

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Newsletter and Issues Workbook

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

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

This planning project provides a unique opportunity for the Service to involve individuals and local communities in the long-term management of the refuge. You can play a significant role in the development of this far-reaching plan! Please note that the issues scoping phase of the planning process officially ends on June 30, 2010.

Who will be involved in developing the plan?

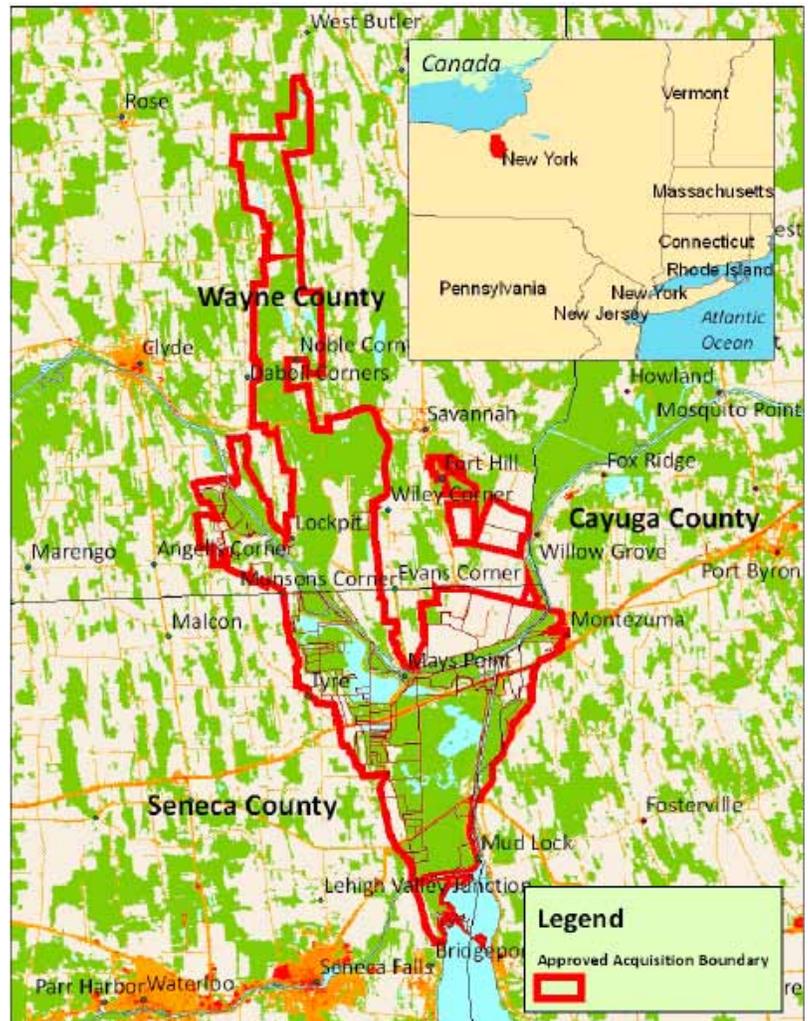
The local refuge staff in Seneca Falls, New York will lead the effort, with assistance from the Service's Northeast Regional Office. We will invite other Service experts, as well as representatives from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, to serve on our core planning team.

We hope that you, and other interested groups and individuals, will participate in this planning process. We would like to hear your thoughts on current management, your vision for the future of the refuge's biological and public use programs, or any other issues of importance to you. We hope to engage local residents and community leaders in discussing ways the refuge could become a welcome and integral part of the community. Please let us know how we can reach you with further details by completing the mailing information on the back of this newsletter.

How Can I Get Involved?

The Issues Workbook, starting on page 3, is an attempt to jump start your involvement. We will also provide other forums to facilitate public participation. Below is a list of options we intend to use. We would be interested to know if you have other ideas you would like us to pursue.

- Hold open houses (see next page)
- Conduct a visitor survey
- Develop informational newsletters
- Participate in civic and professional group events
- Give presentations at town and community leadership meetings
- Hold working group sessions and technical expert meetings
- Continue partnerships
- Write feature articles
- Provide status updates on refuge website



Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge



Short-eared owl

Planning Newsletter

Upcoming Open Houses

An open house with two sessions will be held at the Montezuma NWR Visitor Center. At each session, there will be the opportunity to speak with refuge and planning staff, as well as time to provide comments on issues, concerns, and opportunities to explore during the CCP planning process.

Date: May 18, 2010

Times: 2:00-4:00 PM*
7:00-9:00 PM*

Location:

Montezuma NWR
Visitor Center
3395 US Route 20 East
Seneca Falls, NY 13148

For more information, contact the refuge by phone at 315/568-5987. Directions to the refuge are available on the refuge website: http://www.fws.gov/r5mnwr/new_dir_hours.html

**At each open session, the refuge will give a short presentation beginning approximately 15 minutes after the listed starting time. All facilities are fully accessible.*

What is 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 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 centers, interpretive trails, and environmental education programs.

What should I know about Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge?

The 9,073-acre Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is part of the 50,000-acre Montezuma Wetlands Complex that encompasses public and private lands at the north end of Cayuga Lake in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region of central New York State. More than 1,000,000 waterfowl, as well as a diversity of shore, wading and songbirds, pass through the Complex each year. The refuge's approved acquisition boundary includes parts of Cayuga, Seneca, and Wayne counties in New York. Priority habitats are emergent marsh/open water, inland mudflats, and forested wetlands.

Major management activities include the acquisition and restoration of upland and wetland habitats; a biological control program targeting several invasive species; and partnering in the interagency Montezuma Wetlands Complex to restore the original Montezuma Marsh and enhance community-based ecotourism.

While wildlife and habitat conservation come first on refuges, excellent visitor service opportunities are provided on the refuge. Key components of the refuge visitor services program include a visitor center with a sales outlet; a radio station capable of reaching travelers in the 16 million vehicles that pass through the refuge each year on the New York State Thruway; two viewing towers, three viewing platforms (two wheelchair-accessible); a Seneca River boat dock; and a three-mile self-guided auto driving tour route. Other highlights include a boat ramp, hunting and fishing programs, wildlife hiking trails, a wheelchair-accessible fishing pier, and an active Friends of Montezuma NWR group and volunteer program.



Aerial view of southwest corner of Montezuma NWR (Unit 17) and Cayuga Lake

Issues Workbook

Let's Get Started...

Participation by you and other interested groups and individuals is critical to the success of this planning process. Only then can we develop effective management which reflects your interests.

At this early stage in the planning process we are seeking your input via public meetings and this Issues Workbook. Our intent is to hear directly from folks like you - to learn how you feel about the refuge, any issues or concerns you might have, as well as your ideas for getting things done.

The following workbook will be available at the public meetings, and will be shared with refuge visitors, neighbors, and partners who may not be able to attend the meetings. We have compiled a list of questions to provide a basis for comparing your comments with others we receive.

Please answer any or all questions that are important to you. Feel free to add additional comments in the space provided. Give us a call, email or write us at the address below. Note that the scoping phase officially ends June 30, 2010, so please send us your comments before then.

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

Questions on Values, Vision and the Service's Role

1. How many days do you visit Montezuma refuge each year?

_____ 0 - 4 days

_____ 5 - 10 days

_____ 11 - 24 days

_____ 25 - 49 days

_____ 50 + days

2. What are your favorite activities to engage in while visiting the refuge?
What areas of the refuge do you usually visit?



Main Pool in Fall



Snow Geese

Issues Workbook



Butterfly Weed

USFWS

3. What do you value most about the refuge?

4. What do you consider to be the most important problem facing the refuge?



Black Terns

M. Reed

5. Have you participated in any refuge-sponsored events or activities? If so, which ones?

6. What technical services would you like refuge staff to provide to your local community? (Check if appropriate)

- Wetlands management/restoration _____
- Management of endangered species _____
- Habitat management to benefit wildlife _____
- Land protection funding _____
- Control of invasive plant and animal species _____
- Volunteer opportunities _____
- Grants for habitat management _____
- Other (please specify): _____



Mays Point Pool

USFWS

Issues Workbook

Questions on Recreation and Public Access

While fish, wildlife, and plant conservation is the refuge's primary purpose, some public uses can be allowed when they do not impact these resources. In fact, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 identifies six priority, wildlife-dependent public uses to receive enhanced consideration on national wildlife refuges: environmental education and interpretation, fishing, hunting and wildlife observation and photography. These six uses will be evaluated in this planning process.

According to Service policy, only those public uses that are "compatible" with the purpose(s) for which a refuge was established are allowed. Compatibility with refuge purpose(s) is determined by the refuge manager, based on an evaluation of:

- Anticipated impacts to natural resources;
- Whether safety among and between users can be maintained; and,
- Whether the refuge has the budget and staffing resources to administer the activity

Montezuma refuge has active programs for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography. Environmental education and interpretation activities are limited, given the small staff. This planning process will evaluate opportunities within each of these programs.

7. Are any of these activities, or current levels of use on the refuge, a concern?

8. In your opinion, what other wildlife-related activities should occur on the refuge?



Swamp Milkweed

M. Reed



Pied-billed Grebes

M. Reed

Issues Workbook



Photo Blind

USFWS

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

10. Please include here any additional comments on recreation, education, and public access.

Questions on Natural Resources Conservation

The Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge provides excellent wildlife habitat for migratory birds, rare species, resident fish and wildlife, and a variety of plant species. This plan will emphasize the need to conserve, protect, and enhance these habitats and the species dependent on them.

13. Are there other areas within the Montezuma Wetlands Complex that, in your opinion, need protection? If so please list them here, and explain why you think they are important.

11. Which options should the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursue in protecting important habitats in the Montezuma Wetlands Complex? (Please check up to 3 choices)

- Land acquisition
- Conservation easements; e.g. purchasing development rights
- Partnerships with private land owners
- Work with conservation groups
- Environmental education
- Grants programs
- Habitat restoration
- No active involvement
- Other (please specify) _____



Observation Tower

USFWS

Issues Workbook



D. Spier

Marsh Mallow

12. How do you feel about the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service acquiring land from willing sellers in the Montezuma NWR area?

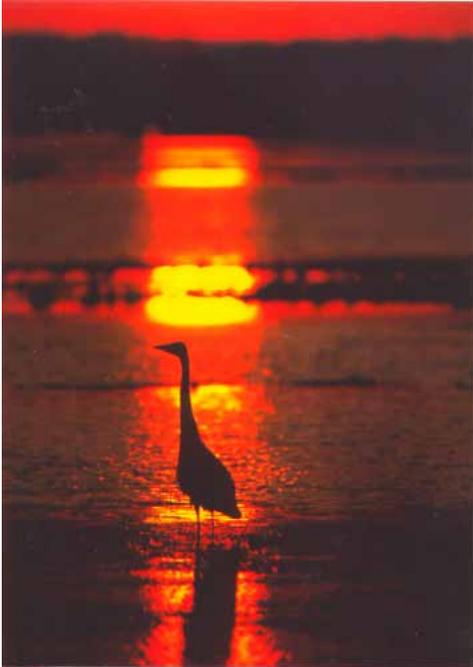
13. In your opinion, which species or habitats should be a management priority?

14. Are any of the following natural resource issues a concern to you in the Montezuma NWR area? If so, please check your top three choices.

- Fragmentation of important habitats
- Invasion of exotic plant and animal species
- Overdevelopment of fragile habitats
- Increased recreational use in sensitive habitat areas
- Water quality
- Lack of active management to improve wildlife habitats
- Other issues (please specify) _____

15. If possible, please provide additional details on why you selected the above. In particular, we would be interested to know specific locations of concern.

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



USFWS

Great Blue Heron

That's it! Thank you for your time.

Mail Issues Workbooks to:

Nancy McGarigal
 Refuge Planner
 US Fish and Wildlife Service
 300 Westgate Center Drive
 Hadley, MA 01035

For Additional Information

Contact the refuge:

Montezuma NWR
 3395 US Route 30 East
 Seneca Falls, NY 13148

Phone: 315-568-5987
 Fax: 315-568-8835
 Email: northeastplanning@fws.gov

*Please put "Montezuma CCP"
 in subject line*

IMPORTANT: Now that you are done, please separate pages 3-8 and mail them back to us by June 30, 2010. We will summarize these public comments, along with those received at the public meeting, in our next newsletter.

If you wish to receive future planning updates about the Montezuma NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan, please fill in the appropriate information below and return with the Issues Workbook.

_____ (Yes) Keep me on your mailing list/add me to your mailing list

_____ (No) Take me off your mailing list.

Name: _____

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 names on the CCP mailing list become part of the public record for this project. The Service must release names, only 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: _____



USFWS

Juvenile Bald Eagle

**Federal Relay
 Service for the deaf
 or hard of hearing:**
 1 800/877-8339

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife
 Service**
<http://www.fws.gov>

April 2010

