

Chapter 1



USFWS

Great egret

The Purpose of, and Need for, Action

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1.1 Introduction

This Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Presquile National Wildlife Refuge (Presquile NWR, refuge) was prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd–668ee), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Refuge Improvement Act) (Public Law 105-57; 111 Stat. 1253); the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.; 83 Stat. 852); and in conformance with United States (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, USFWS, we, our) policy and legal mandates (see “The Service, its Policies and Legal Mandates,” below). The development of a CCP is subject to NEPA because the adoption and implementation of management actions analyzed in a CCP have the potential to affect the natural and human environment. This CCP will serve as a guide for the refuge’s management over the next 15 years.

This CCP has five chapters. Chapter 1 explains the purpose of, and need for, preparing a CCP, and sets the stage for four subsequent chapters and the appendixes. Chapter 1 also:

- Defines the refuge’s regional context and planning analysis area.
- Presents the mission, policies, and mandates affecting the development of the plan.
- Identifies other conservation plans we used as references.
- Clarifies the vision and goals that drive refuge management.

Chapter 2, “The Planning Process,” describes the planning process we followed, including public and partner involvement, in the course of developing this plan.

Chapter 3, “Existing Environment,” describes the refuge’s regional and local setting, physical attributes, habitats, species, other natural resources, and the human-created environment of roads, trails, croplands, impoundments, and buildings.

Chapter 4, “Management Direction and Implementation,” presents the actions, goals, objectives, and strategies that will guide our decision-making and land management for the refuge. It also outlines the staffing and funding needed to accomplish that management.

Chapter 5, “Consultation, Coordination, and Preparation,” summarizes how the Service involved the public and our partners in the planning process. Also, it includes a list of Service and non-Service contributors to the planning effort.

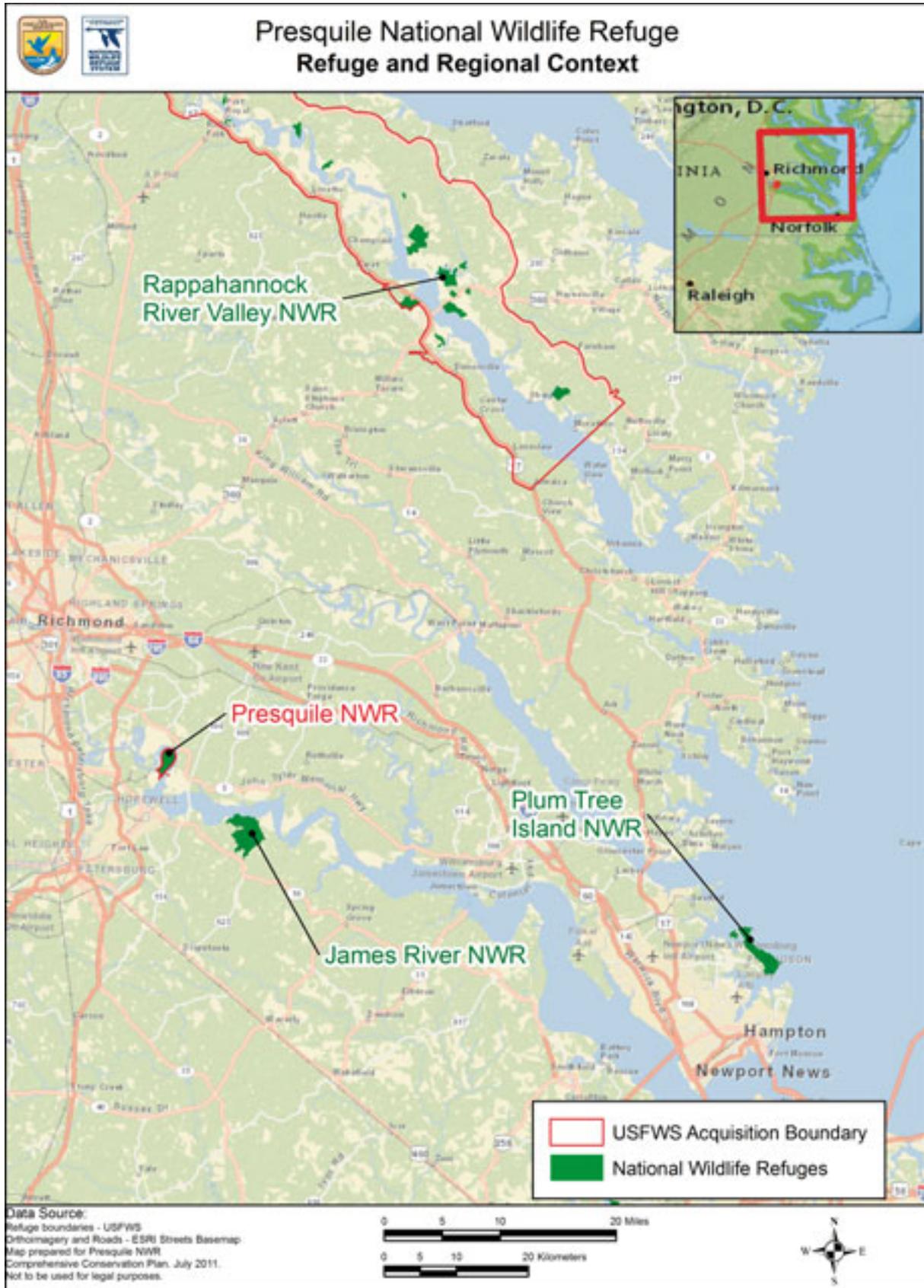
A bibliography, glossary, list of acronyms and abbreviations, list of species scientific names, and five appendixes provide additional supporting documentation and references used in this document.

Project Area

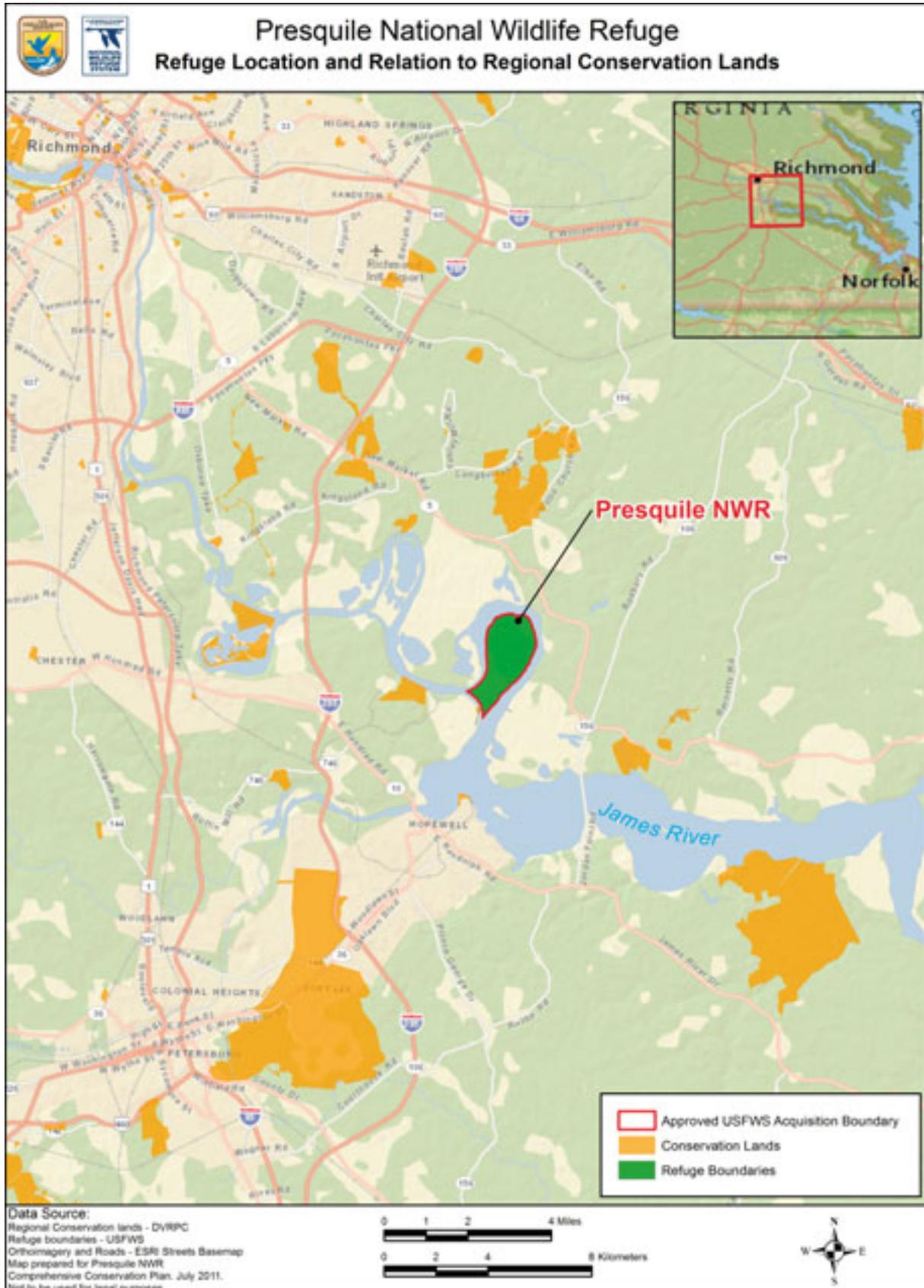
Presquile NWR is located near Hopewell, Virginia, in Chesterfield County, and is approximately 20 miles southeast of Richmond, the State capital. The regional context of the project area is defined by the interactions of the nearby metropolitan area, the James River watershed, and the Chesapeake Bay Estuary (map 1.1).

Lands within the refuge were transferred to the U.S. Government as a gift under the provisions of the will of Mr. A.D. Williams. Presquile NWR was officially established in 1953 “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds” (Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715d) (maps 1.2 and 1.3). It is one of many important migratory bird stopover sites along the Atlantic Flyway, providing protected breeding habitat for State-listed threatened and endangered species, as well as many neotropical migrant bird species.

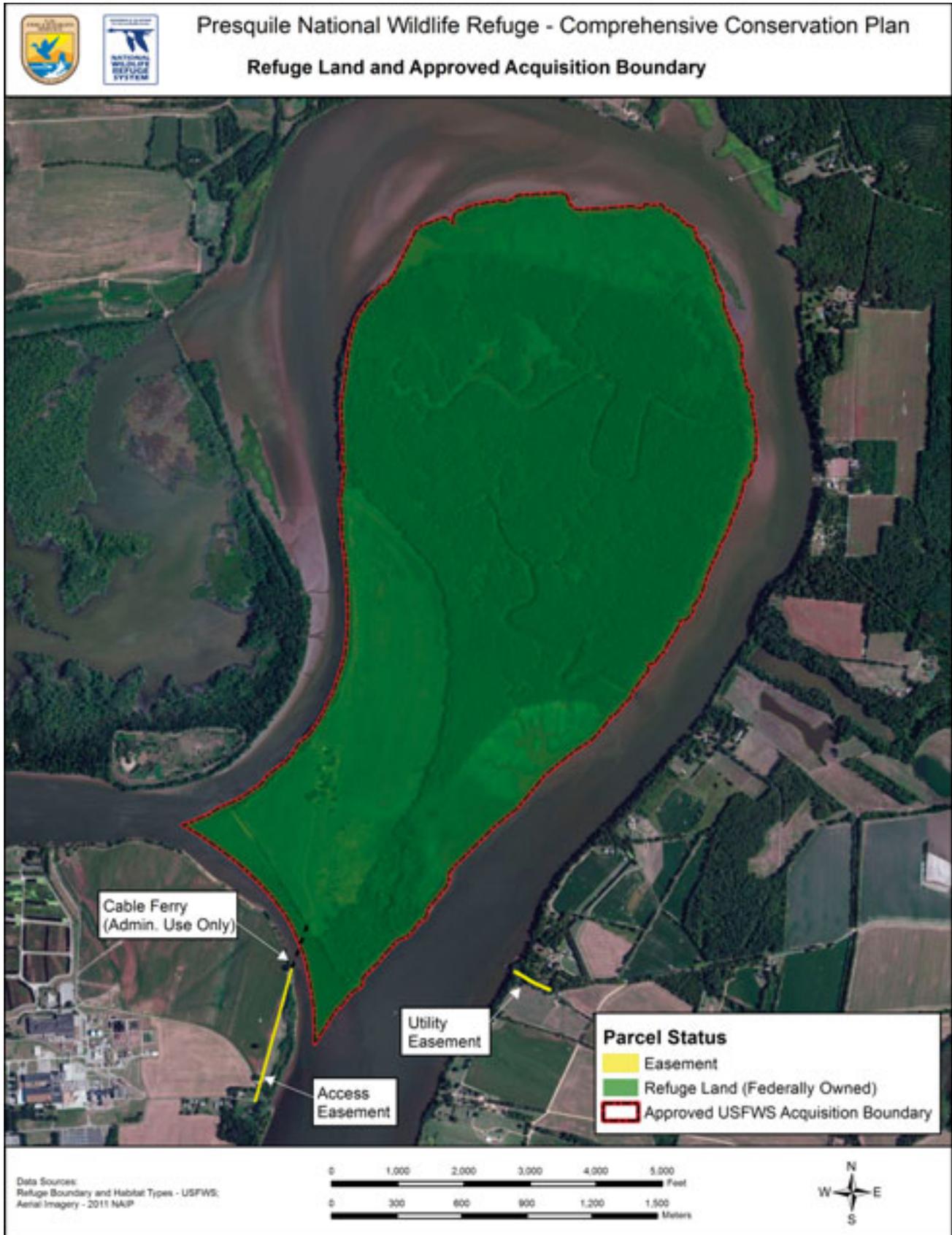
Map 1.1 Presquile NWR and Regional Context



Map 1.2 Refuge Location and Relation to Regional Conservation Lands



Map 1.3 Refuge Land and Approved Acquisition Boundary





Cyrus Brame/USFWS

Little Creek in winter

The 1,329-acre refuge comprises a variety of wildlife habitats: open waters of the James River and associated backwaters, tidal swamp forest, tidal freshwater marshes, grasslands, mixed mesic forest (transitional and mature), and river escarpment. This total acreage includes 1 acre held by the Service in right-of-way easements on adjacent private properties.

In 2003, the refuge was administratively complexed with Rappahannock NWR, James River NWR, and Plum Tree Island NWR to form the Eastern Virginia Rivers NWR Complex (refuge complex) to increase management efficiencies. At that time, Presquile NWR became an unstaffed refuge. The refuge complex staff share responsibility for the four refuges and are located at Rappahannock NWR and in Charles City, Virginia. The CCP for Rappahannock NWR was completed in December 2009 and did not address Presquile NWR. James River and Plum Tree Island NWRs will have their own CCPs.

1.2 The Purpose of, and Need for, the Action

This CCP has been developed in the context of a changing and dynamic environment. The region's natural environment, human uses, and management direction have all changed over the past 60 years since refuge establishment. This CCP is designed to address management and protection of valuable natural resources into the future; a future where continued change is even more likely to occur. Thus, the purpose of this CCP is to provide strategic management direction to ensure that our management of the refuge will best mesh four key areas of concern. "Strategic" means we will implement approaches that are ecologically sound and sustainable in light of physical and biological change, and are also practical, viable, and economically realistic. In our professional judgment, this CCP best:

- Abides by and contributes to the mission, mandates, and policies of the Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System).
- Meets the refuge's goals.
- Addresses key issues.

- Responds to public concerns.

While explained in more depth below in this chapter, this CCP addresses the following:

- (1) The mission of the Refuge System is:

“To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

- (2) Important Refuge System laws and policies concerning habitat management and wildlife conservation include a key Service policy addressing biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health, known as “BIDEH.” Other Service policies regarding human uses require that all uses of a refuge be evaluated for their appropriateness, and direct that inappropriate, incompatible, or harmful uses be prevented or eliminated. Compatible uses can be allowed and, in particular, six priority wildlife-dependent public uses should be facilitated whenever possible. Not every aspect of refuge management implemented at earlier times complies with current directives. Other policies and laws direct how long-term refuge planning is conducted. This CCP is designed to bring all aspects of refuge management into conformity with current laws and policies.
- (3) The refuge’s goals describe the desired future conditions of the refuge and provide a framework for developing alternative objectives to achieve those desired conditions. Along with a vision statement, five fundamental goals were developed for Presquile NWR to frame its purpose for “use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds” and define how this can be best achieved in the future. Two of the goals direct management attention to protection and restoration of the ecological integrity, diversity, and sustainability of key habitat types (forested and emergent wetlands and mature and transitional mixed mesic forest). Other refuge goals address cultural resources, environmental education, and public uses of the refuge.
- (4) Through the NEPA scoping process and the refuge’s understanding of its particular challenges, and incorporating the best available scientific and technical information, several key issues have been identified which this CCP addresses. They are grouped into the following two broad categories:
 - Biological management
 - Public use and interpretation of environmental and cultural resources

We discuss the key issues in more detail in chapter 2.

NEPA requires that a thorough analysis be completed of a range of alternatives, including the proposed action and no action. In the draft CCP/Environmental Assessment (EA) process, we analyzed the socioeconomic, biological, physical, and cultural consequences of implementing two alternatives that represented different ways to achieve the four areas of concern outlined above. Alternative A fulfilled the NEPA requirement for a “no action” alternative; one that proposes no change in the current management of the refuge. Alternative B focused on species of conservation concern, with emphasis on forest-dependent species. We selected alternative B as the preferred alternative, and the specific actions included under that alternative are presented in chapter 4 of this CCP.

This CCP provides management direction for the next 15 years that:

- States clearly the desired future conditions of refuge habitat, wildlife, visitor services, staffing, and facilities.
- Provides State agencies, refuge neighbors, visitors, and partners with a clear understanding of the reasons for refuge management actions.
- Ensures that refuge management reflects the policies, legal mandates, and the mission of the Refuge System and refuge purpose.
- Ensures the compatibility of current and future public use.
- Provides long-term continuity in refuge management.
- Provides justification for our staffing, operations, and maintenance, and projected budget requests.

After its completion, the CCP will be reviewed, evaluated, and subsequently updated approximately every 15 years. However, if and when significant new information becomes available, ecological conditions change, major refuge expansion occurs, or when we identify the need to do so, the plan can be reviewed sooner. All plan revisions will require NEPA compliance.

In developing and adopting a CCP for Presquile NWR, we wanted to accomplish the following goals:

- Goal 1.** Forested and Emergent Wetlands: Protect, maintain, and restore the integrity of the refuge's tidal swamp forest and tidal freshwater marsh to sustain native plants and wildlife, including species of conservation concern, and benefit aquatic resources of the James River watershed and Chesapeake Bay.
- Goal 2.** Upland Habitats: Protect, restore, and enhance the refuge's upland habitats, with emphasis on the mixed mesic forest ecological community, to sustain plants and wildlife native to the James River area, including species of conservation concern.
- Goal 3.** Cultural Resources: Protect and conserve the refuge's cultural resources and landscape, and seek opportunities to increase knowledge and appreciation of the refuge's history as part of the James River region.
- Goal 4.** Environmental Education: Provide environmental education experiences for visitors to inspire appreciation and stewardship of the refuge in relation to the James River watershed, the Chesapeake Bay Estuary, and the Refuge System.
- Goal 5.** Wildlife-dependent Recreation: Provide wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities (interpretation, wildlife observation, nature photography, and hunting) for visitors to enjoy and connect with nature, and to develop an enhanced appreciation for, and understanding of, the refuge's natural and cultural resources.

Development of a CCP addresses three needs. First, the Refuge Improvement Act requires that all refuges have a CCP in place to help fulfill the mission of the Refuge System by October 9, 2012.

Second, there is currently no master plan establishing priorities and ensuring consistent and integrated management for Presquile NWR. This CCP will guide management decisions and actions on the refuge during the next 15 years by presenting the combination of management goals, objectives, and strategies to be implemented on the refuge. The CCP will also help Virginia's natural resource agencies, our conservation partners, local communities, and the public understand our priorities and work with us to achieve common goals.

Finally, management should be consistent with current policies. This CCP brings the refuge into conformity with all current law and policies.

In addition to the laws already mentioned, this section highlights Service policy, legal mandates, and existing regional, State, and local resource plans that directly influenced the development of this CCP.

1.3 The Service and Refuge System Policies and Mandates Guiding Planning

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mission and Policies

The Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior (Department). The Service's mission is, "Working with others, to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."

Congress entrusts to the Service the conservation and protection of these national natural resources: migratory birds and fish, federally listed endangered or threatened species, interjurisdictional fish, wetlands, certain marine mammals, and national wildlife refuges. The Service also enforces Federal wildlife laws and international treaties on importing and exporting wildlife, assists states with their fish and wildlife programs, and helps other countries develop conservation programs.

The Service Manual (USFWS 2012a) contains the standing and continuing directives on implementing our authorities, responsibilities, and activities. The Service publishes special directives that affect the rights of citizens or the authorities of other agencies separately in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR); the Service Manual does not duplicate them (<http://www.fws.gov/policy/direct.html>; accessed May 2012).

The National Wildlife Refuge System Mission

The Service administers the Refuge System, which is the world's largest network of lands and waters set aside specifically for the conservation of wildlife and the protection of ecosystems. Over 550 national wildlife refuges encompass more than 150 million acres of lands and waters in all 50 States and several island territories. Each year, more than 40 million visitors hunt, fish, observe, and photograph wildlife, or participate in environmental education and interpretation on refuges (USFWS 2007a).

In 1997, President Clinton signed into law the Refuge Improvement Act. This act establishes a unifying mission for the Refuge System and a new process for determining the compatibility of public uses on refuges, and requires us to prepare a CCP for each refuge. The act states that the Refuge System must focus on wildlife conservation first. It also states that the mission of the Refuge System, coupled with the purpose(s) for which each refuge was established, will provide the principal management direction on that refuge. The mission of the Refuge System is, "To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans" (National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act; Public Law 105-57).

Policy on the National Wildlife Refuge System Mission, Goals, and Purposes

This policy (601 FW 1) sets forth the Refuge System mission noted above, how it relates to the Service mission, and explains the relationship of the Refuge System mission and goals, and the purpose(s) of each unit in the Refuge System. In addition, it identifies the following Refuge System goals:

- Conserve a diversity of fish, wildlife, and plants.
- Develop and maintain a network of habitats.
- Conserve those ecosystems, plant communities, and wetlands that are unique within the U.S.
- Provide and enhance opportunities to participate in compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation.
- Help to foster public understanding and appreciation of the diversity of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats.



Meghan Carfioi/USFWS

This policy also establishes management priorities for the Refuge System:

Tidal swamp forest

- Conserve fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats.
- Facilitate compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses.
- Consider other appropriate and compatible uses.

Policy on Maintaining Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health

This policy (601 FW 3) provides guidance on maintaining or restoring the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge System, including the protection of a broad spectrum of fish, wildlife, and habitat resources in refuge ecosystems. It provides refuge managers with a process for evaluating the best management direction to prevent the additional degradation of environmental conditions and restore lost or severely degraded components of the environment. It also provides guidelines for dealing with external threats to the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of a refuge and its ecosystem.

Policy on Coordination and Cooperative Work with State Fish and Wildlife Agencies

This policy (601 FW 7) establishes procedures for coordinating and working cooperatively with state fish and wildlife agency representatives on management of units of the Refuge System. Effective conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats depends on the professional relationship between managers at the state and Federal levels. We acknowledge the unique expertise and role of state fish and wildlife agencies in the management of fish and wildlife. It encourages refuge managers to invite, coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate with state fish and wildlife agencies in a timely and meaningful opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of programs conducted under this policy. This opportunity will most commonly occur through state fish and wildlife agency representation on the CCP planning team.

Policy on Refuge System Planning

This policy (602 FW 1, 2, 3) establishes the requirements and guidance for Refuge System planning, including CCPs and step-down management plans. It states that the Service will manage all refuges in accordance with an approved CCP that, when implemented, will help:

- Achieve refuge purposes.
- Fulfill the Refuge System mission.
- Maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System.
- Achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- Conform to other applicable laws, mandates, and policies.

This planning policy provides step-by-step directions and identifies the minimum requirements for developing all CCPs. Among them, the Service is to review any existing special designation areas such as wilderness and wild and scenic rivers, specifically address the potential for any new special designations, conduct a wilderness review, and incorporate a summary of that review into each CCP (602 FW 3).

Policy on the Appropriateness of Refuge Uses

Federal law and Service policy provide the direction and planning framework for protecting the Refuge System from inappropriate, incompatible, or harmful human activities and ensuring that visitors can enjoy its lands and waters. This policy (603 FW 1) provides a national framework for determining appropriate refuge uses to prevent or eliminate those that should not occur in the Refuge System. It describes the initial decision process the refuge manager follows when first considering whether to allow a proposed use on a refuge. An appropriate use must meet at least one of the following four conditions:

- (1) The use is a wildlife-dependent recreational use as identified in the Refuge Improvement Act.
- (2) The use contributes to fulfilling the refuge purpose(s), the Refuge System mission, or goals or objectives described in a refuge management plan approved after October 9, 1997, the date the Refuge Improvement Act became law.
- (3) The use is within the boundaries set by state regulations for the take of fish and wildlife.
- (4) The use has been found to be appropriate after concluding a specified findings process using 10 criteria.

Findings of appropriateness for specific public uses at Presquile NWR can be reviewed in appendix B.

Policy on Compatibility

This policy (603 FW 2) complements the appropriateness policy. Once a refuge manager finds a use appropriate, he or she conducts a further evaluation through a compatibility determination assessment. Compatibility determinations completed for those public uses determined to be appropriate are included in appendix B as part of this CCP.

The direction in 603 FW 2 provides guidelines for determining compatibility of uses and procedures for documentation and periodic review of existing uses. Highlights of the guidance in that chapter follows:

- The Refuge Improvement Act and its regulations require an affirmative finding by the refuge manager on the compatibility of a public use before the Service allows it on a refuge.

- A compatible use is one “that will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the Refuge System or the purposes of the refuge.”
- The act defines six priority wildlife-dependent uses that are to receive enhanced consideration on refuges: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation.
- The refuge manager may authorize those priority uses on a refuge when they are compatible and consistent with public safety.
- When the refuge manager publishes a compatibility determination, it will stipulate the required maximum reevaluation dates: 15 years for wildlife-dependent recreational uses or 10 years for other uses.
- The refuge manager may reevaluate the compatibility of a use at any time. For example, it can occur sooner than its mandatory date, or even before the Service completes the CCP process, if new information reveals unacceptable impacts or incompatibility with refuge purposes (603 FW 2.11, 2.12).
- The refuge manager may allow or deny any use, even one that is compatible, based on other considerations such as public safety, policy, or available funding.

Policy on Wildlife-dependent Public Uses

This policy (605 FW 1) of the Service manual presents specific guidance on implementing management of the priority public uses, including the following criteria for a quality, wildlife-dependent recreation program. A quality program is one that:

- Promotes safety of participants, other visitors, and facilities.
- Promotes compliance with applicable laws and regulations and responsible behavior.
- Minimizes or eliminates conflict with fish and wildlife population or habitat goals or objectives in an approved plan.
- Minimizes or eliminates conflicts with other compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.
- Minimizes conflicts with neighboring landowners.
- Promotes accessibility and availability to a broad spectrum of the American people.
- Promotes resource stewardship and conservation.
- Promotes public understanding and increases public appreciation of America’s natural resources and our role in managing and conserving these resources.
- Provides reliable and reasonable opportunities to experience wildlife.
- Uses facilities that are accessible to people and blend into the natural setting.
- Uses visitor satisfaction to help to define and evaluate programs.

Refuge System Vision— Conserving the Future (2011)

In July 2011, the Refuge System convened the “Conserving the Future—Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation” conference to renew and update its 1999 vision document, originally called “Fulfilling the Promise.” After the conference and an extensive public engagement process, a renewed vision document was finalized in

October 2011 (USFWS 2011). The document has 20 recommendations, covering a variety of topics from habitat and species management, visitor services, refuge planning, land conservation, communications, building partnerships, and urban refuges. Currently, implementation teams are developing strategies to help us accomplish the vision. We will incorporate implementation strategies as appropriate, in our step-down plans and refuge programs.

Other Mandates

Federal laws require the Service to identify and preserve its important historic structures, archaeological sites, and artifacts. NEPA mandates our consideration of cultural resources in planning Federal actions. The Refuge Improvement Act requires that the CCP identify the refuge's archaeological and cultural values. In addition, we consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on the draft and final CCPs. The following four Federal laws also cover historic and archaeological resources on national wildlife refuges:

- The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. § 470aa–470ll; Pub.L. 96–95), approved October 31, 1979 (93 Stat. 721). The Archaeological Resources Protection Act establishes detailed requirements for issuing permits for any excavation for, or removal of, archaeological resources from Federal or Native American lands. It also establishes civil and criminal penalties for the unauthorized excavation, removal, or damage of those resources; for any trafficking of those resources removed from Federal or Native American land in violation of any provision of Federal law; and for interstate and foreign commerce in such resources acquired, transported, or received in violation of any state or local law.
- The Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. § 469–469c; Pub.L. 86–523), approved June 27, 1960 (74 Stat. 220), as amended by Pub.L. 93–291 approved May 24, 1974 (88 Stat. 174). The Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act carries out the policy established by the Historic Sites Act (see below). It directs Federal agencies to notify the Secretary of the Interior whenever they find that a Federal or federally assisted licensed or permitted project may cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, prehistoric, or archaeological data. The act authorizes the use of appropriated, donated, or transferred funds for the recovery, protection, and preservation of that data.
- The Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. § 461–462, 464–467; 49 Stat. 666) of August 21, 1935, popularly known as the Historic Sites Act, as amended by Pub.L. 89–249, approved October 9, 1965 (79 Stat. 971). This Historic Sites Act declares it a national policy to preserve historic sites and objects of national significance, including those located on refuges. It provides procedures for designating, acquiring, administering, and protecting these sites and objects. Among other things, National Historic and Natural Landmarks are designated under the authority of this act. The remains of the Presquile House Site and Cemetery at Presquile NWR have a historic structure designation.
- The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. § 470–470b, 470c–470n), Pub.L. 89–665, approved October 15, 1966 (80 Stat. 915), and repeatedly amended. The National Historic Preservation Act provides for the preservation of significant historical features (buildings, objects, and sites) through a grant-in-aid program to the states. It establishes the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and a program of matching grants under the existing National Trust for Historic Preservation (16 U.S.C. § 468–468d). This act establishes an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which became a permanent, independent agency in Pub.L. 94–422, approved September 28, 1976 (90 Stat. 1319). The act created the Historic Preservation Fund. It directs Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their actions on items or sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register. One previously documented archaeological site (Site 44CF120) at Presquile NWR may be eligible for listing in the National Register.



Meghan Carfoglio/USFWS

Cemetery at Presquile National Wildlife Refuge

The Service also owns and cares for museum properties. The most common are archaeological, zoological, and botanical collections, and historical photographs, objects, and art. Each refuge maintains an inventory of its museum property. Our Regional museum property coordinator in Hadley, Massachusetts, guides the refuges in caring for that property, and helps us comply with the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act and Federal regulations governing Federal archaeological collections. Our program ensures that those collections will remain available to the public for learning and research.

Other Federal resource laws are also important to highlight as they are integral to developing a CCP:

- The Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 1131–1136; P.L. 88–577) establishes a National Wilderness Preservation System that is composed of federally owned areas designated by Congress as “wilderness areas.” The act directs each agency administering designated wilderness to preserve the wilderness character of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System, and to administer the National Wilderness Preservation System for the use and enjoyment of the American people in a way that will leave those areas unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness. The act also directs the Secretary of the Interior, within 10 years, to review every roadless area of 5,000 acres or more and every roadless island (regardless of size) within the Refuge System and National Park System for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Service planning policy requires that the Service evaluate the potential for wilderness on refuge lands, as appropriate, during the CCP/EA development process. Our wilderness review is included in this CCP as appendix D.
- The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended, selects certain rivers of the Nation possessing remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, preserves them in a free-flowing condition, and protects their local environments. Service planning policy requires that the Service evaluate the potential for wild and scenic rivers designation on refuge lands, as appropriate, during the CCP/EA development process. There are no rivers or segments of rivers that qualify for review within the boundary of the refuge; therefore, a wild and scenic river review was not conducted for this CCP.

Our mandates also include orders and initiatives by the President, Secretary of the Interior, or Director of the Service. We highlight four of these below:

- Presidential Initiative “America’s Great Outdoors” was issued on April 16, 2010. President Obama launched the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative as a conservation and recreation effort that would help increase connections with American citizens and the outdoors. America’s Great Outdoors takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should come from citizens who share in the responsibility to conserve, restore, and provide better access to our lands and waters.

In February 2011, a report was generated to lay the foundation for implementing this initiative. It can be accessed at: <http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/> (accessed July 2012). This report identifies 10 major goals and 75 action items to advance this initiative, from expanding youth programs to increasing public awareness about conservation to better managing our public lands. Among these are three major place-based goals to focus the collective conservation and recreation efforts of the Federal government: create and enhance urban parks and greenspaces, renew and restore rivers, and conserves large, rural landscapes.

During the spring and summer of 2011, the Secretary sought recommendations for two specific projects in each state that would highlight opportunities to support the three place-based goals of the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative. In Virginia, the two projects identified are:

- (1) Fort Monroe National Historical Park, in Hampton, Virginia.
- (2) Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (NHT).

The Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT crosses much of eastern tidal Virginia, including Presquile NWR. Additional details on the trail are provided below in section 1.4. We also discuss more on our efforts to cooperate on this project in chapter 3, section 3.9.

- Presidential Executive Order 13443–Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation was issued on August 16, 2007. The purpose of this order is to direct Federal agencies that have programs and activities affecting public land management, outdoor recreation, and wildlife management, including the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat. Federal agencies are directed to pursue certain activities listed in the order, consistent with their missions. Those activities include managing wildlife and wildlife habitats on public lands in a manner that expands and enhances hunting opportunities, and working with state and Tribal governments to manage wildlife and habitats to foster healthy and productive populations and provide appropriate opportunities for the public to hunt those species.
- Presidential Executive Order 13508–Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration was issued on May 12, 2009. This order furthers the purpose of the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), and other laws “...to protect and restore the health, heritage, natural resources, and social and economic value of the Nation’s largest estuarine ecosystem and the natural sustainability of its watershed.” It recognizes the Chesapeake Bay as “a national treasure constituting the largest estuary in the United States and one of the largest and most biologically productive estuaries in the world.”

It directs the establishment of a Federal Leadership Committee chaired by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), or their designee, with participation by all Federal agencies with jurisdiction in the bay. The Committee's purpose is to lead the effort to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay under a renewed commitment to control pollution from all sources as well as protect and restore habitat and living resources, conserve lands, and improve management of natural resources, all of which contribute to improved water quality and ecosystem health.

This order also develops a strategy for coordinated implementation of existing programs and projects, and an annual action plan and accomplishment reports. It also requires collaboration with state partners. The focus of the coordinated implementation plan will be to address: (1) water quality, (2) sources of pollution from agricultural lands and Federal lands and facilities, (3) protecting the bay's resources as the climate changes, (4) expanding opportunities for public access, (5) conserving landscapes and ecosystems, and (6) the monitoring and accountability of activities.

- Secretarial Order 3289–Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources was issued on September 14, 2009. This order establishes a Departmentwide, science-based approach to increasing our understanding of climate change and to coordinate an effective response to its impacts on tribes and on the land, water, ocean, fish and wildlife, and cultural heritage resources that the Department manages. The order establishes a “Climate Change Response Council” that will execute a coordinated Departmentwide strategy to increase scientific understanding and the development of adaptive management tools to address the impact of climate change on our natural and cultural resources. The council will help coordinate activities within and among Federal agencies. Land management agencies are directed to pursue appropriate activities to reduce their carbon footprint, adapt water management strategies to address the possibility of a shrinking water supply, and protect and manage land in anticipation of sea level rise, shifting wildlife populations and habitats, increased wildland fire threats, and an increase in invasive and exotic species.

In Chapter 4, “Environmental Consequences,” of the draft CCP/EA, we evaluated this plan's compliance with the acts noted above, as well as the Clean Water Act of 1977 as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251, et seq.; Public Law 107–303), the Clean Air Act of 1970 as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.), and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531–1544), as amended. Our draft CCP/EA was written to comply with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500–1508). Appendix G, the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), also documents our compliance with these Federal laws and how they were considered in our final decision.

Pursuant to the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration approved the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program in 1986. In accordance with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program requirements, a Federal Consistency Determination was prepared for the proposed action and is included in appendix E of this CCP.

While Service and Refuge System policies and each refuge's purpose(s) provide the foundation for management, national wildlife refuges are administered consistent with a variety of other Federal laws, executive orders, treaties, interstate compacts, and regulations on the conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources. The “Digest of Federal Resource Laws of Interest to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service” lists them and can be accessed at: <http://www.fws.gov/laws/Lawsdigest.html> (accessed August 2012).

1.4 Conservation Plans and Initiatives Guiding the CCP

National, Regional, and Local Plans and Priorities

Important guidance for habitat and visitor service management at Presquile NWR was provided by a series of plans and priorities that were in place or in development during our planning process for this CCP. We highlight them below.

Landscape Dynamics: Land Cover and Land Use

North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative Development and Operations Plan (USFWS 2009a)

The Service is developing a coordinated network of landscape conservation cooperatives across the U.S., in part to address major environmental and human-related factors that limit fish and wildlife populations at the broadest of scales, including developing adaptation strategies in response to climate change. The landscape conservation cooperative is utilizing principles of strategic habitat conservation to develop and communicate landscape-scale scientific information to shape conservation across the Northeastern U.S. This initial plan outlines the regional threats to conservation, and identifies priority species and habitats, as well as active regional partnerships. You may access the plan at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/science/pdf/NorthAtlanticLCCfinal.pdf> (accessed October 2012).

The Nature Conservancy's Chesapeake Bay Lowlands Ecoregional Plan (TNC 2005)

The Chesapeake Bay Lowlands ecoregion is centered on the Chesapeake Bay and includes most of Delaware, all of the Coastal Plain in Maryland and the District of Columbia, and coastal Virginia south to the James River. Five major types of conservation targets were identified in the Chesapeake Bay Lowlands ecoregion: (1) matrix forest blocks; (2) aquatic ecosystems; (3) “significant conservation areas” in tidal waters (for estuarine, coastal, and marine targets); (4) natural communities; and (5) species. To the extent that some of these conservation targets overlap with the species and habitats found on Presquile NWR, they have been considered as part of this plan development. You may access the plan at: <http://conserveonline.org/library/CBYplan.pdf/view.html> (accessed October 2012).

The National Park Service's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (NPS 2010)

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT, the first national water trail in the U.S. Established in 2006, the trail consists of a series of water routes extending approximately 3,000 miles along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries in the States of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and in the District of Columbia, tracing the 1607 to 1609 voyages of Captain John Smith to chart the land and waterways of the Chesapeake Bay. The trail complements the diverse resources of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network—a partnership of existing water trails, parks, museums, wildlife refuges, and other sites that provide interpretation and bay access—to make additional opportunities for education, recreation, and heritage tourism. As the Nation's first national water trail, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT will be most fully experienced by watercraft and at water access sites. However, visitors will also be able to view the trail setting and learn the stories from land. Numerous existing land sites along the voyage routes will interpret Smith's explorations, native settlements and cultures, and the environment of the early 17th century. You may access more information about the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT at: <http://www.nps.gov/cajo/index.htm> (accessed October 2012).

Wildlife and Habitat

Virginia Wildlife Action Plan (VDGIF 2005)

The Virginia Wildlife Action plan was completed in 2005 (VDGIF 2005). While creating a strategic focus for State fish and wildlife management agencies, this plan attempts to provide a Statewide perspective on conservation, presenting geographic, species, and habitat priorities. Presquile NWR protects several habitats that support species determined to be of conservation need by the State

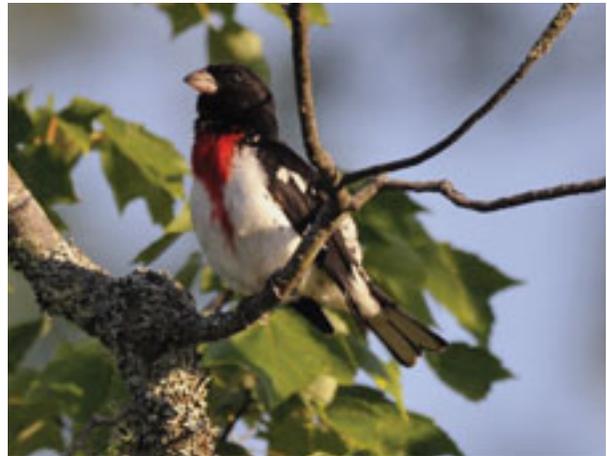
of Virginia. As such, species of conservation priority noted in the Wildlife Action Plan were considered in development of the refuge's resources of concern. You may access the plan at: <http://www.bewildvirginia.org/wildlifeplan/plan.asp> (accessed October 2012).

USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (USFWS 2008a)

This report identifies the migratory and nonmigratory bird species (beyond those already designated as federally threatened or endangered) that represent the Service's highest conservation priorities and draws attention to species in need of conservation action. The geographic scope includes the U.S. in its entirety, including island territories in the Pacific and Caribbean. Bird species considered for inclusion on lists in this report include nongame birds, gamebirds without hunting seasons, subsistence-hunted nongame birds in Alaska; and Endangered Species Act candidate, proposed endangered or threatened, and recently delisted species. Assessment scores are based on several factors, including population trends, threats, distribution, abundance, and area importance. You may access the report at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/NewReportsPublications/SpecialTopics/BCC2008/BCC2008.pdf> (accessed October 2012).

USFWS Migratory Bird Program Strategic Plan (USFWS 2004b)

The Migratory Bird Program Strategic Plan provides direction for the Service's migratory bird management over the next decade (2004 to 2014). The plan contains a vision and recommendations for the Refuge System's place in bird conservation. It defines strategies for the Service, including the Refuge System, to actively support bird conservation through monitoring,



Bill Thompson

Rose-breasted grosbeak

conservation, consultation, and recreation. Considerations for, to the extent it is practical, standard monitoring protocols, habitat assessment and management, and promoting nature-based recreation and education to forward the vision of the Migratory Bird Program Strategic Plan have been incorporated into this plan. You may access the plan at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/AboutUS/mbstratplan/finalmbstratplan.pdf> (accessed October 2012).

North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP 2004) and Joint Venture Plans

Originally written in 1986, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan describes a 15-year strategy for the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to restore and sustain waterfowl populations by protecting, restoring, and enhancing habitat. The plan committee, including representatives from all three countries, has modified the 1986 plan twice to account for biological, sociological, and economic changes that influenced the status of waterfowl and to allow cooperative habitat conservation. The most recent modification in 2004 updates the needs, priorities, and strategies for the next 15 years, and guides partners in strengthening the biological foundation of North American waterfowl conservation and stakeholder confidence in the direction of the plan. You may access the report at: <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/NAWMP/files/ImplementationFramework.pdf> (accessed August 2012).

To convey goals, priorities, and strategies more effectively, that 2004 modification comprises two separate documents: Strategic Guidance and Implementation Framework. The former is for agency administrators and policy makers who set the direction and priorities for conservation. The latter includes supporting technical information for use by biologists and land managers.

The plans are implemented at the regional level in 14 habitat joint ventures and 3 species joint ventures (Arctic Goose, Black Duck, and Sea Duck). Presquile NWR lies in the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, which includes all the Atlantic Flyway states from Maine to Florida and Puerto Rico. The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture Waterfowl Implementation Plan (2005) was completed in June 2005. The refuge lies within the plan's Lower James River Focus Area. You may view the focus area online at: <http://www.acjv.org> (accessed August 2012).

The waterfowl goal for the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture is to, "Protect and manage priority wetland habitats for migration, wintering, and production of waterfowl, with special consideration to black ducks, and to benefit other wildlife in the joint venture area." The Black Duck Joint Venture plan also relates to our CCP. American black ducks use the refuge during the winter and migration, but are less common during their breeding season as their primary breeding grounds are in Canada. The Black Duck Joint Venture Final Draft Strategic Plan (USFWS/CWS 1993) resides online at: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bdjh> (accessed August 2012). We referred to both joint venture plans in developing the management objectives and strategies under goals 1 and 2.



Bill Wood

Canada geese

Bird Conservation Plan for the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain (Physiographic Area 44) (PIF 1999)

Partners in Flight is a partnership of government agencies, private organizations, academic researchers, and private industry throughout North America focused on coordinating voluntary bird conservation efforts to benefit species at risk and

their habitats. Bird conservation regions (BCRs) have been developed to guide management on a regional scale. Version 1.0 of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain BCR was completed in 1999. Presquile NWR is located within the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province and thus is considering the conservation priorities of this plan along with other conservation plans. You may access the plan at: http://www.partnersinflight.org/bcps/plan/pl_44_10.pdf (accessed October 2012).

Mid-Atlantic Coast Bird Conservation Region Implementation Plan (BCR 30) (USFWS 2008b)

The implementation plan for the BCR 30 combines regional plans, assessments, and research completed over the past two decades to develop continental-based bird conservation efforts. Presquile NWR is located within the southern extent of the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain. Many of the priority species listed for BCR 30 are also species of concern listed within the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan. These rankings and the recommendations of the inventory have been considered along with other local and regional conservation priorities. You may access the plan at: http://www.acjv.org/BCR_30/BCR30_June_23_2008_final.pdf (accessed October 2012).

1.5 Refuge Purpose, Vision, and Goals

Refuge Purpose

The purpose of Presquile NWR is “for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds” (Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715d).

Refuge Vision

The planning team developed the following vision statement to provide a guiding philosophy and sense of purpose in the CCP:

Presquile National Wildlife Refuge exemplifies the majesty of our natural world and the significance of the Lower James River as a major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Throughout the year, bald eagles perch on the island’s forested shores and survey the rich assemblage of wildlife: the wake of the prehistoric sturgeon heading to spawn, basking turtles in the warm spring sun, colorful warblers darting amongst trees all summer, and thousands of wintering waterfowl resting in the quiet waters of the winding river.

This isolated island bridges the modern world to its long and storied history of people connecting to the land. The joyful sound of children learning in the natural classroom echoes through the forest in this gateway to wild places. Stewardship fostered here generates action beyond the river in communities across their watershed.

Refuge Goals

The planning team developed refuge goals (see section 1.2) after considering the vision statement, the purposes for establishing the refuge, the missions of the Service and the Refuge System, and the mandates, plans, and conservation initiatives noted above. These goals are intentionally broad, descriptive statements of purpose. They highlight elements that we will emphasize in refuge management over the next 15 years.