

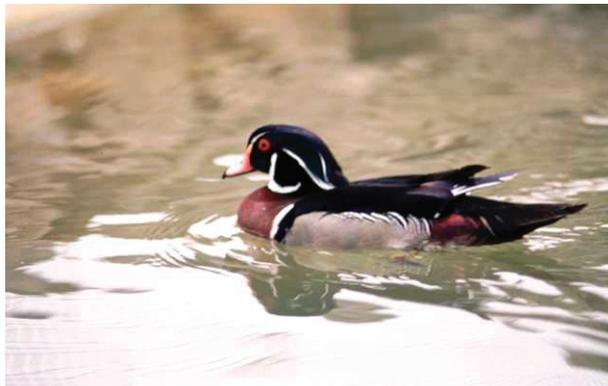
Erie National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Newsletter - March 2008

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) is starting work on a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for the Erie National Wildlife Refuge. The plan will establish management goals and objectives for all refuge programs over the next 15 years. Wildlife, habitat, land protection, wildlife observation, hunting, fishing and interpretation programs will all be evaluated during the planning process.

This planning project provides a unique opportunity for the Service to involve all of those interested in the long-term management of the refuge. You can play a significant role in the development of this far-reaching plan!



Wood duck

Who will be involved in developing the plan?

Our local refuge staff, headquartered in Guys Mills, Pennsylvania will lead the effort with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Northeast Regional Office. We will invite other Service experts, as well as State agencies and tribal representatives to serve on our core planning team.

We also will engage local residents and community leaders in discussing ways the refuge could become an integral part of the community. Below is a list of forums we may use. Do you have any other suggestions for reaching out to the community?

- Hold open houses
- Develop informational newsletters
- Write feature articles
- Participate in civic and professional group events
- Hold working group sessions and technical expert meetings
- Continue partnerships

Want to get involved?

Help us evaluate current management, propose future desired conditions for wildlife and habitats, plan the future of our public use programs, and identify other important refuge issues.

We hope you will also consider participating in our Public Scoping meetings (see next page). In addition, you are welcome to contact us at any time or provide written comments after meetings.



Erie National Wildlife Refuge

Upcoming Public Scoping

Date: **March 19, 2008**

Location: Westbury United Methodist Retirement Community
31 Park Avenue
Cribbs Building, Community Room
Meadville, PA

Schedule:

3:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Open House
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm - Meeting format

Date: **March 20, 2008**

Location: Erie National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters
11296 Wood Duck Lane
Guys Mills, PA

Schedule:

3:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Open House
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm - Meeting format

You do not need to be present. Written comments from this initial public scoping can be sent to the refuge by April 30, 2008. Please send them to the refuge address above or email to: northeastplanning@fws.gov.

About the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, part of the Department of the Interior, is the principle 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 in all 50 states provide important habitats for native plants and animals, facilitating the preservation of threatened or endangered species. Refuges also offer a wide variety of wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, and many have visitor facilities, interpretive trails, and environmental education programs.

What should I know about Erie National Wildlife Refuge

Erie National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), located in Crawford County, Pennsylvania, was established in 1959 under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (the Duck Stamp Act) as an "inviolate sanctuary and for any other management purpose, for migratory birds". The refuge provides migratory birds with nesting, feeding, brooding, and resting habitat. The refuge's varied habitat supports 237 species of birds, 47 species of mammals and 37 species of amphibians and reptiles. In accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, refuge management goals seek to maintain the biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of the refuge for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

The refuge consists of two separate land units. The Sugar Lake Division, containing 5,206 acres, is the unit closest to Guys Mills. The Seneca Division, containing 3,594 acres, is 10 miles north of the Sugar Lake Division and borders French Creek near Cambridge Springs.

Over 5791 acres of wetland provide desirable habitat for a variety of migratory birds. A system of dikes (man-made barriers) and water control structures regulate water levels to mimic the flood and drought cycles in a natural, undisturbed marsh and reduce flooding in surrounding areas.

Forest management aims to create open spaces interspersed with thickets of dense, young shrubs and trees which provide food, cover or nesting areas for a variety of mammals and birds.

While wildlife and habitat conservation come first on refuges, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, interpretation, hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities can be enjoyed on the refuge. Three nature trails in the Sugar Lake Division and two in the Seneca Division as well as an observation deck with spotting scopes, a photo blind, wooded drive and overlook give insight into the refuge's wildlife and habitat management programs. Refuge staff offer programs including a biennial nature photography contest in October, sponsored by the Presque Isle Audubon Society and the Friends of Erie NWR. The refuge is also a partner in the Guys Mills Heritage Festival in June. Opportunities for hunting begin in September, coinciding with most State of Pennsylvania hunting seasons with a refuge hunting permit. Fishing is permitted following refuge regulations. A fishing pier is located at Pool K.

The refuge Headquarters/Visitor Contact Station is located off Route 198E on Wood Duck Lane, 3/4 mile east of Guys Mills and 10 miles east of Meadville. Normal operating hours are 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. Visitors should call ahead to insure that the office is open. Please visit or contact refuge staff by calling 814-789-3585. Or visit our website: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/erie>.



Bald Eagle



Hunters in Marsh