

Cover Picture: *John Hay NWR shoreline along Lake Sunapee.* Erin Victory



This goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 548 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service’s best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

John Hay National Wildlife Refuge

Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

February 2010

Refuge Vision Statement

John Hay NWR is a unique setting and destination in the Lake Sunapee region. It is situated between the lake and a larger network of conserved forestland extending throughout Sunset Hill. Together with adjacent conservation lands, Refuge forests provide important habitat for migratory birds and other forest wildlife in the midst of increased development in the region. The Refuge provides an extensive, undeveloped shoreline, as well as public ownership, amidst the predominantly privately developed lake community. We will continue to maintain its unique character within the context of the region, and provide important habitat for wildlife.

John Hay NWR provides a valuable mature forest ecological component to this larger network of conserved forest lands. Through local and state partnerships, it contributes to the natural resource management and environmental education opportunities in the region. The Refuge supports large majestic trees exemplary of a mature northern pine and hardwood forest habitat that complement the younger, more diverse and actively-managed lands of its adjacent conservation partners. The Refuge will continue to contribute to the biological integrity and diversity of the Atlantic northern forest and Lake Sunapee region.

The John Hay NWR showcases the legacy of the late statesman John Hay and honors the wishes of his daughter-in-law, Alice Hay, who donated the land for the conservation of migratory birds. It provides a special place where people come to experience the beauty of the undeveloped Lake Sunapee shoreline and the majestic Atlantic northern forest. Together with our partners, we will continue to provide increasing opportunities for outreach to the community and a broad array of visitors to raise awareness about the Refuge's wildlife stewardship mission, and the broader network of conserved lands in the region.

**John Hay National Wildlife Refuge
Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan
and Environmental Assessment
February 2010**

Type of Action:	Administrative – Development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Lead Agency:	U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
Location:	John Hay National Wildlife Refuge Newbury, NH
Administrative Headquarters:	Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Sunderland, MA
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This Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes two alternatives for managing the 80 acre John Hay National Wildlife Refuge over the next 15 years. This document also contains five appendices that provide additional information supporting our analysis. Following is a brief overview of each alternative:

Alternative A: This alternative is referred to as our “No Action” or “Current Management” alternative, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This alternative would maintain the status quo in managing this 80 acre refuge for the next 15 years. No major changes would be made to current management practices.

Alternative B: This is the Service-preferred alternative. It represents the planning team’s recommended strategies and actions for achieving refuge purposes, vision and goals and responding to public issues. Under this alternative, we focus on making improvements to our visitor services through the addition of seasonal on-site staff, fishing as an approved public use, and a minor expansion of our trail system on the refuge. Our biological program would be enhanced through partnerships that would increase our ability to conduct surveys and long-term monitoring.

Alternative C: This alternative goes beyond the proposed actions in Alternative B to incorporate more active forest management to encourage white pine regeneration. Visitor services would be improved through permanent staff on-site, and an ADA-compliant trail. Biological programs would incorporate more surveys and the ability to conduct habitat improvements.

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