

# *Implementation and Monitoring*

## Personnel

Current staffing at the Refuge consists of eight permanent and eight seasonal employees. One of the positions, Tallgrass Prairie Biologist, is shared with South Dakota. A recent national evaluation of complexity and minimum staffing requirements of the Complex indicated that an additional 10 permanent staff is suggested. Additional seasonal staff will be required to implement the strategies in the CCP and effectively monitor the flora and fauna, to determine if the goals and objectives in the Plan are met.

At this time, the Refuge has an annual base budget of \$374,000 to maintain salaries for eight full-time permanent personnel and annual operating expenses for the Refuge and Wetland Management District. The current budget represents the minimum needed to maintain current annual activities and does not adequately support Complex habitat management, biological monitoring, maintenance, public use, and educational programs and all Complex facilities and structures.

The following chart shows the current staff and the proposed additional staff required to fully implement the CCP. If all positions are funded, the Refuge Complex staff will be able to carry out all aspects of this Plan. This would provide maximum benefits to wildlife, maximum efficiency, improve facilities and provide for increased public use. Projects that have adequate funding and staffing will receive priority to accomplish. Staffing and funding are requested for the 15-year period of the Plan.

<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Complex Project Leader, GS-13	Complex Project Leader, GS-13
Supervisory Refuge Operations Specialist, GS-11	Supervisory Refuge Operations Specialist, GS-12 Refuge Operations Specialist, GS-9/11
Complex Biologist, GS-9	Complex Biologist, GS-11 Biologist, GS-9 Biological Technician, GS-7
Seasonal Biological Technicians, GS-4 to GS-6 (2)	Seasonal Biological Technicians, GS-4 to GS-7 (3) Private Lands Biologist, GS-9
Tallgrass Biologist, GS-11*	Tallgrass Biologist, GS-12* Law Enforcement Officer, GS-11* Outdoor Recreation Planner, GS-11 Seasonal Public Use Staff, GS-7/9 (2) Fire Management Officer, GS-9*
Career Seasonal Range Technician, GS-6*	Career Seasonal Range Technician, GS-7*
Seasonal Range Technicians, GS-3 to GS-6 (5)*	Seasonal Range Technicians, GS-3 to GS-6 (6)*
Administrative Assistant, GS-6/7	Administrative Assistant, GS-8 Administrative Assistant, GS-6/7
Equipment Operator, WG-10	Equipment Operator, WG-10
Maintenance Worker, WG-8	Maintenance Worker, WG-8 Career Seasonal Maintenance Workers, WG-8 Career Seasonal Tractor Operator, WG-7

\*shared with other stations in North and South Dakota.

## Funding Needed to Implement This Plan

Projects required to implement the Tewaukon CCP are listed in Appendix J. This Appendix shows the funding needed to implement the CCP through two different systems. The first system is the Refuge Operation Needs System (RONS). This documents requests to Congress for funding and staffing needed to carry out projects above the existing base budget. Amounts shown below include a start-up cost of implementing each program with actual yearly costs that are significantly less. The other system is the Maintenance Management System (MMS) which documents the equipment, buildings, and other existing property that require repair or replacement.

Twelve of the current RONS projects directly support the implementation of the CCP. A synopsis of the projects in priority order follow.

<b>RONS Projects</b>	<b>Construction Funding</b>	<b>General Funding</b>
1. Upland Restoration for grassland nesting birds		\$ 209,000
2. Biological info. collection and monitoring to support management of wildlife and habitat		\$ 254,000
3. Noxious plant control to improve habitat for wildlife		\$ 148,000
4. Tallgrass restoration for declining grassland nesting birds		\$ 325,000
5. Protection of resources including wetlands, grasslands, and safety of public		\$ 270,000
6. Assistance to private landowners to improve wildlife habitat		\$ 185,000
7. Improvement of staff facilities and support	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 155,000
8. Improvement of Public Education and Recreation Facilities and staff	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 383,000
9. Fire management program to improve wildlife habitat and protection of wildfires		\$ 242,000
10. Protection, documentation, and interpretation of existing cultural resources		\$ 77,000
11. Protection and clarifying of water rights on Complex to support water bird needs		\$ 467,000
12. Predator control to improve grassland bird nesting success on the Complex		\$ 382,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 2,500,000</b>	<b>\$3,067,000</b>

Other funding needs include the maintenance or replacement of existing equipment and facilities. In the past, the Complex has had a large backlog of these funding needs. However, in recent years, much has been accomplished in funding these backlogs. Below is a list of remaining needs required to implement the CCP and maintain the structures and equipment to safe standards for the 15 years of the Plan.

Vehicles	\$1,339,250
Equipment	\$ 561,585
Public Use Facilities	\$ 300,000
Buildings and Facilities	\$ 50,000
Water Control Structures and dikes	\$ 900,000
Roads, gates and fences	<u>\$ 73,500</u>
	<b>\$3,224,335</b>

A list of the top ten items is located in the Maintenance Management System list in Appendix J.

## Step-Down Management Plans

Service managers have traditionally used the Refuge Manual to guide field station management actions. The policy direction given through the Manual has provided direction for developing a wide variety of plans which are used to prepare annual work schedules, budgets, public use, safety, and land management actions. The CCP is intended as a broad umbrella plan which provides general concepts and specific wildlife, habitat, endangered species, public use, and partnership objectives. The purpose of step-down management plans is to provide greater detail to managers and employees who will implement the strategies described in the CCP.

Under the CCP, the Complex staff will revise or develop several step-down plans for the Refuge and District. Complex step-down plans to be revised include:

Public Use Plan	Water Management Plan
Cropland Management Plan	Upland Management Plan
Fisheries Management Plan	Fire Management Plan

Staff will also develop Habitat and Wildlife Monitoring Plans.

## Partners

Partnerships require extensive staff time to coordinate, develop, and maintain. Long-term commitments including funding and staff time are needed to maintain a strong and lasting relationship with partners. Without appropriate staffing, we run the risk of losing our current partners and not developing new partners. Several of the objectives in the CCP depend on partner support and funding. Many of our wildlife, habitat, and public use programs would not continue without the additional funding and support from partners. Without partners, many of the habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement projects would go unfunded. Over time, the diversity of wildlife species will begin to decline as the habitat degrades. Partners are essential in fully implementing the CCP for the Tewaukon Complex.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Adaptive management is a flexible approach to long-term management of natural resources that is directed over time by the results of ongoing monitoring activities and other information. Habitat, wildlife, and public use management techniques and specific objectives will be regularly evaluated as results of the monitoring program and other new technology and information become available. These periodic evaluations will be used over time to adapt both the management objectives and techniques to better achieve management goals.

Monitoring is an essential component of the CCP. Monitoring strategies have been integrated into many of the goals and objectives. Specific details including monitoring strategies, methods, techniques, and locations will be outlined in a step-down Complex Monitoring Plan. In this CCP, habitat monitoring receives the primary emphasis. Many of the wildlife species on the Complex are migratory birds. Migratory birds are impacted by a variety of factors (drought, disease, pollution, habitat destruction, etc.) on their wintering and nesting grounds and all along their migration pathways. Determining whether or not a habitat manipulation on a Refuge field or wetland is wholly responsible for a Refuge migratory bird population change is difficult. Managers can strive to gather current information about the critical habitat needs for targeted species and then design Habitat Management Plans and strategies to meet these needs. The habitat can then be monitored to determine if the management strategies are providing the critical habitat needs of a wildlife species. For example, if one of the critical habitat needs for bobolinks is vegetative structure at a specific density, managers can manipulate vegetation to achieve this structure and density. Whether or not bobolink use increases on the manipulated field, when the vegetation structure and density meet the conditions that bobolinks prefer, may or may not be directly tied to the manipulation. Monitoring bobolink populations in the manipulated field over a long period of time can provide some general local population trend information and document bird use. Managers must then carefully evaluate the bird use data to try and determine if a direct correlation exists to the habitat manipulation.

All habitat management activities will be monitored to assess whether the desired effect on wildlife and habitat components has been achieved. Baseline surveys will be conducted for wildlife species for which existing or historical numbers and occurrence is not well known. It is also important to conduct studies to monitor wildlife responses to increased public use including fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and environmental education.

Monitoring should be designed and developed with Universities and/or Government research divisions when stringent protocols or complex data analysis is needed. Applied research can help to answer habitat, wildlife, and public use management questions. Complex staff will work with researchers to ensure that the research is applicable and compatible with Complex objectives.

This CCP is designed to be effective for a 15-year period. Periodic review of the CCP will be required to ensure that established goals and objectives are being met and strategies are being implemented. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be an important part of this process.

Key monitoring needs are identified throughout the CCP. A step-down Complex Monitoring Plan will incorporate and describe how, when, and who will conduct the monitoring.

## Plan Amendment and Revision

The CCP will guide management on the Complex for the next 15 years. CCPs are ultimately signed by the Regional Director, Mountain Prairie Region 6, thus providing regional direction to the station project leader. A copy of the CCP will be provided to all those who are interested. The project leader at the station will review the CCP every five years to determine if it needs revision. In the case of severe circumstances, the project leader has the authority to modify management actions to respond appropriately. The Plan will be revised no later than 2015.

## Comprehensive Conservation Plan Preparers

The planning team was comprised of:

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The CCP and accompanying EA were written by Sandra Siekaniec, Kristine Askerooth, and Jack Lalor. Both documents were reviewed by Tewaukon Complex staff, Regional Office staff, Biological Resources Division, and other Service offices.

