

Chapter 1. Introduction

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has developed this comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) to provide a foundation for the management and use of 39 limited-interest national wildlife refuges located primarily throughout eastern North Dakota. The CCP is intended as a working guide for management programs and actions over the next 15 years.

The CCP was developed in compliance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Improvement Act) and Part 602 (National Wildlife Refuge System Planning) of the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual. The actions described within this CCP also meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Compliance with NEPA is being achieved through the involvement of the public and the inclusion of an integrated environmental assessment (EA).

When fully implemented, this CCP will strive to achieve the North Dakota Limited-interest Refuge Program (Program) vision and the purposes of each refuge. Fish and wildlife are the first priority in refuge management, and public use (wildlife-dependent recreation) is allowed and encouraged as long as permission is granted by the affected landowners and it is compatible with, or does not detract from a refuge's purpose(s).

The CCP has been prepared by a planning team composed of representatives from various Service programs, including Refuges and Realty, and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF). In developing this plan, the planning team has incorporated the input of the landowners who own most of these refuge lands and local citizens and organizations. This public involvement and the planning process itself are described in section 1.5, "The Planning Process."

After reviewing a wide range of public comments and management needs, the planning team developed the preferred alternative. This action will attempt to address

all significant issues while determining how best to achieve the intent and purposes of the Program. The preferred alternative is the Service's recommended course of action for the future management of these refuges, and is embodied in this CCP.

1.1 Purpose and Need for Plan

The purpose of this CCP is to identify the role that the Program will play in support of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (System), and to provide long-term guidance for managing refuge programs and activities. The CCP is needed:

- To build relationships with the landowners and communicate with the general public and other partners in efforts to carry out the mission of the System.
- To provide a clear statement of direction for the future management of the Program;
- To provide landowners, neighbors, visitors, and government officials with an understanding of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's management actions on and around these refuges;
- To ensure that the Service's management actions are consistent with the mandates of the Improvement Act;
- To ensure that the management of these refuges is consistent with federal, state, and county plans; and
- To provide a basis for the development of budget requests for the Program's operation, maintenance, and capital improvement needs.

Sustaining our Nation's fish and wildlife resources is a task that can be accomplished only through the combined efforts of governments, businesses, and private citizens.

1.2 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working with others, is to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Over a hundred years ago, America’s fish and wildlife resources were declining at an alarming rate. Concerned citizens, scientists, and hunting and angling groups joined together to restore and sustain our national wildlife heritage. This was the genesis of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Today, the Service enforces federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores vital wildlife habitat, protects and recovers endangered species, and helps other governments with conservation efforts. It also administers a federal aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars to states for fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, and related programs across America.

The Service is the managing agency of the Program along with the rest of the System, thousands of waterfowl production areas (WPA), and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations.

Service Activities in North Dakota

Service activities in North Dakota contribute to the state’s economy, ecosystems, and education programs. The following lists the Service’s presence and activities in North Dakota, reported in 2005:

- The Service employs 201 people.
- Over 14,245 hours were donated by 623 volunteers to help Service projects.
- There are two national fish hatcheries and one fish and wildlife management assistance office.
- Sixty-five national wildlife refuges encompass 342,799 acres (0.8 percent of the state).

- There are 12 wetland management districts.
 - Fee waterfowl production areas cover 284,317 acres (0.6 percent of the state).
 - There are 1,046,358 wetland acres (2.4 percent of the state) under various leases or easements, including these limited-interest refuges.
- Service-managed lands hosted more than 394,063 visitors—
 - 152,160 hunting visits
 - 142,281 wildlife observation visits
 - 83,650 fishing visits
 - 2,360 trapping visits
 - Over 51,000 students participated in environmental education programs.
- The Service provided \$3.3 million to NDGF for sport fish restoration and \$3.4 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education.
- Since 1987, the Partners for Wildlife program has helped private landowners restore over 21,008 acres on 3,351 sites and 170,217 acres on 1,113 sites; and 47.8 miles of river.
 - The Service employs 11 program managers for Partners for Wildlife in the state.
- The Service paid North Dakota counties more than \$352,271 under the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act; funds were used for schools and roads.

The National Wildlife Refuge System

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt designated the 5.5-acre Pelican Island in Florida as the nation’s first wildlife refuge for the protection of brown pelicans and other native nesting birds. This was the first time the federal government set aside land for the sake of wildlife. This small but significant designation was the beginning of the System. One hundred years later, this System has become the largest collection of lands in the world specifically managed for wildlife, encompassing over 96 million acres within 544 refuges and over 3,000 small areas for waterfowl breeding and nesting. Today, there is at least one refuge in every state in the nation including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In 1997, a clear mission was established for the System through the passage of the Improvement Act. That mission is:

to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

The Improvement Act further states that each refuge shall be managed:

- to fulfill the mission of the System;
- to fulfill the individual purposes of each refuge;
- to consider the needs of fish and wildlife first;
- to fulfill the requirement of developing a CCP for each unit of the System, and fully involve the public in the preparation of these plans;
- to maintain the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the System;
- to recognize that wildlife-dependent recreation activities including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation, are legitimate and priority public uses; and
- to retain the authority of refuge managers to determine compatible public uses.

In addition to the overall mission for the System, the wildlife and habitat vision for each national wildlife refuge stresses the following principles:

- Wildlife comes first.
- Ecosystems, biodiversity, and wilderness are vital concepts in refuge management.
- Refuges must be healthy.
- Growth of refuges must be strategic.
- The System serves as a model for habitat management with broad participation from others.

Following passage of the Improvement Act, the Service immediately began efforts to carry out

the direction of the new legislation, including the preparation of CCPs for all refuges. The development of these plans is now ongoing nationally. Consistent with the Improvement Act, all refuge CCPs are being prepared in conjunction with public involvement, and each refuge is required to complete its own CCP within the 15-year schedule (by 2012).

People and the National Wildlife Refuge System

Our fish and wildlife heritage contributes to the quality of our lives and is an integral part of our nation's greatness. Wildlife and wild places have always given people special opportunities to have fun, relax, and appreciate our natural world.

Whether through bird watching, fishing, hunting, photography, or other wildlife pursuits, wildlife recreation also contributes millions of dollars to local economies. In 2002, approximately 35.5 million people visited a national wildlife refuge, mostly to observe wildlife in their natural habitats. Visitors are most often accommodated through nature trails, auto tours, interpretive programs and hunting and fishing opportunities. Significant economic benefits are being generated to the local communities that surround the refuges. Economists have reported that national wildlife refuge visitors contribute more than \$792 million annually to local economies.

1.3 National and Regional Mandates

Refuges are managed to achieve the mission and goals of the System and the designated purpose of the refuge unit as described in establishing legislation or executive orders, or other establishing documents. Key concepts and guidance of the System are provided in the Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (P.L. 87-714), Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual and, most recently, through the Improvement Act.

The Improvement Act amends the Refuge System Administration Act by providing a unifying mission for the System, a new process for determining compatible public uses on refuges, and a requirement that each refuge will be managed under a CCP. The Improvement Act states that wildlife conservation is the priority of System lands and that the Secretary of the Interior will

ensure that the biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of refuge lands are maintained. Each refuge must be managed to fulfill the System's mission and the specific purposes for which it was established. The Improvement Act requires the Service to monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants in each refuge. A list of other laws and executive orders that may affect the CCP or the Service's implementation of the CCP is provided in "Appendix D, Key Legislation and Policies." Service policies providing guidance on planning and the day-to-day management of a refuge are contained within the Refuge System Manual and the Service Manual.

1.4 Ecosystem Descriptions and Threats

Mississippi Headwaters–Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem

Thirty-three refuges in this Program are located east of the Missouri River within the Mississippi Headwaters–Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem. This ecosystem is primarily located in Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota with small sections extending into Wisconsin and Iowa. This ecosystem encompasses a major portion of the Prairie Pothole Region of North America. The Prairie Pothole Region produces 20 percent of the continental waterfowl populations annually.

Historically, this portion of North America was subject to periodic glaciation; glacial meltwaters were instrumental in forming the five major river systems located or partly located within this ecosystem. These river systems are: Mississippi, St. Croix, Red, Missouri, and Minnesota. Likewise, glacial moraines and other deposits resulted in a myriad of lakes and wetlands common throughout this area. Significant variation in the topography and soils of the area attest to the ecosystem's dynamic glacial history.

The three major ecological communities within this ecosystem are the tallgrass prairie, the northern boreal forest, and the eastern deciduous forest. Grasses common to the tallgrass prairie include big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass, sideoats grama, and switch grass. Native tallgrass prairie also supports ecologically important forbs such as prairie cone flower, purple prairie clover, and blazing star. The northern boreal forest ecological community comprises a variety of

coniferous species such as jack pine, balsam fir, and spruce. Common tree species in the eastern deciduous forest ecological community include maple, basswood, red oak, white oak, and ash. Current land uses range from tourism and timber industries in the northern forests to intensive agriculture in the historic tallgrass prairie. Of the three major ecological communities, the tallgrass prairie is the most threatened with more than 99 percent of it having been converted for agricultural purposes.

Due to its ecological and vegetative diversity, the Mississippi Headwaters–Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem supports at least 121 species of neotropical migrants and other migratory birds. It provides breeding and migration habitat for significant populations of waterfowl plus a variety of other waterbirds. The ecosystem supports several species of candidate and federally listed threatened and endangered species including the bald eagle, piping plover, Higgins eye pearly mussel, Karner blue butterfly, prairie bush clover, Leedy's roseroot, dwarf trout lily, and the western prairie fringed orchid. The increasingly rare paddlefish and lake sturgeon are also found in portions of this ecosystem.

There has been no prior planning or establishment of headwaters focus areas in the Mississippi Headwaters–Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem.

Hudson Bay Ecosystem (part of the Missouri Main Stem River Ecosystem)

Lake Patricia and Pretty Rock National Wildlife Refuges are located within a portion of the Missouri Main Stem River Ecosystem identified as the Hudson Bay Ecosystem. This ecosystem includes portions of the Missouri River and Hudson Bay watersheds. An initial Ecosystem Management Plan developed by the Ecosystem Team identified four focus areas needing the highest priority for protection and evaluation; wetlands, the Missouri River, native prairies, and riparian areas. Priorities were based on significance in the ecosystem, species diversity, risk and/or threat to the entire focus area, public benefits, international values, and trust resources. Although a detailed analysis of habitats, threats, and priorities for this ecosystem has not been completed, a vision and set of goals and objectives have been developed for each of these focus areas. The overall threats and visions for each focus area include:

Wetlands

Threats: The glaciated prairies on North and South Dakota and northeastern Montana cover approximately 60 million acres. Once a myriad of prairie pothole wetlands in a sea of native prairie, the area is now the “bread basket” of the country and intensively farmed. Drainage, for agricultural purposes has reduced 7.2 million acres of wetlands by over 40 percent to 3.9 million acres.

Vision: Diverse, wetland habitats and watersheds that provide an abundance and diversity of native flora and fauna in the ecosystem for the benefit of the American public.

Missouri River

Threats: The Missouri River is vastly different from the “untamed” flood plain system of even 50 years ago. Originating in the Rocky Mountains of south-central Montana, the river flows 2,300 miles, traversing seven states and passing through seven mainstem dams built and maintained by the federal government. Over 900 miles (nearly 60 percent) of the former upper river passing through Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska now lie under permanent multi-purpose reservoirs. As the Missouri River changed, so did the wildlife communities that depend on it. Currently 8 fishes, 15 birds, 6 mammals, 4 reptiles, 6 insects, 4 mollusks, and 7 plants native to the ecosystem are listed as either threatened or endangered or are under status review for possible listing.

Vision: A healthy Missouri River capable of self-sustaining fish and wildlife resources.

Native Prairie

Threats: Native Prairie in the Missouri Main Stem River Ecosystem consists of tall grass, mid-grass, and short grass prairies from the eastern Dakotas to the west. Although the plant and wildlife species differ across the gradation from tall to short grass, the threats and issues remain the same—conversion of prairie to other uses. The west river area of North Dakota has lost approximately 60 percent of the original 34 million acres of native prairie due to agricultural conversion.

Vision: Protect, restore and maintain ecosystem native prairie and other grasslands

to ensure its diversity and abundance of native flora and fauna.

Riparian Areas

Threats: Riparian areas make up a small portion of the habitat in the Hudson Bay (Missouri Main Stem River) Ecosystem. However, riparian and riverine wetland habitats are more important than other focus areas to fish and wildlife resources including migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, native fish, rare and declining fisheries, amphibians and many mammals. Riparian habitats provide for much of the biodiversity in the ecosystem. Many of the species currently occurring in the ecosystem would be eliminated without healthy riparian areas. Sedimentation, contamination, invasive species, and development threaten the health of this diverse habitat.

Vision: Healthy riparian and flood plain ecosystems that provide an abundance and diversity of indigenous flora and fauna.

1.5 The Planning Process

This CCP and EA for the 39 limited-interest refuges and the Program are intended to comply with the Improvement Act, NEPA, and the implementing regulations of the acts. The Service issued a final refuge planning policy in 2000 that established requirements and guidance for System planning, including CCPs and step-down management plans, ensuring that planning efforts comply with the provisions of the Improvement Act. The planning policy identified several steps of the CCP and EA process (see figure 1):

- Form a planning team and conduct pre-planning (see “Appendix A, Consultation and Coordination”)
- Initiate public involvement and scoping
- Draft vision statement and goals
- Develop and analyze alternatives, including the preferred alternative
- Prepare draft CCP and EA
- Prepare and adopt final CCP and EA and issue a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) or determine if an environmental impact statement is needed.
- Implement CCP, monitor and evaluate

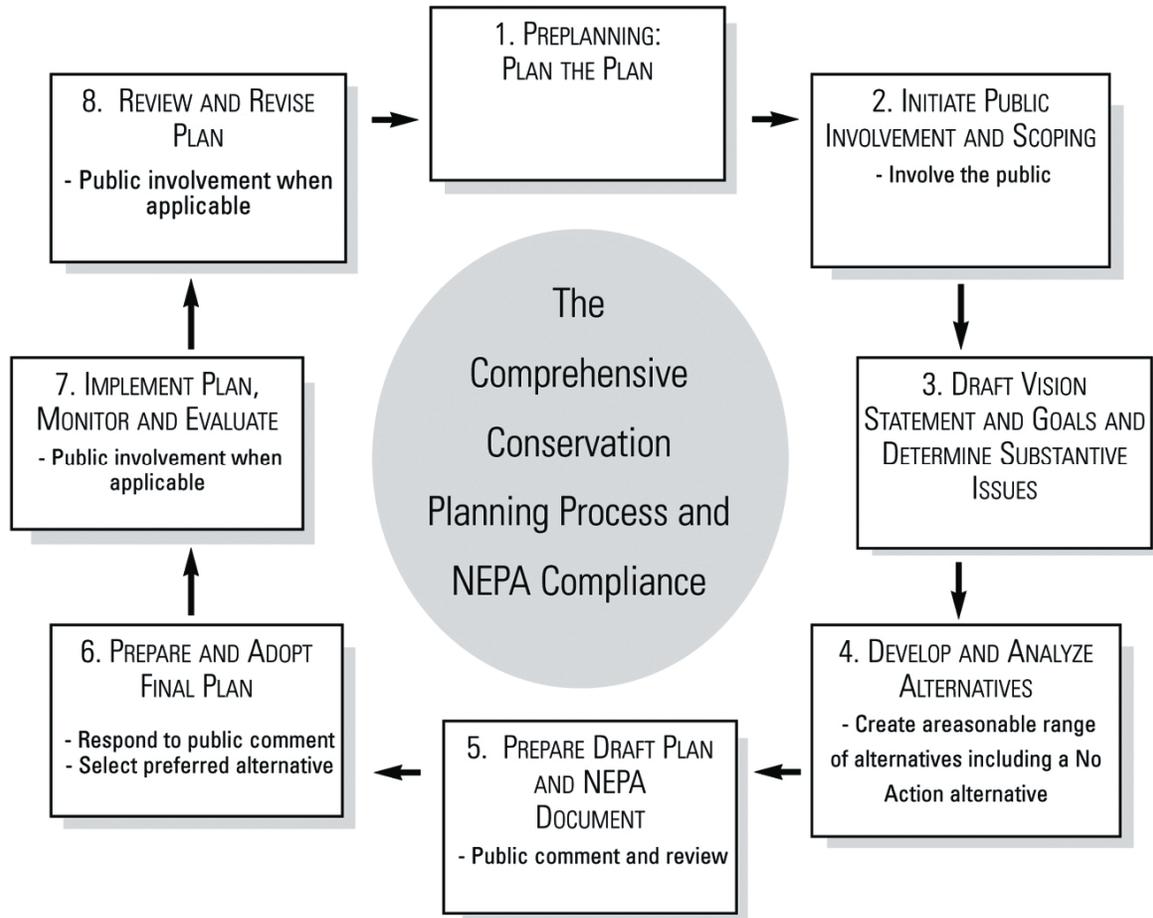


Figure 1. The steps in the CCP process

- Review every 5 years and revise CCP every 15 years

This is a dynamic process that may require revisiting various steps. Nevertheless, the first step to developing this Program was determining the criteria for including limited-interest refuges in this CCP. Although there are other limited-interest refuges in North Dakota and other states, including South Dakota and Montana, the 39 refuges covered in the CCP were selected based on the following criteria:

- Refuge is located within North Dakota
- Less than 15 percent of the refuge acres are fee-title national wildlife refuge acres, the remainder are in private ownership or are WPAs.

Refuges with significant amounts of fee-title NWR acres were excluded from this CCP based on their significantly greater management capabilities. These refuges will be addressed in separate planning efforts. The WPAs within and adjacent to these refuge boundaries will be addressed in future WMD CCPs for the managing station.

The Service began the pre-planning process in December 2003. A planning team of Service personnel from each of the six managing stations, Division of Realty and Refuges, and NDGF, was developed shortly after an initial kickoff meeting. Draft issues and qualities were developed and updated over a course of several meetings. During pre-planning, several items were addressed including developing a mailing list and determining the rights the Service purchased with the limited-interest refuge agreements.

Over the course of pre-planning and scoping, the planning team collected available information about the resources of the limited-interest refuges and the surrounding areas. This information is summarized under “Chapter 4, Affected Environment.”

Due to the number of refuges in this planning effort, this CCP became more of a programmatic CCP than the more traditional management CCP. This CCP provides long-term guidance for management decisions; sets forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes; and identifies the Service’s best estimate of future needs.

This CCP details Program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning purposes. This CCP does not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.

Public scoping began in March 2004 with the initial contact of the 225 refuge landowners. A Notice of Intent to prepare and EA was published in the Federal Register on July 2, 2004.

Coordination with the Landowners and Other Publics

The planning team ensured that the first stakeholders to be contacted during scoping were landowners of limited-interest refuges. A mailing list of over 225 names was created and included private citizens, the North Dakota State Land and Game and Fish Departments, and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). In May 2004, a personal letter was sent to each landowner introducing them to the CCP process and providing history on the Program. Each was invited to participate in the process and to offer comments. The initial response was minimal. In early July 2004, a newsletter was mailed to each landowner and over 460 additional individuals and organizations (over 700 total). Information was provided on the history of the Program and the CCP process along with a schedule of and invitation to upcoming open houses. Open houses also were announced in 37 local newspapers.

A total of 19 open houses were held between July 14, 2004 and September 16, 2004. At the start of each meeting, the CCP planner or the

refuge personnel gave a presentation on the history of the Program along with an overview of the CCP/NEPA process. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and offer comments. Attendees were invited to submit additional thoughts or questions in writing and each was given a two-page comment form to complete. The turnout was mixed, from no attendees to 19 individuals at a single-refuge meeting. In addition to scoping meetings, postage-paid comment forms were sent to everyone on the mailing list (over 700 individuals), with a September 30 response deadline. Forty-six written comments were received. Input obtained from all of these meetings and correspondence was considered in developing this CCP.

State Coordination

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department’s mission is to “protect, conserve, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive uses.” Overall, the NDGF is responsible for managing natural resource lands owned by the state in addition to enforcement responsibilities for the state’s migratory birds and endangered species resources. The state currently manages over 78,000 acres in support of wildlife, recreation, and fisheries.

In January 2004, an invitation letter to participate in the CCP process was sent by the Region 6 regional director to the Director of the NDGF. Local NDGF wildlife managers and the refuge staffs maintain excellent and ongoing working relations that precede the start of the CCP process. An NDGF representative is part of the core CCP planning team and has been participating in most of the workshops. In addition to the NDGF, all relative federal, state (see below), and county representatives, including all county chairpersons, were provided a newsletter introducing them to this Program and welcoming their comments.

Elected officials were initially contacted by the North Dakota Refuge Coordinator by telephone and mail about the CCP in January 2004. They were contacted again through a newsletter that outlined the public scoping meeting schedule.

The 39 refuges are dotted across 23 counties encompassing 26 state legislative districts (see table 1). In July 2004, district senators and

representatives were sent an informational newsletter inviting them to the open houses. In addition to these districts, an additional 15 adjoining state districts were contacted and provided the same information, for a total of 42 legislative districts represented by 42 senators and 84 representatives.

Tribal Coordination

On June 10, 2004, six Native American Tribal governments in North and South Dakota (Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux, Spirit Lake Tribal Council, Standing Rock Sioux, Three Affiliated Tribes, Fort Peck Tribal Executive Board, and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa) were contacted through a letter signed by Service regional director. The letter gave information about the upcoming CCP and invited recipients to serve on the core team. The Service received one inquiry from the Chairman of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas. After receiving clarification on the CCP, the Chairman wished

to continue receiving correspondence, but felt the planning area would not be of interest to his tribal members.

Results of Scoping

Table 2 summarizes all scoping activities. Comments collected from scoping meetings and correspondence, including comment forms, were used in the development of a final list of issues that need to be addressed in the CCP. The planning team determined which alternatives could best address these issues. The preferred alternative formed the basis for the objective and strategies to achieve the goals developed by the planning team. This process ensures that those issues that have the greatest impact on the Program are resolved or given priority over the life of this plan. Identified issues along with some discussion of their impacts to the resource are summarized in chapter 2.

Table 1. North Dakota counties and legislative districts by refuge

<i>County</i>	<i>Population (2002)</i>	<i>Legislative Districts</i>	<i>Refuges in County/District</i>
Barnes	11,224	6	Hobart Lake, Stoney Slough, and Tomahawk NWRs
Benson	6,873	7 and 23	Pleasant Lake, Silver Lake, and Wood Lake NWRs
Bottineau	6,893	6	Lords Lake NWR (also Rolette County)
Burleigh	70,937	8, 14, 30, 32, 35, and 47	Canfield Lake NWR
Dickey	5,554	26 and 28	Dakota Lake and Maple River NWR
Eddy	2,627	23 and 29	Johnson Lake NWR
Emmons	4,087	28	Springwater, Sunburst Lake, and Appert Lake NWRs
Grand Forks	64,929	17, 19, and 43	Little Goose NWR
Grant	2,689	31	Pretty Rock NWR
Griggs	2,599	23	Sibley Lake NWR
Kidder	2,591	14	Hutchinson Lake and Lake George NWRs
Lamoure	4,569	26, 28, and 29	Bone Hill NWR
McHenry	5,739	7	Cottonwood Lake and Wintering River NWRs
McLean	9,014	4 and 8	Camp Lake, Hiddenwood, Lake Otis, and Lost Lake NWRs
Morton	25,181	31, 33, 34, and 36	Lake Patricia NWR
Nelson	3,464	23	Lambs Lake, Rose Lake, and Johnson Lake (Eddy) NWRs
Pierce	4,525	7	Buffalo Lake NWR
Ramsey	11,746	15	Silver Lake NWR (also Benson County)
Rolette	13,760	9	Rabb Lake, School Section Lake, and Willow Lake NWRs
Sheridan	1,572	7 and 14	Shenoy Lake NWR
Stutsman	21,388	12 and 29	Half Way NWR
Towner	2,712	10 and 15	Brumba, Rock Lake, and Snyder Lake NWRs
Walsh	11,891	16	Ardoch NWR

Source: Office of Social and Economic Trend Analysis 2002; North Dakota Legislative Branch 2005.

Table 2. North Dakota limited-interest refuges planning process summary

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<i>Dec. 11–12, 2003</i>	Initial meeting with proposed planning team	CCP overview, planning team finalized, purposes identified, initial issues and qualities list, initiate development of mailing list
Feb. 10–11, 2004	Kickoff meeting	Initiate rights discussion, revise issues and qualities list, biological needs identified, plan public scoping
Feb. 19, 2004	Service's rights discussion with regional office leadership	Develop a position paper for the planning team to review on the Service rights on these limited-interest refuges
March 30, 2004	Finalize rights position	Developed a management decision on which rights the Service will control based on the easement agreement and historical records
March–May 2004	Landowners contacted	Landowner newsletter, comment forms
June 1, 2004	Public scoping planning	Open house model developed
June 29, 2004	Public scoping planning	Finalize scoping meeting schedules and formats
July 14, 2004	Maple River open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 19, 2004	Bone Hill open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 20, 2004	Silver Lake, Wood Lake, Pleasant Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 20, 2004	Rose Lake, Lambs Lake, and Little Goose open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 20, 2004	Cottonwood Lake, Wintering River and Buffalo Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 21, 2004	Hobart Lake, Stoney Slough, and Tomahawk open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 21, 2004	Hiddenwood open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 22, 2004	Dakota Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 22, 2004	Lords Lake, Willow Lake, Rabb Lake, School Section Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 27, 2004	Brumba, Snyder Lake, and Rock Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 27, 2004	Sheyenne Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 27, 2004	Ardoch Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 27 and 28, 2004	Appert, Canfield, and Hutchinson Lakes, Lake George, Springwater, Sunburst Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 28, 2004	Johnson Lake and Sibley Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
July 29, 2004	Lost Lake open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP and provide comments
Aug. 10, 2004	Halfway Lake meeting	Meet with Half Way Lake landowners, discuss CCP
Aug. 11, 2004	Lake Patricia open house	Opportunity for public to learn about the CCP

Table 2. North Dakota limited-interest refuges planning process summary

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Sept. 16, 2004	Second Dakota Lake open house	Second opportunity for the public to provide comments about Dakota Lake refuge and the CCP
Dec. 6–7, 2004	Vision, goals, and alternatives workshop	Developed a vision statement, goals, and discussed alternatives for the CCP
Feb. 7–8, 2005	Objectives and strategies workshop	Drafted a set of objectives and strategies for the proposed action
March–April 2005	Prepare draft plan	Planning team prepared first draft of the combined environmental assessment and plan
May 2005	Planning team reviews plan	Planning team reviewed first draft of the CCP and provided comments
July 2005	Internal review of CCP	Service staff from other divisions review draft CCP
August–Sept. 2005	Prepare outreach plan	Conduct outreach with Service partners regarding various issues addressed in the draft CCP
September 23, 2005	Camp Lake landowners meeting	Update the Camp Lake NWR on the progress of the draft CCP to date
October 4, 2005	Publish NOA and release draft plan to the public	Public began reviewing draft CCP
October 12, 2005	Arrowwood District public meetings, Valley City, ND	Present draft CCP and collect public comments
October 18, 2005	Devils Lake (Devils Lake, ND) and Arrowwood District (Henry, ND) public meetings	Present draft CCP and collect public comments
October 25, 2005	Kulm District public meeting, Oakes, ND	Present draft CCP and collect public comments
October 26, 2005	J.Clark Salyer District public meeting, Upham, ND	Present draft CCP and collect public comments
October 27, 2005	Long Lake District public meeting, Moffitt, ND	Present draft CCP and collect public comments
December 2, 2005	Public review ends	All comments are compiled and provided to planning team
December 7, 2005	Planning team reviews public comments	Planning team discussed public comments and recommended changes to the document
December 12, 2005	Brief regional director	Provide a summary of public comments for Directors review
January 2006	Brief Washington Office and edit document	Respond to public comments in the document and make necessary changes. Provide Washington Office a briefing on the public's response to the draft CCP and the Service's response.
April 6, 2006	Final Internal Review Ends	Final one-week internal review for Service staff
April 14, 2006	FONSI signed by regional director	Preferred alternative is selected and became the management direction for the final CCP

