

# Sunkhaze Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and Carlton Pond Waterfowl Production Area

*Public Scoping Newsletter*

*August 2011*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (we, Service) is currently working with partners to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Sunkhaze Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), which includes the Benton and Sandy Stream Units, and Carlton Pond Waterfowl Production Area (WPA).

On March 24, 2011, the CCP planning team held an agency scoping workshop at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Bangor Research Office. The workshop invited partners from other resource management agencies to help inform the scoping process. The full-day workshop was attended by six representatives from municipal, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies.

We also held a series of public meetings in April. Two public scoping meetings were held on April 12, 2011 in Milford, Maine at the Milford Town Hall. Combined, these meetings were attended by 22 people from the surrounding communities. A third public scoping meeting was held on April 13, 2011 at Unity College in the town of Unity, Maine. This meeting was attended by 12 people. Refuge and CCP planning team members were also in attendance at all three meetings.

In addition to attendance at public open houses, we also received ten written comments, emails, and phone calls.

The official public comment period for public scoping is over. If you missed the meetings, handouts and other information are available at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Sunkhaze%20Meadows/ccphome.html>.



Kirk Rogers

*A bald eagle flies over the pickerelweed and sedge meadows surrounding Carlton Pond Waterfowl Production Area.*

## **Categories of Comments Received**

The comments we've received generally fall into the following categories:

### **Landscape Scale/Ecosystem-wide Issues**

1. Climate Change Impacts
2. Habitat Connectivity
3. Water/Wetland Quality
4. Regional Conservation Context

### **Biological Program Issues**

1. Forest Management
2. Resource Harvesting on Refuge
3. Inventory and Monitoring Needs
4. Invasive Species Prevention
5. Species-specific Management

### **Public Use Programs**

1. Public Access
2. Trail Maintenance
3. Wildlife Observation
4. Hunting and Trapping
5. Snowmobile Use
6. Management Conflicts and Consistency Amongst Agencies

### **Other Refuge Issues**

1. Appropriate Uses/Activities
2. Staffing Needs
3. Infrastructure Improvements
4. Wilderness Designation

### **Community Relations/Outreach/Local**

1. Partnerships
2. Tourism
3. Environmental Education and Interpretive Programming

A more detailed summary of comments received are available on the CCP planning Web site for Sunkhaze Meadows NWR and Carlton Pond WPA online at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Sunkhaze%20Meadows/ccphome.html>.

### **Next Steps**

The CCP planning team is reviewing the gathered comments in light of the draft refuge vision and goals. We have begun to evaluate management alternatives to address the identified issues and to achieve the proposed goals.

Once alternatives have been developed, we will analyze the environmental effects of the various alternatives and will ultimately select a preferred alternative.

We expect to complete a draft CCP, presenting the various management alternatives, sometime in spring 2012. At that time, a formal public review and comment period will be opened to gather comments. Watch the planning Web site for continuous updates throughout the planning process: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Sunkhaze%20Meadows/ccphome.html>.

Ellen Snyder / Ibis Wildlife Consulting



*Public meeting in Milford, ME.*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
NWRS - Refuge Planning  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035



### **Revised Draft Goals**

During alternatives development, the CCP planning team decided that specific goals for each refuge unit and Carlton Pond WPA would make the draft CCP easier to understand. Revised goals are as follows:

Goal 1: Sunkhaze Meadows Biological Management. Promote the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of Sunkhaze Meadows NWR wetland, forest, and aquatic habitats to protect water quality and sustain native rare plants, natural communities, and wildlife, including species of conservation concern.

Goal 2. Carlton Pond WPA Biological Management. Provide open water and emergent wetland habitat at Carlton Pond WPA to sustain a diversity of wildlife, including waterfowl and species of conservation concern.

Goal 3. Benton and Sandy Stream Biological Management. Promote grassland and shrubland habitat at Benton and Sandy Stream Units to sustain a diversity of wildlife, including species of conservation concern.

Goal 4: Sunkhaze Meadows Public Use. Provide for a variety of experiences to allow visitors, students and nearby neighbors to enjoy the wetlands, woods and wildlife of the Sunkhaze Meadows Unit, and thereby encourage the development of their environmental awareness, ethics and stewardship.

Goal 5: Carlton Pond WPA Public Use. Promote enjoyment and environmental stewardship by engaging visitors, students, and nearby residents to experience the wetlands, woods, and wildlife at Carlton Pond WPA.

Goal 6: Benton and Sandy Stream Units Public Use. Promote enjoyment and environmental stewardship by engaging visitors, students, and nearby residents to experience the wetlands, woods, grasslands, and wildlife at Benton and Sandy Stream Units.

Goal 7: Partnerships. Communicate and collaborate with local communities, Federal and State agencies, local and Tribal representatives, and other organizations throughout Maine and the region to further the purposes of the refuge and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

### **To learn more about the planning process contact:**

To learn more about Sunkhaze Meadows NWR and Carlton Pond WPA, please visit our Web site: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Sunkhaze%20Meadows/ccphome.html>

You may reach refuge staff by telephone at 207/557-7805, or by email at [Beth\\_Goettel@fws.gov](mailto:Beth_Goettel@fws.gov).

### **To learn more about the planning process contact:**

Lia McLaughlin, Refuge Planner  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035  
413/253-8575 Phone  
413/253-8468 Fax  
email: [northeastplanning@fws.gov](mailto:northeastplanning@fws.gov)  
(please put Sunkhaze Meadows or Carlton Pond in the subject line)

### **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

<http://www.fws.gov>

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