

Chapter 5



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Northern bobwhite

Consultation and Coordination

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Introduction

Effective conservation usually begins with effective community involvement. To ensure that our future management of the refuge considers the issues, concerns, and opportunities expressed by the public, we used a variety of public involvement techniques in our planning process. What follows is the chronology of public outreach activities we conducted while preparing the CCP and EIS for Prime Hook NWR.

Public Involvement Summary

We began the CCP process for Prime Hook NWR in 2005. We published our original Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* on October 17, 2005, stating we intended to prepare a CCP and environmental assessment (EA) for the refuge and announcing a public scoping period. During scoping, we solicited comments on the major issues that the public and others felt we would address in the CCP. We also held several public meetings during the scoping period.

Based on the extent of public comments received and subsequent developments since scoping, we determined that an EIS would be more appropriate than an EA. We felt that an EIS was necessary to ensure that a full and fair discussion of all significant environmental impacts occurs and to inform decision-makers and the public of the reasonable alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts and enhance the quality of the human environment. We published a second Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* on May 9, 2011, announcing that we complete an EIS rather than EA. We also announced that we were accepting additional scoping comments through June 23, 2011.

We used the input we received during the scoping periods to prepare the draft CCP/EIS. On May 31, 2012, we published a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. The Notice of Availability announced the availability of the draft CCP/EIS for 60 days public review and comment. We published a second Notice of Availability on August 8, 2012 extending the public comment period through August 27, 2012. During the public comment period, we held six public meetings and one formal hearing, as well as three informal refuge open houses. During the draft CCP/EIS comment period, we received over 100 written comments and 19 oral comments. After compiling all of the responses we received, we wrote responses to all of the substantive comments. We include our responses to those comments as an appendix to the final CCP/EIS. Based on these comments, we made several modifications to alternative B in the final CCP/EIS.

The Service issued a final CCP/EIS for a 30-day review period through a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* on December 28, 2012. We received a total of 14 comment letters; however, comments did not raise significant new issues, or result in changes to the analysis, or warrant any further changes to alternative B. All substantive comments were previously addressed in our response to public comments detailed in appendix M of the final CCP/EIS. Three letters of concurrence from other agencies are included in this chapter.

For further information or questions please contact:

Thomas Bonetti, Planning Team Leader
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 5
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, 01035-9589 Email: northeastplanning@fws.gov

Public and Partner Involvement

Planning Updates, Surveys, and other Newsletters	September 2004–September 2005	Distributed 429 visitor surveys and 1,430 community surveys in September 2005 cooperation with USGS.
	June 2005	Distributed newsletter announcing planning efforts for habitat management and hunting, and other issues including wood duck boxes.
	September 2005	Distributed a news release about migratory bird management at the refuge.
	December 2006	Distributed our “Conservation Planning Update” newsletter.
	August 2007	Distributed an updated “Conservation Planning Update” newsletter and completion of Final Report for Visitor and Community Survey Results for Prime Hook NWR by USGS.
	May 2011	Distributed a news release about completing an EIS instead of the originally anticipated EA.
	May 2012	Distributed a news release, <i>Federal Register</i> Notice, and newsletter announcing that the draft CCP/EIS was available for public review and comment. These also announced the length of the public comment period, where people could send written comments, and the dates and times of public meetings.
	December 2012	Distributed a news release, <i>Federal Register</i> Notice, and newsletter announcing that the final CCP/EIS was available for a 30-day review period.
Public Scoping Meetings—Meeting Our Refuge Neighbors	July 13, 2005	(Town Meeting before public scoping meetings began) Number of non-FWS attendants: 130 Location: Milton, DE
	November 8, 2005	Number of non-FWS attendants: 110 (total for all 3 meetings) Location: Milton, DE
	November 9, 2005	Number of non-FWS attendants: 110 (total for all 3 meetings) Location: Dover, DE
	November 10, 2005	Number of non-FWS attendants: 110 (total for all 3 meetings) Location: Lewes, DE
Public Meetings During the Draft CCP/EIS Public Comment Period	June 5, 2012	Public meeting focused on habitat management, Milford, DE
	June 7, 2012	Public meeting focused on hunting, Milford, DE
	June 9, 2012	Public meeting focused on habitat management, Milton, DE
	June 12, 2012	Public meeting focused on hunting, Lewes, DE
	June 14, 2012	Public meeting focused on wildlife observation, photography, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation, Milton, DE
	June 19, 2012	Formal public hearing, Lewes, DE
	July 19, 2012	Public meeting, Milford, DE

**Meetings with State
Partners and Other
Conservation Experts**

- July 18-19, 2006** *Outreach activity:* Partners Workshop
Purpose: Develop a vision statement and goals for Prime Hook NWR
Number of non-FWS attendants: 14
Audience: Rob Gano, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife; Bill McAvoy, Delaware Natural Heritage Program; Glenn Garner, Friends of PHNWR; Otis Clifton, local landowner & farmer; Bill Fintel, local citizen & birder; Glen Wells, refuge cooperative farmer; David Weber, Sussex Bird Club; Joe Farrell, University of Delaware Sea Grant Program; Jim White, Delaware Nature Society; Nick DiPasquale & Mark Martel, Delaware Audubon Society; Jay Walls, Delaware Bassmasters; Jeff Gordon, Delmarva Ornithological Society; Jamie West, refuge hunter; Bill Jones, Jonathan Schafler, Annabella Larsen, George O'Shea, Tom Bonetti, Marci Caplis (moderator), Al Rizzo, USFWS
- January 18, 2007** *Outreach activity:* Technical Workshop
Purpose: Share information and discuss the refuge's most important state and regional contributions to the conservation of federal trust resources within the framework provided by the refuge's establishment purposes, the National Wildlife Refuge System mission and its policies.
Number of non-FWS attendants: 10
Audience: Rob Gano & Bill Meredith, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife; Bill McAvoy, Delaware Natural Heritage Program; Joe Farrell, University of Delaware Sea Grant Program; Nick DiPasquale, Delaware Audubon Society/Duffield Associates; Rachel Dawson, Ducks Unlimited; Jennifer Wheatley, Delaware Division of Soil and Water; Mark Nardi, US Geological Survey, MD-DE-DC; Mick McLaughlin, JCM Environmental Consultants; Cory Whaley, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Service; Bill Jones, Jonathan Schafler, Annabella Larsen, George O'Shea, Tom Bonetti, Rick McCorkle, & Hal Laskowski, USFWS.
- June 19-20, 2007** *Outreach activity:* Technical Workshop
Purpose: Identify priority resources of concern and develop draft biological objectives for PHNWR
Number of non-FWS attendants: 2
Audience: Rob Gano, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife; Robert Coxe, Delaware Natural Heritage Program; Bill Jones, Jonathan Schafler, Annabella Larsen, George O'Shea, Rick McCorkle, Hal Laskowski, Jan Taylor, Terry Villanueva, Ray Brown, Steve Funderburk, Greg Breese, Susan Guiteras, & Oscar Reed, USFWS.
- May 7, 2008** *Outreach activity:* Planning meeting
Purpose: Review background hunting information and prepare hunting objectives and strategies
Number of non-FWS attendants: 3
Audience: Rob Gano, Ken Reynolds, & Pat Emory, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife; Bill Jones, Oscar Reed, Michael Stroeh, Tony Leger, Tom Bonetti, USFWS.

- July 9, 2008** *Outreach activity:* Technical Workshop
Purpose: Develop draft public use objectives for PHNWR
Number of non-FWS attendants: 4
Audience: Rob Gano & Ken Reynolds (Wildlife), Craig Shirey (Fisheries), Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife; Kendall Summers, Delaware Division of Parks & Recreation; Bill Jones, Annabella Larsen, George O’Shea, Susan Guiteras, Tom Bonetti, Julie Study, Tina Watson, Michael Dixon, Michael Stroeh, & Oscar Reed, USFWS.
- April 22, 2010** *Outreach activity:* Planning meeting
Purpose: Review internal draft CCP document and alternatives with Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife staff
Number of non-FWS attendants: 15
- July 2012** Meeting with Senator Carper, his staff, and Tony Pratt from DNREC to provide an update on the CCP and discuss the draft CCP/EIS.
- October 2012** Refuge tour and CCP update with Congressman Carney.

List of Preparers

Core Planning Team

Thomas Bonetti, Senior Refuge Planner and Planning Team Leader

Affiliation: USFWS Region 5 Regional Office

Education: B.S. Biology, M.S. Recreation Administration

Experience: USFWS, Region 5 Refuge Planner, 1998-present
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1992-1998
California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1990-1992

Michael Stroeh, Project Leader

Affiliation: Coastal Delaware Refuge Complex, Bombay and Prime Hook NWRs
(has since transferred to another refuge in Region 4)

Education: B.S. Wildlife Biology - University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Experience: Managed natural resources and public uses on national wildlife refuges for over 24 years.

Contribution: Participated completely in the planning and writing of CCP.

Oscar Reed, Jr., Deputy Refuge Manager

Affiliation: Coastal Delaware Refuge Complex; Bombay Hook NWR

Education: B.S. Biology

Experience: Natural resource and public use management for 19 years

Contribution: Assisted with CCP.

Art Coppola, Refuge Manager

Affiliation: Prime Hook NWR

Education: B.S. in Natural Resources Management, University of Maryland–College Park, Humboldt State University, California

Experience: Refuge Management 3 years

Contribution: Assisted with CCP.

Susan Guiteras, Wildlife Biologist

Affiliation: Coastal Delaware Refuge Complex
Bombay and Prime Hook NWRs

Education: B.S. Biology, M.S. Wildlife Ecology

Experience: Wildlife Biologist, USFWS, 13 years

Contribution: Participated in the writing of CCP, prepared maps.

Annabella Larsen, Wildlife Biologist

Affiliation: Coastal Delaware National Wildlife Refuge Complex;
Prime Hook NWR

Education: B.S. in Chemistry – Rutgers University 1982; B.S. in Biology –
Salisbury State University 1986; B.S. Wildlife Management – Delaware State
University – 1993.

Experience: Wildlife Biologist, USFWS, 19 years

Research Biologist – University of Salisbury, Maryland 1986-1988

Research Biologist – Wildlife International, Maryland 1988-1990

Engineering Technician – 1980-1982 Exxon Corporation

Contribution: Helped write all chapters of CCP, HMP, some
compatibility determinations.

Daniel Stotts, Wildlife Biologist

Affiliation: Coastal Delaware Refuge Complex; Bombay and Prime Hook NWRs

Education: B.S. in Biology - University of Maryland-College Park

Experience: Wildlife Biologist, USFWS, 30 years

Contribution: Assisted with chapters 2 and 4, HMP, and compatibility
determinations.

Bill J. Jones, Visitor Services Manager

Affiliation: Coastal Delaware Refuge Complex; Prime Hook NWR

Education: B.S. and M.S. Fisheries Science and Management

Experience: Visitor Services Manager, USFWS, 12 years

Contribution: Visitor Services section of CCP and compatibility determinations.

Prepared public outreach material including Web site updates, CCP newsletter
articles, and database.

**Assistance from other
Service Personnel**

Brittany Benson
Meredith Bixby
Brian Braudis
Margaret Engesser
Kathryn Fox
Mike Higgins
Dale Hudson
Louise Kotarba
Jennifer McAndrews

Kate McManus
Laura Mitchell
George O'Shea
Virginia Rettig
Al Rizzo
Jonathan Schafler
Anne Sittauer
Tina Watson

**Assistance from Federal,
State, Local, and other
Partners**

Delaware Bay Estuary Project
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife
Delaware Division of Soil and Water
Delaware Natural Heritage Program
Delaware Coastal Program

Delaware Division of Parks and
Recreation
U.S. Geological Survey
Joyce Lindsay
Betty Kirk

Letters of Concurrence



State of Delaware Historical and Cultural Affairs

21 The Green
Dover, DE 19901-3611

Phone: (302) 736.7400

Fax: (302) 739.5660

March 4, 2013

Project 2011.04.25.01

Mr. Thomas Bonetti
Natural Resource Planner
National Wildlife Refuge System
US Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Dr.
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

Project: Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for
Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge

Dear Mr. Bonetti:

Thank you for providing us with an internal review copy of the Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (CCP/EA). It is our understanding Alternative B has been revised to include a step down Cultural Resource Management Plan that will address the effects of sea level rise on archaeological sites and will ensure our cultural resources are adequately considered in the final CCP. On March 1, Ms. Shelley Small transmitted the rewritten texts of chapters 3 and 4 that formally include the Cultural Resource Management Plan into the CCP.

From our conversation, Alternative B is the only option that contains the Cultural Resource Management Plan, which we advocate. Therefore, we support Alternative B, as it will provide a proactive analysis of long range impacts of sea level rise on salt marsh archaeological sites. In addition, it will employ the Service's regular procedures for ensuring that historical and archaeological sites are considered when ground disturbing projects are being planned in the future.

We look forward to working with you on future undertakings and in development of the cultural resource management plan. If you have any questions, please contact me at cmig.lukezic@state.de.us.

Sincerely,



Craig Lukezic
Archaeologist

cc: Gwen Davis, Deputy Director, Delaware State Historic Preservation Office



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

89 KINGS HIGHWAY
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

Phone: (302) 739-9283
Fax: (302) 739-2041

DELAWARE COASTAL
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

February 15, 2013

Thomas Bonetti
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

**Re: Delaware Coastal Management Federal Consistency Certification
Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan**

Dear Mr. Bonetti,

The Delaware Coastal Management Program (DCMP) has received and reviewed your consistency determination for the above referenced project. Based upon our review and pursuant to National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration regulations (15 CFR 930), the DCMP concurs with your consistency determination for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's selected alternative, Alternative B, of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge (PHNWR) located in Milton, Delaware.

While Alternative B is consistent with our enforceable policies, there are modifications to the habitat management, hunting program and mosquito control aspects of the plan that the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control would like to have implemented. Detailed comments were submitted by Department Secretary Collin O'Mara on February 4, 2013, and enclosed for your reference.

The DCMP supports the PHNWR's efforts to restore and protect vital habitat along Delaware's bayshore and will continue to provide input as the final marsh restoration plan is developed.

Implementation of the finalized restoration plan will require state permits; this concurrence is conditioned upon the issuance of all required permits and adherence to the restrictions and/or conditions placed on any and all permits issued to you for this project.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or Tricia Arndt of my staff at (302) 739-9283.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah W. Cooksey".

Sarah W. Cooksey, Administrator

Enclosure

cc: File 2013.0030
Collin O'Mara-Secretary

Delaware's good nature depends on you!



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

FEB 04 2013

Mr. Thomas Bonetti
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Regional Office
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

Re: Final Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, December 2012, CEQ # 20120406

Dear Mr. Bonetti:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge's Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS). In our August 27, 2012 review letter of the Draft CCP/EIS, we rated the environmental impacts of the proposed action as LO (Lack of Objections). Based on our review of the subject document we have no objection to the project.

We recommend that the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) continue to work closely with federal, state, and local stakeholders throughout the implementation of this plan and any adaptive management decisions. In addition, the FWS should coordinate closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA on any Clean Water Act Section 404 permit issues that may arise from proposed impacts to waters of the United States.

As mentioned in our August 2012 comments, regarding pesticide application, all pesticides should be mixed, loaded and applied in accordance with label specifications and all applicators must be certified with the Delaware Department of Agriculture or working under the supervision of a certified applicator.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Barbara Okorn, staff contact, at (215) 814-3330.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Rudnick".

Barbara Rudnick
NEPA Team Leader

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