



# Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge

*Planning Update 1, October 2011*

*Mt. Baker fills the sky behind the Dungeness Light Station/©Dow Lambert*

## Help Us Plan for the Future

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has launched a planning process to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (NWR or refuge). The CCP will guide the management of the refuge for the next 15 years. You can play a role in the planning process by helping us identify issues, concerns, and opportunities.

This Planning Update is the first in a series of updates that will keep you informed about the CCP's development. It includes information on the CCP process, the National Wildlife Refuge System, the purposes for which the refuge was established, and the

preliminary list of goals, issues, concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the CCP. A response form for comments is also included.

## About the CCP

When Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (Act) in 1997, it incorporated an underlying philosophy that "wildlife comes first" on refuges. The Act provided the Service with guidance for managing refuges to ensure the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. It also established six priority public uses on National Wildlife Refuges: wildlife observation, photography, hunting, fishing, interpretation, and environmental education. The Act also strengthened the process for determining the compatibility of refuge

uses to assure that priority uses and other activities do not conflict with refuge management purposes.

The Act requires all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) to be managed in accordance with a CCP. A CCP ensures that the management of each refuge reflects the purposes of that refuge and the mission, policies, and goals of the Refuge System. The Service views the planning process as an opportunity to strengthen current partnerships and forge new ones.

The CCP for Dungeness NWR will outline goals, objectives, and management strategies for achieving the purposes for which the refuge was established.

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## Introduction to Dungeness NWR

Dungeness NWR is located along the northern coast of the Olympic Peninsula in Clallam County, Washington, and consists of two units equaling 772 acres. The Dungeness Unit, consisting of 644 acres, is 15 miles east of Port Angeles, and the Dawley Unit, made up of 128 acres, is located south of Highway 101 near Blyn. Dungeness NWR is part of the Washington Maritime NWR Complex.



*Dungeness Light Station/Sue Mayo, USFWS*

At 5.5-miles (8.9 km), Dungeness Spit is the longest natural sand spit in the United States. At the end of the Spit is a small Coast Guard inholding where the New Dungeness Light Station is situated. Graveyard Spit, which is attached to Dungeness Spit, is designated as a Research Natural Area due to the quality of its native

plant community, which provides an excellent representation of coastal strand.

Habitat types found on the refuge include beach, bluffs, and coastal strand; eelgrass beds, mudflat, coastal lagoon, and salt marsh; natural and constructed freshwater wetlands; and mixed conifer forests. The refuge's eelgrass beds are

important over-wintering and staging areas for brant. Numerous other birds use the refuge during migration and winter, including dabbling and diving ducks, shorebirds, and bald eagles. The refuge also provides breeding habitat for black oystercatchers, pigeon guillemots, and forest birds. Harbor seals use the refuge to pup, haulout, and molt.



*Harbor seal/©Mike Baird*

### National Wildlife Refuge System Mission

*The mission of the National Wildlife 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.*

## Refuge Purposes

The National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act directs the Service to manage each refuge to fulfill the mission of the Refuge System; to maintain and, where appropriate restore the refuge's ecological integrity; and achieve the specific purposes for which the refuge was established.



*Black oystercatcher/©Kevin Cole*

Dungeness NWR was established by Executive Order 2123 on January 20, 1915 as a "...refuge, preserve and breeding ground for native birds." Additional lands were added to the refuge under the Refuge Recreation Act, Endangered Species Act, and Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, which added to refuge purposes. These include "...suitable for – (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered or threatened species..." 16 U.S.C. § 460k-1.

# Preliminary Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

The following broad categories of preliminary issues have been identified by the Service for consideration in the planning process:

**Forest habitats:** Should forest habitats of the Dawley Unit be actively managed for old growth characteristics, and if so, how?

**Eelgrass beds:** Is there a need to enhance eelgrass beds on the refuge? Is there anything the Service can do to mitigate anticipated impacts to eelgrass beds from climate change?

**Marine debris and derelict fishing gear:** What role can the Service play in reducing the presence of marine debris and derelict fishing gear from the refuge and adjacent areas?

**Oil spills and other contaminants:** What can the Service do to reduce the risk of oil and other contaminant spills? What can be done about contaminants on refuge lands?

**Invasive Species:** Which invasive species should be the highest priority for monitoring and control measures? What can the Service do to prevent the introduction and dispersal of invasive plants and animals?

**Climate change:** What, if anything, should the Service do about anticipated impacts of sea level rise? What aspects of climate change should be studied at the refuge, and how can this information be incorporated into wildlife and habitat management on the refuge?

**Research and Monitoring:** What research or monitoring studies would assist in answering refuge management questions? How can impacts to wildlife and habitats from research or monitoring activities be minimized? What research or studies, if any, should be encouraged for Graveyard Spit Research Natural Area?

**Human-caused wildlife disturbance:** How can the Service reduce the incidences of human-caused wildlife disturbance on and adjacent to the refuge and improve compliance with refuge regulations?

**Visitor orientation:** How can the Service help visitors understand they are on a national wildlife refuge and the importance of the National Wildlife Refuge System? How can visitors be helped to understand what activities are appropriate for the refuge and which areas are open or closed to visitation? How can the Service enhance opportunities for people with disabilities to experience refuge resources?

**Wildlife-dependent uses:** How should refuge visitors and the community be educated about the refuge and the natural and cultural resources of the Salish Sea? How can visitor opportunities to observe wildlife be enhanced? What can be done to help visitors understand and appreciate Dungeness Spit's unique geology which results in a culturally important and biologically rich site?

**Non-Wildlife dependent uses:** Are jogging and horseback riding appropriate and compatible with refuge purposes? How can the Service enhance the visitor's cultural appreciation for and experience of the New Dungeness Lighthouse?

**Community outreach:** How can the Service enhance community outreach efforts to advance Salish Sea conservation? How can the Service better utilize partnerships to achieve refuge and regional conservation and education goals?



*Refuge visitor at overlook/©Eponabri*



*View of Dungeness Spit/©Isaac Wedin*

## Our Vision for the Future

Vision statements describe the desired future conditions of our refuges. They reflect the purposes of each refuge as well as the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The goals, objectives, and strategies of the comprehensive conservation plan will act as our guide for achieving these desired future conditions.

### Preliminary Vision Statement for Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge

The forest, shoreline, and wetland habitats of Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge support a rich diversity of wildlife, from the regal peregrine falcon to the boisterous black oystercatcher to the unassuming rough-skinned newt.

Fed by a generous offering of ancient glacial sediment from nearby bluffs and anchored by gnarled logs of driftwood, the pristine barrier beach of Dungeness Spit curves seamlessly down from the lush layers of mature forest above into the sparkling waters of the Salish Sea. Offshore, sheltered beds of rippling eelgrass provide a wealth of nutrients to a teeming nursery of young salmon and crab.

Like the brant and dunlin that rely on this home, people flock to Dungeness seeking a welcome haven for the study of dynamic natural forces, distinctive geologic features, and compelling cultural stories. A strong corps of volunteers is trained in interpretation and

knowledge of local resources to enhance the visitors' understanding of the refuge. Visitors are inspired to experience the natural world as they meander through the primeval forests and emerge upon the stunning seascape vistas of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the New Dungeness Lighthouse.

In accord with our friends and partners, and with sound science as our foremost principle, we will continue to monitor and preserve the integrity of this wonder of the Olympic Peninsula ecosystem. We endeavor to understand more about the delicate balance of nature while fostering in our visitors an abiding sense of stewardship for this irreplaceable sanctuary.

## Preliminary Goals for Dungeness NWR

1. Protect, maintain, and enhance the structure of forested habitats characteristic of late-successional forests on the Olympic Peninsula for the benefit of forest-dependent species.
2. Protect and maintain the diversity of near shore habitats historically characteristic in the Salish Sea ecosystem for the benefit of native plants and marine-associated wildlife.
3. Enhance and/or protect freshwater wetlands for the benefit of wetland-dependent species.
4. Encourage and support collection of scientific information that assists in managing refuge resources and contributes to a greater understanding of the natural and cultural resources of the Salish Sea ecosystem.

5. Welcome visitors and let them know they are on a national wildlife refuge as well as where they can safely explore and learn more about the diversity of wildlife while being good wildlife stewards. As a result, visitors will have a memorable experience and leave the refuge with a greater connection between themselves and nature.
6. Provide visitors the opportunity to participate in safe, quality, wildlife-dependent recreation programs and compatible non-wildlife-dependent recreation activities while minimizing wildlife disturbance in the face of increasing refuge visitation.

Programs and activities, including interpretation, environmental education, wildlife observation and photography, and fishing will focus on enhancing public understanding and

appreciation of wildlife and cultural resources while building support for the refuge.

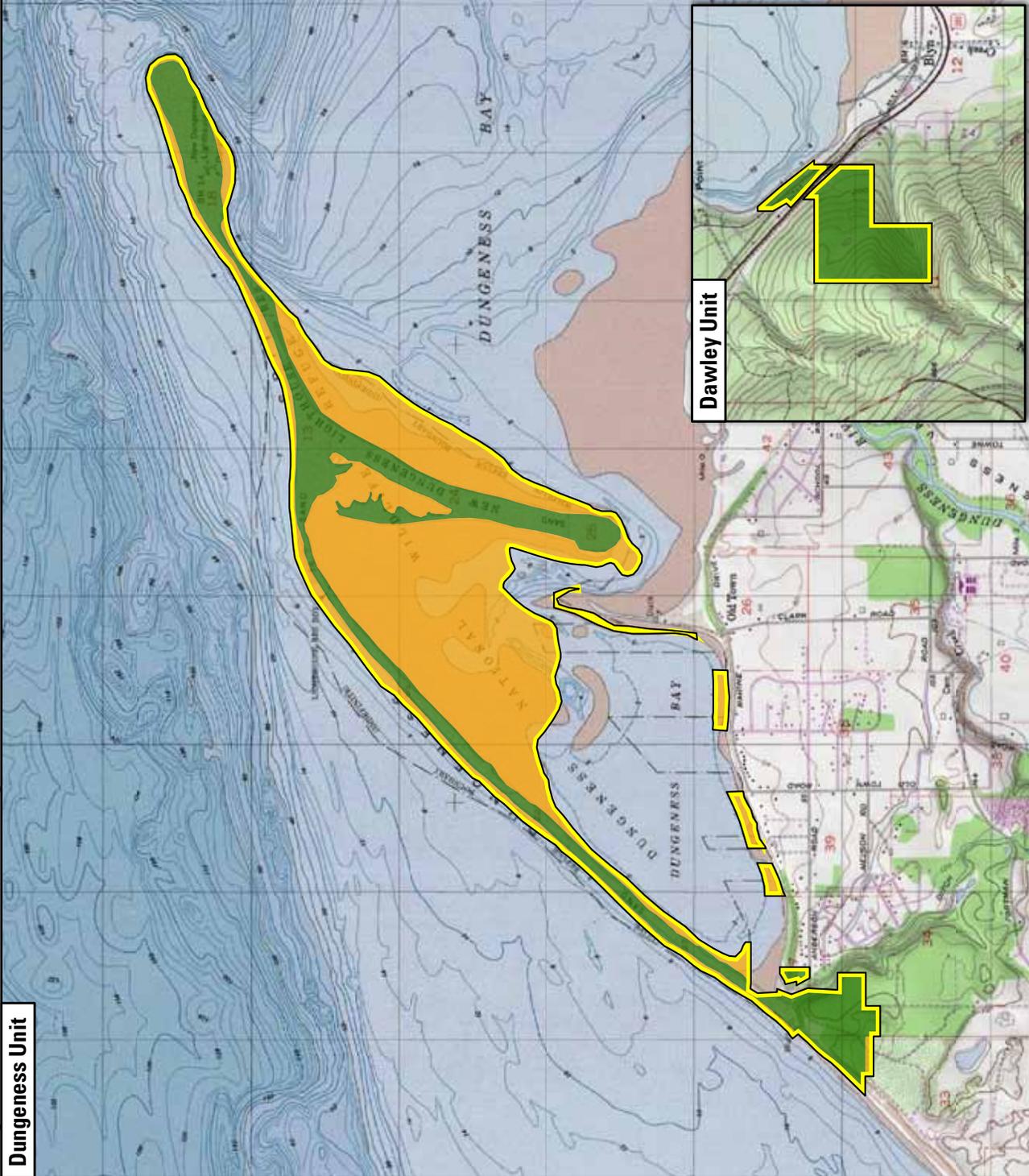
7. Through refuge outreach efforts, local residents will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of and appreciation for the refuge and the Refuge System.



*Bufflehead*/©Dow Lambert

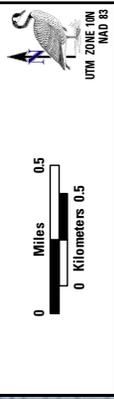
# Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge Land Status

Dungeness Unit



## Legend

- Refuge Land Status**
- Approved Refuge Boundary
  - Fee Title
  - Easement



Data Sources: Refuge Boundaries from USFWS/RT; Topographic Map from National Geographic/USGS



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex**  
**715 Holgerson Road**  
**Sequim, WA 98382**

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**For More Information**

**Address comments, questions, and requests for further information to:**

Kevin Ryan, Project Leader  
Washington Maritime  
National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
715 Holgerson Road  
Sequim, WA 98382  
phone: 360/457-8451  
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An electronic version of this planning update and other planning information are available online at <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning>

**Visit the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge Website:**  
<http://www.fws.gov/washingtonmaritime/dungeness/>



*Heermann's Gulls/©Dow Lambert*

# **We Are Interested in Your Views about Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge.**

The Service seeks your help in planning the future of Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge. We value your support as we continue to preserve and manage this unique wildlife area for the benefit of the American people. You can play a role in the development of this long-term plan by sharing your comments and concerns with us.

Please consider answering the following questions and returning this comment page by November 3, 2011, by one of the following methods.

**Mailing address:**

Kevin Ryan, Project Leader  
Washington Maritime National Wildlife  
Refuge Complex  
715 Holgerson Road  
Sequim, WA 98382.

**Fax number:**

360/457-9778

**Email address:**

FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov and  
include "Dungeness NWR CCP" in the  
subject line of the message.



*A curious Harbor seal/©Mike Baird*

**What do you see as the primary issues that need to be addressed in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan?**

**What are your thoughts on the visions and goals for Dungeness NWR?**

**Do you have additional Comments at this time?**

If you would like to receive future updates, please provide your contact information below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your time!**

*All comments received from individuals, including names and addresses, become part of the official public record and may be released. Requests for such comments will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations [40CFR1506.6(f)] and other U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of the Interior policies and procedures.*

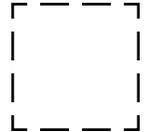
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will use this information to better serve the public. There is no requirement to provide a response or to use this form. Response is voluntary, and providing your name, organization, and address is optional.*



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Please fold on the dotted line, tape in two locations on long edge, affix stamp, and mail.

Return address:



Kevin Ryan, Project Leader  
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Sequim, WA 98382

