

# Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

## *Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan*

### Vision for the Future

*Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge will continue to provide essential tidal marsh habitat to feed and shelter migrating waterfowl and to feed nearby colonial-nesting wading birds, thereby maintaining its significant role as part of the Delaware Bayshore system of wetlands and upland buffers that is one of the most important migratory bird habitats in the nation.*

*The refuge will continue to serve as an oasis of native biotic communities within sight of the burgeoning industrial, transportation, and residential developments of the lower Delaware River Basin and South Jersey by providing an array of wetland and upland habitats that support a diverse community of breeding and migrating birds, native mammals, and other species.*

*Refuge visitors will be able to hunt and fish, observe and photograph wildlife, and learn of the ecological importance and diversity of wildlife at Supawna Meadows NWR. They will understand the refuge as part of a larger network of protected lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System, set aside specifically for wildlife.*



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*Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge south of Davis Tract*

### Refuge Setting

Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is located along the shoreline of the Delaware River where it widens to become the Delaware Bay estuary in Salem County, New Jersey. The refuge currently includes 3,016 acres of marsh, grassland, shrubland, and forest habitats.

Supawna Meadows NWR was originally established in 1971 as the Goose Pond addition to the Killcohook Migratory Bird Refuge. The lands acquired as the Goose Pond addition were renamed Supawna Meadows NWR and officially separated from Killcohook Migratory Bird Refuge on April 10, 1974. In 2004, Supawna Meadows NWR was complexed with Cape May NWR, and is currently administered through Cape May NWR.

### Status of our Conservation Plan

We began planning for Supawna Meadows NWR in 2007. We identified preliminary issues, stakeholder and management concerns, and developed a refuge vision statement and preliminary goals. The planning effort is considered a major federal

action, so we combined the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and the final Environmental Assessment (EA) as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We are proud to announce the availability of the CCP/EA for the Supawna Meadows NWR. Once final, the plan will guide wildlife and habitat management, land conservation and public use programs on the refuge for the next 15 years.

### Details of the Draft Plan

Our draft plan presents three management alternatives that were developed by a team consisting of regional planners, biologists, refuge staff, and other resource specialists. We carefully considered public input from scoping meetings and public comments.

The three alternatives share some actions in common. These actions may be required by law or policy, or they may be administrative actions that do not require public review, but are worth noting. We believe they are crucial to achieving the refuge's purposes, vision and goals.



Ryan Hagerly/USFWS

*Northern Diamondback Terrapin*

## Draft CCP Goals

We developed the following goals to describe the desired future conditions of the refuge and to establish a framework within which to develop management objectives.

**Goal 1:** Protect, enhance, and restore biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of tidally influenced habitats to support native wildlife and plant communities including species of conservation concern.

**Goal 2:** Protect, enhance, and restore biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of upland habitats to support native wildlife and plant communities with emphasis on migrating and wintering birds and other species of concern.

**Goal 3:** Protect, enhance, and restore biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of non-tidal wetland habitats to support native wildlife and plant communities with emphasis on migrating and wintering birds and other species of concern.

**Goal 4:** Provide opportunities for compatible, high-quality, wildlife-dependent public uses.

**Goal 5:** Protect historic and cultural resources.

**Goal 6:** Enhance refuge management through partnerships, Friends, volunteers, and community outreach.

These actions include acquiring land within the current refuge acquisition boundary, managing the current conservation easement, conducting animal damage control, protecting cultural resources, mapping vegetation and contributing to maintaining the area's water quality and quantity.

### Description of the Alternatives

We based our three alternatives on the purposes for establishing the refuge, the refuge's vision, goals, and the issues and concerns identified by the public, state agencies, and the Service during the planning process. Some actions are common to all alternatives, as mentioned above. Other actions distinguish the alternatives. The draft CCP/EA describes the alternatives in detail, and relates them to the issues. Highlights of each alternative follow.



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*King Rail*

#### *Alternative A.*

##### *Current Management*

Alternative A (Current Management) describes our existing management priorities and activities, and serves as a baseline for comparing and contrasting alternatives B and C. It would maintain our present levels of approved

refuge staffing and the biological and visitor programs now in place. We would continue to focus efforts on providing native tidal marsh habitat for Federal trust resources – in particular, for migrating and nesting wading birds – and wintering habitats for marsh birds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and other wildlife. We would continue to actively manage tidal marsh and grassland habitats and would maintain dikes and water levels on impoundments that have water control structures.

#### *Alternative B.*

##### *Focus on Species of Conservation Concern (Service-preferred Alternative)*

This alternative is the Service-preferred alternative. It combines the actions we believe would most effectively achieve refuge purposes, vision, and goals, and responds to issues raised during the planning process. It emphasizes management of specific refuge habitats to support Federal trust resources and species of conservation concern in the area. In particular, the priority would be to protect and restore the refuge's native tidal marsh habitat to benefit Pea Patch Island colonial-breeding wading birds, as well as secretive marsh birds, migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and other birds of conservation concern. A secondary consideration would be to manage a diversity of other refuge wetland and upland habitats to benefit breeding and migrating songbirds, waterfowl, and raptors, as well as amphibians, reptiles, and mammals of conservation concern. Our Visitor Services program would be enhanced to provide more opportunities for wildlife observation, photography,

hunting, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation. Staffing and funding would be expected to increase to accommodate additional wildlife habitat management, restoration, and monitoring, and expanded opportunities for wildlife dependent recreation.

#### *Alternative C.*

##### *Cease Management and Close Refuge to Public Uses*

Under this alternative, we would close Supawna Meadows NWR to all public uses and cease habitat management activities. There would be no funding allocated for any projects at the refuge. This alternative would only partially achieve the refuge purposes, vision, and goals, and respond to issues; however, budgetary constraints may necessitate its adoption. The public would be notified of the closure, and appropriate signage would be placed on all buildings and along the refuge



Phil Sezerzenie

*Finns Point Rear Range Light*

boundary. Cape May NWR staff would conduct semiannual site inspections requiring about 40 staff hours per year. We would continue to meet our trust obligations under the Endangered Species Act, which requires us to take measures to benefit the recovery of any Federally listed species that might be found on the refuge in the future. We would also continue to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act by maintaining Finns Point Rear Range Light.

Steve Maslowski



Northern Bobwhite

### Public Review and Comment on the Plan

Public involvement is crucial in the planning process, and we encourage your participation. Your comments will help shape the final plan. We are releasing the draft plan for a 30-day period of public review and comment. Please submit your comments by October 26, 2010, by regular mail, email, or fax to Lia McLaughlin, Planning Team Leader, at the address below. You can also submit comments at our public meetings (see shaded box on this page for dates and locations).

### How to Obtain a Copy of the CCP

The draft plan is available online at [http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Supawna Meadows/ccphome.html](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/Supawna%20Meadows/ccphome.html). To request the document in print or on CD, contact:

Lia McLaughlin  
 Planning Team Leader  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 300 Westgate Center Dr.  
 Hadley, MA 01035  
 Phone: (413) 253-8575  
 Fax: (413) 253-8468  
 E-mail: [northeastplanning@fws.gov](mailto:northeastplanning@fws.gov)  
 (Please put "Supawna Meadows" in the subject line)

### Open Houses

We will host a daytime session from 2- 4 pm and an evening session from 6-8 pm. Each session will include a short presentation and a comment period. The library is wheelchair accessible.

(Sgt. W. T. Whitaker) V. F. W. Post 1952  
 171 S. Broadway  
 Pennsville, NJ 08070  
 (856) 678-8250

October 12, 2010

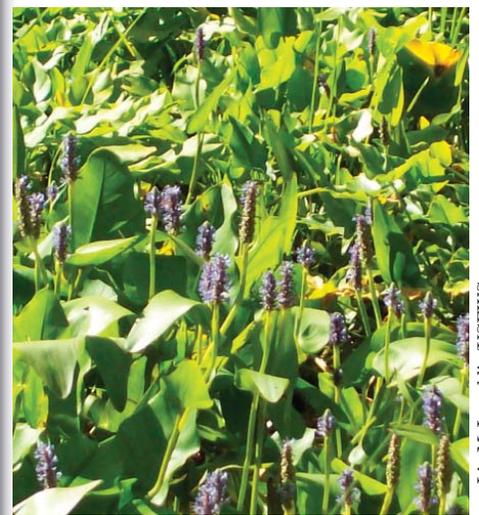
### Refuge Purposes

The Supawna Meadows NWR was established for the following purposes:

- as property with particular value in carrying out the national migratory bird management program (The Transfer of Certain Real Property for Wildlife Conservation Purposes Act, as amended [16 U.S.C. §667b-667d; 62 Stat. 240]);
- for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds (The Migratory Bird Conservation Act [16 U.S.C. §715D]); and,
- as a refuge suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species (Refuge Recreation Act, as amended [16 U.S.C. 460k-1]).

### Next Steps

1. Distribute draft CCP/EA for public review and comment; host 2 public meetings in Pennsville, New Jersey. (October)
2. Evaluate public comments and revise the CCP as warranted. (November)
3. Submit final recommendation for Regional Director approval. (December)
4. If approved, publish a notice of availability in the Federal Register and distribute final plan. (January 2011)
5. Implement CCP (January 2011)



Lia McLaughlin/USFWS

Pickerelweed

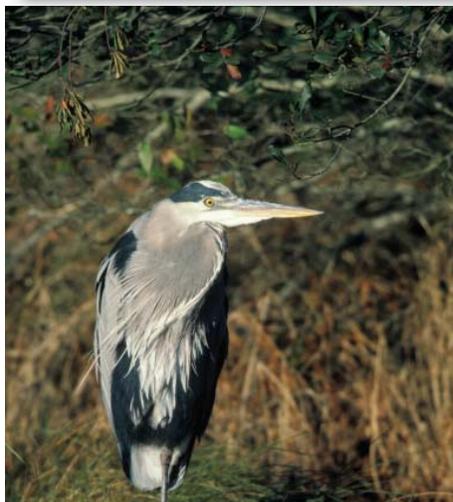
### For Information About the Refuge

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<http://www.fws.gov/supawnameadows/>

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

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
<http://www.fws.gov>  
 September 2010



USFWS

Great Blue Heron

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

