

Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Update

This planning update describes the progress the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, we) has made in developing a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge (NWR, the refuge). It also summarizes the different alternatives the planning team considered for managing the refuge and includes information about how to obtain and comment on the draft CCP.

Draft Plan Available for Public Comment

We began preparing a CCP/EIS for all eight refuges for what was then known as the Great Meadows NWR Complex in 1999. After first completing CCPs for several other refuges within the complex, we held public scoping meetings in Nantucket in 2008. We have now completed a draft plan for Nantucket which we are distributing for public review and comment. To provide additional opportunities for input, the public comment period has been extended through October 1, 2011.

An environmental assessment (EA), required by the National Environmental Policy Act, accompanies the draft plan. The EA describes the three alternatives that



Nantucket NWR

Karen Terwilliger/TCI

we evaluated in detail to achieve the refuge purposes, vision and goals. It also provides an analysis of their effects on the environment. We have identified Alternative B as the Service-preferred alternative.

How to Obtain a Draft Plan

You may request a hard copy or CD-ROM of the draft plan from our office at the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Sudbury, MA. Please call 978/443-4661 or send an email to northeastplanning@fws.gov.

You may view and download the draft CCP/EA online:
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/nantucket/ccphome.html>

You may also read the CCP at the Nantucket Public Library and the Nantucket Town Hall.

How to Provide Comments

We invite you to share your comments about the draft plan either in writing or in person at

our public meetings. We will accept letters, faxes, and emails. To be considered, all comments must be emailed or postmarked by October 1, 2011.

Send comments by email to northeastplanning@fws.gov (Please put "Nantucket NWR" in the subject line) or mail your comments to:

Carl Melberg
73 Weir Hill Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776

You may also fax your comments to 978/443-2898.

Public Meetings

Date: September 15, 2011

Time: 1-3 pm

6-8 pm

Place: Nantucket Inn

1 Miller's Lane

Nantucket, MA 02554



Gray seal on Great Point

Tom Eagle/USFWS

Draft Vision Statement

“Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge, though diminutive in size, is an important part of a larger area aptly named Great Point. It has great value to the wildlife that uses its beaches, from coastal birds including piping plovers and terns, to mammals including gray seals. Situated at the tip of a peninsula, it is surrounded by a diverse assemblage of coastal, intertidal, wetland, and marine habitat, attracting a great diversity of fauna. It will continue to be managed as a special place for breeding, wintering and migratory wildlife.”

“We will continue to provide opportunities for quality, compatible, wildlife-dependent experiences by the public. Nantucket NWR is recognized internationally as a premier fishing location, and the presence of its lighthouse provides the public with a destination that offers cultural perspective and panoramic views. Through strong partnerships, we will promote ecologically responsible use of the property, and continue to promote public awareness about the intrinsic value of dynamic coastal ecosystems.”

Public Meetings

You may also wish to participate in our public meetings on September 15, 2011 in Nantucket, MA. There will be a short presentation on the draft plan, and then we will record any comments you would like to provide.

Chronology of Our Conservation Plan

In August 2008 we revisited the comprehensive conservation planning process for Nantucket NWR to guide natural resource management and public use programs for the next 15 years. We re-convened a core planning team that included regional planners, refuge staff, and representatives from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.

In October 2008, we held a public scoping meeting to present the work we had completed so far and to invite your comments. At that time, we had completed the draft vision and goals for the refuge. After a 30-day open comment period, during which time we received many comments, we reviewed your input in order to create management alternatives for the refuge.

Proposed Management Alternatives

The planning team is grateful to everyone who provided comments and suggestions. The team has carefully considered

the information provided to date and has developed the following management alternatives for the refuge.

Alternative A-(Current Management)

This alternative would continue the type and scale of current management activities and programs on the refuge's 21 acres.

Alternative B-(Enhanced Wildlife and Visitor Services) (Service-preferred alternative)

This alternative strives to provide a balance between visitor services and recreational opportunities with increased habitat protection for species of concern on the refuge and throughout the Nantucket Islands.

Habitat/Wildlife Management

- Continue to collaborate with partners to meet federal and state management guidelines for plovers and terns on the refuge



Gene Nieminen/USFWS

Piping plover

- Create a system of zones on the refuge that protect habitat for seals and nesting and staging birds, and allow access to various portions of the refuge year-round
- Increase habitat protection and species monitoring capacity by providing on-site seasonal staff
- Collaborate with partners to initiate research to fill knowledge gaps
- Implement predator control as necessary
- Treat invasive species as needed
- Protect and restore dune habitat
- Increase involvement with local conservation initiatives throughout Nantucket Island and provide assistance to partners to fulfill conservation goals

Visitor Services

- Disseminate current refuge information on closures, species, fishing, etc., through the refuge website and the installation of a kiosk at the Wauwinet gatehouse
- Collaborate with partners to provide environmental education and to increase interpretation capacity through programs, brochures, and signs on and off the refuge
- Become involved in local contests and tournaments on and off the refuge for fishing and photography
- Explore possibility of providing shuttle service to the refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Goals for the Refuge

Goal 1. Perpetuate and enhance the biological integrity and diversity of coastal habitats on and around Nantucket to support and enhance native wildlife and plant communities, with an emphasis on species of conservation concern.

Goal 2. Promote awareness and stewardship of our coastal natural resources by providing compatible wildlife-dependent recreation and education opportunities, both on the Refuge and within the local and visitor community on and around Nantucket.

Goal 3. Perpetuate and enhance long-term conservation and management of wildlife resources on Nantucket and its landscape context through partnerships and land protection with public and private landowners, federal, state and local entities.

- Create a designated pedestrian access trail from the lighthouse to the beach

Land Protection

- Work with partners on Coskata-Coatue to coordinate management and increase land protection status
- Work with inholding landowners to establish long term land protection
- Prioritize acquisition of federal excess lands on Nantucket Island

Alternative C-(Wildlife Diversity and Natural Processes Emphasis)

This alternative prioritizes habitat protection on the refuge to benefit species of conservation concern and increases visitor services from Alternative A, though those resources are focused on-site.

Habitat/Wildlife Management

- Same as Alternative B, but efforts are focused on refuge lands
- In addition, most of the refuge is closed seasonally (April-September) regardless of avian activity or seal presence

Visitor Services

- Similar to Alternative B, though efforts are focused on refuge lands

Land Protection

- Efforts to acquire federal excess properties would be opportunistic



Karen Terwilliger/TCI

Tip of Great Point

Contact Information

To learn more about Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge, please visit our website:
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nantucket/>

You may reach refuge staff by telephone at 978/443-4661.

To learn more about the planning process contact:

Carl Melberg, Refuge Planner
Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex
73 Weir Hill Rd.
Sudbury, MA 01776
northeastplanning@fws.gov
Phone: 978/443-4661 ext. 32

Or visit the refuge CCP Web site:
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/nantucket/ccphome.html>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>



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Refuge recreation

Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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