-migratory. Approximately 20 species of reptiles and amphibians, 48 species of mammals, 26 species of fish, and over 200 species of birds have been documented on the Refuge. Many of these species are conservation priorities for the Midwest Region of the Service.

Whitefish Point Unit

Under the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1996, the Service received 33 acres of the former Coast Guard Station at Whitefish Point, in Chip-

Refuge Vision Statement

The planning team considered the past vision statements and emerging issues and drafted the following vision statement as the desired future state for the Refuge:

Seney National Wildlife Refuge will continue to be a place of excitement and wonder where wildlife comes first. It will be a place where management decisions are made in the best interest of wildlife and their habitats, and people are encouraged to explore and learn about the natural world.

The Refuge's rich mosaic of habitats and ecosystems will be viewed as part of the greater eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan ecoregion. Priority will be given to managing for those

species, habitats, and ecosystems of regional concern that are best suited to Seney's unique environment. Management will maintain Refuge-level biological diversity while preserving ecological integrity. Habitats will be managed for an array of ecological conditions, including the preservation of Wilderness character. When and where appropriate, an emphasis will be placed on preserving or restoring historic habitat conditions and ecosystem functions.

As part of a holistic approach to natural resource stewardship, people will be welcomed to use the Refuge to learn about the natural world. The public will be invited to participate in wildlife-dependent experiences that are in concert with the relatively undeveloped

nature of the Refuge. Students and researchers will be encouraged to use the Refuge as an outdoor laboratory for biological and ecological research that focuses on understanding natural patterns and processes and developing habitat management techniques.

Seney NWR will continue to be a source of pride for the staff, those who visit, and the local community. It will showcase biological and ecological diversity, habitat management, and wildlife-dependent public use. It will add to the richness of the broader community by holding in trust a portion of the natural heritage of the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan for the continuing benefit of the American people.

pewa County. The remaining 11 acres were split between the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, which received 8.3 acres, and the Michigan Audubon Society, which received 2.8 acres.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service property is administered as part of Seney NWR and managed as a stop-over location for migratory birds. Currently there are no permanent buildings or designated trails on the property and the Service does not administer any programs on-site. However, the Michigan Audubon Society conducts migratory bird research and provides natural resource programs at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, which is adjacent to the Refuge's property. Parking and restroom facilities are provided by the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, which administers the former Coast Guard buildings, including the lighthouse, and interprets the maritime significance of Whitefish Point.

Who We Are and What We Do

The Refuge is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the primary federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and

enhancing the nation's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

The Service oversees the enforcement of federal wildlife laws, management and protection of migratory bird populations, restoration of nationally significant fisheries, administration of the Endangered Species Act, and the restoration of wildlife habitat such as wetlands. The Service also manages the National Wildlife Refuge System, which was founded in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt designated Pelican Island in Florida as a sanctuary for Brown Pelicans.

Today, the Refuge System is a network of over 550 refuges and 7,000 waterfowl production areas covering more than 150 million acres of public lands and waters. Overall, the Refuge System provides habitat for more than 5,000 species of birds, mammals, fish, and insects. Refuges also provide unique opportunities for people. When it is compatible with wildlife and habitat conservation, they are places where people can enjoy wildlife-dependent recreation such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and environmental interpretation.



Red Squirrel, Seney NWR. Photo credit: Igor Drobyshev

Steps in Comprehensive Conservation Planning

The CCP process began in March 2006 with a meeting between Refuge staff and regional planners from the Service's office in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Initial public scoping for the Seney NWR CCP began in August 2006 with an open house event held at the Refuge Visitor Center. The event drew about 15 people. People interested in making written comments were asked to submit their comments by U.S. mail, e-mail, or via the Seney planning website on the Internet. Approximately 30 comment forms and other written comments were submitted to the Refuge during the scoping process.

The Draft CCP/EA was released for public review and comment on September 3, 2008. The 35-day comment period ended October 8, 2008. During the comment period, Refuge staff hosted an open house event to encourage dialog on future management direction. Individuals and representatives of organizations submitted a total of 14 comments on the Draft CCP. Respondents who expressed an opinion on the three alternatives supported the Refuge's preferred alternative, which became the management direction described in the final CCP.

Refuge Management Goals

The goals are designed to meet the purposes of the Refuge and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The following goals were established for Seney NWR and will form the direction for the Refuge over the next 15 years.

1. Goal 1: Wildlife – Preserve, conserve, and (where and when appropriate) restore the diversity of wildlife native to the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan; with an emphasis on Region 3 Conservation Priority Species.
2. Goal 2: Habitat – Conserve the range of habitat conditions now found within the Refuge and (where and when possible) restore pre-European conditions once characteristic of the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan.
3. Goal 3: People – Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

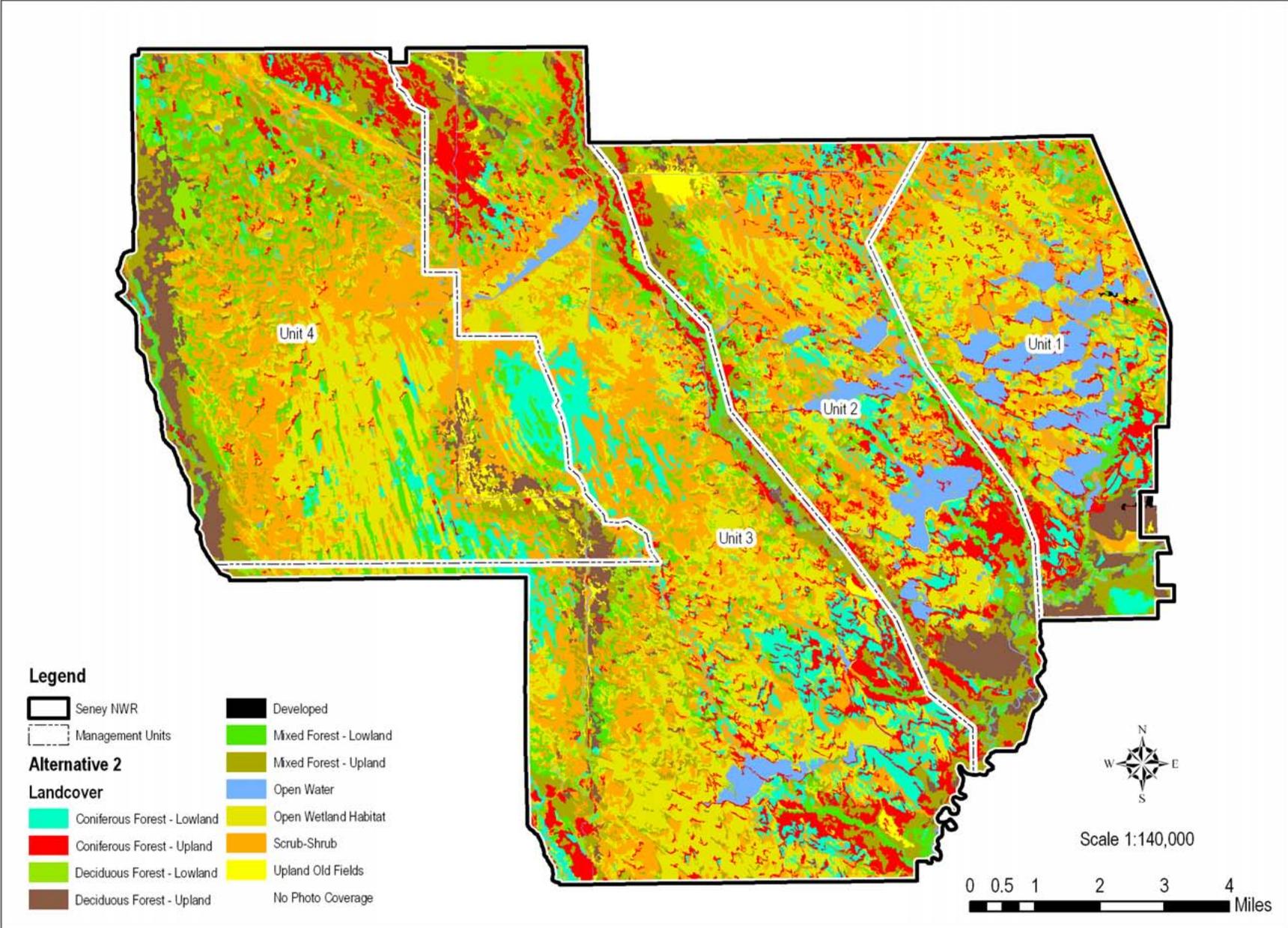
What's Proposed

The management direction established in the CCP can be described as a management gradient of conservation emphasis (Unit 1), to conservation-restoration emphasis (Unit 2), to restoration-preservation emphasis (Unit 3 and Wilderness preservation (Unit 4).

The Refuge will be managed as four general units, each of which has a unique management strategy. See the figure on the following page for a graphical representation of management changes and see page 7 for a comparison of past and future management direction. The units will follow a general gradient of management from low intensity (wilderness) to higher manipulation (managed impoundments and visitor use). Some high and low intensity management actions will occur in all units except the designated Wilderness (Unit 4). Wildlife needs always receive priority when in conflict with visitor services.

Unit 1: Conservation – This unit contains 14 managed pools, the Visitor Center/Headquarters compound, the Marshland Wildlife Drive and the Fishing Loop. Habitat management will maintain areas for species that the visiting public enjoys, including Trumpeter Swans, Common Loons, wad-

Future Land Cover, Seney NWR





Seney NWR. USFWS Photo

ing birds and game fish. Upland habitats will be managed to provide for a diversity of native cover types.

Unit 2: Conservation and Restoration – This unit contains four managed pools, significant mixed pine uplands, and two large old field openings (Diversion Farm and Chicago Farm). The focus of management on this unit will include maintaining seasonal rotation of water levels in the managed pools, natural regeneration of upland forests, and the gradual restoration of the Chicago Farm field to a forested habitat.

Unit 3: Restoration and Preservation – Unit 3 is the largest of the three non-wilderness units. It contains natural and forested wetlands but only three managed pools. A large opening, the Walsh Farms old field, is found on the north end of this unit. Management efforts on this unit will include allowing a greater percentage of natural processes, such as beaver-constructed wetlands, wildfires, and seasonal floods to shape the landscape.

Unit 4: Wilderness: The Federally-designated wilderness will be managed to maintain natural habitats and processes according to the existing Wilderness Management Plan. Visitor and Refuge staff entry will be limited to foot traffic only. Active habitat manipulation will only occur in emergency situations and the minimum tools necessary would be used to complete tasks.

Whitefish Point Unit: The Refuge will work with a Joint Committee consisting of the Michigan Audubon Society, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society and the Service to implement provisions of the Human Use Natural Resource Management Plan for Whitefish Point. Specifically

the Refuge will take the following actions on its lands to protect the fragile habitat at the Point for the wildlife that depend upon it.

- Designate trails to allow public access while protecting environmentally sensitive areas. One trail will lead from the parking lot to the tip of the Point. The second will run along an old cobble road in a southeasterly direction.
- Close the southeast beach from April to August to promote nesting of Piping Plovers.
- Work with the GLSHS to route visitors to the beach via their boardwalk and revegetate the cut-through from the parking lot to the beach.
- Hire a Refuge Manager trainee with a major responsibility for on-site work, mitigation approvals and coordination with partners.
- Occupy a portion of a second keeper's quarters if the building is re-constructed. The building will also be used by other partners to the Whitefish Point Plan.

Into the Future

Throughout the comprehensive conservation planning process, people have contributed time and ideas to make the Seney NWR CCP a better document. We are grateful to everyone who cared enough about the Refuge and its future to participate in this planning effort. We will continue to welcome your thoughts on Refuge management.

To succeed, a management plan has to adapt to nature's ever changing conditions. Although the plan is complete, we expect to review it and, if needed, update it every 5 to 10 years in response to conditions that could not be anticipated in planning.

Seney NWR is a place for both wildlife and people to use and enjoy, now and in the future. We hope that you will continue to care about and participate in conserving the Refuge's wildlife and habitat.

Comparison of Previous and Future Management Direction, Senee NWR

Issue	Previous Management Direction	Future Management Direction
Habitat Management		
<i>Upland forest habitat</i>	Maintain and enhance existing upland forest	Increase upland forests by reducing old fields and open lands by 25 percent
<i>Invasive plant species</i>	Infestations reduced from current levels	Same as Alternative 1
<i>Prescribed burning</i>	Maintain existing habitats	Increased use of fire in Units 2 & 3
<i>Stream restoration</i>	Continue ditch and stream restoration as opportunities allow	Increase ditch restoration in Unit 2
<i>Wilderness management</i>	Follow existing wilderness management plan	Modify plan to allow for fire use in the Wilderness
<i>Role of the Refuge in the landscape</i>	Maintain existing habitat blocks	Encourage large blocks of contiguous habitat to compliment adjacent public lands.
Aquatic Resources		
<i>Protection of waterbodies from invasive species</i>	Increase monitoring and conduct control measures when necessary.	No change from Previous Management Direction
<i>Predator and native fish populations</i>	Maintain current balance of native and non-native fish populations	Enhance fish populations through stream restoration and fishing regulations
Wildlife Management		
<i>Wildlife research capacity</i>	Slightly increase on-site wildlife research and monitor impacts	No change from Previous Management Direction
<i>Carrying capacity for trust species</i>	Stable to increasing trust species with minimal monitoring.	Research and monitor species populations and interaction.
<i>Beaver management</i>	Remove beavers only when their activities threaten infrastructure	No change from Previous Management Direction
Public Use		
<i>Deer hunting</i>	Firearms season under state regulations.	No change from Previous Management Direction
<i>Upland game hunting</i>	Open during state season	No change from Previous Management Direction
<i>Fishing</i>	Allowed on select Refuge waters. No lead sinkers.	No change from Previous Management Direction
<i>Visitor capacity</i>	Current emphasis and high level of public participation continue.	Increase over current status.
<i>Outreach</i>	Limited due to staffing.	Slight increase if funding is available.
Access		
<i>Developed picnic area</i>	Former Wigwam site opened for day use.	No change from Previous Management Direction
<i>Miscellaneous Access (Horseback riding, snowmobile crossing)</i>	Maintain prohibition according to Refuge regulations.	Work with snowmobile organizations to establish route in M77 right-of-way. Consider limited horseback riding on designated roads.