

Chapter 5

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Spotted turtle

Consultation and Coordination

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Introduction

We presented in chapter 1, figure 1.1, the steps in the comprehensive conservation planning process and how it integrates NEPA requirements including public involvement. This chapter describes how we engaged others in developing this CCP and how we plan to continue consulting and coordinating with others in the future. In chronological order, it details our efforts to encourage the involvement of the public and conservation partners, the partnership of other Federal and State agencies, civic, public, and private conservation and education organizations, and user groups. It also identifies who contributed in writing the plan or significantly contributed to its contents.

It does not detail the dozens of informal discussions the refuge manager and his staff have had over the last 2 years where the CCP was a topic of conversation. Those involved a wide range of audiences, including local community leaders and other residents, refuge neighbors, refuge visitors, and other interested individuals. During those discussions, the refuge manager and his staff often would provide an update on our progress and encourage comments and other participation.

According to Service policy, we must review and update our final CCP at least once every 15 years. We may update the plan sooner, if we determine that we need to markedly change management direction or our Director or Regional Director deems it necessary. If so, we will once again announce our revised planning and encourage your participation.

Planning to Protect Land and Resources

January and February 2010

We began the CCP process for Montezuma NWR by developing a draft timeline for completing the CCP, and discussing the current status of the refuge, important issues that need to be addressed in the CCP, and the status and sources of data for the analysis.

March 2010

Our refuge planning began formally on March 3 and 4, 2010, with a conference call between refuge staff, regional office staff, and contractors. Two of the major outcomes of the meeting were revising the timeline for the project and determining when and how we should involve others. We held an internal scoping meeting, site visit, and field review to identify issues, concerns, management ideas, and data sources for the development of the CCP and analysis of management strategies.

April 2010

In April, we established a core team to include refuge managers and staff from the refuge, regional planners, and a representative from NYSDEC at Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area. We published and distributed our first CCP newsletter and an issues workbook. These were sent (via email or U.S. Postal Service) to over 430 individuals. This

information was also posted on the CCP Web site:
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Montezuma/ccphome.html>.

May 2010

On May 7, 2010, we formally initiated our public scoping by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* (75 FR 25286) stating we intended to prepare a CCP and EA for Montezuma NWR.

On May 17, 2010, we held a core team meeting to prepare for the public meeting. On May 18, 2010, we held two public scoping meetings at the refuge to identify public issues and concerns, share the draft vision statement and tentative goals, describe the planning process and explain how people could become involved and stay informed about the process. Attendees included 24 members of the public, refuge and regional Service staff, a NYSDEC representative, and the CCP consultant.

On May 24, 2010, invitations to a tribal and agency workshop were sent to over 50 individuals representing 13 Federal, State, local agencies, and tribes. Prior to the workshop, agendas and background information on the refuge were sent to the invitees.

June and July 2010

The Service held a State and Federal Agencies and Tribal scoping meeting at the MAC in Savannah, NY, on June 23, 2010, to seek advice from our State partners, and other technical experts on what resources of conservation concern in the project area should be management priorities. This interagency meeting initiated consultation with our State and Federal partners to identify resources of concern and potential issues that needed to be addressed in the CCP. The following agencies and/or groups were represented: Cayuga County Planning, Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, National Park Service (Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor), NYSDEC, New York State Canal Corporation, NYS Thruway Authority, town of Tyre (Code Enforcement), and U.S. Forest Service (Finger Lakes National Forest).

The official public scoping period ended on June 30, 2010, and a summary of public scoping newsletter was posted to the CCP Web site and sent via email and the U.S. Postal Service in July 2010. That newsletter shared our draft vision and goals, provided an update on CCP activities, and summarized the key issues the Service would address in the CCP/EA.

August 2010 through March 2012

From August through December 2010, the planning team worked together to analyze comments and evaluate alternative management options that would help achieve the refuge's purposes and draft goals. Over the course of three workshop-style meetings, the core team developed the basic framework for what is proposed within the draft CCP/EA. We decided we would include a small expansion of the refuge as part of the draft CCP/EA, so we developed and distributed our third CCP newsletter showing what areas we were considering including and to provide opportunities for public comment on this aspect of the plan.

March 2012 through Spring 2013

We completed “Step E: Prepare Draft Plan and NEPA document,” by publishing our Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* announcing the release of the draft CCP/EA, preparing and distributing a newsletter, and by distributing the document for public review. During the 30-day period of public review which ended June 21, we held two public meetings at the refuge to obtain comments. We also received comments by regular mail and electronic mail. After the comment period ended, we reviewed and summarized all of the comments we received in order to develop our responses, which are included as appendix K.

We compiled the final CCP, including the final LPP as an appendix, for review by the Regional Chief of Refuges and Regional Solicitor’s Office before submitting it to the Regional Director for review and approval. The Regional Director determined that all NEPA compliance requirements and submitted the LPP to the Service’s Director for review and approval. The Service’s Director approved the LPP in January 2013. The Regional Director determined a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate, and has certified that the final CCP meets agency compliance requirements, achieves refuge purposes, and helps fulfill the mission of the Refuge System. With an affirmative FONSI, approval of the LPP, and other positive findings, the Regional Director has approved the final CCP. In spring 2013, we published another NOA in the *Federal Register* to announce the availability of the final plan. That completes “Step F: Prepare and Adopt a Final Plan.” We then began “Step G: Implement Plan, Monitor and Evaluate.”

Updating Various Constituents on our Progress

The refuge has provided updates on the CCP process to the local community and other constituents through a variety of methods. Following the release of the NOI, the public was informed and public comments were solicited through a variety of additional mechanisms. The CCP process information was posted on the CCP planning Web site. In addition, news releases requesting public input as part of the draft CCP/EA scoping process were sent to 49 local and regional newspapers. A flyer requesting input and advertising the public meetings was made available at the refuge visitor contact station. Lastly, public scoping newsletters and public meeting invitations were sent (via email or U.S. Postal Service) to over 430 individuals (private citizens, interest groups, academia, and representatives of local, State, and Federal agencies, and Tribes, etc.).

Partners Contacted for Refuge Planning

Refuge programs enjoy a great deal of support from outside the Service in many areas, including: conducting biological surveys, enhancing public use and refuge programs, restoring habitat, and protecting land. Our partnerships will continue to expand under the increasing interest in conserving refuge resources. Since May 2010, we have contacted the following partners to apprise them of the planning process and encourage their involvement.

- All County ATV Club
- Amphibian Ark
- Applied Ecological Services, Inc.
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Audubon New York
- Bass Pro Shops
- Biodiversity Research Institute
- Bird Coalition of Rochester
- Canandaigua Lake Duck Hunters, Inc.
- Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development
- Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Cayuga County Tourism
- Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway
- Cayuga Lake Watershed Network
- Cayuga Lake Wine Trail
- Cayuga Nation
- Conservation Alliance of New York
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology
- Cornell Plantations
- Cornell University
- Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources, NYSDEC Region 8
- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- Duke University
- Eaton Bird Society
- Falcon Sportsman's Club
- Finger Lakes Community College
- Finger Lakes Land Trust
- Finger Lakes National Forest
- Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex
- Frontenac Fowlers
- Great Swamp Conservancy
- Green Mountain National Forest
- Institute for Environmental Learning
- Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
- Jackson Farmers, Inc.
- Lake Plains Waterfowl Association
- McGrath and Associates Carp Angling Services
- Mesa Engineering Incorporated
- Montezuma Audubon Center
- Montezuma Winery
- Morrisville State College
- National Park Service
- National Park Service Erie Canalway National Historic Corridor
- New York Corporate Wetlands Partnership
- New York State Canal Corporation
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- New York State Thruway Authority
- New York State Trappers Association
- New York Wild
- North West New York Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team
- Onandaga Nation
- Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmens Clubs
- Pheasants Forever
- Rochester Birding Association
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Rosamond Gifford Zoo
- Seneca County Chamber of Commerce
- Seneca County Federation of Sportsmens Clubs
- Seneca County Planning and Community Development Department

- Seneca Meadows Environmental Education Center
- Seneca Museum of Waterways and Industry
- Seneca Park Zoo
- Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma
- SUNY Brockport
- SUNY Cobleskill
- SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
- SUNY Cortland
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Plantsmen Nursery
- Trout Unlimited
- US Geological Survey
- USDA Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USFWS Atlantic Coast Joint Venture
- USFWS Ecological Services, New York Field Office
- USFWS Great Lakes Fisheries Resources Office
- Wayne County Planning Department
- White Oak Nursery
- Wild Turkey Federation
- Women's Rights National Historic Park

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