

Chapter 6



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Northern bobwhite

Consultation and Coordination with Others

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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 comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and environmental impact statement (EIS) for Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).

Public Involvement Summary

We began the CCP process for Prime Hook NWR in 2005. We published our original Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on October 17, 2005, stating we intended to prepare a CCP and environmental assessment for the refuge and announcing a public scoping period. During the scoping period, 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 NOI 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 (NOA) in the *Federal Register*. The NOA announced the availability of the draft CCP/EIS for 60 days public review and comment. We published a second NOA 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 these comments as an appendix to this final CCP/EIS. Based on these comments, we made several modifications to alternative B in the final CCP/EIS.

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 cooperation with U.S. Geological Survey (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 PHNWR by USGS
	May 2011	Distributed a news release about completing an environmental impact statement instead of the originally anticipated environmental assessment
	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.
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
Meetings with State Partners and Other Conservation Experts	June 19, 2012	Formal public hearing, Lewes, DE
	July 19, 2012	Public meeting, Milford, DE

- July 18-19, 2006** *Outreach activity:* Partners Workshop
Purpose: Develop a vision statement and goals for PHNWR
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 & 4, HMP and Compatibility
Determinations

Bill J. Jones, Visitor Services Manager

Affiliation: Coastal Delaware Refuge Complex; Prime Hook NWR

Education: B.S. & 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 website updates, CCP newsletter
articles, and database.

**Assistance from other
Service Personnel**

Louise Kotarba
George O'Shea
Jennifer McAndrews
Dale Hudson
Mike Higgins
Al Rizzo
Tina Watson

Laura Mitchell
Kate McManus
Jonathan Schafler
Brian Braudis
Virginia Rettig
Brittany Benson
Meredith Bixby

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

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

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