



Planning Update

PLANNING UPDATE #1

JULY 1997

GREETINGS!

This is the first in a series of updates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to keep you informed of the planning progress for the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).

This update explains how to get involved in the planning process for the refuge, describes some of the concepts and options for managing lands transferred to the Service, and includes a schedule of upcoming public workshops and other events.

HELP US PLAN THE PROPOSED ALAMEDA REFUGE

The planning process has just begun. This is a good opportunity for you to help the Fish and Wildlife Service identify issues and concerns, and for us to answer your questions. Your participation is an integral part of the development of this proposed new refuge, and we would like to meet you and get acquainted with your concerns. A public workshop/open house is scheduled for August 12, 1997.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP/OPEN HOUSE

This is the first public planning meeting for the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge.

WHEN: 6 p.m.- 9 p.m., August 12, 1997

WHERE: Alameda High School Cafeteria, located on Central Avenue between Walnut and Oak Streets.

DIRECTIONS TO OPEN HOUSE:

If you are traveling on Highway 880 (Nimitz Freeway), take the High Street exit. Go west toward Alameda. After crossing a small bridge, continue several blocks to Central Avenue. Turn right and drive approximately 10 blocks to 2200 Central Avenue. This is the address of the Kofman Auditorium, a large building with tall columns. The cafeteria is located in the building next to the auditorium (no address on front).



PARKING: Limited parking is permitted on site. A parking lot is available 1 1/2 blocks north on Walnut. Please make sure that your car is parked in a legal space; cars parked illegally will be towed.

WORKSHOP/OPEN HOUSE AGENDA

At 6 p.m., the Fish and Wildlife Service will give a brief presentation regarding the refuge program and the planning process. The open house will start about 6:30 p.m. Staff from Service offices in California and the Regional Office in Portland, Oregon will be available to discuss habitat management options for the proposed Alameda NWR.

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SUBMITTING COMMENTS

If you have questions or concerns, please bring them to the workshop/open house, call one of the numbers on the “Who to Contact” list, or send us a letter or e-mail message. The issue identification period ends September 12, 1997, so make sure we receive your comments by that date.



Please provide written comments to *Charles Houghten, Chief, Planning Branch, ARW/RE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 911 NE 11th Ave., Portland, Oregon 97232-4181.* Please send e-mail comments (with “Alameda NWR” typed in the subject line) to ***rlplanning_guest@fws.gov***.

WHAT’S NEXT?

The issues identified in this part of the planning process are the driving factors for the next step in the process--developing wildlife management and habitat protection alternatives. These alternatives, which will address the concerns and issues of affected parties, will be described and analyzed in a management plan and environmental assessment.

You will have an opportunity to review both documents and provide comments. You will also be notified of any public meetings or workshops that may be held in the future.

FWS PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The **comprehensive management plan** will present an overview of the Service’s proposed management approaches to wildlife and habitats, public uses and wildlife-dependent recreational activities, facilities, and public outreach within the proposed refuge. These proposed management actions would only apply to lands and waters within the National Wildlife Refuge System.

(cont’d at right) 

PLANNING SCHEDULE
PROPOSED ALAMEDA NWR

<u>Planning Step*</u>	<u>Completion Dates*</u>
<i>Planning Update 1</i> issued; open house announced	July 1997
Public workshop/open house	Aug. 12, 1997
Issue identification period ends	Sept. 12, 1997
Alameda NWR Draft Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Assessment released	Nov. 1997
Public workshop/Open house	Dec. 1997
Comment period ends	Jan. 1998
Final Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Assessment released	March 1998
Public notice of decision for Alameda NWR	March 1998

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**Unforeseen circumstances could cause changes. We will keep you posted if any major planning dates change.*

The **environmental assessment** will analyze alternative proposals for protection of wildlife and habitat in the proposed refuge and the potential effects of those alternatives.

WILDLIFE • LOCATION MAP

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND WILDLIFE

The 2,796-acre Naval Air Station Alameda was closed on April 25, 1997. The Service has requested 900 acres (525 acres of land and 375 acres of open water) for use as a wildlife refuge (see maps below and on next page). Thus, the lands and waters within the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge would continue their importance for “flight operations”-- for bird species.

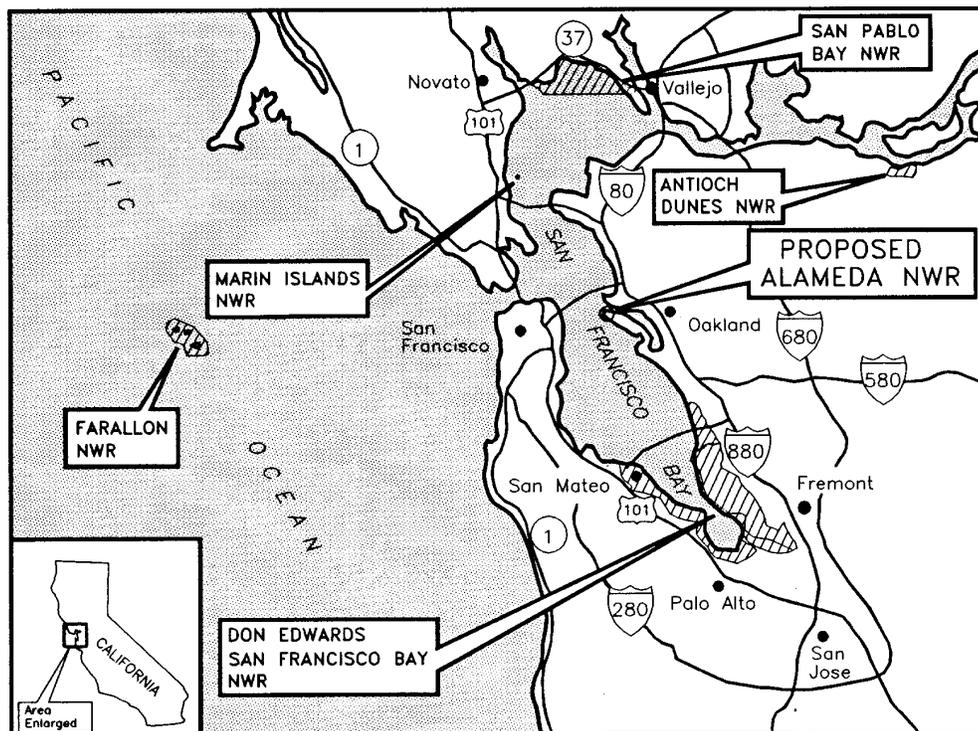


More than 200 pairs of California least terns, an endangered species, nest adjacent to an airport taxiway each spring/summer. This tern colony is at the northern limit of its range and is extremely important to overall species survival. The nesting site ranks in the top three for chick production and is especially important during “El Nino” years when tern production in southern California

decreases. The Navy was a very good tern steward, monitoring the colony, maintaining the nest site substrate, constructing a protective fence, and removing predators.

The breakwater within the proposed Alameda NWR is a summer/fall roost site for more than 400 endangered California brown pelicans. It is considered the most important roost, and the only known night roost, in San Francisco Bay. The breakwater is also used by harbor seals, including pups, as a haul-out area. The second largest western gull colony in central and northern California nests on the breakwater. Wetland areas within the proposed refuge boundaries support the largest Caspian tern nesting colony on the Pacific coast (as many as 1,000 nests!), and nesting ducks, geese, shorebirds, and other waterbirds. Burrowing owl, northern harrier, and loggerhead shrike are other sensitive or rare species that nest within the proposed refuge.

LOCATION MAP



Note to PDF viewers: An electronic copy of this map is not yet available. Please let us know if you would like to receive a paper copy.

PRELIMINARY GOALS FOR THE PROPOSED ALAMEDA REFUGE

- Implement recovery actions for the endangered and threatened species, including the California least tern.
- Protect migratory birds and preserve important foraging, nesting, and roosting habitats from disturbance.
- Manage native wildlife species to preserve a natural diversity and abundance of fauna and flora on refuge lands.
- Promote wildlife-dependent educational opportunities on refuge lands to foster public awareness and appreciation of local wildlife resources.

KEY AREAS OF MANAGEMENT FOCUS

The following section describes some of the management approaches that are being considered if the refuge is established.

On national wildlife refuges, wildlife management activities are always the primary land use. However, the Service promotes the wildlife-dependent recreational activities of wildlife observation and photography, interpretation, environmental education, hunting, and fishing, whenever those uses are compatible with the purpose of the refuge. Other public and economic uses may be considered if they are compatible with refuge purposes.

The primary management focus for the proposed Alameda NWR would be wildlife protection and habitat management. The Service is committed to providing high-quality, safe, and accessible

wildlife-dependent interpretive, recreational, and educational opportunities at the proposed Alameda NWR within the capabilities of available staff and budget.

Your input will be used to help develop the refuge management plan. The following ideas are a beginning point for our discussion of management of the proposed Alameda NWR.

Habitat Management. The primary focus of habitat management would be the protection and recovery of California least tern. Potential actions could include control of exotic vegetation; maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of the existing breeding site; installation of additional electric fence around nesting sites; and construction and maintenance of a

chain-link perimeter fence to protect terns from terrestrial predators, human trespass, and other disturbance. A secondary objective would be the enhancement and recovery of existing wetland habitat, which could include removing exotic vegetation, restoring native vegetation species, and implementing other management measures for the benefit of wetland and wildlife species.

Population Monitoring.

Monitoring of the tern colony during breeding season (March through August) would be similar to that presently occurring under Navy management. The tern monitoring would document the presence of adults, nesting success, and the presence of fledglings until all chick fledge.

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*California least terns,
Kendal Morris, USFWS
1991*



Nuisance Species Management. The Service proposes a proactive approach to predator management, similar to that occurring at other tern nesting sites throughout California. Preventative measures, including the reduction of predator habitat and raptor perches immediately adjacent to the tern nesting site, would be attempted first. When preventative measures are ineffective, a variety of other management techniques would be employed. Nonnative target mammals such as red foxes and feral cats would be trapped and removed. Other predators may be controlled if they are considered a threat to nesting birds or if populations are determined to be artificially high due to human influence. The Service would seek a population balance for natural predatory animals.

Public Use Opportunities. Lands within the proposed Alameda NWR are owned by the Department of the Navy and have been open in the past to limited use by the public. Once these lands become a refuge, stewardship of the natural resources would be the paramount goal and public use that supported this goal would be considered. Wildlife-dependent use is generally encouraged on national wildlife refuges as long as those uses are compatible with the primary purpose(s) for which the refuge is established, adequate funding and staff are available, and the uses are consistent with other management programs.

Because of its location in a major urban area, the proposed Alameda NWR will offer an excellent opportunity for public contact. Environmental education would be an important element of public use. Docent-led tours of the area are being considered.

The refuge intends to cooperate with the East Bay Regional Park District to plan a perimeter trail for public access around the airfield site. During the tern breeding season, the portion of the trail from runway wetland to the northwest edge of the west wetland would be closed to public access.

Interpretive activities and an opportunity to view the least tern colony would be provided in the adjacent control tower or observation deck. In addition, a viewing platform is being considered for the north end of the west wetland to allow the public to view the Caspian tern colony and other water birds. Interpretive signs and panels would be located in viewing areas to inform the public about wildlife and access restrictions.

Public use regulations are needed to insure public safety, maintain the quality of the outdoor experience, and protect natural resources. General public use regulations for national wildlife refuges are found in Subchapter C, Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations. Public and other secondary uses that are generally not authorized may be permitted through a special use permit on a case-by-case basis, if these uses are compatible with the refuge purposes.

Non-recreational Uses. The Service is considering leasing a portion of the runway and taxiways as a limited-use private airport, if it is determined that this activity is compatible with refuge purposes and the Alameda community agrees on the need for an airfield. Since the tern colony flourished under past airport operations, an even more restricted airport operation may be compatible.

Road Access. Trail access would be limited to pedestrians and bicycles only. No vehicle access to the perimeter trail would be granted to the general public.

Law Enforcement. An on-site assistant refuge manager would have law enforcement authority to control trespass, violation of wildlife laws, and other violations. Additional law enforcement assistance will be provided by staff from the San Francisco Bay NWR Complex in Fremont.

(cont'd on p. 7)



Facilities Management. The site has several existing bunkers and small supply buildings. Bunkers may be maintained for refuge purposes or leased to private individuals. Unnecessary structures would be removed to minimize raptor perches in proximity to tern nest sites. Boundaries of any lands acquired by the Service would be posted with refuge signs.



WHO TO CONTACT

If you have comments or questions, please write or call us at the following locations:

Information on Proposed Alameda NWR Management

Marge Kolar, Project Leader
San Francisco Bay NWR Complex
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 524
Newark, California 94560
(510) 792-0222; fax (510) 792-5828

Joelle Buffa, Wildlife Biologist
San Francisco Bay NWR Complex
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 524
Newark, California 94560
(510) 792-0222; fax (510) 792-5828

Information on Proposed Alameda NWR Planning

Cathy Osugi, Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
911 NE 11th Avenue, 3rd Floor West
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181
(503) 231-2231 or (800) 662-8933
Fax (503) 231-6161

Information on Alameda County Endangered Species Issues

Jim Browning, Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Mike Thabault, Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 130
Sacramento, California 95821-6340
(916) 979-2752; fax (916) 979-2744

Information on Land Acquisition

Jackie Cumpton, Realty Specialist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2233 Watt Avenue, Suite 375
Sacramento, California 95825-0509
(916) 979-2085; fax (916) 979-2092



PLANNING INFORMATION ON-LINE

Check out the new planning home page, available sometime in August. We'll be offering electronic versions of some of our planning documents, as well as a glossary and some useful links.

WEBSITE ADDRESS:

www.r1.fws.gov/text/planhome.html

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

r1planning_guest@fws.gov

(For e-mail messages, please type "Alameda NWR" in the subject line).

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: *Let us know if you have a change of*
: *address or would like to add or delete an*
: *address. Unless we hear from you, your name*
: *will remain on the mailing list for all future*
: *Planning Updates. Call (800) 662-8933 for*
: *changes and additions.*
:

THIS IS YOUR PLANNING UPDATE FOR THE
●PROPOSED ALAMEDA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE●

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR

A public workshop/open house will be held
August 12 to discuss the proposed refuge.
Please see inside this update for details.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service (Attn: ARW/RE/Planning)
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181

Address correction requested