

Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
73 Weir Hill Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Update

This planning update describes the progress the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, we) has made in developing a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR, the refuge). It also summarizes the different alternatives the planning team considered for managing the refuge and includes information about how to obtain and comment on the draft CCP.

Draft Plan Available for Public Comment

We began preparing a CCP for this refuge in 1999. After completing CCPs for several refuges in the complex, and separating the Nomans Land Island and Monomoy CCPs, we have now completed a draft plan which we are distributing for public review and comment through July 2, 2010. An environmental assessment (EA), required by the National Environmental Policy Act, accompanies the draft plan. The EA describes the three alternatives that we evaluated in detail to achieve the refuge purposes, vision and goals (see highlights below). It also provides an analysis of their effects on the environment. We have identified Alternative C as the Service-preferred alternative.



Erin Victory/TCI

Nomans Land Island's southern shore

How to Obtain a Draft Plan

You may request a hard copy or CDROM of the draft plan from our office at Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Sudbury, MA.

Telephone: 978/443-4661

Email: northeastplanning@fws.gov

You may also view and download the draft CCP/EA online:
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/nomansland/ccphome.html>

How to Provide Comments

We invite you to share your comments about the draft plan either in writing or in person at our public meeting (see below). We will accept letters, faxes, and emails. To be considered, all comments must be emailed or postmarked by July 2, 2010.

You may also contact us at:

Email: northeastplanning@fws.gov

(Please put "Nomans Land Island NWR" in the subject line) or at:

Mail: Carl Melberg
73 Weir Hill Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776

Phone: 978/443-4661 ext. 32

Fax: 978/443-2898

Public Meeting

You may also wish to participate in our public meeting on June 23, 2010 in Chilmark, MA. There will be a short presentation on the draft plan, and then we will record any comments you would like to provide.

Public Meeting

Date: June 23, 2010

Time: 7:00pm-9:00pm

Place: Chilmark Community Center
Chilmark, MA 02535

Draft Vision Statement

“We envision Nomans Land Island NWR to be a vital and unique maritime resource for migratory birds along the Atlantic Flyway. Our management will perpetuate the diversity of nesting, resting, and foraging habitats used by passerines, raptors, waterfowl and seabirds throughout the island. In particular, species of regional conservation concern including the peregrine falcon will benefit from land which is free from mammalian predators and from present-day human disturbances.”

“Nomans Land Island has a culturally rich human history that began thousands of years ago and our management will ensure that this legacy endures. Culturally sensitive management actions on the island, and strong partnerships with the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and other partners, will foster cultural awareness and an appreciative and knowledgeable public.”

“With its recent history of human use, Nomans Land Island NWR will be a place few people can experience firsthand; yet we will provide meaningful alternatives for members of the public to experience the beauty and singularity of the Refuge. Through partnerships, education, interpretation and outreach, we hope to instill a sense of wonder about complex and dynamic coastal ecosystems, and underscore the value of the Refuge in conserving those resources.”

Chronology of Our Conservation Plan

In August 2008 we revisited the comprehensive conservation planning process for Nomans Land Island NWR to guide natural resource management and public use programs for the next 15 years. We re-convened a core planning team that included regional planners, refuge staff, and representatives from the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.

In October 2008, we held a public scoping meeting to present the work we had completed so far and to invite your comments. At that time, we had completed the draft vision and goals for the refuge. After a 30-day open comment period, during which time we received many excellent comments, we reviewed your input in order to create management alternatives for the refuge.

Proposed Management Alternatives

The planning team is grateful to everyone who provided comments and suggestions. The team has

carefully considered the information provided to date and has developed the following management alternatives for the refuge.

Under all alternatives, we would continue to coordinate with the U.S. Navy and their ongoing unexploded ordnance removal operations. In addition, we would continue to enforce the ban on public access for public safety.

Alternative A-Current Management

This alternative would continue the type and scale of current management activities and programs on the refuge's 628 acres.



Stephanie Koch/USFWS

Refuge shoreline and cobble spit

Alternative B-Enhanced Wildlife Management and Visitor Services

This alternative features more active monitoring and habitat management to promote species of conservation concern, and would increase off-site visitor services programming.

Habitat/Wildlife Management

- Conduct prescribed burns every 7 to 12 years to maintain shrubland.
- Treat invasive species as needed so as not to exceed at most 10 percent cover, per habitat type.
- Add migratory shorebird, pollinator, and rare species surveys to current species and vegetation monitoring efforts.
- Annually evaluate management needs for terns.
- Monitor shoreline for sea level rise (climate change), seal use, and seabird mortality events.
- Evaluate feasibility of New England cottontail release.

Off-Site Visitor Services

- Annually update website with photo's, videos, and interviews from the refuge.
- Partner with Aquinnah Cultural Center (ACC) and Town of Chilmark to provide a trail/

- spotting scope to view the refuge.
- With partners, develop interpretation and environmental education programs and activities for Martha's Vineyard.
- Increase outreach efforts to inform public of refuge activities.

Cultural and Archaeological Resources

- Continue to work with the Tribe to finalize a partnership agreement for refuge burial site protection, ceremonial access, and cultural resource and emergency response protocols.
- With the Tribe and partners, develop opportunities to interpret refuge cultural resources.
- Work with partners to maintain and protect the Luce cemetery, and research and identify those buried in the cemetery.



Erin Victory/TCI

Refuge wetland in autumn

Alternative C-Natural Processes Emphasis, Focal Species Management and Wilderness Designation (Service-preferred Alternative)

This is the Service-preferred alternative. The biological program would focus on more targeted management to benefit prioritized species of conservation concern, while the off-site visitor services program would be increased somewhat from current levels.

Habitat/Wildlife Management

- Conduct prescribed burns as needed to maintain shrubland.
- Treat invasive species as needed.
- Monitor vegetation; survey migrating landbirds, pollinators, terns and American oystercatchers.
- Evaluate feasibility of New England cottontail release.

Off-Site Visitor Services

- Develop refuge brochures and interpretive displays, and collaborate with partners when possible.
- Partner with the ACC and Town of Chilmark to provide a trail/spotting scope to view the refuge.
- Increase outreach efforts from current levels.

Cultural and Archaeological Resources

- Continue to work with the Tribe to finalize a partnership agreement for refuge burial site protection,

ceremonial access, and cultural resource and emergency response protocols.

- Work with partners to protect the Luce cemetery.
- Work with partners to interpret cultural resources when possible.

Wilderness Recommendation

- Propose Nomans Land Island for wilderness designation.



Erin Victory/TCI

Refuge shrubland

Contact Information

To learn more about Nomans Land Island National Wildlife Refuge, please visit our website: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nomanslandisland/>

You may reach refuge staff by telephone at 978/443-4661.

To learn more about the planning process contact:

Carl Melberg, Refuge Planner
Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex
73 Weir Hill Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776
northeastplanning@fws.gov
Phone: 978/443-4661 ext. 32

Or Visit the Refuge CCP Website:
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/refugeCCPs.html>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

May 2010



Comprehensive Conservation Planning Goals for the Refuge

Goal 1. Perpetuate the biological integrity and diversity of coastal island habitats to support native wildlife and plant communities, including species of conservation concern.

Goal 2. Promote awareness and stewardship of our coastal natural resources by working with partners to provide off-site interpretation, education and outreach opportunities.

Goal 3. Recognize the archaeological and cultural importance of the island.

Goal 4. Protect, maintain, enhance, and preserve the wilderness character of Nomans Land Island NWR.