



Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex
715 Holgerson Road
Sequim, WA 98382

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We want to hear from you!

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

**U.S. mail: Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex
715 Holgerson Road, Sequim, WA 98382**

**Email: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov
(Please include "Protection Island and San Juan Islands NWRs" in the subject line.)**



**Comments are
due to us by
September 15, 2010.**

Phone: 360-457-8451

Fax: 360-457-9778

Tufted puffin / Karen Robinson



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Protection Island and San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuges

Planning Update 3, August 2010

Harbor seal and pup camouflaged against refuge land / USFWS

Draft CCP/WSP/EA is Available for Public Comment

Your comments are important

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Wilderness Stewardship Plan, and Environmental Assessment (CCP/WSP/EA) for the Protection Island and San Juan Islands National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges) is available for public review and comment between now and September 15, 2010. We value your comments and encourage you to share them with us. See page 4 for options for sending your comments to us.

In 2008, we requested and received your comments on the preliminary alternatives for the refuges. We considered those comments during the development and analysis of the Service's three alternatives for refuge management summarized on the following pages. Alternative

A is our "no action" alternative, which describes current refuge management. Alternative B is our preferred alternative. Management actions common to all alternatives, and actions for protecting refuge habitats and wildlife populations, are identified in the Draft CCP/WSP/EA. The refuges' priority public use programs – wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation – are

also evaluated in the Draft CCP/WSP/EA.

At the end of the comment period, the planning team will evaluate your comments and address them in the final CCP. The final CCP will be published and distributed, and will guide the management of Protection Island and San Juan Islands Refuges over the next 15 years. Actions will be implemented as funding becomes available.

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Overview of Draft CCP/EA Alternatives

Alternative A: Current Management

Under Alternative A, the refuges would continue with current management which focuses on stewardship, including removing unnecessary roads and human structures; allowing natural processes to occur with minimal human intervention; monitoring wildlife species; and working with partners to reduce the risk of oil spills, clean up marine debris, and educate boaters to minimize human-caused wildlife disturbance. Recreational activities would continue as they have in the past and be facilitated through a State Parks partnership.

Alternative B: Preferred Alternative

This Alternative would continue many of the activities in Alternative A, but would also include more active habitat management projects, such as removing deer from Protection Island to enhance seabird nesting habitat and forest habitat; restoration projects on the spits, grasslands, and forests to increase native plant diversity; and the facilitation of research studies that answer refuge management questions. Public use changes include enforcing no-pets regulations on all San Juan Islands Refuge lands, and closing some areas on Turn Island, including all of the rocky shoreline to the east and the southeast "pocket" beach as well as some of the Island's interior. Overnight camping on Turn and Matia Islands would be limited to visitors arriving by

human-powered craft only, and a camping reservation system would be initiated. There would be more emphasis on enhancing the public's understanding and appreciation of the refuges' natural, cultural, and wilderness resources through both on- and off-refuge interpretation and education programs. There would be fewer large signs but more medium sized signs installed on San Juan Islands Refuge units to discourage close approach or trespassing on closed islands. There would also be more emphasis on working with existing partners and developing new partnerships to accomplish objectives.

Alternative C

This Alternative is very similar to Alternative B. In Alternative C, there would be fewer acres of native habitat restoration, as well as fewer research studies and surveys compared to Alternative B; camping would continue with fewer campsites on Matia Island, and Turn Island would be limited to day-use only. Compared to Alternative B, fewer and mostly smaller signs would be used in Alternative C to identify closed refuge islands and reduce human-caused wildlife disturbance.



Black oystercatcher / USFWS



Rhinoceros auklet / Peter Hodum



Double-crested cormorants on Protection Island / Peter Hodum

Tentative Planning Schedule

<u>Planning Step</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
Planning Update 1 (issued)	September 2007
Planning Update 2 (issued)	August 2008
Public Meetings (completed)	September 2008
Planning Update 3 (issued)	August 2010
Draft CCP/WSP/EA Public Comment Period	August 15-September 15, 2010
Final CCP/WSP/EA	Fall 2010

Schedule dates are tentative and subject to change as the planning process progresses.

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

Copies of the DCCP/WSP/EA on CD-ROM may be obtained by contacting:

Kevin Ryan, Project Leader
Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex
715 Holgerson Road
Sequim, WA 98382
Phone (360) 457-8451.

Review or download the DCCP/WSP/EA from the following Internet site:

<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning>

A printed copy of the DCCP/EA is available at each of the following libraries:

- Anacortes Public Library
- Bellingham Public Library
- Clinton Public Library
- Coupeville Public Library
- Evergreen State College Library
- Island Public Library
- Jefferson County Central Library
- Lopez Island Public Library
- North Olympic Public Library
- Oak Harbor Public Library
- Orcas Island Public Library
- Peninsula College Library
- San Juan Islands Library
- Shaw Island Library
- University of Puget Sound Library
- University of Washington Library
- Waldron Island Library
- Washington State University Library

Your Refuge Leaner, Greener and Reaching Out

To promote the availability of the DCCP/EA to a wider audience, and to reduce our use of the natural resources used to produce paper and CD-ROM copies of our documents, we will be posting the DCCP/EA on one Website and providing each of the listed libraries a printed and CD-ROM copy. Limited printed and CD-ROM copies are available. Please contact us if you would like to obtain a copy.

Draft CCP/WSP/EA Alternatives Summary Table. Protection Island (PI) and San Juan Islands (SJ)

Key Management Topics	Alternative A (Current Management/No Action)	Alternative B (CCP Team Preferred)	Alternative C
HABITAT MANAGEMENT			
Multiple Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with partners to minimize human disturbance to wildlife and habitats. - WDNR tideland lease and bedland withdrawal around PI. - Participate in oil spill prevention and preparedness planning and activities near PI. - Opportunistic shoreline clean-up activities with volunteers and partners. - Survey and use integrated pest management strategies on invasive species, except no prescribed burning. 	<p>Same as Alt A., plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase efforts to work with partners to minimize human disturbance to wildlife and habitats. - Work with WDNR to renew and enhance the Service's ability to manage the tidelands and protect bedlands up to 200 yards waterward from the low water line around PI and SJ. - Participate in oil spill prevention and preparedness planning and activities in PI and SJ vicinity. - Regularly work with partners and volunteers to conduct yearly shoreline clean-up activities on all Refuge islands. Support off-Refuge efforts to remove derelict fishing gear from the marine environment surrounding the Refuges. - Include prescribed burning as a potential restoration and integrated pest management tool. - Work with WDFW to reduce deer impacts by removing deer from PI. - Monitor for and remove non-native rats, rabbits, and red fox. - Conduct a survey of mammalian predators, assess impacts, and develop a management plan if necessary. 	
Shoreline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Occasional mowing of spits on PI. - Periodic shoreline nourishment with gravel on PI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restore a total of approximately 41 acres of spit habitat on PI, Smith, and Minor Islands to native-species-dominated strand community and manage spits for more open vegetation. - Continue shoreline nourishment with gravel stockpiles on PI. - Remove marine debris and contaminated materials. - Conduct a survey of herbivores and predators of management concern, assess impacts, and develop a management plan if necessary. 	<p>Same as Alt. B, except:</p> <p>Only up to 15 acres of spit restoration.</p>
Sandy Bluffs	No specific habitat enhancement actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Control invasive plants and increase native plants. - At end of lease term, remove structures and improve habitat conditions in the expanding area of the auklet colony. - Enhance vegetation characteristics on up to 20 acres of bluffs on PI. 	
Savanna Grasslands and Herbaceous Balds	Removal of unnecessary roads and structures on PI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restore up to 200 acres of savanna grassland on PI and up to 20 acres on Smith and Turn Islands to increase native species composition to benefit a variety of wildlife. - Maintain herbaceous bald patches and where appropriate, associated rare plants on 28 islands within SJ. 	<p>Same as Alt. B, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage/restore up to 40 acres of savanna grassland on PI and up to 10 acres on Smith and Turn Islands. - Maintain herbaceous bald patches on 14-28 islands within SJ.
Forests and Woodlands	Removal of unnecessary roads on PI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restore connectivity, crown closure, regeneration, and associated understory of 80 acres of forest and woodland on PI. - Increase protection and maintenance of mature and old-growth forests and associated understory on 6 islands within SJ. 	
Wetlands	No specific habitat enhancement actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine if it is feasible to restore part of the historic wetlands on PI. - Conduct hydrologic study, and if needed, restore natural hydrology to Smith and Matia Islands wetlands. - Monitor and control invasive plants and animals. 	
RESEARCH AND MONITORING			
Research Program Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good collaboration between the Service and long-term PI researchers. - Old buildings used by researchers in 2 separate locations on PI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase collaboration between the Service and the larger research community. - Place more emphasis on studies that answer Refuge management questions and species information gaps. - Replace old buildings with a single bunkhouse relocated on PI to serve researchers and short-term volunteers. - Develop Refuge databases, GIS layers, and integrate data into regional databases. 	
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glaucous-winged gull behavior studies. - Studies on a variety of other topics. 	<p>Same as Alt. A, plus more emphasis on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct research to determine best habitat restoration methods. - Study erosion rates of bluffs and deposition on spits. - Research to evaluate wildlife response to habitat restoration. - Demography studies of seabirds and marine mammals. - Hydrology studies of wetlands. 	<p>Same as Alt. B, minus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demography study of marine mammals. - Study of bluffs erosion and deposition
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long-term monitoring of rhinoceros auklets, pigeon guillemots, glaucous-winged gulls, and marine mammals. - Summer wildlife surveys. 	<p>Same as Alt. A, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refuge and ecosystem-wide monitoring of nesting seabirds and black oystercatchers. - Bald eagle surveys. - Periodic surveys for rare butterflies and rare plants. - Winter wildlife surveys. - Breeding bird survey on PI. 	<p>Same as Alt. B, minus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winter wildlife survey. - Bald eagle survey. - Breeding bird survey on PI.
Scientific Assessments	- Some assessments conducted and species lists developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematically complete plant surveys on SJ. - Determine and map Refuge vegetation types to the association level. - Conduct assessment of reptiles and amphibians. - Conduct assessment of invasive wetland species as well as herbivores and predators of management concern. 	<p>Same as Alt. B, minus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reptile and amphibian assessment.
Cultural and Paleontological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural resource surveys of mostly project-specific locations. - No paleontological studies conducted. 	<p>Same as Alt. A, plus complete prioritized systematic cultural resource surveys of all Refuge lands and resurvey known sites approximately every 5 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic paleontological survey on PI. - Develop GIS layer for paleontological resources. 	
Effectiveness Monitoring	- Limited monitoring	- As strategies are implemented, monitor progress toward meeting CCP objectives under Goals 1-8	

Key Management Topics	Alternative A (Current Management/No Action)	Alternative B (CCP Team Preferred)	Alternative C
ON-REFUGE VISITOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES			
Protection Island	No public access.		
SJ Refuge entry areas and open and closed areas.	<p>Turn Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All beaches are Refuge entry and boat landing areas. - All island areas except steep slopes are open. 	<p>Turn Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West and southwest beaches are the only authorized entry and boat landing areas. - Southeast beach is closed to landing and public use. - Designated public use area and loop trail are open to visitors; the rest of the island is closed. 	
	<p>Matia Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rolfe Cove dock and beach are the only authorized entrances to the island. - Refuge access and camping prohibited at or from the 4 other pocket beaches. - 2-acre public use area adjacent to Rolfe Cove is open to day-use and camping. - Wilderness loop trail is open to visitors; the rest of the island (wilderness area and island perimeter) is closed. - All other Refuge islands and rocks are closed. 		
SJ Public Use Times and Other Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turn and Matia Islands open year-round, 24 hours per day. - Turn - Pets allowed on leash. - Matia - Pets allowed on leash within 2-acre picnic/campground area only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turn and Matia public use areas open to day-use. - Outside of day-use hours, only authorized campers arriving via human-powered boats are allowed on Turn and Matia Islands. - No pets allowed. 	Same as Alt. B, except Turn Island is only open to day-use; no camping allowed.
SJ - WA State Parks Seasonal Dock and Mooring Buoys	<p>Dock on Matia Island at Rolfe Cove from mid-April to mid/late-October.</p> <p>Turn – 3 buoys off N. beach – available year round.</p> <p>Matia – 2 buoys in Rolfe Cove - available year round.</p>		
SJ - Camping	<p>Camping allowed only in designated campsites: Turn Is - 13 campsites.</p> <p>Matia Is. - 6 campsites.</p> <p>Visitors arriving by motorized and nonmotorized boats are permitted to camp on the Refuge.</p>	<p>Camping allowed only in designated campsites:</p> <p>Turn Is. - 8 campsites.</p> <p>Matia Is. - 6 campsites.</p> <p>Only visitors arriving by human-powered boats are permitted to camp on the Refuge.</p> <p>New camping reservation system initiated.</p>	Same as Alt. B, except Turn Is - no camping. Matia Is. - 4 campsites.
SJ - Campfires	Liquid fuel or gel camp stoves allowed. Some unauthorized charcoal and wood campfires occurring.	Matia and Turn – Better enforcement of no fires. Liquid fuel or gel camp stoves allowed.	
SJ - Trails	<p>Turn - 0.9 mile loop trail around perimeter.</p> <p>Matia - 1.2 mile loop trail.</p>	Re-evaluate trail locations for impacts to cultural resources and small meadow. Reroute if necessary but continue to provide a loop trail on both Turn and Matia Islands.	
Wildlife Observation, Photography, and Interpretation	Unstructured opportunities. No interpretive signs. Infrequent interpretive walks conducted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design and install informational and interpretive signs at Turn and Matia Islands. - Interpretive trail at Turn Island. - Local experts and/or trained volunteers provide short “ranger” programs during some summer weekends. 	
Environmental Education - Scientific Studies	Some students given opportunities to do scientific studies on PI and SJ.	At least 3 college students/5 years given opportunities to do scientific studies on PI and SJ.	
Environmental Education - Stewardship Projects	<p>PI - 1 per year.</p> <p>SJ – less than 1 per year.</p>	<p>PI - 1+ projects per year</p> <p>SJ - 1+ projects per year</p>	
SJ - Commercial Outfitters	Allowed for camping and day-use on Turn and Matia Islands. Special use permit required		Allowed for camping and day-use on Matia Is. and day-use only on Turn Is. Special use permit required.
Visitor Services Facilities and Maintenance	WA State Parks provides public use facilities (toilets, picnic tables, campsite markers, etc.) and maintenance on Turn and Matia Islands.		Same as Alts. A and B, except: The Service/other partners would provide facilities and maintenance on Turn Is. after camping is phased out.
SJ - Law enforcement for public safety/resource protection on Turn and Matia.	WA State Parks enforces State Parks regulations on Turn Island and on 2 acres of Matia Island. The Service enforces regulations on all Refuge lands.	WA State Parks enforces State Parks regulations and new Service regulations on all of Turn and Matia Islands. The Service enforces regulations on all Refuge lands.	Same as Alt. B, except phase out WA State Parks law enforcement on Turn Is. as camping is phased out.
OFF-REFUGE VISITOR SERVICES			
Wildlife Observation and Photography	Some staff coordination with Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PI) and SoundWatch (SJ) to facilitate wildlife observation and minimize human-caused wildlife disturbance.	Same as Alt. A, plus additional Refuge staff time, volunteers, and partners facilitate and educate many individuals, organizations, and ecotourism businesses to enhance wildlife observation and appreciation of Refuge wildlife and minimize human-caused wildlife disturbance.	
Natural and Cultural Resource Interpretation	<p>PI - 1 panel at John Wayne Marina and no other interpretive activities.</p> <p>SJ - no interpretive panels or activities.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. A, plus:</p> <p>PI – 1 more panel (Port Townsend area) and 2 additional interpretive venues.</p> <p>SJ – Panels at 5 marina locations and 2 additional interpretive venues.</p>	Same as Alt. B, except: SJ – Panels at 5 marina locations only.
Environmental Education Materials	SJ - Refuge poster at marinas.	Same as Alt. A, plus educational materials prepared for use by local teachers. Provide information at local community events, tourist agencies, ferries, etc.	
Boater Education to Reduce Human-Caused Wildlife Disturbance	<p>PI - Direct boater education.</p> <p>SJ - Poster at marinas and some coordination with partners to provide boater education regarding human-caused disturbance to wildlife.</p>	<p>PI - Continue direct boater education.</p> <p>PI & SJ - Increase educational materials, working with partners, and direct contacts with boaters to improve education regarding human-caused disturbance to wildlife.</p>	
SAN JUAN ISLANDS WILDERNESS			
Many of the above actions apply to wilderness as well as non-wilderness lands. The following items are more specific to wilderness concerns.			
Refuge Signs to Reduce Human-Caused Wildlife Disturbance	Standard text and 11” x 14” size Refuge boundary/closure signs used on most islands. Very large (4’x 6’) “stay away 200 yds” signs on approximately 15 islands.	Improve text and increase size of boundary/closure signs to medium (15” x 20”) on most islands and a larger version (22” x 28”) on some islands. Use very large “stay away 200 yds” signs on up to 10 of the most sensitive islands.	Improve text of boundary/closure signs, but use standard 11” x 14” size only. Use very large “stay away 200 yds” signs on up to 10 of the most sensitive islands.
Sights and Sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use only tools authorized for wilderness areas to maintain a narrow and natural appearing trail on Matia Island. - Conduct garbage and marine debris cleanups. - Promote 2000-foot aircraft ceiling over wilderness islands. 		
Solitude and Numbers of Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boat landing limited to Rolfe Cove only, but not well enforced. - No number limits on commercial day-use groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance enforcement of limited landing and camping areas. - Limit the size of commercial day-use groups to not more than 20 people. 	
Wilderness Education	Limited wilderness education.	- Integrate wilderness themes and messages in new or updated Refuge information products, interpretive panels, volunteer training, and outreach programs whenever appropriate.	