



Columbia National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update 3, July 2011



Ferruginous hawk chick/© Tom Tietz

The Refuge's Draft CCP/EA is Available for Public Comment

Your comments are important!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Columbia National Wildlife Refuge Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (Draft CCP/EA) is available for public review and comment between now and August 28, 2011. We value your comments and encourage you to share them with us. Please see page 5 for options on sending us your comments.

Last year we provided you with our preliminary alternatives, goals, and objectives. Since then, we have made several modifications, so we are again summarizing our alternatives on

the following pages. We invite you to download the full text with the complete goals and objectives from our web site, or request a compact disk from us.

We developed the Draft CCP/EA to provide reasonable, scientifically grounded guidance for improving Columbia National Wildlife Refuge's (CNWR) grasslands, shrub-steppe expanses, wetlands, riparian areas, lakes and streams, woodlands, and farm fields for the long-term conservation of migratory birds and resident plants and animals. All three alternatives meet this standard, provide resource protection, fulfill refuge purposes, and allow the public to enjoy CNWR.

The refuge's priority public use programs—hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation—are also in the Draft CCP/EA.

As the CCP will guide CNWR's management actions for at least the next 15 years, your comments are critical. We want to hear your ideas and get your feedback in selecting the final management alternative. We will address your comments in the Final CCP and shape our final management choices through them. Actions will be implemented as funding becomes available. Help us select the best direction for the future of CNWR!

Overview of the Draft CCP/EA Alternatives

Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative)

Under Alternative 1, no significant change to current refuge management would occur, apart from actions necessary for compliance with Service policy. This alternative is considered the baseline from which to compare the other alternatives. The refuge would continue to manage habitat primarily for ducks, geese, and shorebirds.

Public use would continue to be managed for a mix of active and passive opportunities. Camping would be discontinued; this is one

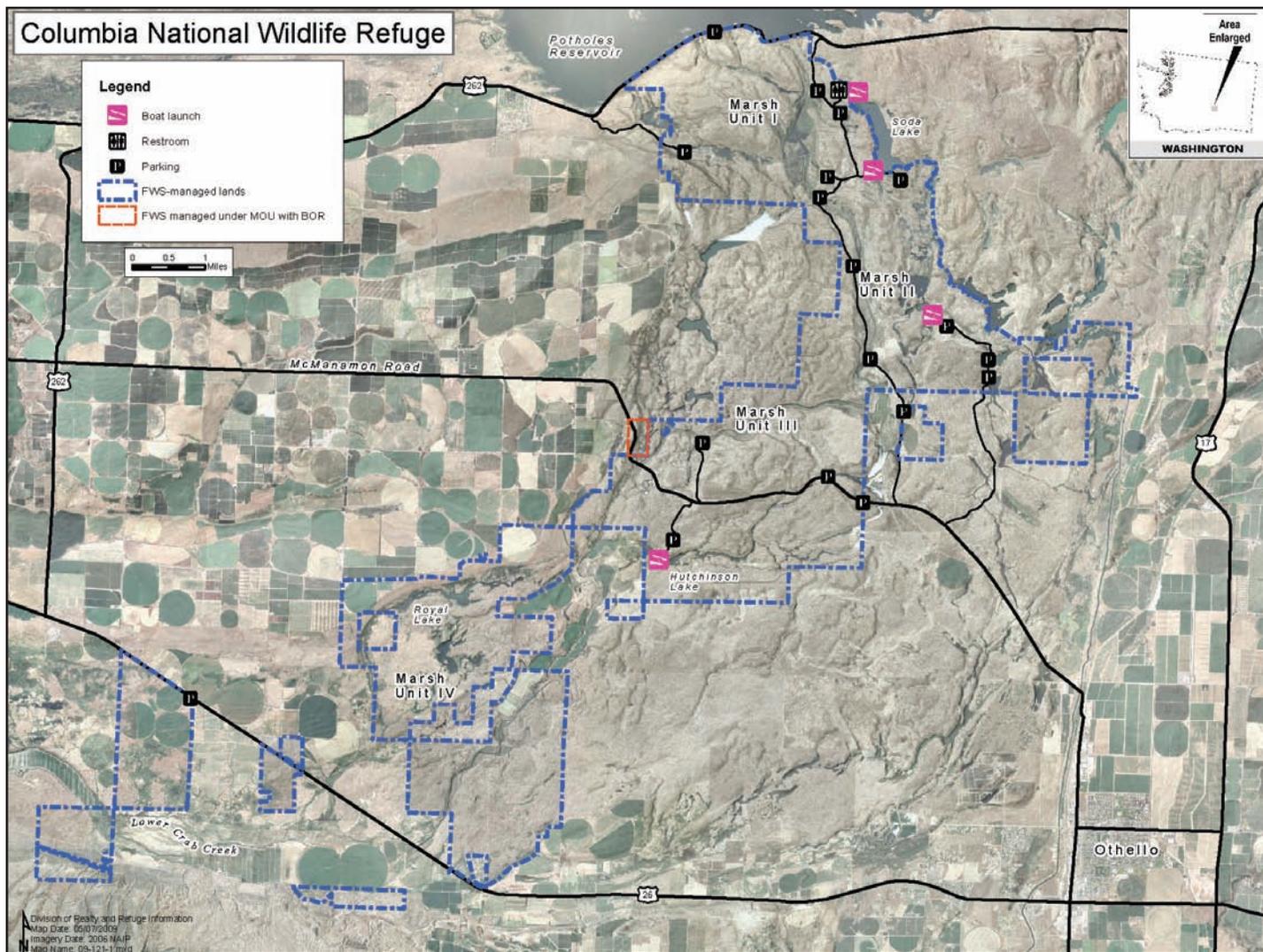
of those instances where the current situation would have to change to meet Service policies of appropriateness and compatibility for CNWR. Camping has been found to be not appropriate at the refuge in the Draft CCP and therefore would be considered for elimination under all three alternatives.

Stocking of sport fish would continue, and fishing access would remain mostly undeveloped with



Bitterbrush shrubs/US Forest Service

gravel parking lots. Hunting would continue as is, with few developed facilities or special programs, apart from the hunting lottery. The hiking trail system would remain limited. Interpretive and environmental education programs would continue to be limited and sporadic. The annual Sandhill Crane Festival would remain a priority for the Service.



Alternative 2

Under Alternative 2, habitat management remains similar to Alternative 1, except that 175 acres of emergent wetlands in Marsh Unit III would be converted to riparian habitat; the Crab Creek channel would be restored; specialized habitats (e.g., rock outcroppings) would receive more planned attention; and farming would emphasize low-impact techniques.

The refuge would continue to manage, and where feasible, restore habitat for waterfowl, and there would be additional emphasis on managing for other priority species, such as American bitterns, Washington ground squirrels, northern leopard frogs, lesser Sandhill cranes, migratory songbirds, redband trout, and upper Columbia River steelhead.

Alternative 3

Biological management actions under Alternative 3 are much the same as Alternative 2, except farming will focus on traditional practices. Management would continue to focus on the same species as Alternative 2, except northern leopard frogs would receive even more attention.

A much greater emphasis on visitor services exists under Alternative 3, and the types of uses would change. As in Alternatives 1 and 2, camping would be eliminated at both the Bluebird and Soda Lake Campgrounds; however, the Soda Lake Campground would be converted to day-use facilities, and the area around the Bluebird Campground would be available by permit for day use as an

educational site. As in Alternative 2, ADA-compliant facilities would be developed to promote hunting and fishing. Fish stocking would continue under Alternative 3; however, it would be discontinued in the lakes with the highest likelihood of success for northern leopard frog recovery.

Waterfowl and big game hunting opportunities would be substantially expanded by opening new areas, providing for additional weapons, and implementing additional youth hunt days, areas, and seasons; the waterfowl hunting lottery would be retained. The current use of horses and bicycles would be retained, and Morgan Lake Road would remain open for 24-hour use. A new hiking

although numerous informational brochures would be developed to enhance passive recreational use of the refuge. The Sandhill Crane Festival would remain a priority.

Visitor use would be focused around passive recreation, and some uses might be restricted or eliminated to enhance the natural functioning of the various habitats. For example, horseback riding and bicycling would be eliminated under this alternative. Camping also would be discontinued.

New, step-down plans on signs, cultural resource management, habitat management, and other actions related to the goals and objectives in this CCP would be developed. In addition, new guidance on discoveries of Native American artifacts and remains and the needs of local schools would also be developed.



California quail/Anita Ritenour

and interpretive trail would be developed within the Drumheller Channels National Natural Landmark. Seasonal and permanent wildlife observation blinds would be provided. New interpretive and educational programs would be developed, and as in Alternative 2, new brochures to aid visitors would be developed. The Sandhill Crane Festival would remain a priority.

The development of additional plans and guidance would be the same as described in Alternative 2. Unlike Alternative 2, however, water rights and/or agreements would be pursued to ensure the availability of water for moist soil management.

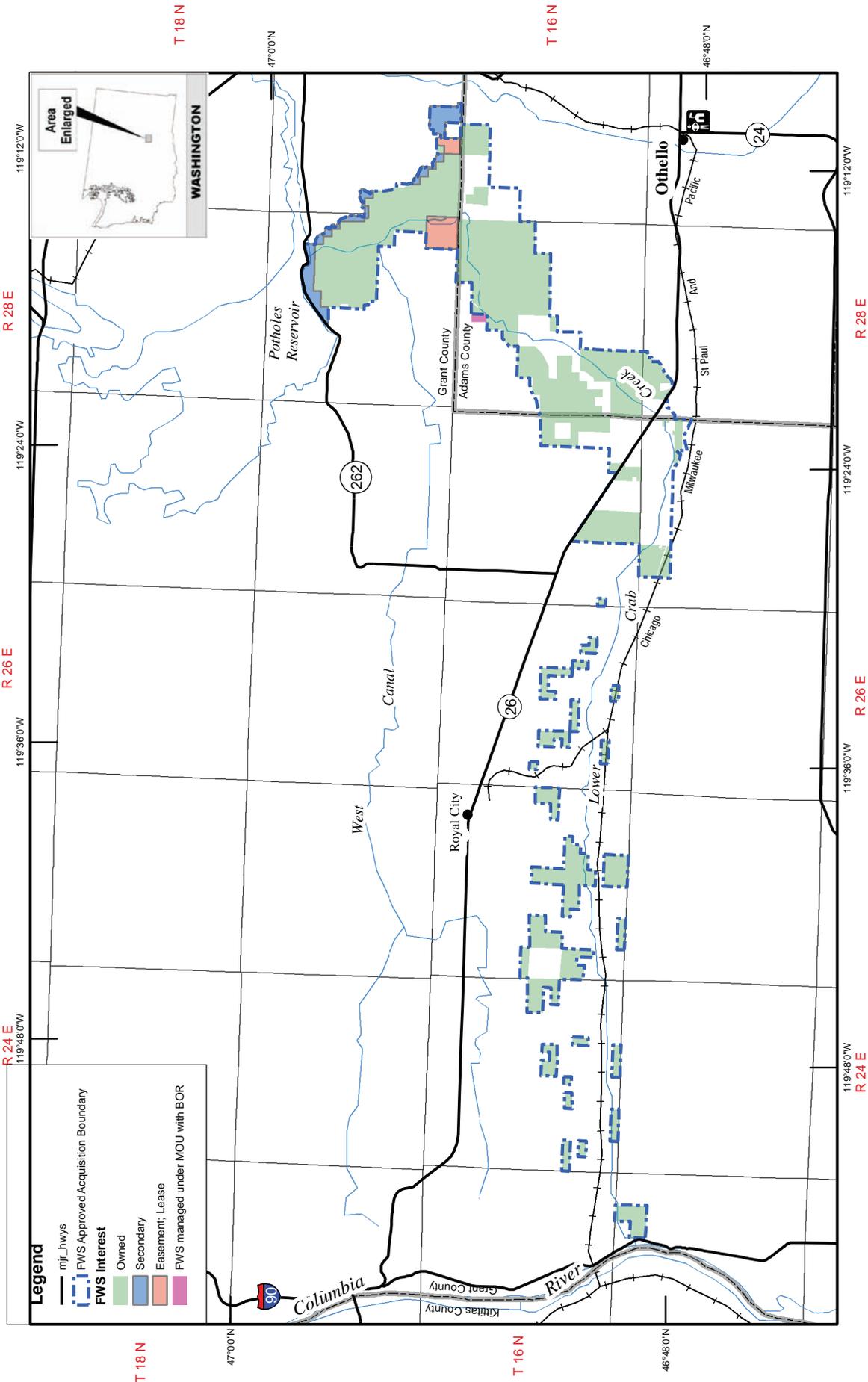


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Columbia National Wildlife Refuge

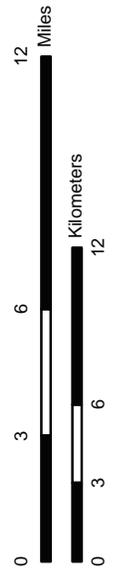
Adams and Grant Counties, Washington

Service Managed Lands with
Approved Acquisition Boundary



Legend

- mjl_hwys
- FWS Approved Acquisition Boundary
- FWS Interest
- Owned
- Secondary
- Easement; Lease
- FWS managed under MOU with BOR



PRODUCED IN THE DIVISION OF REALTY & REFUGE INFORMATION
 PORTLAND, OREGON
 LAND STATUS CURRENT TO: 06/01/2008
 MAP DATE: 05/06/2009
 BASEMAP: N/A
 MERIDIAN: WILLAMETTE
 FILE: 09-121-3.IMXD





A variety of CNWR users: Washington ground squirrel/USFWS; Northern leopard frog/Emple; Wildlife observation/USFWS

Your comments will help shape the future of CNWR. Please send your comments and requests to us by any of the following methods:

Mail: Dan Haas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 64 Maple Street, Burbank, WA 99323

Fax: (509) 546-8303

Web: www.fws.gov/columbia/contact.html

Email: mcriver@fws.gov

Please include "Columbia CCP Comments" in the subject line of all electric correspondence.



The refuge hosts a Wood's rose in bloom/Doug Waylett; hunting regulations explained/USFWS; sage sparrow/USFWS

Planning Schedule

Planning Step	Target Date
Planning Update 1 (issued)	May 2009
Public Meetings (completed)	June 2009
Planning Update 2 (issued)	February 2011
Planning Update 3 (issued)	July 2011
Draft CCP/EA Public Comment Period.....	July 29 to August 28, 2011
Planning Update 4.....	Fall 2011
Final CCP/EA.....	Fall 2011

Schedule dates are tentative and subject to change.

For refuge updates, visit us at

www.fws.gov/columbia/

To learn more about the planning process, go to the Region's planning page

www.fws.gov/pacific/planning/



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
64 Maple Street
Burbank, WA 99323

In This Issue:

Review and comment
on the Draft Columbia
National Wildlife
Refuge Comprehensive
Conservation Plan
and Environmental
Assessment.

**Comments are due by
August 28, 2011.**

Copies of the Draft CCP/EA are available as follows:

Review or download the Draft Plan from the following Internet site:

www.fws.gov/columbia/management.html or www.fws.gov/pacific/planning/

Copies on CD-ROM may be obtained by contacting:

Dan Haas
Columbia NWR
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
64 Maple Street
Burbank, WA 99323
(509) 546-8333
daniel_haas@fws.gov

**A printed copy of the Draft Plan is available at the
following libraries:**

Basin City Public Library
50-A North Canal Boulevard
Basin City, WA 99343
(www.midcolumbialibraries.org/branches/basin-city/)

Othello Public Library
101 East Main Street
Othello, WA 99344
(www.midcolumbialibraries.org/branches/othello/)

Your Refuge Leaner, Greener, and Reaching Out

To promote the availability of the Draft CCP/EA to a wider audience, and to reduce our use of natural resources, we are emphasizing electronic distribution of the document. Limited printed and CD-ROM copies are available. Please visit the libraries listed above or contact us if you need to obtain a CD or printed copy.