

CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION



Friends group: USFWS

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Introduction

This chapter describes how we engaged others in developing this draft CCP/EA. In chronological order, it details our efforts to encourage the involvement of the public and conservation partners: other Federal and state agencies, county officials, civic groups, non-government 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 two years where the CCP was a topic of conversation. Those involved a wide range of audiences, including congressional representatives or their staffs, 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.

A 30-day period for public review follows our release of this draft CCP/EA. We encourage you to respond with your ideas about the plan. During that period, we will host open-house public meetings at locations near the refuge to gather your opinions and answer your questions about our proposals. We will weigh your responses carefully before we write the final CCP.

According to Service policy, we must review and update our final CCP at least once every 15 years, or sooner, in response to significant new information that would markedly change management direction or, our Director or Regional Director deem it necessary. If so, we will once again announce our revised planning and encourage your participation.

Planning to Protect Land and Resources

Our refuge planning began informally in March 2005 at an initial strategy meeting between the refuge staff and regional office staff. One major outcome of that first meeting was a timetable for accomplishing the major steps in the planning process and determining when and how we should involve others. Please contact the refuge manager for additional details.

March 17–18, 2005: Refuge and regional office planning staff meet on the refuge. We draft a vision statement, identify preliminary issues, determine what additional resource information we need to collect and summarize, discuss who should participate on the core planning team and what other experts we should consult to help us address planning issues. We also develop our timetable for the planning process.

May 23–24, 2005: Refuge and regional staff meet with a social scientist and economist from the USGS to discuss the possibility of their designing and implementing a survey of the refuge community.

June 8, 2005: We write to the state director of the VDGIF, asking that staff in his agency join our core planning team. His response, on July 5, 2005, names four individuals.

June 13–17, 2005: We conduct a visitor services station evaluation, which includes discussions with the president of the Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends Group.

June 23–24, 2005: The core team meets for the first time with representatives of other Service programs and the VDGIF to discuss the planning process, issues, and ideas for a technical experts' workshop.

September 22, 2005: 25 guests attend the technical experts' workshop, including state and Federal resource agency staff and representatives from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary, the Nature Conservancy, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

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Our purpose is to facilitate a discussion to identify potential natural resource priorities for the refuge. The participants identify as priorities bald eagles, migrating and wintering waterfowl, grassland birds, wetlands and their associated aquatic resources, and healthy, diverse habitats free of invasive plants.

November 1, 2005: We publish a Notice of Intent (to prepare a CCP) in the “Federal Register.”

November 2005: We distribute a 1-page newsletter to more than 600 people, organizations and agencies to announce formally the beginning of the planning process and ask if they want to stay on our project mailing list. We also alert people to the three public open houses we would host in December.

December 2005: We distribute a detailed planning newsletter and issues workbook to everyone on the project mailing list. That workbook asks people to respond to questions about their use and enjoyment of the refuge and the issues they would like us to address. We alert people again to the scheduled public open houses, and provide contact information. We receive 32 workbooks in return.

November—December 2005: The “Northern Neck News,” “Rappahannock Times, and “Free Lance” publish articles on the planning process, alert readers to the public meetings, and explain that we highly encourage public involvement.

December 5–8, 2005: We host three open-house meetings in Richmond, Port Royal, and Warsaw, Virginia, having published notices about the meetings in five local and regional newspapers, on radio, in our newsletter and on the Web. Forty-five people attend the meetings.

At each meeting, we present an overview of current refuge management, describe the planning process, and explain how people can get involved. We also share our preliminary vision and goals for the refuge and the issues we already know we need to address. We ask for feedback, and answer any questions about the planning process.

December 2005: We contact both the Virginia Dept of Historic Resources and the Virginia Dept of Environmental Quality to alert them to the planning process and encourage their involvement.

January 2006: We mail the planning newsletter and issues workbook to hunters to whom we have given permits on the refuge. Our intent is to solicit from that specific user group their ideas about refuge planning issues, their interests and preferences, or other comments.

April 2006: We distribute a planning update newsletter to everyone on our project mailing list, distribute it from the refuge office and at refuge events, and post it on our website. It summarizes what we heard at our public meetings and encourages continued involvement in the planning process.



Pipevine swallowtail: USFWS

May to July 2006: We work with the USGS on conducting a community survey, and send it to a random group of 1,200 residents in our study area. Its purpose is to collect baseline information on issues, characterize visitor services, visitor preferences and experiences, test the favorability of some proposed management actions, and improve our outreach program. Appendix G contains the executive summary of the survey results.

June 2007: We distribute a planning update newsletter to everyone on our project mailing list, distribute it from the refuge office and at refuge events, and post it on our website. That newsletter presents highlights of the three management alternatives we would evaluate in detail.

Partners Involved in Refuge Planning

Refuge programs enjoy a great deal of support from outside the Service in many arenas: 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. During the past 2 years, we contacted the following partners to apprise them of the planning process and encourage their involvement.

Boy Scouts of America

Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Conservation Management Institute at Virginia Polytechnic and State University

Essex County Countryside Alliance

Fort A.P. Hill (U.S. Army)

Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula

Middle Peninsula Land Trust

National Park Service

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Northern Neck Audubon Society

Northern Neck Land Conservancy

Northern Neck Soil and Water Conservation District

Rappahannock *Phragmites* Action Committee

Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends Group

Rotary Club

St Margaret's School

The Conservation Fund

The Nature Conservancy

Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District

Trust for Public Land

University of Mary Washington—Biology Dept

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

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Virginia Commonwealth University—Biology Dept

Virginia Dept of Conservation and Recreation, Natural Heritage Program

Virginia Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries

Virginia Farm Bureau

Virginia Herpetological Society

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Virginia Native Plant Society

Virginia Ornithological Society

Virginia Outdoors Foundation

Contact Information

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<http://northeast.fws.gov/planning>

Planning Team

Joseph McCauley, Project Leader, Eastern Virginia Rivers Refuge Complex

Kathryn Owens, Deputy Project Leader, Eastern Virginia Rivers Refuge Complex (has since transferred to Back Bay NWR)

Sandy Spencer, Refuge Complex Biologist, Eastern Virginia Rivers Refuge Complex

Susan Guiteras, Regional Refuge Biologist (has since transferred to the Coastal Delaware Refuge Complex)

Julie Study, Regional Visitor Services Specialist, USFWS Refuge System

Susan Lingenfelter, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Ecological Services Virginia Field Office

Nancy McGarigal, Regional Natural Resource Planner, Planning Team Leader, USFWS Refuge System

John (J.D.) Kleopfer, VDGIF, Wildlife Diversity Division

Steve Owens, Fisheries Biologist, VDGIF Fisheries Division

Phil West, Wildlife Biologist, VDGIF Wildlife Division

Galon Hall, District Wildlife Biologist, VDGIF Wildlife Division

Andrew Zadnick, VDGIF, Environmental Services Biologist, Wildlife Diversity Division (has since transferred from the agency)

Other Service Program Involvement

Melanie Steinkamp, Mid Atlantic Coordinator for the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, USFWS Migratory Birds and State Programs

Bruce (BJ) Richardson, Regional Cartographic and Spatial Data Services Specialist, USFWS Refuge System

Albert Spells, Coordinator, USFWS Virginia Fisheries Program Office

Carolina Ferro Vasconcelos, Assistant Regional Natural Resource Planner, USFWS Refuge System (has since transferred from the agency)

Lelaina Marin, Assistant Regional Natural Resource Planner, USFWS Refuge System (has since transferred to NPS)

Mao Lin, Assistant Regional Natural Resource Planner, USFWS Refuge System

Jan Taylor, Regional Refuge Biologist, USFWS Refuge System

Hal Laskowski, Interregional Biological Monitory Coordinator, USFWS Refuge System

Chris Dwyer, Migratory Bird Coordinator, USFWS Migratory Bird and State Program

Cyrus Brame, Visitor Service Specialist, USFWS Eastern Virginia Rivers Refuge Complex

Other Involvement

Scott Klopfer, GIS and Remote Sensing Division Leader, Conservation Management Institute, Virginia Tech (assisted in mapping vegetation)

Natalie Sexton, Social Scientist, USGS Policy and Science Assistance Program, Ft. Collins, CO (developed and coordinated our community survey)

Lynne Koontz, Economist, USGS Policy and Science Assistance Program, Ft. Collins, CO (assisted in developing regional economic profile and describing economic impacts of the alternatives)



Volunteers constructing the Hutchinson Tract Trail: USFWS