



## **602 FW 4** **Step-Down Management Planning**

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**4.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter provides guidance on step-down management planning.

**4.2 What is our policy for step-down management planning?** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or we) will prepare step-down management plans when required by policy or when they may be necessary to provide strategies and implementation schedules for meeting goals and objectives identified in Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs). Step-down management plans should include public involvement and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance documentation, as appropriate. Develop step-down management plans following the planning process guidance in [602 FW 1](#) and [602 FW 3](#).

**4.3 What is the applicability of step-down management planning and its relationship to Comprehensive Conservation Plans?**

**A.** Step-down management planning is the formulation of detailed plans for meeting goals and objectives identified in the CCP.

**B.** Step-down management plans describe the specific strategies and implementation schedules we are to follow, "stepping down" from general goals and objectives. The preparation of new step-down management plans or substantial changes to existing step-down management plans typically will require further compliance with NEPA and other policies, and an opportunity for public review. For public use plans or other step-down management plans dealing with proposed uses of the refuge, prepare and append compatibility determinations to the plans.

**C.** The CCP will identify which step-down management plans are necessary and provide a schedule for their completion. After completion of the CCP, modify existing step-down management plans as needed to accomplish stated objectives. See [602 FW 3](#). In the absence of an approved CCP, we will develop step-down management plans to describe goals, objectives, strategies, implementation schedules, and details necessary to implement a management program.

**D.** As an alternative to separate step-down management plans, we may address management programs in detail during preparation of the CCP. Determining which programs we can address in detail in the CCP depends on several factors, including the degree of public interest, the amount of available information, and the complexity of the issues.

**4.4 How do we combine step-down management plans?** Address management subjects individually or combined into a single, integrated step-down management plan. This decision

rests with the refuge manager. Base the decision on strategies defined in the CCP, the relationship between program areas, and the complexity of the programs under consideration. Some program areas, such as fire management and habitat management, logically suggest an integrated approach.

**4.5 What is the list of potential step-down management plans?** [Exhibit 1](#) is a list of potential refuge step-down management plans. Consider all of these plans during the CCP process. The CCP will document which plans we require for the planning unit.

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