

Chapter 5. Implementation and Monitoring

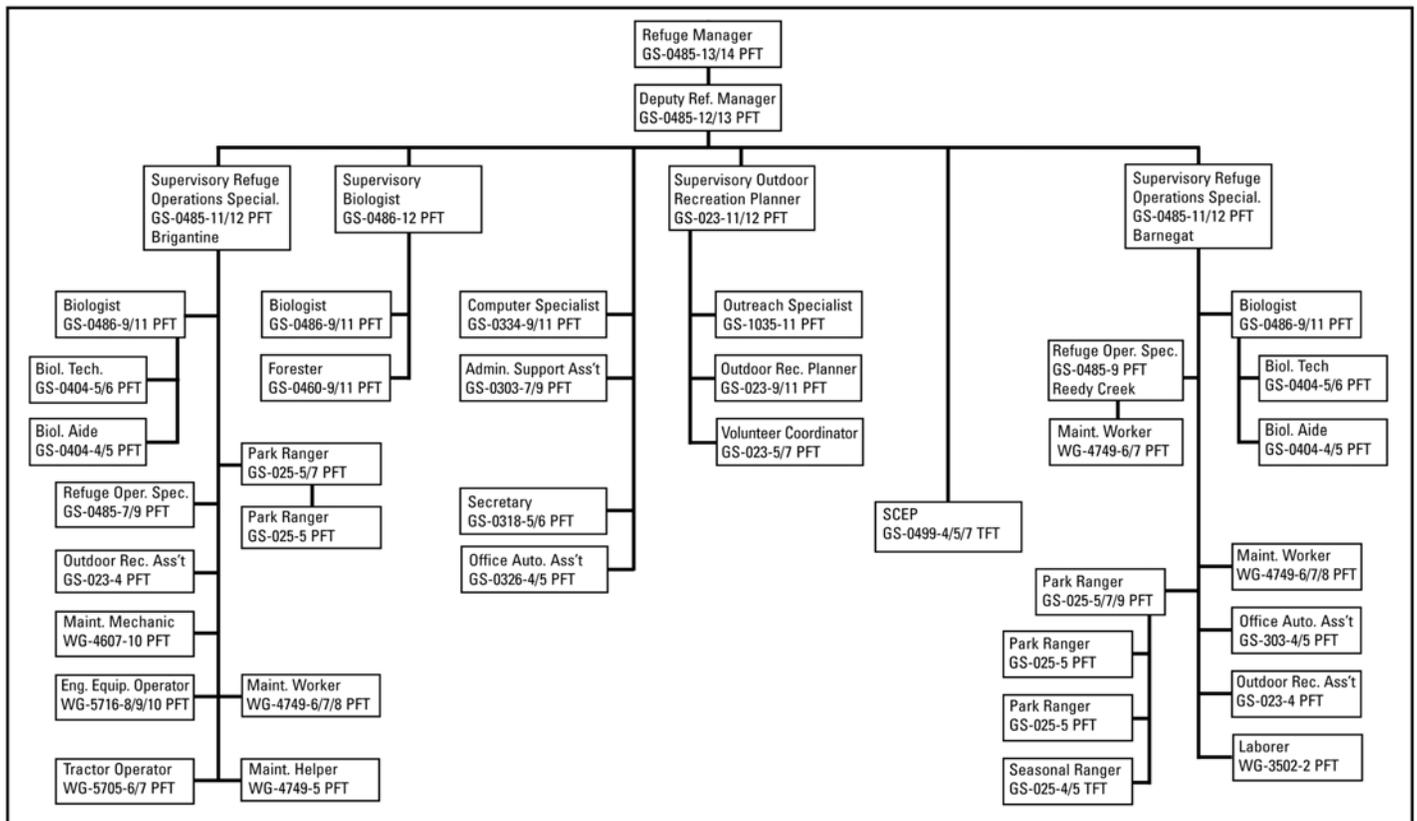
Funding and Staffing

A staff of 16 full time equivalents (FTEs) currently operates Forsythe Refuge. This includes:

- Project Leader;
- Deputy Project Leader;
- Supervisory Refuge Operations Specialist;
- Refuge Operations Specialist;
- two Biologists;
- Outdoor Recreation Planner;
- two Maintenance Workers;
- Lead Administrative Office Assistant;
- Office Automation Assistant;
- two Park Rangers;
- Seasonal Park Ranger;
- Volunteer Coordinator;
- SCEP (Student Career Experience Program).

To fully implement the extensive program of wildlife conservation and compatible wildlife-dependent recreation found in this CCP, a staffing plan of 41 FTEs will be required (see Figure 2). This staffing plan,

Figure 2. Staffing plan for Forsythe Refuge



together with funding for our land protection efforts, will allow us to achieve the objectives and strategies set forth in this CCP. Full funding of the CCP over the next 15 years will require;

- \$54.2 million for staffing and projects;
- \$30.7 million for land protection.

Projects required to implement the CCP are listed in the Appendices. Appendix H contains the Refuge Operation Needs System (RONS) which documents requests to Congress for funding and staffing needed to carry out projects above the existing base budget. Amounts shown include a start-up cost for the first year, the recurring cost for following years, and a 15-year total cost. Staffing is shown in FTEs (one FTE is one person working full time for one year). Appendix I contains the Maintenance Management System (MMS) which documents the equipment, buildings, and other existing property that require repair or replacement.

The rate at which the Refuge achieves its full potential of contributing locally, regionally, and nationally to wildlife conservation and providing opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is totally dependent upon receiving adequate funding and staffing.

Step-down Management Plans

Step-down management planning is the formulation of detailed plans for meeting goals and objectives identified in the CCP. These plans describe the specific strategies and implementation schedules we are to follow, “stepping down” from general goals and objectives. They may be addressed in detail during preparation of the CCP, or prepared following completion of the CCP. The preparation of new step-down management plans or substantial changes to existing plans typically require further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance and an opportunity for public review.

The Refuge System Manual, Part 4, Chapter 3, lists over 25 specific management plans that are generally required on every Refuge. Some plans require annual revisions, others are on a 5 to 10 year revision schedule.

The following step-down management plans are currently being revised:

- Habitat Management Plan (to be completed in 2005).

The following step-down management plans are either in need of revision or do not exist:

- Wildlife Population Management Plan, including trapping (scheduled for 2006);
- Integrated Pest Management Plan, including chapters for each problem species (scheduled for 2006);
- Wilderness Management Plan (scheduled for 2005);
- Priority Wildlife-Dependent Recreation Plan, including hunting and fishing (scheduled for 2005), wildlife observation and photography (scheduled for 2005), environmental education and interpretation (scheduled for 2005).

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

This CCP covers a 15-year period, through 2015. Periodic review of the CCP will be required to ensure that established goals and objectives are being met and that the Plan is being implemented as scheduled. To assist this review process, a monitoring and evaluation program will be implemented, focusing on issues involving public use activities, and wildlife habitat and population management.

Monitoring of public use programs would involve the continued collection and compilation of visitation figures and activity levels. In addition, research and monitoring programs will be established to assess the impacts of public use activities on wildlife and wildlife habitat, conflicts between Refuge users, and identify compatible levels of public use activities. We will reduce these activities if we determine that incompatible levels of public use were occurring.

Collection of baseline data on all wildlife populations and habitats will be implemented. This data will update existing records of wildlife species using the Refuge, their habitat requirements, and seasonal use patterns. This data will also be used to evaluate the effects of public use and habitat management programs on wildlife populations.

Refuge habitat management programs will be continually monitored for positive and negative impacts on wildlife habitat and populations and the ecological integrity of the ecosystem, and to determine if these management activities are helping to meet Refuge goals and objectives. Information resulting from monitoring will allow staff to set more specific and better management objectives, more rigorously evaluate management objectives, and ultimately, make better management decisions.

Volunteer Opportunities and Educational Programs

As Forsythe Refuge continues to contribute to the quality of life on the New Jersey coast, strong support in the community and the region will continue to contribute to their success. Helping hands are needed for program development, data gathering, and other opportunities discussed in the CCP. Only with this type of assistance can the Refuge achieve its goals and objectives, support the mission of the Service, and help meet the needs of the community.

The volunteer program at Forsythe Refuge has been growing steadily. In 1990, volunteers provided more than 2,300 hours of assistance to the Refuge. In 1999, volunteers provided about 3,900 hours of volunteer service.

Much of this volunteer work was done by 60 core volunteers, five active Friends Group members, three schools who brought groups to work on specific problems and two Eagle scouts working on their projects.

In addition, 65 one-time volunteers provided 756 hours of service for a "Community Tree Planting project" and another 90 onetime volunteers gave 360 hours of service on "Make a Difference Day".

Volunteers are essential to the ongoing and planned operation and maintenance of Forsythe Refuge. We are deeply indebted to all of our volunteers for their dedication and services rendered for the betterment of our nation's natural resources.

Volunteers participate in a wide variety of activities. These include wildlife and wildlands photography, interpretation, providing information, observation and surveys of endangered species, such as, peregrine falcons and piping plovers, botanical surveys, fabrication of wood duck and bluebird boxes, waterfowl surveys and research assistance, litter pickup, trail clearing and maintenance, sign rehabilitation, and other

maintenance projects.

Plan Amendment and Revision

Periodic review of the CCP will be required to ensure that objectives are being met and strategies are being implemented. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be an important part of this process.

The Plan will be reviewed annually to determine the need for revision. A revision would occur if significant new information were to become available, ecological conditions changed, major Refuge expansion occurs, or we identify the need to do so during Plan review. This should occur every 15 years or sooner, if necessary. Revisions to the Plan will be subject to additional NEPA compliance and an opportunity for public review and comment.

Appendices

- A. Relevant Legal Mandates.
- B. Summarized Public Comments, July 1999.
- C. Summarized Public Comments, July 2000.
- D. NEPA Compliance.
- E. Species of Concern.
- F. Pre-acquisition Compatibility Determinations.
- G. Ecosystem Values.
- H. RONS Project List.
- I. MMS Project list.
- J. Glossary.
- K. Works Cited.
- L. List of Preparers.

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