

# John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

## *Public Scoping Newsletter* *July 2010*

*“As we now embark together on development of our 15 year Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum as part of the Refuge Improvement Act, it is important for us to communicate regularly with all interested stakeholders.”*

- Refuge Manager Gary Stolz

### **Gathering Interest and Input: Public Scoping**

To gather public comment to help develop the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum’s Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff (Service, we) initiated a period of public scoping throughout the early part of 2010. This effort was intended to engage audiences interested in the future management of the refuge and allow opportunities to help identify issues for consideration as the refuge begins development of the CCP.

Interested parties provided comments in multiple ways including attending meetings, and sending emails, letters, and comment forms.

Federally-recognized tribes and state and federal agencies were invited to a meeting held at the Cusano Environmental Education Center on March 31, 2010.



*Attendees discuss refuge management as part of the agency scoping.*



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*Access roads provide gateways to many refuge habitats and wildlife.*

This meeting was attended by 26 representatives from various state and federal agencies. The roundtable format began with brief presentations on the comprehensive conservation planning process and habitats, context, and goals of the refuge. Formal questions were posed to the participants with ample time allowed for comments, follow up, and further discussion. Numerous comments were recorded at the meeting and participants had the opportunity to identify their high priority issues.

Two public open houses were held in the afternoon and evening at the Cusano Environmental Education Center on May 11, 2010. Eighteen people attended these meetings. The open houses also included brief presentations, and maps displaying the refuge, its landscape context, habitat management units, visitor services and facilities, and the past and planned marsh restoration projects.

As a result of this public and agency participation, the core planning team members and refuge staff recorded numerous issues under (but not limited to) these broad categories:

1. Climate Change Impacts
2. Tidal Marsh Restoration
3. Deer Management
4. Invasive Species Management
5. Biological Connectivity
6. Environmental Hazards and Water Quality
7. Environmental Education and Interpretation
8. Accessibility Improvements
9. Role of the Refuge in Regional Conservation Efforts
10. Partnerships and Public Outreach

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**Gathering Interest and Input:  
Public Scoping (continued)**

The comment period for public scoping ended on June 11, 2010; however, the Service welcomes continued participation of interested organizations and the public. Additional opportunities for public comment will be provided in the coming months; in particular we will solicit comments on the draft CCP.

**Materials Made Available at Scoping Meetings:**

Scoping Meeting Agendas  
Comment Forms  
Draft Refuge Vision and Goals

Map Displays and Handouts:

- Refuge and Regional Context
- Refuge Natural Communities
- Habitat Management Units
- Visitor Service Facilities

Handouts and other information are available at [www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/John%20Heinz/ccphome.html](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/John%20Heinz/ccphome.html)

**Next Steps**

The John Heinz NWR CCP core team and refuge staff will review the gathered comments in light of the draft refuge vision and goals. The CCP core team and refuge staff will then begin to evaluate alternative management options to address the identified issues and to achieve the proposed goals.

The Service will analyze the environmental effects of the various alternatives and will ultimately select a preferred alternative.

We expect to complete a Draft CCP, presenting the various management alternatives sometime around Spring 2011. At that time, a formal public review and comment period will be opened to gather comments. Watch the planning website for continuous updates throughout the planning process. [www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/John%20Heinz/ccphome.html](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/John%20Heinz/ccphome.html)

**Draft Vision Statement**

*“John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum is a green respite nestled within the urban setting of the City of Philadelphia. Refuge lands are a thriving sanctuary teeming with a rich diversity of fish, wildlife, and plants native to the Delaware Estuary. Healthy and productive expanses of freshwater tidal marsh, open waters, mudflats, and forests support the hundreds of species that breed, rear their young, rest during migration, and call the refuge home year-round.*

*With partners’ support, the refuge leads by example in the restoration and conservation of freshwater tidal marsh within the Delaware Estuary. Also, given its accessibility and visibility to over 35 million Americans living within a 2-hour drive, the refuge serves as a prominent ambassador of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Its high quality programs promote natural and cultural resource stewardship, demonstrate the conservation of urban wildlife habitat, encourage compatible outdoor public use, and serve as a living classroom to connect people with nature and local history. Those who visit John Heinz NWR are inspired to take action to improve the quality of life for themselves and those around them.”*

*Refuge News*

**New Mammal Sighting**

The staff at John Heinz NWR have received the first photo documentation of a mink on the refuge. This is a new mammal species, never recorded before at John Heinz NWR.



C. Hunold

*First photo documentation of a mink at John Heinz NWR.*

Christian Hunold (Political Science Professor at Drexel University) spotted this elusive member of the weasel family near the eagle nest in early June 2010. While the refuge has had a few prior unconfirmed reports, this is the first photo confirmation.

Gary Stolz, refuge manager, said improved habitat can be credited with the mink’s recent appearance.

**Bald Eagle Update**

This year, as the refuge celebrated the 40-year anniversary of Earth Day, its two young eaglets provide a powerful testimony of how we have improved our environment through successful environmental education, regulations, and conservation stewardship of protected wildlife habitat.

Even “Swoop” from the NFL Philadelphia Eagles came to celebrate. The eaglets have been featured in more than 150 newspapers nationwide to promote conservation! Plans are underway to install an eagle camera to watch the nest online.



B. Buchanan/USFWS

**Contact Information**

To learn more about John Heinz NWR, please visit our website: <http://www.fws.gov/heinz/index.html>.

You may reach refuge staff by telephone at (215) 365-3118, or by email at [Gary\\_Stolz@fws.gov](mailto:Gary_Stolz@fws.gov)

**To learn more about the planning process contact:**

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**July 2010**

