1 Introduction

Scott Ralston/USFWS

Birders

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 Sullys Hill National Game Preserve, which is located in Benson County near the town of Fort Totten, North Dakota (see figure 1, vicinity map). This CCP will serve as a working guide for management programs and actions over the next 15 years. This chapter provides an introduction to the CCP process and describes the involvement of the Service, the state of North Dakota, the public, and others, as well as conservation issues and plans that affect Sullys Hill National Game Preserve.

This 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 in this CCP meet the requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Compliance with NEPA is also being achieved through involvement of the public.

The CCP specifies the necessary actions to achieve the vision and purposes of the refuge. Wildlife is the first priority in refuge management, and visitor services (wildlife-dependent recreation) are allowed and encouraged as long as they are compatible with the refuge's purposes.

This CCP has been prepared by a planning team comprised of representatives from various Service programs. In addition, the planning team used public input, public involvement, and the planning process as described in section 1.6, "Planning Process."

After reviewing a wide range of public comments and management needs, the planning team developed alternatives for managing the refuge. This was documented in the "Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment—Sullys Hill National Game Preserve." The regional director of region 6 selected alternative C as the Service's preferred alternative for management of the refuge. This action addressed all substantive issues, while determining how best to achieve the purposes of the refuge.

1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

The purpose of this CCP is to identify the role that Sullys Hill National Game Preserve will play in support of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) and to provide long-term guidance for management of refuge programs and activities. The CCP is needed

- to communicate with the public and other partners in order to carry out the mission of the Refuge System;
- to provide a clear statement of direction for management of the refuge;

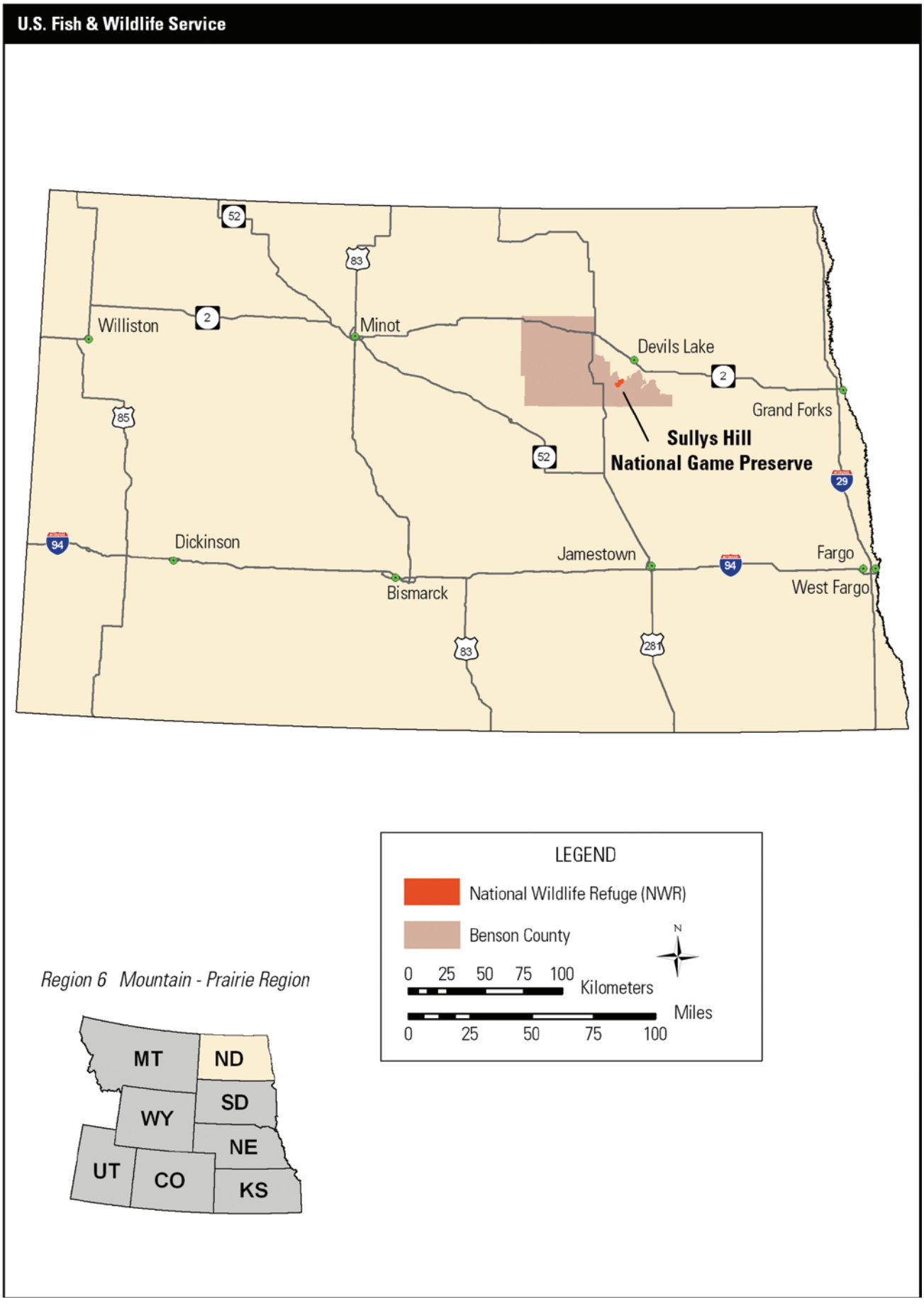

Figure 1. Vicinity map for Sullys Hill National Game Preserve, North Dakota.

- to provide neighbors, visitors, and government officials with an understanding of the Service's management actions on and around the refuge;
- to ensure that the Service's management actions are consistent with the mandates of the Improvement Act;
- to ensure that management of the refuge is consistent with federal, state, and county plans;
- to provide a basis for development of budget requests for the refuge's operation, maintenance, and capital improvement needs.

Sustaining the 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 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND THE REFUGE SYSTEM

The Service is the principal federal agency responsible for fish, wildlife, and plant conservation. The Refuge System is one of the Service's major programs.

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 century 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 America's 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. In addition, the Service 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.

Service Activities in North Dakota (2005)

Service activities in North Dakota contribute to the state's economy, ecosystems, and education programs. The following list describes the Service's presence and activities:

- employed 201 people in North Dakota
- assisted by 623 volunteers who donated more than 14,245 hours in support of Service projects
- managed two national fish hatcheries and one fish and wildlife management assistance office
- managed 65 national wildlife refuges encompassing 342,799 acres (0.8% of the state)
- managed 12 wetland management districts including
  - 284,317 acres of fee waterfowl production areas (0.6% of the state)
  - 1,046,358 wetland acres under various leases or easements (2.4% of the state)
- hosted more than 394,063 annual visitors to Service-managed lands including
  - 152,160 hunting visits
  - 2,360 trapping visits
  - 83,650 fishing visits
  - 142,281 wildlife observation visits
  - environmental education programs for over 51,000 students
- provided $3.3 million to North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) for sport fish restoration and $3.4 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education
- helped private landowners restore more than 191,225 acres on 4,464 sites and restore 47.8 miles of river since 1987, through the Partners for Wildlife Program
- employed 11 Partners for Wildlife Program managers
- paid North Dakota counties $352,271 under the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act (money used for schools and roads)

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 wildlife. This small but significant designation was the beginning of the Refuge System.

One hundred years later, the Refuge System has become the largest collection of lands in the world specifically managed for wildlife. It encompasses over 96 million acres within 547 refuges and more than 3,000 small areas for waterfowl breeding and nesting. Today, there is at least one refuge in every state, including the territories of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In 1997, the Improvement Act established a clear mission for the Refuge System.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System 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 states that each national wildlife refuge (that is, each unit of the Refuge System, which includes wetland management districts) shall be managed

- to fulfill the mission of the Refuge 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 Refuge System and fully involve the public in the preparation of these plans;
- to maintain the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge 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;
- to retain the authority of refuge managers to determine compatible visitor services.

In addition to the mission for the Refuge System, the wildlife and habitat vision for each unit of the Refuge System stresses the following principles:

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

Following passage of the Improvement Act, the Service immediately began to carry out the direction of the new legislation, including preparation of CCPs for all national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts. Consistent with the Improvement Act, the Service prepares all CCPs in conjunction with public involvement. Each refuge is required to complete its CCP within a 15-year time frame (by 2012).

People and the Refuge System

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

Whether through bird watching, fishing, hunting, photography, or other wildlife pursuits, wildlife recreation contributes millions of dollars to local economies. In 2002, approximately 35.5 million people visited the Refuge System, 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 generated for the local communities that surround refuges and wetland management districts. Economists report that Refuge System visitors contribute more than $792 million annually to local economies.

1.3 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MANDATES

Refuge System units are managed to achieve the mission and goals of the Refuge System, along with the designated purpose of the refuges (as described in establishing legislation, executive orders, or other establishing documents). Key concepts and guidance for the Refuge System are in the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (Administration Act), Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), "The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual," and the Improvement Act.

The Improvement Act amends the Administration Act by providing a unifying mission for the Refuge System, a new process for determining compatible visitor services on refuges, and a requirement that each refuge be managed under a CCP. The Improvement Act states that wildlife conservation is the priority of Refuge 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 Refuge 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 detailed description of these and other laws and executive orders that may affect the CCP or the Service's implementation of the CCP is in appendix A. Service policies on planning and day-to-day management of refuges are in the "Refuge Manual" and "The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual."

1.4 REFUGE CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANS

Sullys Hill National Game Preserve contributes to the conservation efforts described here.

Fulfilling the Promise

A 1999 report, "Fulfilling the Promise, The National Wildlife Refuge System" (USFWS 1999), is the culmination of a yearlong process by teams of Service employees to evaluate the Refuge System nationwide. This report was the focus of the first national Refuge System conference in 1998—attended by refuge managers, other Service employees, and representatives from leading conservation organizations.

The report contains 42 recommendations packaged with three vision statements dealing with wildlife and habitat; people; and leadership—this CCP deals with these three major topics. The planning team reviewed the recommendations in the report for guidance during CCP planning.

Partners in Flight

The "Partners in Flight" program began in 1990 with the recognition of declining population levels of many migratory bird species. The challenge is, according to the program, maintaining functional natural ecosystems in the face of human population growth. To meet this challenge, Partners in Flight worked to identify priority land bird species and habitat types. Partners in Flight activities have resulted in the development of 52 bird conservation plans covering the continental United States.

The primary goal of Partners in Flight is to provide for the long-term health of the bird life of this continent. The first priority is to prevent the rarest species from becoming extinct. The second priority is to prevent uncommon species from descending into threatened status. The third priority is to "keep common birds common."

There are 58 physiographic areas, defined by similar physical geographic features, wholly or partially contained within the contiguous United States, and several others wholly or partially contained in Alaska. The Sullys Hill National Game Preserve lies within the physiographic area known as the northern mixed-grass prairie, area 37 (see figure 2, physiographic areas).

The northern mixed-grass prairie physiographic area includes almost the entire eastern half of South Dakota and central North Dakota, from the Red River Valley on the east, to the Missouri River and Montana border on the south and west. In Canada, it includes a small portion of southern Manitoba and a swath that crosses Saskatchewan and extends into Alberta. The southern edge of this physiographic area is the terminus of a glacial moraine parallel to the course of the nearby Missouri River. To the north, prairie gives way to aspen parkland.

Precipitation declines and evaporation rates increase from east to west across the northern mixed-grass prairie, resulting in differences in the height of dominant grasses. To the east, the mixed grass begins as topography rises out of the tall-grass prairie of the Red River Valley. Grass height gradually decreases toward the western boundary of this physiographic area.

Because of the glacial history of the northern mixed-grass prairie and the relationship between precipitation and evapotranspiration, the area is dotted with thousands of depressions that range from permanently to periodically wet. This area is known as the Prairie Pothole Region.

Priority bird species and habitats of the northern mixed-grass prairie include the following:

Grassland
- Baird's sparrow
- greater prairie-chicken
- McCown's longspur
- Sprague's pipit
- Le Conte's sparrow

Wetland
- yellow rail
- Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow
- marbled godwit

Riparian Woodland
- Bell's vireo

River Sandbars
- piping plover
- waterfowl
- shorebirds

Maintenance of large, unfragmented grassland ecosystems is the conservation objective for areas where agriculture is not dominant. On the drift prairie and other agricultural areas, conservation of discrete blocks of grassland-wetland complexes is recommended.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Written in 1986, the "North American Waterfowl Management Plan" (NAWMP) (USFWS et al. 1998) envisioned a 15-year effort to achieve landscape conditions that could sustain waterfowl populations. Specific NAWMP objectives are to increase and restore duck populations to the average levels of the 1970s—62 million breeding ducks and a fall flight of 100 million birds.

By 1985 waterfowl populations had plummeted to record lows. Habitat that waterfowl depend on was disappearing at a rate of 60 acres per hour. Recognizing the importance of waterfowl and wetlands to North Americans and the need for international cooperation to help in the recovery of a

shared resource, the United States and Canadian governments developed a strategy to restore waterfowl populations through habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement. Mexico became a signatory to the plan in 1994.

The plan is innovative because of its international scope, plus its implementation at the regional level. Its success depends on the strength of partnerships called "joint ventures," involving federal, state, provincial, tribal, and local governments; businesses; conservation organizations; and individual citizens. Joint ventures are regional, self-directed partnerships that carry out science-based conservation projects through a wide array of community participation efforts. Joint ventures develop implementation plans focusing on areas of concern. Sullys Hill National Game Preserve is part of the "Prairie Pothole Joint Venture."

Recovery Plans for Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species

Where federally listed threatened or endangered species occur at the Sullys Hill National Game Preserve, management goals and strategies in their respective recovery plans will be followed. The list of threatened or endangered species that occur at the refuge will change as species are listed or delisted, or as listed species are discovered on refuge lands. Currently, 8 species of fish, 15 species of birds, 6 species of mammals, 4 species of reptiles, 6 species of insects, 4 species of mollusks, and 7 species of plants native to the ecosystem are listed as either threatened or endangered, or are under status review for possible listing. If these species are ever found residing on the refuge, the staff will follow recovery plan guidelines.

State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy

Over the past several decades, declines of wildlife populations have been documented nationwide. Congress created the State Wildlife Grant (SWG) program in 2001. This program provides states and territories with federal dollars to support conservation aimed at protecting wildlife and preventing species from becoming endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The SWG program represents an ambitious endeavor to take an active hand in keeping species from becoming threatened or endangered in the future.

According to the SWG program, each state, territory, and the District of Columbia were required to complete a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy (CWCS) by October 1, 2005, in order to receive future funding.

These strategies help define an integrated approach to the stewardship of all wildlife species, with additional emphasis on species of concern and habitats at risk. The goal is to shift focus from single-species management and highly specialized individual efforts to a geographically based, ecosystem and landscape-oriented fish and wildlife conservation effort. The Service approves CWCSs and administers SWG program funding.

The CWCS for the state of North Dakota was reviewed and this information was used during

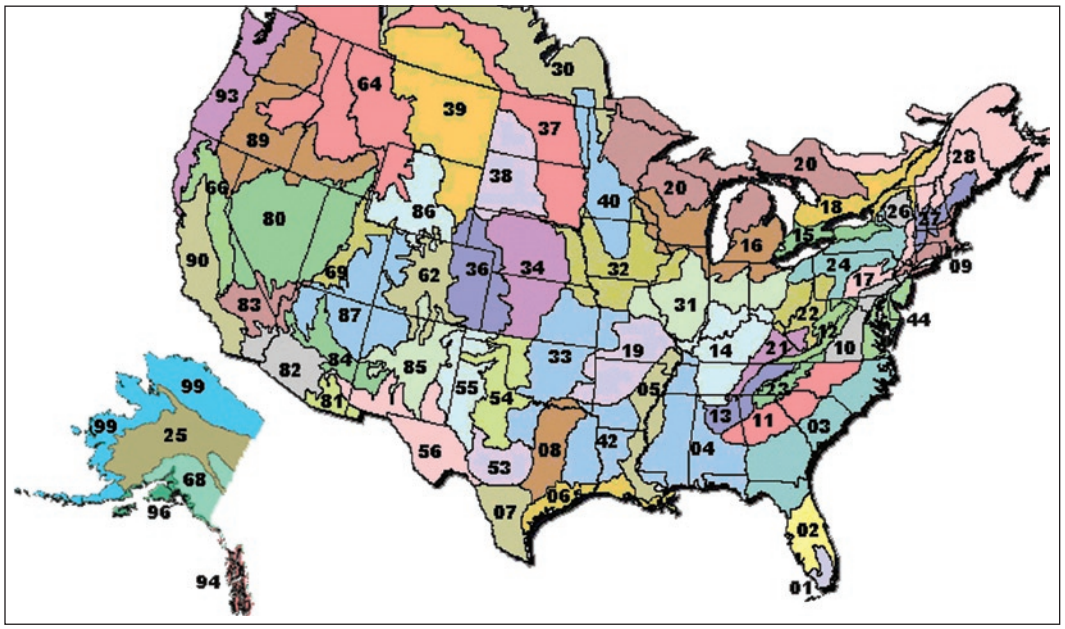

Figure 2. Physiographic areas of the United States. *(Source: Partners in Flight)*

development of this CCP. Implementation of CCP habitat goals and objectives will support the goals and objectives of the CWCS.

1.5 ECOSYSTEM DESCRIPTION AND THREATS

Mississippi Headwaters/Tall-grass Prairie Ecosystem

Sullys Hill National Game Preserve is located within the "Mississippi Headwaters/Tall-grass Prairie Ecosystem" (figure 3). This ecosystem—primarily located in Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota, with small sections extending into Wisconsin and Iowa—encompasses a major portion of the Prairie Pothole Region of North America. The Prairie Pothole Region annually produces 20% of the continental waterfowl populations.

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: Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Red, and St. Croix river systems. Glacial moraines and other deposits resulted in a myriad of lakes and wetlands common throughout this area. This significant variation in topography and soils attest to the ecosystem's dynamic glacial history.

The three major ecological communities within this ecosystem are tall-grass prairie, northern boreal forest, and eastern deciduous forest. Grasses common to tall-grass prairie include big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass, sideoats grama, and switchgrass. In addition, native tall-grass prairie supports ecologically important forbs such as prairie coneflower, purple prairie clover, and blazing star. The northern boreal forest comprises a variety of coniferous species such as jack pine, balsam fir, and spruce. Common tree species in the eastern deciduous forest include maple, basswood, red oak, white oak, and ash. Due to its ecological and vegetative diversity, the "Mississippi Headwaters-Tall-grass 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 bald eagle, piping plover, Higgins eye pearly mussel, Karner blue butterfly, prairie bushclover, Leedy's roseroot, dwarf troutlily, and western prairie fringed orchid. Additionally, the increasingly rare paddlefish and lake sturgeon are found in portions of this ecosystem.

Current land uses range from tourism and timber industries in the northern forests to intensive agriculture in the historical tall-grass prairie. Of the three major ecological communities, tall-grass prairie is the most threatened, with more than 99% having been converted for agricultural purposes. Other major industrial developments include logging, mining, and hydroelectric development. Management of old growth and late-succession forests to make up for reduced timber harvests, and a focus on smarter energy solutions, head the priorities for this ecosystem.

1.6 PLANNING PROCESS

This CCP for Sullys Hill National Game Preserve was developed in compliance with the Improvement Act, NEPA, and the implementing regulations of both acts. The Service issued its Refuge System planning policy in 2000, which established requirements and guidance for refuge plans—including CCPs and step-down management plans—to ensure that planning efforts comply with the Improvement Act. The planning policy identified several steps of the CCP and environmental analysis process (see figure 4, steps in the planning process).

Table 1 lists the specific steps in the planning process for the preparation of this CCP. The Service began the pre-planning process in January 2006 with the establishment of a planning team (see appendix B). The planning team is comprised primarily of Service personnel from the Devils Lake Wetland Management District (the managing station). Other partners include other Service divisions, the Spirit Lake Nation Tribe, NDGF, North Dakota Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), North Dakota Bureau of Animal Health, local teachers, and researchers at the University of North Dakota.

During pre-planning, the team developed a mailing list, a list of internal issues, and a special qualities list. The team also identified and reviewed current refuge programs; compiled and analyzed relevant data; and determined the purpose of the refuge. In May of 2006 a notice of intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* to notify the public of this planning process and to invite them to comment.

The planning team met with many experts from the Service and other state, tribal, and federal agencies to evaluate existing refuge programs. This information was used to develop three separate alternatives designed to address issues and guide future refuge management. The environmental consequences of these three alternatives were evaluated and a draft CCP and final EA were prepared. This document was then reviewed internally by a group of Service, state, and tribal employees. The document was revised based on some of their comments.

In June 2008, the Service published a notice of availability (NOA) announcing that the Draft CCP and EA was available for a 30-day public review. Hard copies of the document and/or a planning update, summarizing the plan, were mailed to 238

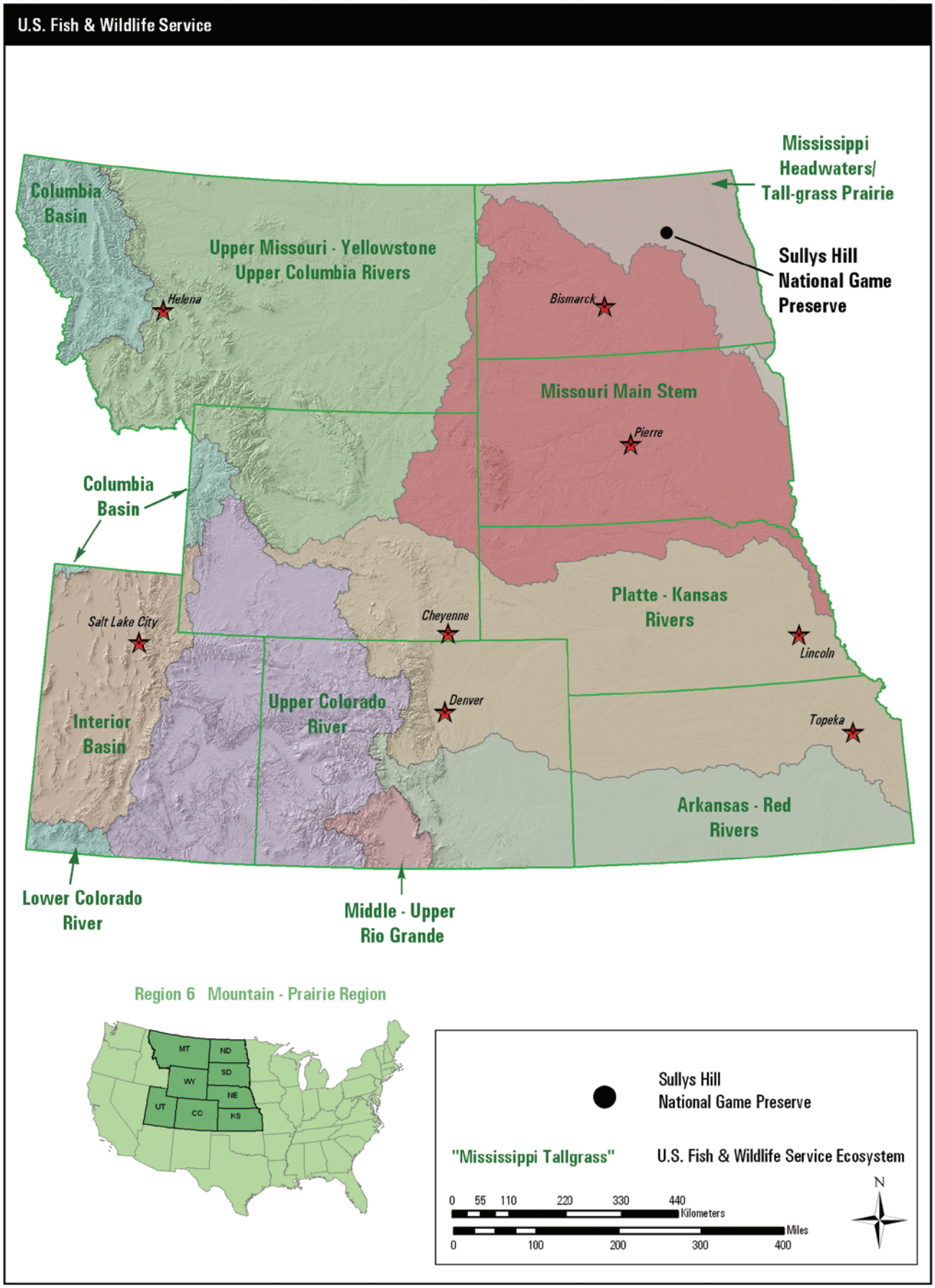

Figure 3. Mississippi Headwaters/Tall-grass Prairie ecosystem map.

federal, state, and local agencies; organizations; and citizens. The document was also posted on the region 6 website. A summary of the comments and responses can be found in appendix C. An intra-Service Section 7 evaluation was completed on the document by the Service's ecological services office to evaluate any impacts to threatened and endangered species (appendix D). The regional director reviewed the document, the analysis of alternatives, and all public comments. He selected alternative C as the preferred alternative for the final CCP. Subsequently, the draft CCP was modified in accordance with substantive public comments to produce this final CCP, which the regional director approved in August 2008 after documentation of a "finding of no significant impact" (see appendix E).

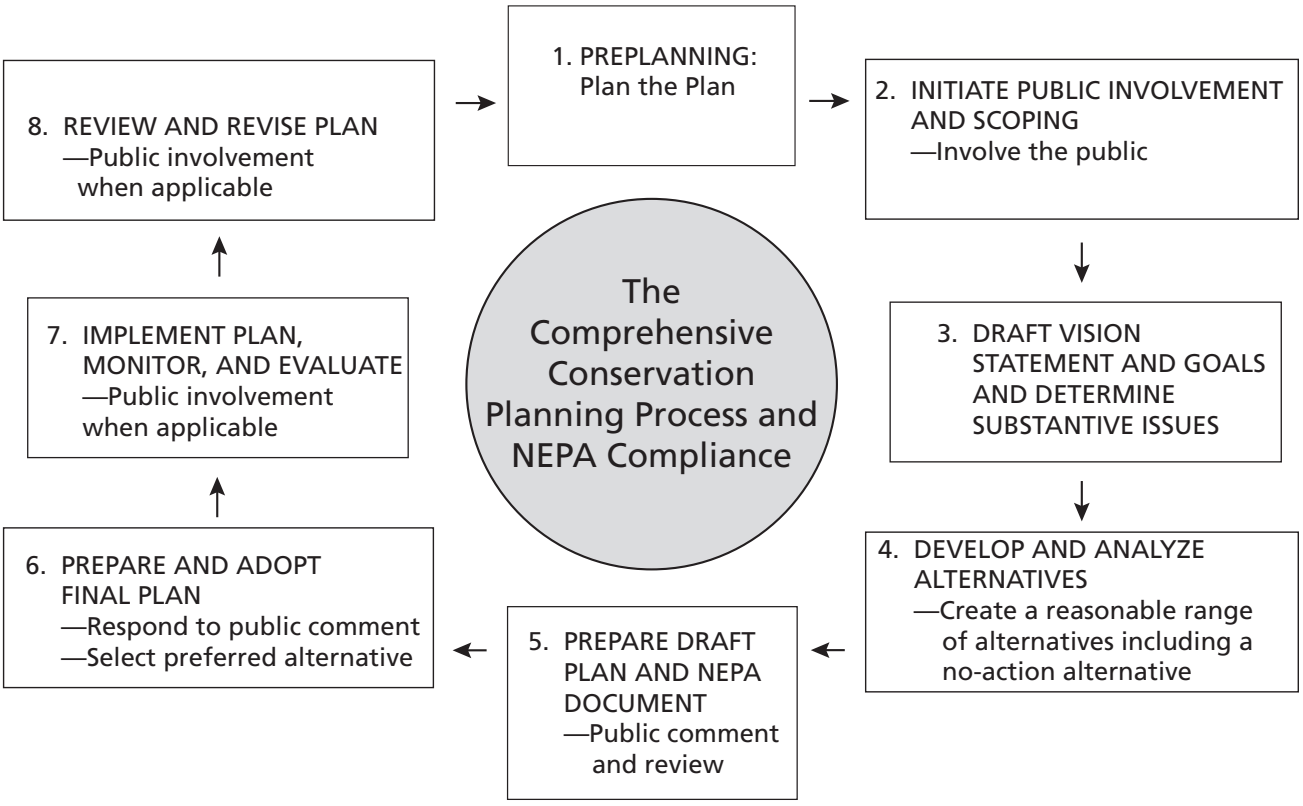

Figure 4. Steps in the planning process.

Table 1. Planning process summary and timeline for Sullys Hill National Game Preserve.

Date	*Event*	*Outcome*
June 23, 2005	Forest management review.	Forest management program review with the ND Forest Service, NRCS, and Service staff.
January 26, 2006	Kickoff meeting.	CCP overview; planning team list finalized; purposes identified; initial issues and qualities list developed; development of mailing list started. Biological and mapping needs identified; public scoping planned.
May 1, 2006	Vision statement.	Worked with team members, including NDGF, to develop first draft of vision statement for CCP.
May 23, 2006	NOI.	NOI published in *Federal Register* initiating public scoping.
June 8, 2006	Planning update.	First planning update sent to mailing list describing planning process and announcing upcoming public scoping meeting.
June 15, 2006	Focus group meeting (woodland birds).	Discussed woodland bird habitat needs and impacts of grazing by bison (Service nongame biologists).
June 17, 2006	Sullys Hill National Game Preserve Annual Birding Festival.	Presentations and displays reach over 1,200 attendees at the annual birding festival.
June 29, 2006	Public meeting, Sullys Hill National Game Preserve visitor center.	Public opportunity offered to learn about the CCP and provide comments.
August 1, 2006	Public scoping.	All public scoping comments were due. Comments were compiled for consideration by planning team.
August 1, 2006	Focus group meeting (disease control/ grazing).	Discussed ungulate grazing and disease control (Service, NRCS, and UND researchers).
August 23, 2006	Focus group meeting (disease control).	Discussed fenced animal disease issues with North Dakota Board of Animal Health.
August 29, 2006	Meeting with Spirit Lake Nation tribal council.	Presented CCP process and potential partnership proposals to Spirit Lake Nation tribal council members and chairwoman.
August 30–31, 2006	Vision and goals workshop.	Fine-tuned initial vision statement and developed goals to support it.
September 20, 2006	Focus group meeting (visitor services).	Visitor services program experts from the Service and tribal members reviewed the current refuge program.
September 21–22, 2006	Alternatives workshop.	Alternatives table developed.

Table 1. Planning process summary and timeline for Sullys Hill National Game Preserve.

Date	*Event*	*Outcome*
January 17–18, 2007	Objectives and strategies workshop.	Finalized alternatives table and began writing objectives/strategies for the proposed action.
February 2007–June 2007	Draft plan.	Planning team prepared draft CCP and EA.
March 18–April 2, 2008	Internal review.	Draft CCP and EA reviewed by other Service divisions along with interested state and tribal agencies.
June 26, 2008	NOA.	The public was notified that the draft plan was available for review and comment.
July 22, 2008	Public meeting.	Public opportunity offered to learn about the draft plan and offer comments.
July 25, 2008	End of public comment period.	All public comments were received or postmarked by this date.
August 29, 2008	FONSI.	The regional director selected the preferred alternative and signed the FONSI.

Coordination With the Public

A mailing list was prepared during the preplanning phase. The list includes more than 320 names of private citizens; local, regional, and state government representatives and legislators; other federal agencies; and interested organizations. A summary of the nongovernmental, state, and federal organizations who participated in public involvement is in appendix B.

The first planning update issue was sent to everyone on the mailing list in June 2006. Information was provided on the history of the refuge and the CCP process, along with an invitation to the public scoping meeting. Each planning update included a comment form and postage-paid envelope to give the public an opportunity to provide written comments. Comments via email were also accepted at the refuge's email address.

Presentations about the CCP process were made during all public activities including the refuge annual birding festival, attended by more than 1,200 individuals. The public scoping meeting was held on June 29, 2006, at the refuge visitor center. There were 10 attendees including local citizens, local teachers, and members of the Spirit Lake Nation. After a presentation about the refuge and an overview of the CCP and NEPA process, attendees met with presenters to ask questions and offer comments. Each attendee was given a written comment form to submit additional thoughts or questions. All written comments were due August 1, 2006. A total of 183 written comments were received throughout the scoping process. All comments were reviewed by the planning team and considered throughout the planning process.

State Coordination

The Service's region 6 director sent an invitation letter in April 2006 to the director of NDGF requesting the department's participation in the CCP process. Several representatives from the NDGF have participated in the planning process. Local NDGF wildlife managers and the refuge staff maintain excellent, ongoing working relations that preceded the start of the CCP process.

The NDGF's mission is to "protect, conserve, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive uses." In addition to enforcing the state's protection laws for migratory birds and endangered species, the NDGF is also responsible for managing natural resource lands owned by the state. The state manages over 78,000 acres in support of wildlife, recreation, and fisheries.

Tribal Coordination

The Spirit Lake Tribal Council was sent a written invitation in April 2006 to participate in the CCP planning process. The Spirit Lake Nation Reservation surrounds the refuge boundary on three sides. Although no initial response was received, tribal members did attend the public scoping

meeting. At that time another meeting was proposed for the tribal council meeting in August.

On August 28, 2006, the tribal chairwoman and 11 other members of the tribe, including 3 council members and tribal planning staff, met with refuge staff and the planning team leader at the Sullys Hill National Game Preserve education and visitor center. A presentation on the CCP process and a separate presentation outlining common goals and interests between the refuge and the tribe were presented. Tribal representatives also attended the visitor services workshop held the following month. Their insights were valuable and all comments were considered during development of alternatives. In particular, the refuge staff recognized several opportunities to further incorporate the tribe's history and culture into future visitor services programs.

Results of Scoping

Table 1 and appendix C summarize all scoping activities. Comments collected from scoping meetings and correspondence, including comment forms, were used in the development of a final list of issues to be addressed in this CCP. The Service determined which alternatives could best address the issues. The planning process ensures that issues with the greatest potential effect on the refuge will be resolved or given priority over the life of the CCP. These issues are summarized in chapter 2. In addition, the Service considered suggested changes to current refuge management presented by the public and other groups.

Plan Amendment and Revision

This CCP will be reviewed annually to determine the need for revision. A revision will occur if and when significant information becomes available, such as a change in ecological conditions. The CCP will be augmented by detailed step-down management plans to address the completion of specific strategies in support of the CCP goals and objectives. Revisions to the CCP and the step-down management plans will be subject to public review and NEPA compliance. At a minimum, this plan will be evaluated every 5 years and revised after 15 years.

Song Sparrow