



# Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge

## Spring 2002 - Planning Newsletter 1

### Open Houses

The Refuge will host open houses in three different locations for the public. During the afternoon sessions, you are invited to come and talk one-on-one with staff from the Refuge and from the Service's Regional Office. During the evening sessions, we will give a short presentation on the CCP process and the Refuge, and then we will invite comments from participants. Please come and share your ideas about Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. Following are a list of dates, times and places of the meetings. Please direct all inquiries to the Refuge, 410-639-7056.

#### Tuesday, June 18, 2002

3-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.  
Meeting Room  
Queen Anne's County Public Library  
121 South Commerce Street  
Centreville, MD 21617

#### Wednesday, June 19, 2002

3-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.  
Auditorium  
Rock Hall Municipal Building  
5585 Main Street  
Rock Hall, MD 21661

#### Thursday, June 20, 2002

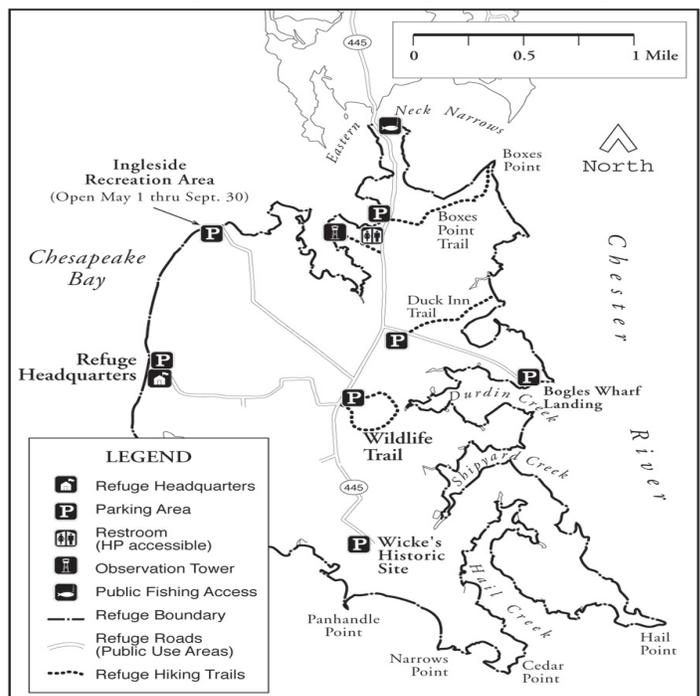
3-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.  
Commissioners' Hearing Room  
Kent County Government Center  
400 High Street  
Chestertown, MD 21620

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is starting work on a long-term management plan for the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). This plan, called a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), will serve as a guide for managing the Refuge over the next 10-15 years.

This planning project offers a unique opportunity for the Service to involve individuals, organizations, and local communities in the future management of the Refuge. You can play a significant role in the development of this far-reaching plan by submitting comments and participating in open houses (see left sidebar for dates and times).

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge totals 2,285 acres and is located at the mouth of the Chester River in Kent County, Maryland. It was established in December of 1962 under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act "for use as an inviolate sanctuary or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." The Refuge is a major feeding and resting place for migratory and wintering waterfowl. It is also home to the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel and the threatened southern bald eagle. Some of the Refuge's broad management goals are as follows:

- Enhance habitat for nesting and migratory waterfowl using upland and water level management practices.
- Enhance the population of the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel.
- Monitor and protect habitat for nesting southern bald eagles.
- Provide high-quality, compatible opportunities for wildlife-dependent public uses.
- Serve as a model for showcasing sustainable management techniques.



Map of Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge

# More information on planning and getting involved

## What is the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System?

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

## What are Refuges all about?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, part of the Department of the Interior, is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the nation’s fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The Service also manages the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world’s largest collection of lands set aside specifically for the protection of fish and wildlife populations and habitats. Refuges provide important habitats for native plants and animals, facilitating the preservation of threatened and/or endangered species. Refuges also offer a variety of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, and many have visitor centers, hiking trails, and environmental education programs.

## Why is this planning effort starting now?

In October 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, which states that, first and foremost, the National Wildlife Refuge System must focus on wildlife conservation. This law establishes the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and creates a new process of determining compatible public use activities on refuges. The law also requires us to prepare CCP’s for each refuge.

## What are the goals of the CCP?

- Outline Refuge management priorities for the next 10 - 15 years;
- Describe significant Refuge resources and their importance;
- Identify how the Refuge can best protect these resources;
- Clarify which public uses are, and are not, compatible with managing significant resources; and
- Identify the Refuge’s role within the local community and as a national resource.

## What activities can be enjoyed at Refuges?

It is important to recognize there are laws and policies which guide management of public use on National Wildlife Refuges. Only those public uses which are determined to be compatible with the mission of the Refuge System and the purposes of the Refuge are allowed. The Refuge Improvement Act identifies six wildlife dependent public uses as priority uses:

- wildlife photography
- hunting
- fishing
- environmental education
- interpretation
- wildlife observation

## Want to get involved?

Your participation is critical to the success of this planning effort. Throughout this process, there will be several opportunities for you to provide input to the plan. Please share your ideas with us by answering the questions included in this newsletter and returning your response in the enclosed envelope. The Refuge will host three open houses to hear more directly from you. We need to know your feelings about the Refuge, your concerns, those things that you are happy with, and your ideas for turning the Refuge’s vision into reality. We hope you can attend one of the scheduled Open Houses. Locations, dates, and times are listed on the front page. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Refuge Headquarters at (410) 639-7056, or call Beth Goldstein, the CCP Team Leader at (413) 253-8564. You will also find updated information on the Refuge’s Web page, at <http://easternneck.fws.gov>.

# The Issues Workbook



**Tundra Swans.**  
*USFWS photo*

## Getting Involved...

You can help us focus our planning effort on those things that matter to you and your community. Your comments will assist us in identifying the best alternative for long-term management of Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge.

The following workbook has been mailed to everyone on our mailing list and will be handed out to everyone who attends the Open House meetings. It provides an effective way for us to share background information and to hear your ideas and concerns on important issues affecting the Refuge. We have compiled a list of questions to provide a basis for comparing your comments with others we receive. Answer any or all that are important to you. Feel free to make additional comments in the space provided. You can also call, E-mail, or write us at the address provided on the last page.

The comments we receive in the workbooks and at the public meetings will help us identify issues and develop goals and objectives.

## Values, Vision, and the Service's Role

1. How many times a year do you visit Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge?

- never
- 1-5
- 5-25
- 25-50
- 50+

2. What are your favorite activities to engage in while visiting the Refuge?



**Fishing Group.**  
*USFWS photo*

3. With a larger perspective in mind, what do you value most about the Refuge?

4. What do you consider the most important problem facing the Refuge today?

### Draft Vision Statement

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge is part of a nation-wide network of lands and waters belonging to the National Wildlife Refuge System. Located on Maryland's eastern shore, the Refuge lies at the confluence of the Chester River and the Chesapeake Bay. The 2,285-acre Refuge functions as a microcosm of habitats that includes cropland, impoundments, brackish tidal marsh, open water and forest. These varied habitat types sustain large populations of wintering Canada geese as well as other migratory waterfowl and songbirds. The Refuge is also home to the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel and the threatened southern bald eagle.

The Refuge is the only undeveloped island in the Chesapeake Bay that offers public access. The Refuge's proximity to major urban areas such as Washington, D.C., Baltimore and Philadelphia provides a unique opportunity to showcase management practices that benefit natural resources.

Every year thousands of visitors partake in a variety of high-quality, wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. A new Visitor Center, which is currently under construction, will facilitate environmental education, emphasize the Refuge's long and varied cultural history, and provide a new home for administrative offices.

To serve as a model for other organizations, the Refuge will continue to pursue, with partners, innovative opportunities for implementing and demonstrating renewable, sustainable management techniques.

## Issues Workbook (continued)

5. What technical services would you like the Refuge staff to provide to your local community? (check if appropriate)

- wetlands management
- management of endangered species
- grasslands restoration
- management to benefit wildlife
- land protection funding
- control of invasive plants and animal species
- volunteer opportunities
- grants for habitat management

other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did you attend one of the Open Houses? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
Date/town: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where did you obtain this Workbook? (This will help us in determining the most effective places to distribute these in the future.)
8. What do you think of our Vision Statement (*see sidebar*)? Any comments or suggestions?
9. Please indicate here any additional comments you wish to make on values, vision or the Service's role in your community.

# Issues Workbook (continued)

## Tentative Planning Schedule

Spring 2002: Hold Open Houses to gather public input and identify issues.

Summer 2002: Define issues and develop strategies and alternatives for dealing with issues.

January/February 2003: Distribute Draft CCP/Environmental Assessment (EA).

March 2003: Hold public meetings on Draft CCP.

Summer 2003: Distribute Final CCP/EA.

Fall 2003: Begin implementation of the CCP.

Ongoing: Meetings with agencies, groups and other interested parties.

## Fish, Wildlife, and their Habitats

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge provides important habitat for a wide variety of species, some of which are threatened or endangered. This planning process will emphasize the importance of these habitats and the need to conserve and enhance their existence and the species they support.

1. Are there specific areas outside the Refuge that, in your opinion, need protection? If so, please list them here, and explain why you think they are important.

2. Which options should the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursue in protecting important habitats that are not currently in a National Wildlife Refuge? (Please check your top three choices)

- land acquisition
- conservation easements
- purchasing development rights
- partnerships with private landowners
- work with conservation groups
- environmental education
- grants programs
- habitat restoration
- no active involvement
- other (please specify)

3. How do you feel about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquiring land from willing sellers?

4. Are any of the following issues a concern to you? If so, please check your top three choices.

- the fragmentation of important habitats
- invasion of exotic plant and animal species
- overdevelopment of fragile habitats
- increased recreational use in sensitive habitat areas
- decreased water quality
- lack of active management to improve wildlife habitats
- other issues (please specify)

5. Please include here any additional comments on conserving fish and wildlife habitat.

# Issues Workbook (continued)

## Recreation, Education, and Access



**The Lodge, soon to be the new Visitor Center.**

*USFWS Photo*



**Boardwalk**

*USFWS photo*

It is important to recognize there are laws and policy which guide management of public use on National Wildlife Refuges. National Wildlife Refuges are closed to public use until officially designated open. Only those public uses that are “compatible” with the purpose(s) for which a Refuge was established are allowed. Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge was established under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act “for use as an inviolate sanctuary or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

The following six wildlife-dependent recreational uses are identified by the 1997 Refuge Improvement Act as a priority on National Wildlife Refuges when determined to be *compatible*: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretation.

“Compatibility” with the Refuge purpose is determined by the Refuge Manager based on an evaluation of:

- 1) anticipated impacts to natural resources;
- 2) whether safety among and between users can be maintained;
- 3) whether the Refuge has the budget and staffing resources to administer the activity, and
- 4) expected level of involvement with partners and volunteers.

1. In your opinion, which of the following wildlife-dependent public uses should be allowed on the Refuge? Please check all that apply.

- hunting
- fishing
- wildlife observation and photography
- environmental education and interpretation

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are any of these activities, or the current levels of use on the Refuge, a concern to you? Why?

3. Do our recreational facilities (trails, parking, signs, etc.) meet your needs? Please explain.

# Issues Workbook (continued)

*Please contact us if you have any questions or need additional information. Also, we would be happy to meet with your group or organization to discuss this project. Direct all inquiries to:*

Martin Kaehny, Refuge Manager  
Eastern Neck NWR  
1730 Eastern Neck Rd.  
Rock Hall, Maryland 21661

phone: (410) 639-7056  
FAX: (410) 639-2516  
E-mail: r5rw\_ennwr@fws.gov

Federal Relay Service  
for the deaf and hard-of-hearing:  
1-800-877-8339

ADA compliant materials will be  
provided upon request

4. Please indicate here any additional comments on recreation, education, and public access.

**That's it! We appreciate your time and effort.**

**IMPORTANT:** Now that you are done, please separate pages 3-7, seal them into the enclosed envelope and drop it in the mail by June 21, 2002. We will let you know the results as soon as we can.

Please help us keep our mailing list updated by completing the following:

Are you on our mailing list? *(you are if you recieved this by mail)*

Yes  No

If you wish to recieve future "Planning Updates" about the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, please fill in the appropriate information below and return with the Workbook.

- (Yes) Keep me on your mailing list.
- (Yes) Add me to your mailing list (I'm not currently on it).
- (No) Take me off your mailing list.



**Hail Point Nest.**  
*USFWS photo*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are acting in an official capacity as the representative of an organization, please complete the following two items:

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that the names on the Comprehensive Conservation Plan Mailing List become part of the public record for this project. The Service must release names, if requested, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of 1974. To retain you on our mailing list we need your permission. Please sign below.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Beth Goldstein, Planning Division  
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Hadley, MA 01035-9589