

# Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

## *Developing a Conservation Plan for the Future*

### **A conservation plan for the future**

We continue to make progress in developing a comprehensive conservation plan for Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. The plan will guide wildlife and habitat management and public use programs for the next 15 years.

The manager and staff at Cape May National Wildlife Refuge, headquartered in Cape May Court House, New Jersey, are leading this planning project, with assistance from planners, biologists and other natural resource specialists from the Service, the State of New Jersey and the State of Delaware.

The planning team is using the draft refuge vision statements and broad management goals from our first newsletter in August 2007 as the basis for developing a range of management alternatives, each with a different theme. Then we will develop detailed objectives in each alternative that

are consistent with its theme for managing habitats, wildlife species of concern, and visitor uses. During the next few months, we will finalize those alternatives and objectives and will publish their details in a subsequent newsletter. We plan to publish the draft plan this fall and the final plan in the winter of 2009.

### **Public involvement**

We often discuss issues and management recommendations with state agencies, other conservation organizations, interested individuals, volunteers, and Friends of Supawna Meadows NWR. We will continue to involve our partners at every opportunity.

We hosted a public open house on September 7, 2007, at the Pennsville Public Library in Pennsville, New Jersey. Our purpose was to provide local residents and other interested individuals their first opportunity to become involved in the planning



Dave Menke

*The Northern pintail makes Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge its home during the winter months.*

process. Those who attended voiced their concerns and recommendations about many aspects of refuge management, including:

- Invasive plant species, particularly phragmites, on the refuge
- Nuisance animal species, such as mute swans
- An increase in unauthorized uses on the refuge
- Public safety during the hunting season
- The lack of funding and staffing for the refuge
- The need for more environmental education opportunities
- Protecting fish species and their habitats

We will continue to refer to these issues and try to develop management alternatives for them as we move through the planning process.

### *Consultation and Coordination with Partners*

Prior to the public open house in September, we hosted an internal scoping meeting in July 2007 with



USEFWS

*Current Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge management programs focus on restoring and maintaining tidal marsh, grassland, and shrub/scrub habitats for a variety of migratory bird and resident wildlife species.*



USFWS

*A snowy egret perched on shore at Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.*

representatives from the Ecological Services and Migratory Birds programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and with staff from the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, to discuss issues related to public use and habitat management on the refuge. In particular, we discussed

- Management strategies for the Finns Point Rear Range Light
- Providing public access while minimizing disturbance to wildlife
- Controlling invasive species on all refuge habitats
- Protecting the refuge from contaminants stemming from a potential accident at the nearby nuclear power plant or on the adjacent Delaware River.

On February 12, 2008 we hosted a biological workshop with representatives from the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation to discuss priority species and habitats on the refuge. In particular, we discussed

- Controlling phragmites in the tidal marsh
- Managing water levels in the impoundments
- Creating larger blocks of forest in the upland areas.

Most recently, on May 6, we hosted a public use workshop with representatives from the New Jersey Lighthouse Society and the New

Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife to discuss the current and future status of recreational public uses on the refuge. In particular, we discussed strategies for managing the Finns Point Rear Range Light and for expanding or enhancing opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation on the refuge.

#### *Vision Statement*

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. 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.

#### **Our draft goals for Biology are:**

Goal 1. Manage the tidally-influenced habitat complex to benefit Service trust resources (wading birds, shorebirds and waterfowl) and other species of conservation concern.

Goal 2. Manage early successional habitats to benefit Service trust resources and other species of conservation concern.

Goal 3. Manage forest habitats to benefit Service trust resources and other species of conservation concern.

Goal 4. Manage non-tidal wetland habitats to benefit Service trust resources and other species of conservation concern.

#### **Our draft Public use goals are:**

Goal 5. Provide opportunities for compatible high-quality, wildlife-dependent public uses.

Goal 6. Protect historic and archeological resources on the refuge.

#### *Stay in touch*

Over the next couple months we will pursue discussions with resource professionals on some of the more prominent issues, such as invasive species control and management of the Rear Range Light. We will also continue to craft goals, objectives and strategies for the plan. We expect to have a draft plan ready for public review by the end of the calendar year.

We encourage you to send comments in now, if you have not done so already, so that we can consider incorporating them into the draft plan. Comments can be sent to Beth Goldstein at the address below.

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