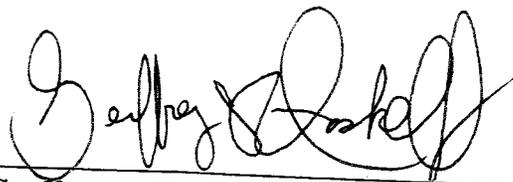


Final Strategic Plan
for the
National Wildlife Refuge System
FY 2006 –2010

December 2006

Approved



Geoffrey L. Haskett, Assistant Director
National Wildlife Refuge System

Date

2/16/2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and it is the world's premiere system of public lands and waters set aside expressly to conserve America's fish, wildlife, and plants. In its first 100 years, the Refuge System grew from the tiny 5-acre Pelican Island Refuge in Florida to a nationwide network of nearly 100 million acres that includes remote coral atolls, expansive wilderness, and wildlife oases near our largest cities. The Refuge System's 547 national wildlife refuges and 37 wetland management districts (WMDs) conserve an array of this nation's diverse ecosystems: tundra, deserts, forests, great rivers, vast marshes, swamps, mountains, prairies, estuaries, and coral reefs. Refuges are part of the American landscape, drawing nearly 40 million visitors a year and tens of thousands of community volunteers who provide integral assistance in managing the wildlife resources at their doorstep. More than 3,000 refuge employees, about 40,000 volunteers, hundreds of support groups, and many neighbors and local communities dedicate work to refuges.

Management of the Refuge System is a complex endeavor. This strategic plan describes priorities for the next 5 years and establishes measurable performance indicators to help focus our management. Our overall goal is to be a high performing organization effectively delivering valued conservation and recreational services to Americans. This increasingly means working beyond refuge boundaries to accomplish broader conservation goals like protecting key habitats, maintaining migratory bird populations, recovering endangered species, and delivering conservation education. Our approach to accomplishing this overall goal will rely heavily on maintaining key conservation partnerships, melding our work with State wildlife action plans, and taking innovative approaches to protecting land.

Many Refuge System goals listed in this plan also support the top six priorities Service Director Dale Hall shared with Service employees during the "Conversation with Director Dale Hall" on January 30, 2006. During that meeting, Director Hall shared the following six priorities for the Service: (1) Reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act, (2) Restoring the marshes in the Gulf Coast States, (3) Consistent policy development and implementation throughout Service organizations nation-wide, (4) the National Fish Habitat Initiative, (5) State Wildlife Action Plans, and (6) Reauthorization of the Conservation Reserve Program in the 2007 Farm Bill.

Three significant events preceded development of this plan: 1) passage of the Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, which provided new organic legislation for the System; 2) holding the "Fulfilling the Promise" conference in 1998 to establish a collective vision for the future; and 3) holding the Conservation in Action Summit in 2004 to develop a shared sense of priorities with our partners. Common themes from these events, combined with the broader strategic planning efforts of the Service and the greater conservation community, were drawn upon to develop 12 strategic goals for the Refuge System as presented in this plan.

The goals are outcome orientated and describe results which the Refuge System strives for. Eleven of the 12 goals apply directly to natural resources and recreation, while the twelfth strives

for organizational excellence. Each goal is further broken down into performance measures with targeted metrics for the 5-year period. Performance metrics are implemented through the new Refuge Annual Performance Planning (RAPP) process, which sets annual targets and monitors progress.

AGENCY AND REFUGE SYSTEM MISSIONS

The Service holds its official mission as:

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission is, working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

Tiering under that is the mission of the Refuge System:

“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.” (National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997; Public Law 105-57)

To accomplish these missions, the Refuge System must successfully engage in an amazingly diverse array of stewardship and management activities. The Refuge System concentrates on maintaining healthy lands and waters throughout the system for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats. The Refuge System actively manipulates over 3.5 million acres of land each year to improve their value to wildlife. In addition, an active fuels treatment program, dominated by the focused use of prescribed burning, is used to reduce wildfire danger and improve wildlife habitat on extensive areas. In FY 2004, for example, fuels treatment occurred on 435,000 acres of lands, second only to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the number of acres treated. The Service led the Department of the Interior in efficiency of operations in terms of cost per acre.

Conservation goals for natural resources are pursued by applying good science to the inventory, monitoring, study, and restoration or improvement of biological communities; restoring, enhancing, or annually managing habitats; correcting problems such as invasive species or wildlife disease outbreaks, and reducing or removing impacts of environmental contaminants; assuring adequate quantities of high quality water consistent with water laws; and managing and protecting heritage resources such as Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Marine Protected Areas, and numerous other natural heritage categories. Cultural and historic resources are preserved through their identification, protection, management, and, where appropriate, interpretation.

Recreation and education goals are achieved by providing public access to allow enjoyment of

wildlife dependent recreation and education consistent with conservation of fish, wildlife and plant resources; rendering quality experiences that include adequate availability of staff, signs, brochures, etc.; supplying safe and accessible facilities for the public to enjoy these resources; and managing recreation fees in a manner that provides the government with a fair return on investments and visitors with appropriate value for fees paid.

Serving communities goals are pursued through collaborative management of wildland fire prevention, response, and recovery; a refuge law enforcement program that protects visitors, natural and cultural resources, and government property; and facility maintenance and improvement to provide for the safe and reliable use of roads, bridges, buildings, water control structures, and other facilities. Collectively, the portfolio of constructed assets within the Refuge System is valued at about \$17 billion.

In addition to the above described management activities, the Refuge System continues to grow in size through a land acquisition program that secures existing or potential highest quality habitats for addition to the System. All activities are premised on strong partnerships with State and Federal agencies, local communities, universities, non-government conservation organizations, and other groups that want to help protect and conserve our nation's wildlife heritage and provide for its enjoyment by present and future generations.

FULFILLING THE PROMISE VISION

At a historic gathering in Keystone, Colorado, (Keystone Conference) in 1998, stakeholders and representatives from all national wildlife refuges in the nation assembled to discuss the future of the Refuge System. Results were subsequently published as “**Fulfilling the Promise - Visions for Wildlife, Habitat, People, and Leadership**”. Vision statements from that historic conference still play a prominent role in management of the System and are listed below:

- Wildlife Comes First:* *Refuges are places where wildlife comes first.*
- Anchors for Ecosystem Conservation:* *Refuges are anchors for biodiversity and ecosystem-level conservation and the System is a leader in wilderness preservation.*
- Healthy Wildlife Habitats:* *Lands and waters of the System are biologically healthy, and secure from outside threats.*
- Leaders and Centers of Excellence* *The System is a national and international leader in habitat management and a center for excellence where the best science and technology is used for wildlife conservation.*
- Strategic Growth:* *Strategically located lands and waters are added to the System until, in partnership with others, it represents America’s diverse ecosystems and sustains the nation’s fish, wildlife, and plant resources.*
- Models of Land Management:* *The System is a model and demonstration area for habitat management which fosters broad participation in natural resource stewardship.*
- A Legacy of Wildlife:* *A strong and vibrant System provides an enduring legacy of healthy fish, wildlife, and*

plant resources for people to enjoy today and for generations to come.

A Place Where Visitors Feel Welcome: Visitors find national wildlife refuges welcoming, safe, and accessible, with a variety of opportunities to enjoy and appreciate America's fish, wildlife, and plants.

Opportunities for Public Stewardship: Visitors and local communities recognize refuges as national treasures, actively participating in their stewardship and standing firm in their defense.

A System to Appreciate: Americans know that each wildlife refuge is a part of an enduring national system. They understand and support the System's tremendous contribution to wildlife conservation.

Best and Brightest: The Service identifies and mentors America's best and brightest to staff refuges and be future leaders within the System and the Service.

An Esprit de Corps: An Esprit de Corps and passion for refuges and the System are embraced by refuge employees and throughout the Service.

System Integrity: The Service provides a stable organizational structure and clear policy framework to promote integrity, adaptability, and creativity in managing the System.

The above vision statements were stepped down into 43 more specific recommendations and have been the focus of management improvement efforts over the last 7 years. They continue to provide a solid foundation for the future. Guiding principles for managing the Refuge System, also developed as part of "Fulfilling the Promise", continue as another key underpinning of refuge management actions and are listed in Appendix A.

CURRENT SETTING AND CHALLENGES

America's fish, wildlife, and plant resources are an enduring treasure valued by our citizenry. In 2001, over 34 million Americans went fishing, 13 million hunted, and 66 million (over a third of us) watched or photographed wildlife. It is estimated that these activities contributed about \$108 billion to the U.S. economy in 2001. About 40 million people visited the Refuge System in FY 2004. In addition to recreational enjoyment, fish and wildlife provide intrinsic value such as inspiring artists to draw, paint, or carve and authors to write in numerous venues.

A growing human population is increasingly straining natural resources. With the increased human population comes increased urbanization, agriculture, mining and industry. Natural resources are increasingly stressed, biodiversity is declining, and the number of threatened and endangered species continues to climb. Limited resources such as fresh water are increasingly the subject of contentious struggles where natural resources are in direct competition with a variety of municipal, commercial, and agricultural uses. Human population growth influences natural resource management efforts variably depending on location. Coastal areas and certain areas of the West are having much more rapid population growth and along with that population growth, a higher tendency for conflict with natural resource values.

Invasive species impacts are an increasing challenge. The silent invasion of harmful non-native plants, animals, and microbes, poses one of the most serious ecological battles of the 21st

century; costing the nation billions of dollars annually in lost resources and productivity and seriously impacting our biological heritage. Scientists and land managers need to find better ways to implement a coordinated approach, working closely with our non-Federal partners. This approach needs both a preventative effort to preclude invasive plants, animals, and microbes from becoming established and a corrective effort to control invasives where they already occur.

The American public has growing and rapidly evolving expectations for its public servants. Americans expect to be involved at every step of the decision process and they come from an increasingly diverse, variable, and constantly evolving set of social values. Information technology has provided a rapidly growing and complex body of available information on social values, legal constructs, and scientific information related to management of conservation lands. The technology explosion has also raised expectations that the latest information be quickly adapted and applied to the most recent management need. Finally, the American public increasingly expects natural resource management decisions to be more transparent than ever, despite the complexities of overlapping jurisdictions of Federal, State, and local agencies.

The cumulative effect of the above trends is that management of conservation lands is increasingly contentious and complex. Land managers are often overwhelmed as they attempt to deal with natural resources under stress, assimilate large quantities of relevant information, balance conflicting social values, coordinate with multiple agency jurisdictions, and document consideration of these factors into their decisions. These trends are particularly challenging for the Refuge System because field stations are widely dispersed and generally have small staffs. About 200 of the 545 refuges and 37 wetland management districts within the System do not have on-site staff. The diverse management challenges within the Refuge System are being tended to by small staffs with diverse demands placed upon them. If available staff is averaged across all lands, in Alaska each field employee manages all activities on about 250,000 acres of land and tends to the needs of about 3,000 visitors. In the rest of the country, each field employee manages all activities on about 7,000 acres of land and tends to the needs of about 15,000 visitors.

On the positive side of the human population growth trend, many individuals in nearby communities volunteer their time and talents to help accomplish refuge goals. Nearly 40,000 volunteers assist with natural resource and recreation program management and over 200 refuges have nonprofit Friends groups working on their behalf.

SHARED SENSE OF PRIORITIES

Americans know what they want from the Refuge System --- sound resource protection and management, along with quality wildlife-dependent recreation. The 1997 Refuge Improvement Act provided a long-awaited definition of the Refuge System mission and identified its “Big Six” priority public uses. The following year, we came together with partners at the Keystone Conference to define a long-term vision that would be based on this newfound authority. “Fulfilling the Promise”, the product from Keystone, provided a strategic vision that identified

42 recommended actions to meet our mission to both protect resources and advance public use. Action teams composed of subject matter experts have developed detailed reports on how to effect many of the recommendations (see the recently issued *Fulfilling the Promise Progress Report* at <http://refuges.fws.gov/habitats/promises.html>).

Administration initiatives in 2003 focused on improving performance through use of measurable performance goals resulted in a call to develop a 5-year strategic plan for the Refuge System. This strategic plan and its associated performance management components are being completed partly in response to the OMB Performance Assessment Rating Tool process. It also represents the Refuge System's step-down of priorities from the Department Strategic Plan (see Appendix B) and the Fish and Wildlife Service Operational Plan.

The focus of this plan is to set measurable baselines and targets to help guide budget and management decisions for the Refuge System. Before completing this strategic plan, Refuge System leadership worked with our partners to develop a shared sense of priorities by holding the May 2004 Conservation In Action Summit (Summit). In preparation for this Summit, which closed out the Refuge System Centennial Anniversary, 5 white papers identified suggested priorities for the future and workshop discussions were held with a broad cross-section of internal and external participants to garner their reaction and recommendations for adjustment. Many of the concepts were considered timely and found strong support amongst the broad group.

A synopsis of leading priorities identified through the Summit is provided in Appendix C. Shared priorities that emerged from the Summit had many commonalities with priorities identified in "Fulfilling the Promise" and played a major part in guiding development of this strategic plan.

LANDSCAPE LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Ensuring effective conservation of the Refuge System's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans is a complex and daunting task. Because of the mobility and migratory movements of most of these resources, the Refuge System must look beyond its boundaries and work with a variety of partners to achieve broader conservation goals beyond the boundaries of individual refuges. A landscape level view of resource concerns using a foundation of science-based management is a critical need. The recently completed State Wildlife Action Plans are a major step in this direction and will greatly improve the understanding of how State and Federal lands are interdependent. This sort of broad landscape level view is important to all activities but is especially important in actions such as the completion of Comprehensive Conservation Plans and in planning for land acquisition.

Landscape level biological planning will increasingly be applied as a tool to guide management decisions and to prioritize land acquisitions. We will work closely with States and other partners in determining whether a particular area is best suited for addition to the Refuge System or

whether it is better protected through acquisition and/or management by another conservation entity or retained in private ownership. This landscape level concept, commonly referred to as the habitat goals process, is described in the document “A Process for Integrating Wildlife Population, Biodiversity, and Habitat Goals and Objectives on the National Wildlife Refuge System: Coordinating with Partners at all Landscape Scales” (January 2004) produced by a Fulfilling the Promise Action Team.

PARTNERS AND STATES

Working with partners has been and continues to be a vital aspect of Refuge System programs. The complexity of our tasks, the fact that conservation benefits extend well beyond refuge boundaries, and the ever increasing stresses on natural resources make this an obvious time to renew, reinforce, and reinvigorate existing partnerships and to expand into new partnerships.

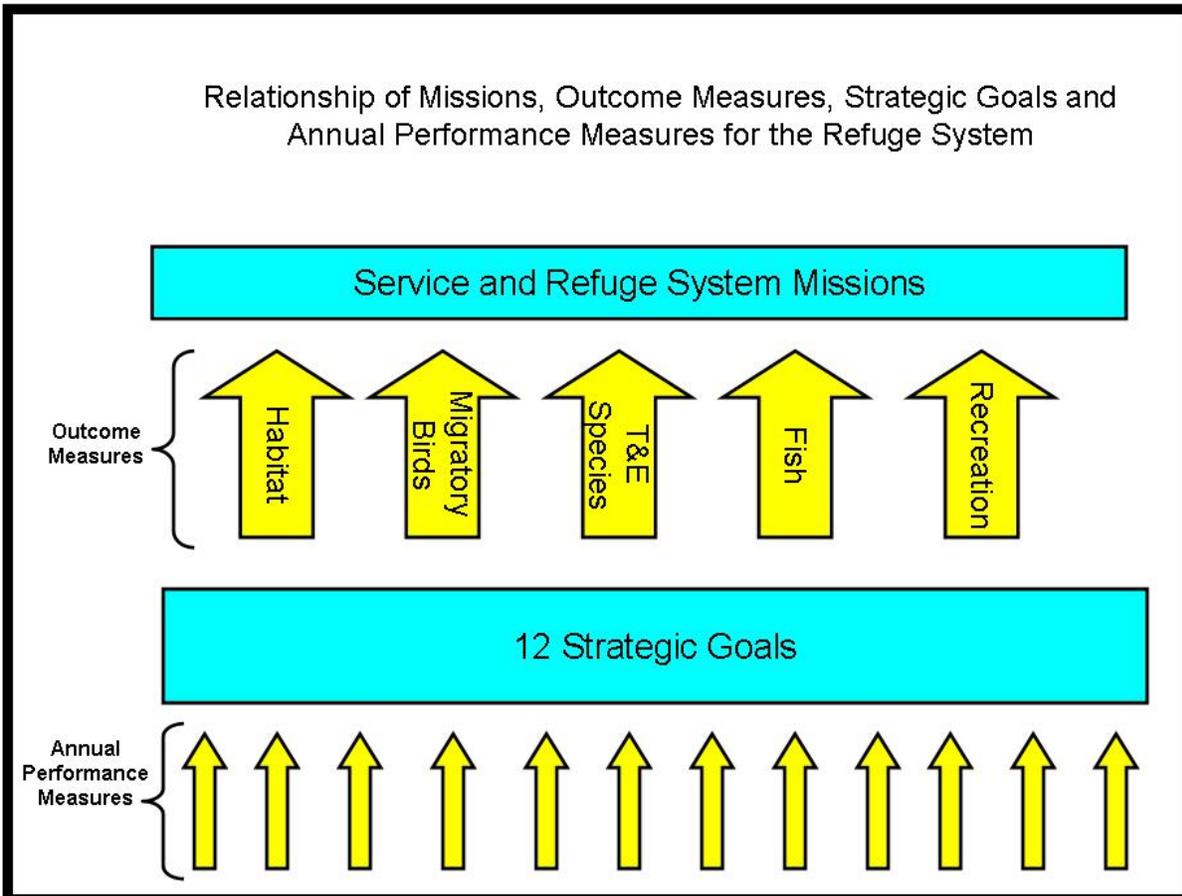
The Conservation in Action Summit reinforced the continuing need for the Refuge System to actively engage our partners. Management of the Refuge System has impacts at all levels – local, regional, national and international. We work in partnership with other Federal agencies, State natural resource agencies, local government entities, tribes, and non-government organizations in pursuing the mission of the System and in accomplishing mutually beneficial conservation objectives on a broader scale. We work sometimes as leaders and sometimes as followers in a collective effort to adequately care for the diverse array of our nation’s fish, wildlife, and plants. Volunteers and Friends groups routinely assist us with activities. Stewardship of land and species requires effective collaboration among a wide array of individuals and organizations and the Refuge System welcomes and actively participates in collaborative approaches.

The Service also acknowledges the statutory requirements to work with State fish and wildlife agencies in the management of fish and wildlife resources on refuges. Consistent with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act and 43 CFR 24, and as outlined in Director’s Order 148, we will coordinate, cooperate, and consult with the State fish and wildlife agencies in a timely and effective manner on the acquisition and management of national wildlife refuges. Refuge System regulations and management plans are, to the extent practicable, consistent with State laws, regulations, and management plans. We will provide State fish and wildlife agencies timely and meaningful opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of refuge programs, thereby insuring such programs have the broadest support possible.

To achieve our conservation goals, we will cultivate enduring partnerships with States and a wide variety of organizations and individuals. Truly, this is the only means by which we can achieve our mission for the benefit of both present and future generations of Americans. We will actively coordinate and communicate among all stakeholders to protect, restore, and manage the natural resources we all treasure.

CONNECTING MISSIONS, OUTCOMES, GOALS, AND MEASURES

A strategic plan should illustrate connections up and down the continuum between an organization's high-level mission and its lower-level annual work cycles. This strategic plan does that by holding the Service's mission and the Refuge System's mission as the highest ambitions, and tiering those down to outcome measures, strategic goals, and annual measures. The missions of the Service and the Refuge System are explained on page 2, and the diagram below shows their relationship to the outcome measures, strategic goals, and annual measures.



Outcome Measures – Falling just under the Service's and Refuge System's missions, the outcome measures represent high level impacts the Refuge System can contribute to, but not accomplish on its own. The five outcome measures in this plan were selected to align with core areas of the Service and Refuge System missions, and several of them are shared measures also utilized by other Service programs. Outcome measures function as high-level, measurable ambitions that, if the Service and Refuge System are being effective, should move slowly toward the positive. Outcome measures are expected to change little, if at all, in the course of a year,

but in a 2-5 year timeframe they should demonstrate improvement. If they do not, then the Refuge System and the Service will be compelled to ask “Why not?” and then consider revising its approaches to conservation. These outcome measures also demonstrate how the efforts of the Refuge System knit together with the work of other Service programs. For example, the Refuge System alone could recover few endangered species; however, the Refuge System can contribute substantially to recovering many species by working with other Service programs such as Endangered Species, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, etc. The outcome measures and their metrics are listed in the first part of Appendix D – Performance Metrics.

Strategic Goals

Strategic goals are not meant to be measurable; rather they represent broad strategies the Refuge System uses to accomplish major segments of its mission. They help bridge the relationship between the Service/Refuge System missions and annual performance measures so that if we strive towards the strategic goals, we should be moving the outcome measures towards the positive. The strategic goals also align with many programs and functions already established within the Refuge System. For example, Strategic Goal 7, protect resources and visitors through law enforcement, aligns directly with the Refuge Law Enforcement program. Similarly, Goals 4 and 5, regarding welcoming and orienting visitors and providing quality recreation and education, align clearly with our Visitor Services program. Some of the strategic goals are broad, like Goal 1 regarding the conservation of fish and wildlife resources, or Goal 6 related to partnerships; however, that broadness is a necessary reflection of the broad nature of the Refuge System's work. For example, the mechanisms for conserving millions of acres of marine habitat in the south Pacific will vary substantially from those used to protect prairie pothole habitat in the mid-western States, but the different mechanisms still accomplish the common goal of conserving acres of habitat.

Because the strategic goals align closely with the programs and functions within the Refuge System, they are an appropriate way to organize our annual performance measures. Thus within each strategic goal reside many annual performance measures. By measuring and evaluating our work with these annual performance measures, we can better assess the relative importance of our various types of annual work and decide which types are most important for affecting the strategic goal and improving the outcome measures.

Annual Performance Measures

These are the indicators, statistics and metrics, typically measured annually, that help us gauge performance at the most fundamental level. All of them are listed in Appendix D. In contrast to the outcome measures, annual performance measures should show change in the course of one year. If we make progress in moving these annual measures toward the positive, then we will in essence be affecting the Strategic Goals, slowly improving the Long-term Outcome Measures, and ultimately accomplishing the mission of the Refuge System and Service. Because these measures are assessed annually, they provide a framework to aid refuge staffs and refuge supervisors in prioritizing work for an upcoming year. Through the use of RAPP, nearly all of these measures are answered annually by every unit within the Refuge System, thus they provide

the most genuine data possible.

OUTCOME MEASURES

1. **Habitat** - Percent of acres of Refuge System lands and waters with habitat in good condition.
2. **Migratory Birds** - Percent of migratory bird species achieving healthy and sustainable levels.
3. **Threatened and Endangered Species** - Percent of threatened or endangered species listed a decade or more that are stabilized or improved.
4. **Fish** - Percent of depleted native and inter-jurisdictional fish species achieving healthy and self-sustaining levels.
5. **Recreation** - Percent of adult Americans participating in wildlife-associated recreation.

Outcome Measure 1. Habitat - Percent of acres of Refuge System lands and waters with habitat in good condition.

The Refuge System's mission states the intent "...to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation ...of fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats..." thus making clear that the habitat features of the lands and waters within the Refuge System are one of the primary trusts it holds for the American public. The maintenance and improvement of those habitat conditions is an outcome in itself that is measurable and serves all parts of the Service and Refuge System missions. This measure is tracked as all Class 1 (1a and 1b) acres in the Refuge Annual Performance Planning database.

Outcome Measure 2. Migratory Birds - Percent of migratory bird species achieving healthy and sustainable levels.

Conservation of migratory birds prompted creation of the Refuge System and has been one of the primary forces in its growth. Although many programs, within and outside the Service, contribute to conserving migratory birds, the collective outcome desired by all is that migratory bird species are healthy and sustainable. The Refuge System will always provide an important contribution to that outcome. This measure is tracked by various programs within the Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management.

Outcome Measure 3. Threatened and Endangered Species - Percent of threatened or endangered species listed a decade or more that are stabilized or improved.

Second only to migratory birds, the conservation of threatened and endangered species has prompted establishment of 59 units of the Refuge System. Although the Refuge System does not administer the Endangered Species Act, it plays a vital role in accomplishing the intent of the Act by stabilizing and improving populations of many threatened and endangered species. In that manner the Refuge System contributes to the recovery of these species. This measure is tracked in the Recovery Data Module of the Service's Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS).

Outcome Measure 4. Fish - Percent of depleted native and inter-jurisdictional fish species achieving healthy and self-sustaining levels.

Just as the lands and waters of the Refuge System contribute to the conservation of migratory birds and threatened and endangered species, they contribute equally to the conservation of America's fisheries. While some fish species are resident, many are as transient as migratory birds, and their effective conservation demands collaboration across Service programs and with partners. Restoring depleted fish species to healthy, self-sustaining levels is an important outcome to which the Refuge System can contribute. This measure is tracked in the Populations Module of the Fisheries Information System.

Outcome Measure 5. Recreation - Percent of adult Americans participating in wildlife-associated recreation.

The Refuge Improvement Act makes clear that compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a purpose of the Refuge System. The Act recognizes that engaging people in such recreation is the best way to develop and sustain a constituency to support wildlife conservation. Although refuges themselves provide many recreational opportunities, the wildlife conserved on refuges is also enjoyed by recreationists elsewhere. In a similar relationship, if refuges contribute towards the outcome of increasing the overall percentage of Americans participating in wildlife associated recreation, it is contributing towards building a constituency that will steward wildlife wherever it might be. This measure is tracked in the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation coordinated by the Service's Division of Federal Assistance.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Conserve, Manage, and Where Appropriate, Restore Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Resources and Their Habitats to Fulfill Refuge Purposes, Trust Resource Responsibilities, and Biological Diversity/Integrity.

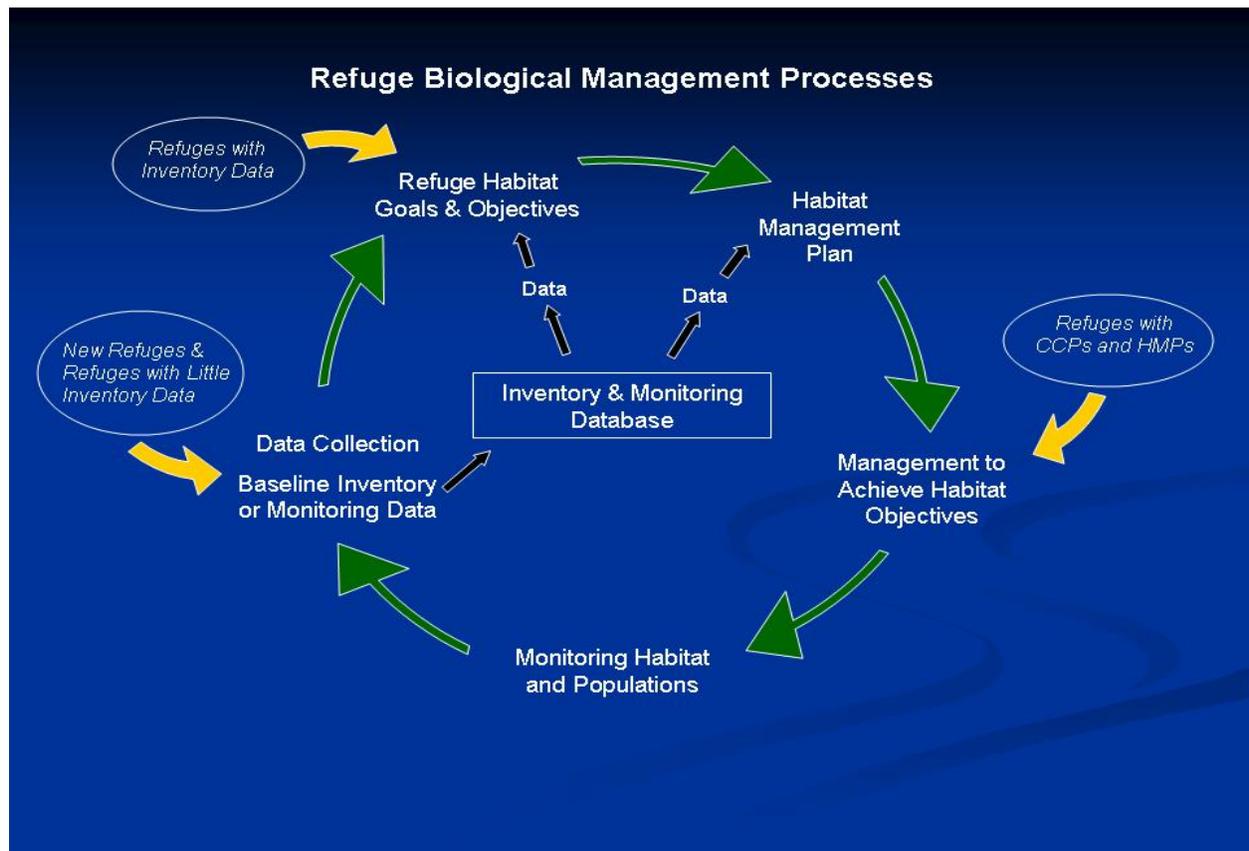
2. Provide Quality Environments with Adequate Water.
3. Ensure that Unique Values of Wilderness, other Special Designation Areas, and Cultural Resources are Protected.
4. Welcome and Orient Visitors.
5. Provide Quality Wildlife-Dependent Recreation and Education Opportunities.
6. Facilitate Partnerships and Cooperative Projects to Engage Other Conservation Agencies, Volunteers, Friends, and Partners in the Refuge System Mission.
7. Protect Resources and Visitors through Law Enforcement.
8. Provide Infrastructure and Equipment Adequate to Support Mission and Maintained in Good Condition.
9. Complete Quality and Useful Comprehensive Conservation Plans on Schedule and with Full Engagement of Partners.
10. Strategically Grow the Refuge System.
11. Reduce Wildfire Risks and Improve Habitats.
12. Promote and Enhance Organizational Excellence.

Strategic Goal 1. Conserve, Manage, and Where Appropriate, Restore Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Resources and Their Habitats to Fulfill Refuge Purposes, Trust Resource Responsibilities, and Biological Diversity/Integrity.

Means and Strategies: Successful implementation of this goal will result in habitats being maintained so that they effectively contribute to the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge System. Habitat management in conjunction with population management will provide healthy populations of fish, wildlife, and plants throughout the Refuge System and will enable the Refuge System to be an effective partner in achieving broader conservation goals beyond the boundaries of refuges themselves. This is the central focus of the Refuge System as provided in the “wildlife first” mission of the Refuge System Improvement Act. The Refuge System plays an especially significant role in the recovery of Federally-listed threatened and endangered species. About 20% of the over 1,200 Federally-listed threatened and endangered species in the U.S. occur on units of the Refuge System. Fifty-nine refuges have been established with a primary purpose of conserving threatened or endangered species. Threatened and endangered species, or those known to be imperiled, are given increased management attention on refuges and more labor intensive actions such as reintroduction

programs or control of limiting factors like disease or habitat deterioration occurs where endangered species are involved. Imperiled species are also given increased attention so that corrective actions can be taken before they become endangered.

Natural resource management responsibilities of the Refuge System are varied and complex. A wide range of planning, inventory, monitoring, and analysis actions are necessary to determine the status and condition of natural resources and to effectively guide their stewardship. A systematic, science-based approach is to be applied to meet this need: 1) establish a process for setting conservation priorities for both species and habitats that allows quantification of national, regional, and local objectives; 2) establish standardized protocols for a systematic nationwide approach to conducting inventory and monitoring of species and their habitats; 3) use state-of-the-art technology such as Geographic Information Systems and other information technology applications to analyze and apply all information; and 4) dedicate appropriate multi-disciplinary staffing to enable effective utilization of the overall strategy. This is an essential first step to carry out the Refuge Improvement Act direction to preserve the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge System and, where possible, adjacent non-refuge lands. Implementing these strategies offers opportunities to collaborate with numerous conservation partners including State fish and wildlife agencies, Federal land managers, private landowners and many others.



Refuge biological management processes for individual refuges are displayed in the diagram on

page 15. It identifies relationships among goals, planning, and monitoring and displays the fact that different refuges may initiate the process at different stages, depending upon information available at a given time. The circular structure of the diagram identifies that this is an iterative process that improves over time.

Natural resource management on refuges most frequently occurs through habitat management that falls into three broad categories: habitat restoration, habitat management, and invasive species management.

Habitat restoration includes: 1) restoration of hydrology and functions of wetlands; 2) restoration of upland habitats by revegetation (generally either reforestation or reestablishment of grassland or shrub habitats); 3) rebuilding of riffles, pools, and similar structural components within stream channels or other water bodies; 4) restoration of riparian zones by stabilizing streambanks and reestablishing vegetation immediately adjacent to stream channels; and 5) restoring degraded marine or estuarine habitats. Wetland restoration within this work process also provides for the installation or expansion of water management facilities such as dikes, levees, pumps, spillways, water level control structures, and associated facilities needed to initiate water level control within impoundments.

Habitat management includes a broad array of habitat manipulation methods that occur either every year or on a repeating basis. For purposes of this strategic plan, it excludes fire management activities related to rehabilitation and hazardous fuels reduction that are treated under Strategic Goal 11. Active habitat management occurs on over 3.5 million acres of refuge habitats every year and includes: managing extensive wetland impoundments and other bodies of water by adjusting water levels; managing vegetative habitats through prescribed burning, farming, mowing or haying, grazing; forest treatment by harvest or selective thinning; mechanical treatments such as disking, plowing, or root raking; and application of herbicides to control pest plants.

Invasive species management includes all actions to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plants or animals, and to control or remove them where they are already established. Use of integrated pest management techniques is applied wherever feasible but mechanical removal or herbicide application is often necessary where extensive infestations of invasive plants occur. Early detection and treatment of newly emerging problems is sought wherever possible to prevent problems from growing to the point of requiring more difficult and costly treatment regimes. Regular assessment of habitats is needed to detect invasions, and rapid deployment capabilities are vital. Invasive species can be very persistent; therefore, adequate control frequently requires repeated treatment over extended periods. Cooperative work with other entities is necessary to have the greatest opportunity to successfully control invasives. Public education and outreach efforts are important techniques to bolster cooperative detection, prevention, and control.

Due to the need to collaborate with an array of partners and the need to keep all apprised of sometimes contentious management decisions, it is essential that resource management efforts

include a focused communications program to keep key internal and external audiences advised as activities proceed.

The Conservation in Action Summit identified many priorities associated with this goal; among them were improving invasive species control, implementing a comprehensive inventory and monitoring program for the entire Refuge System starting with a focused monitoring program for migratory birds, and improving the application of science to refuge management needs.

Performance Measurement: Performance is gauged by the condition of habitat acres and by the response of fish, wildlife, and plant populations to management actions. Developing the standard protocols, the capability to carry out inventory and monitoring programs, and then to complete associated data analysis to guide management adjustments is an essential first step in making progress toward this goal. Reporting on the health of Refuge System lands requires an understanding of land condition as it relates to fulfillment of the Refuge System mission. Also, with respect to invasive species management, the majority of the outcomes of invasive species work are manifested in impacts to vegetative habitats; however, invasive animals in some cases directly impact fish, wildlife, and plant populations without affecting vegetation. For purposes of this strategic plan, reporting for invasive plant control will be quantified in acres of habitat and for invasive animal control will be quantified as populations controlled.

Strategic Goal 2. Provide Quality Environments with Adequate Water.

Means and Strategies: Environmental quality within the Refuge System is maintained or improved by preventing and managing air and water quality impacts and identifying and remediating sites where contaminants affect the quality of habitats. Adequate quantities of water are protected and/or restored on all refuges sufficient to achieve the Refuge System mission.

National wildlife refuges are often viewed as both cornerstones and barometers of the environmental health of ecosystems. To maintain, enhance, or restore these systems, and thereby provide for the fish, wildlife, and plants they support, we must start with the basics: clean air, clean water, and environments free of contaminants at concentrations that affect environmental health. Due to the nature of environmental quality problems, pursuit of this goal requires extensive coordination and cooperation.

The Refuge System is responsible for protecting the air quality and air quality related values of Wilderness areas from manmade air pollution. These values include vegetation, wildlife, soils, water quality, visibility, odor, and cultural and archeological resources. We monitor air quality at our 21 Class 1 Wilderness areas but have only very limited air quality monitoring or information available outside those 21 areas.

Water quality monitoring is not normally completed by refuge staff, and we generally rely on other entities to monitor water quality. Corrective actions on water quality issues generally occur in cooperation with other entities working collaboratively on a broad scale. Refuge management options to alleviate water quality programs are often limited. Investigation and

cleanup of contaminant problems are site-specific and management responses are usually more geographically focused (usually within watersheds) than are other environmental quality efforts. Complex issues of cost, jurisdictional authority and responsibility, risk analysis, and effectiveness of corrective actions often come with these actions.

Adequate supplies of surface and subsurface water are crucial to nourish fish, wildlife, and plant populations. The Service is an advocate for fish, wildlife, and plants in the adjudication and allocation of water rights and in the protection of hydrological systems. Healthy habitats depend not just on the quantity of water but also on the quality, timing, and duration of flows and other factors. Adequate water quantity is a concern not restricted to arid western States but is increasingly a concern throughout the country. Water needs are part of ongoing management needs but are an especially vital element to be assessed during planning activities such as with acquisition of new lands or when Comprehensive Conservation Plans are prepared. We will continue to work with States on all matters related to water use and water rights, and will seek to resolve conflicts through negotiation to the maximum extent possible in coordination with the Office of the Solicitor.

The Conservation in Action Summit identified attention to water quantity needs as a priority need associated with this goal.

Performance Measurement: Data on environmental quality measures are presently quite fragmented. With adoption of this strategic plan, we will begin collecting data on these performance elements in a more systematic way. Performance measures for adequate water will focus on identification, quantification, and adjudication of water rights throughout the Refuge System.

Strategic Goal 3. Ensure that Unique Values of Wilderness, other Special Designation Areas, and Cultural Resources are Protected.

Means and Strategies: Unique features of natural heritage designation sites are maintained consistent with goals in their establishment laws or documents. Cultural, archaeological and paleontological resources are maintained in good condition and their unique values are preserved for study, use and enjoyment by present and future generations.

In addition to being afforded protective status under the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, a number of areas within the Refuge System have been designated for unique natural resource values through legislation, executive orders, or policy. These areas are protected and managed with special attention given to the unique values and goals in their establishment documents. Special management areas incorporated in this strategic plan include Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Marine Managed Areas. Evaluation of potential designation of new special management sites is also included here.

There are a number of special designation categories within the Refuge System in addition to the three mentioned in the preceding paragraph. They include RAMSAR wetlands of international

importance, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserves, UNESCO biosphere reserves, cave resources protected under the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act, Research Natural Areas, Natural Landmarks, and others. These areas are important to the management of particular refuges but are not planned for incorporation into the Refuge System strategic plan performance measures at this time.

Cultural resources, including archaeological sites, historic structures, traditional religious sites, and museum property items, are evaluated and protected to further mandates of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, and other applicable historic preservation statutes. All known cultural resources (listed or eligible historic properties, archeological resources, sacred sites, etc.) and paleontological resources are protected, maintained and used in accordance with applicable legal requirements, Service policies, and DOI Standards. All undertakings that could affect cultural resources are reviewed in advance by Regional Historic Preservation Officers.

Actions to improve stewardship of Wilderness areas emerged as a priority at the Conservation in Action Summit.

Performance Measurement: Special designation areas will be monitored to determine whether they meet unique criteria in their authorizing legislation or documents. Cultural resources will be monitored to assure that they are adequately inventoried, protected from harm, and maintained in good condition. Condition of historic structures is measured under Strategic Goal 8.

Strategic Goal 4. Welcome and Orient Visitors

Means and Strategies: Refuge field stations have consistent messages and appearance so they are readily recognized by the public as a unit of the Refuge System. This gives visitors a clearer understanding of the Refuge System mission, the types of uses appropriate to these lands, and their ability to volunteer to assist with activities.

This goal will be pursued through use of consistent messaging and appearance. For messaging, we will use common information themes at all levels that describe how the work of individual refuges fits within the overall framework of the entire Refuge System and accomplishment of the mission nation-wide. For appearance, System-wide standards have been established for readily observed physical elements of signs, boundaries, publications, and Web-sites. Standards are to be unique to the Refuge System and consistently applied so that a brand identity is reinforced and the public can easily distinguish between the Refuge System and other land management entities.

The goal of improving capabilities to welcome and orient visitors was identified by the Conservation in Action Summit as a high priority need.

Performance Measurement: Compliance with all standards is expected in order to provide multiple methods for the public to recognize refuge system field units.

Strategic Goal 5. Provide Quality Wildlife-Dependent Recreation and Education Opportunities.

Means and Strategies: Public enjoyment of the Refuge System, consistent with its wildlife first mission, is provided wherever appropriate through adequate programs supporting the six priority uses of the Refuge System.

This strategy supports hosting an array of recreation and education opportunities that allow visitors to enjoy and appreciate America's fish, wildlife, and plants as called for in the Refuge System Improvement Act. Wildlife-dependent recreation (wildlife observation, hunting, fishing, nature photography, environmental education, and interpretation) is provided to the extent compatible with Refuge System and individual refuge purposes. When managed in accordance with principles of sound fish and wildlife management; fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and environmental education in national wildlife refuges have been and continue to be generally compatible uses. Non-wildlife dependent outdoor recreation (e.g., swimming, sunbathing, recreational boating, picnicking, camping) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Also, not all refuges are suited to wildlife-dependent recreation or a particular type of wildlife-dependent recreation. All activities must be compatible with the mission of the Refuge System and the purposes of the individual refuge before they can be allowed. For example, a small refuge with fragile habitats for an endangered species may not lend itself to public use of any kind.

Hunting and fishing on refuges is a long standing traditional recreational use that will continue wherever feasible. Programs will be managed in such a way as to provide reasonable access and avoid problems such as overcrowding or other conflicts among users. Development and implementation of hunting and fishing programs is an area where especially close coordination is maintained with State fish and wildlife agencies. Hunting and fishing programs will be managed consistent with State laws and regulations to the extent practicable and compatible. We work closely with States in planning these activities so that our efforts complement one another.

The Refuge System seeks to provide visitors with direct contact with the natural world wherever feasible and consistent with wildlife management goals. In providing for public use, limited impact facilities such as trails, boardwalks, observation platforms, and self-guided auto tour routes are delivery mechanisms that are preferred over the construction of large-scale visitor centers. Visitor centers are an appropriate mechanism for interpretational and educational activities; however, we seek to keep them modest in size and heavily supplemented by less facility-dependent trails, boardwalks, and interpretive kiosks.

The Refuge System strives for quality recreation and environmental education opportunities. This is tempered by practical considerations such as whether the quality of the experience and level of public interest allows efficient and effective use of funding and staff relative to the availability of similar opportunities at other locations. Quality components include adequacy of

signage, brochures, and interpretive materials, adequacy and accessibility of recreational facilities, and availability of staff. User satisfaction with recreational opportunities is gauged through periodic use of formal surveys along with direct feedback and interaction with on-site staff. Availability of staff, to a large extent, determines interpretive activities that include talks, tours, staffed exhibits, demonstrations, and special events; and environmental education activities that involve structured classroom activities for teachers, students, or others. Professional workshops or structured instructional programs to learn bird watching, natural resource management, land stewardship, or wildlife management are also included. These activities are provided both on- and off-site to the extent they contribute to the accomplishment of the Refuge System goals. Teacher workshops are an especially effective mechanism to reach out to local school districts and provide a service that teachers can then relay to their students. Volunteers often play a significant role in these activities. This activity also encompasses the management of entrance fees, various recreation user-fees, commercial visitor service permits, and concessions.

The Conservation in Action Summit identified environmental education as one of the highest future priorities for the Refuge System. The broader need of providing quality wildlife-dependent recreation was also identified. Both are associated with this strategic goal.

Performance Measurement: The number of refuges with programs for each of the six priority wildlife-dependent recreation uses, the quality of those programs, and the number of people participating in them is reported in the Refuge Annual Performance Planning module of the Refuge Management Information System. A customer service survey of visitors provides feedback on satisfaction with services and programs provided.

Strategic Goal 6. Facilitate Partnerships and Cooperative Projects to Engage Other Conservation Agencies, Volunteers, Friends, and Partners in the Refuge System Mission.

Means and Strategies: Private citizens are afforded meaningful opportunities to assist in achieving the Refuge System mission by volunteering their talents, working with Friends groups to support a refuge, or cooperatively completing projects on refuges. In a similar manner, conservation partners such as State and Federal government agencies, tribes, and non-government organizations are regularly engaged in mutually beneficial projects and programs.

This process includes support of volunteerism and community partnership efforts, provided for in the Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998, and collaborative efforts with a wide variety of entities including cost sharing of projects by any non-Federal entity. More than 200 organized Friends groups work to assist refuges in meeting public use and natural and cultural resource management goals. Support for volunteers and Friends is provided through on-site training, mentoring, workshops, and awards. Other partnership programs include the Challenge Cost Share program, which involves the completion of cost shared conservation or visitor service projects using financial contribution or in-kind contributions of labor and materials. Agreements with neighboring landowners to manage their lands in a network that complements refuge management efforts are included here as are cooperative programs with

universities for research purposes and partnerships with gateway communities regarding recreational programs.

Participants at the Conservation in Action Summit affirmed that involving volunteers and Friends advances all aspects of the Refuge System mission. For this reason, they identified several action items to maintain and improve these cooperative relationships.

Performance Measurement: The number of refuges with programs for each of these partnership programs is reported in the Refuge Annual Performance Planning module of the Refuge Management Information System. While this captures quantitative information, there is frequently a more qualitative impact associated with these collaborative efforts that is difficult to capture through data metrics. The good will and cooperative spirit captured in these efforts often elicit future reactions that can not be readily predicted or measured.

Strategic Goal 7. Protect Resources and Visitors through Law Enforcement

Means and Strategies: The Refuge System law enforcement program seeks to: 1) protect natural and cultural resources from overharvest, poaching, or other abuse; 2) enable visitors to enjoy recreation, interpretation, and environmental education without fear of crime or incident; and 3) protect government property from vandalism, abuse, destruction, and terrorist threat. Conservation education is also an integral function of Refuge law enforcement officers.

This activity encompasses prevention, enforcement, protection and security activities to assure compliance with wildlife laws, refuge regulations, and related laws. A variety of different strategies are being employed to modernize the Refuge System law enforcement program. These strategies are carried out to implement recommendations from the Secretary's Law Enforcement Review Panel Report and the International Association of Chiefs of Police Report. These documents along with other ongoing activities within the refuge law enforcement program, led to the completion in May 2003 of the plan titled, *Interim and Long-Term Deployment of Law Enforcement Resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System*. Many of the policy decisions from that plan were incorporated in July 2003 into Director's Order #155. The plan and Director's Order called for immediate implementation of several reforms dealing with headquarters and regional structure, zone system implementation, collateral duty officer reforms, and centralized recruitment. The plan also called for a long-term staffing study to assess, quantify, and strategically locate the law enforcement resources of the Refuge System. A community policing effort is also being initiated to encourage a more structured approach to coordinating, interacting, and instilling cooperation with other State, Federal, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

Refuge law enforcement was not identified among the highest priorities at the Conservation in Action Summit; however, it is a priority need as identified by the Department and the Service.

Performance Measurement: Reporting currently relies on the Refuge Annual Performance Planning database module of the Refuge Management Information System. An upcoming Department-wide incident management system will provide a more detailed monitoring tool in

the future. Staffing needs are quantified in the refuge law enforcement deployment model.

Strategic Goal 8. Provide Infrastructure and Equipment Adequate to Support Mission and Maintained in Good Condition.

Means and Strategies: Facilities and equipment are available where needed and are maintained in good condition so that they can effectively and reliably contribute to the Refuge System mission.

This activity involves adding new facilities where critical to mission needs and maintaining the Refuge System's \$15 billion portfolio of existing facilities. In addition, an extensive vehicle and equipment fleet of over 16,000 items must be maintained in good condition. This is an especially urgent need for new or recently acquired refuge lands. To assure reliable and functional facilities and equipment, we strive to: a) complete adequate preventive and cyclical maintenance; b) complete deferred maintenance projects; c) replace facilities and equipment before they have exceeded their useful lives; and d) excess or demolish assets in poor condition that do not contribute to accomplishing the purposes of the refuge or the mission of the Refuge System. New facilities will selectively be added where needed to achieve mission goals and objectives. Collectively, these efforts allow facilities and equipment to be maintained in good condition so that they can effectively and efficiently contribute to the Refuge System mission.

Preventive maintenance, which includes scheduled servicing, repairs, inspections, adjustments, and replacement, results in fewer breakdowns, fewer premature replacements, and assists in realizing the expected life of facilities and equipment. Deferred maintenance projects repair, rehabilitate, dispose of, or replace buildings and other facilities. Deferred maintenance is maintenance that was not performed when it should have been and which, therefore, was put off or delayed for a future period. Replacement schedules are gauged against industry accepted standards for useful life of various facilities or equipment. Use of comprehensive condition assessments and state-of-the-art maintenance management software to guide management decisions are inherent in this goal.

The Conservation in Action Summit did not identify this goal as among the highest priority needs; however, by inference, high priority activities may be involved when they provide direct support of other identified activities. For example, quality recreation was identified as a high priority and adequate facilities at some locations could be a limiting factor for quality recreation.

Performance Measurement: Condition of facility assets is measured by the Facility Condition Index (FCI), which is the ratio of deferred maintenance needs to replacement cost. This is an indicator of condition commonly applied in both private industry and government. Comprehensive condition assessments are completed on all facility assets over \$50,000 in replacement cost once every 5 years to better plan and budget for repair costs. Five year maintenance and capital improvement plans are completed each year to enhance planning for major asset projects. A comprehensive commercial maintenance management system is also being deployed to document all maintenance expenditures and help plan for needed investments.

This software (MAXIMO) will be integrated with the new Department-wide enterprise management system to allow direct linkage with financial management programs. The Refuge System is also fully engaged in implementing the Department initiatives under Executive Order 13327 on Federal Real Property Asset Management, which applies a variety of metrics to instill a portfolio-based approach to improving the management of facility assets.

Strategic Goal 9. Complete Quality and Useful Comprehensive Conservation Plans on Schedule and with Full Engagement of Partners.

Means and Strategies: Private citizens and all other stakeholders are afforded meaningful opportunities to assist in achievement of the mission of the Refuge System by providing their input into planning processes and assisting in plan implementation.

Comprehensive conservation planning includes all activities associated with the completion of single station or multi-station Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs), which are to be prepared every 15 years as called for in the Refuge System Improvement Act. Core aspects of these activities include gathering background data, coordinating with State and local entities, public involvement efforts, determining significant issues, developing and analyzing alternatives, and printing and distributing draft and final plan documents. A variety of landscape-level planning activities will be drawn upon as refuge CCPs are prepared so that complementary efforts are coordinated with conservation partners. State fish and wildlife agencies are especially important partners in preparing CCPs, and CCPs will complement State wildlife comprehensive plans wherever feasible. CCP preparation provides opportunity for synergy with partners, particularly in the pursuit of broader fish and wildlife conservation goals that extend well beyond refuge boundaries.

This goal was not identified as among the highest priorities by the Conservation in Action Summit; however, successful completion of these plans has tie-ins to the ability to deliver other activities that were identified as priorities. The Refuge System Improvement Act also mandates completion of CCPs for all refuges by 2012.

Performance Measurement: Performance is judged by the number of plans completed on schedule and the usefulness of those plans in guiding management actions at the local level. All planning efforts will invite input from all affected parties. State fish and wildlife agencies will be invited to serve on the planning team for each CCP.

Strategic Goal 10. Strategically Grow the Refuge System.

Means and Strategies: “Continued growth of the Refuge System is planned and directed in a manner best designed to accomplish the mission of the Refuge System, to contribute to the conservation of the ecosystems of the United States, to complement efforts of States and other Federal agencies to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats, and to increase support for the Refuge System with participation from conservation partners and the public.”

The above statement comes directly from the Refuge Improvement Act. Working in association with partners, we are developing a more focused approach to identify and prioritize lands and waters with greatest value and most appropriate for addition to the Refuge System. This includes the full range of habitat types in our nation, including marine resources. Strategies for land acquisition apply to all forms of acquisition, whether from Land and Water Conservation Fund projects, Migratory Bird Conservation Fund projects, donations, transfers, or other mechanisms. As a result of these efforts, we are striving to grow the Refuge System wisely in terms of habitat quantity, quality, and priority with due regard to fiscal responsibilities and ramifications that come with growth. Decisions on acquisition of new lands will include a full analysis of future impacts on operations and maintenance costs.

The Service's first priority for land acquisition is to complete acquisitions within approved refuge boundaries; the second is to expand existing refuges; and the third is to establish new refuges. Landscape-level biological planning will be applied as a tool to prioritize land acquisitions, and we will work closely with partners to determine whether a particular area is best suited for addition to the Refuge System or whether it is better protected through acquisition and/or management by another conservation entity or retained in private ownership. This landscape-level concept, commonly referred to as the habitat goals process, is described in the document "A Process for Integrating Wildlife Population, Biodiversity, and Habitat Goals and Objectives on the National Wildlife Refuge System: Coordinating with Partners at all Landscape Scales" (January 2004), produced by a Fulfilling the Promise Action Team.

The Conservation in Action Summit identified attention to this goal as a priority need, primarily through collaborative work with partners and the implementation of the "Habitat Goals" process to focus on highest priority lands being added to the Refuge System.

Performance Measurement: Lands added to the Refuge System are currently tracked in the Land Records System database. A fundamental metric is the percentage of refuges that have completed acquisition. The new habitat goals process for prioritizing conservation needs is currently under development and is being merged with the Services Strategic Habitat Conservation efforts. As these efforts evolve, they should develop more meaningful performance metrics; however, they are complex processes and must mature before the basis for metrics are fully established.

Strategic Goal 11. Reduce Wildfire Risks and Improve Habitats.

Means and Strategies: Incidence of severe, unplanned, and unwanted wildland fire is minimized through an integrated program to reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire dependent natural ecosystems, and continue an effective suppression that minimizes potential loss of life or firefighter injury.

This work includes activities associated with both fire management on Service lands and interagency cooperative efforts to respond to wildfires. It includes such activities as establishment and maintenance of fire breaks, work with neighboring jurisdictions in preparing

for or responding to wildland fires, and wildland fire suppression. Work within the wildland urban interface is particularly a high priority. Prescribed burning to reduce hazardous fuels and for habitat management purposes to restore ecosystems to their historic fire occurrence is included here but also contributes to efforts in Strategic Goal 2 to create habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish. Rehabilitation of burned areas is also captured here to restore habitats damaged by past uses or wildland fire. Fire management is a critical tool in maintaining and improving wildlife habitats; as various fire management activities are undertaken, to the extent practicable, improvement to wildlife habitats is a concurrent goal with hazard reduction and suppression activities.

This goal was not identified as among the highest priorities by the Conservation in Action Summit; however, the Summit did yield several credible action items to improve fire management within the Refuge System.

Performance Measurement: Performance measures are consistent with Department-wide performance measures that have been cooperatively determined by the interagency fire community at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

Strategic Goal 12. Promote and Enhance Organizational Excellence.

Means and Strategies: The Refuge System mission is achieved through effective and efficient application of organizational resources to include communication, human resources, financial resources, budget and performance integration, information technology, and policy processes.

Recognizing that a motivated and highly skilled workforce is our most important asset, the Refuge System established a Leadership Development Council (LDC) in 1998. The LDC worked on many fronts, such as recruitment and retention, development of core competencies, career ladders, training, and leadership development, to improve management of the Refuge System's workforce. The current workforce planning effort builds on the work of the LDC, but aligns the effort with the initiative in the President's Management Agenda to strategically manage human capital. Development and execution of budgets is also given careful attention to focus available resources on highest priority needs. Assistance of volunteers and a variety of partners is also key to accomplishing Refuge System goals. Policy documents are developed in priority order to effectively and consistently implement the Refuge Improvement Act and other legislative direction. Alignment of human resources, budget structures, strategic planning goals, and policies are pursued to provide for most effective accomplishment of the Refuge System mission. Modern information technology applications are utilized in furtherance of accomplishment of the Refuge System mission.

Performance Measurement: This long-term goal does not lend itself to use of performance metrics in the same way as other goals. Generally, performance will be measured through the delivery of specific products. For example, in 2006, a comprehensive workforce analysis was completed for the Refuge System. Employee performance plans have been rewritten to focus resources on the highest priorities. Measurable performance goals will be included in

performance plans of staff at national, regional, and field offices. An independent review of overall performance of the Refuge System in achieving its mission will be conducted every 3 to 5 years. Refuge System leadership will continue its efforts to provide high levels of job satisfaction, workforce diversity, and training and development for staff at all levels of the organization.

INFLUENCES ON PERFORMANCE

One of the most significant factors influencing the ability of the Refuge System to accomplish performance goals is the amount of funding available to support staffing, programs, and activities. The performance targets identified in this plan have been predicted upon an assumption that budgets between FY 2006 and 2010 will provide for buying power that remains stable during those years. Stable buying power can typically be maintained with a 3% to 4% per year growth in actual budget amount. This increased amount is needed to accommodate for rising personnel costs and inflation factors.

In addition to the impact of available financial resources, a variety of other factors may have substantial impact on performance. The Refuge System conducts a range of activities that are affected by outside factors, such as weather, land uses beyond refuge boundaries, regulatory factors, water shortages, environmental contaminants, migratory movements of fish or wildlife, etc. These factors are especially prone to influencing numbers and distribution of fish and wildlife. Managing performance of the Refuge System requires acknowledging that these outside and often uncontrollable influences can effect performance.

REFUGE SYSTEM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We are land stewards, guided by Aldo Leopold's teachings that land is a community of life and that love and respect for the land is an extension of ethics. We seek to reflect that land ethic in our stewardship and to instill it in others.

Wild lands and the perpetuation of diverse and abundant wildlife are essential to the quality of the American life.

We are public servants. We owe our employers, the American people, hard work, integrity, fairness, and a voice in the protection of their trust resources.

Management, ranging from preservation to active manipulation of habitats and populations, is necessary to achieve Refuge System and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service missions.

Wildlife-dependent uses involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, interpretation, and education, when compatible, are legitimate and appropriate uses of the Refuge System.

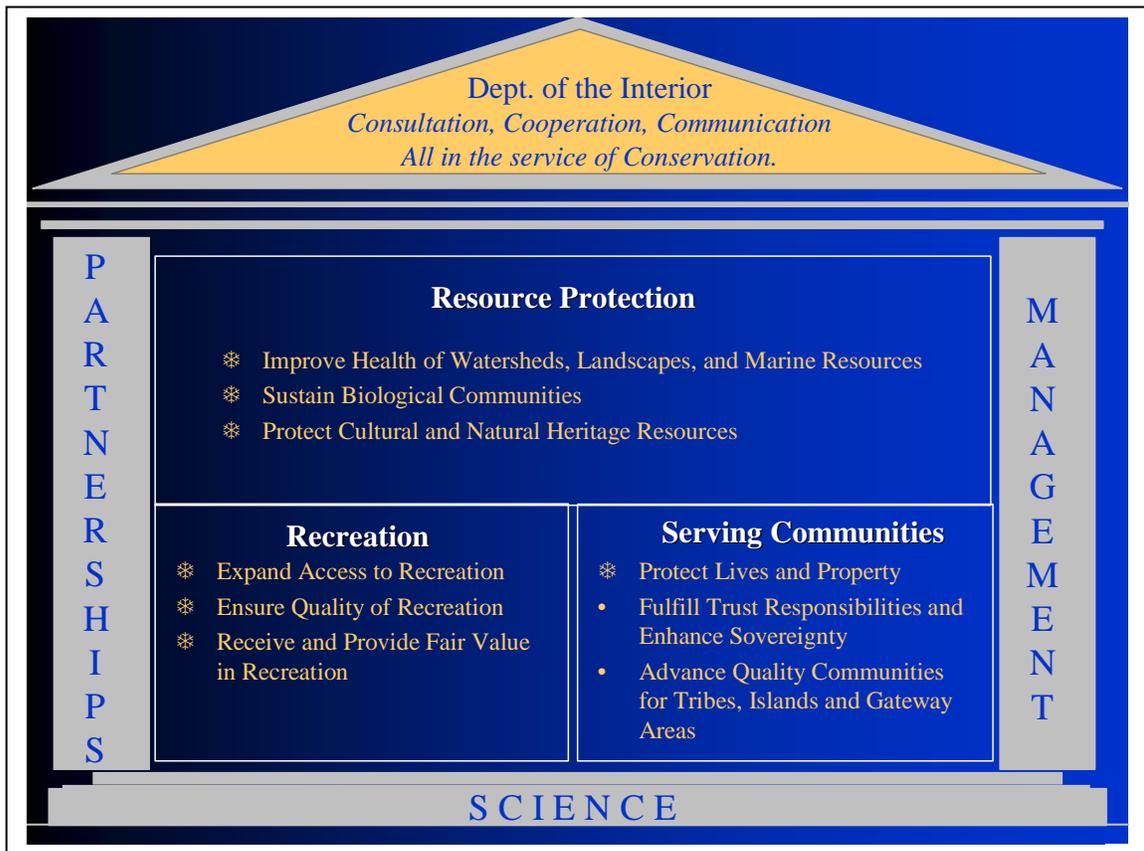
Partnerships with those who want to help us meet our mission are welcome and indeed essential.

Employees are our most valuable resource. They are respected and deserve an empowering, mentoring, and caring work environment.

We respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of our neighbors.

LINKING WITH DOI STRATEGIC PLAN

With the legislative mission statement from the Refuge Improvement Act, vision statements and guiding principles from Fulfilling the Promise, legislative direction in related laws, and a conference with our partners to develop a shared sense of priorities, this plan identifies specific outcome based performance goals to guide Refuge System management over the next 5 years. This plan incorporates the Office of Management and Budget’s Program Assessment Rating Tool review that was conducted for the program in 2003. Further, this plan is consistent with the Department of the Interior’s strategic plan for FY 2003 to 2008. DOI outcome goals that apply to management of the Refuge System are checked in the chart below.



CONSERVATION IN ACTION SUMMIT PRIORITIES

The following lists of priorities are the results of the Conservation In Action Summit, held at the National Conservation Training Center, May 24-27, 2004. The priorities are grouped by the major topical areas of the Summit, which were: Wildlife and Habitat, Wildlife Dependent Recreation, Science, and Strategic Growth. The rankings indicated on the left are based on the total votes that ballot item received within its topical area. An adjustment was made so that equal weight was given to voting by both Service staff and non-staff.

Rank	Wildlife and Habitat
1	Implement a System-wide Bird and Habitat Monitoring Program , including definition of habitats, by fully integrating refuges into ongoing monitoring by partner programs, State and Federal agencies and organizations. Facilitate by standardized protocols applied across the Refuge System, consistent data storage and analysis, and coordinated monitoring at different spatial scales.
2	Assess Surface and Ground Water Resources (quantity, quality, and timing), needs and threats throughout Refuge System to prepare refuge staff and partners to develop effective responses to water issues (and meeting Refuge System water needs).
3	Working with partners, establish System-wide Invasive Species and Habitat Restoration Management Plan and funding mechanisms to set ecosystem priorities and establish scientific protocols for inventory, monitoring and database development and coordinate management strategies using internal and external task forces.
4	Each refuge with science support from Regional Offices, States, joint ventures USGS-BRD and other partners will identify and maintain the appropriate subset of Service Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) that will guide refuge conservation actions by stepping down and implementing population and habitat objectives from bird plans to Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) and individual refuge and wetland management districts.
5	Implement Early Detection/Rapid Response Activities for Invasive Species throughout the Refuge system. Utilize volunteers for early detection efforts and direct newly formed Invasive Species Strike Teams to concentrate on incipient infestations.
	Wildlife-Dependent Recreation
1	Develop a National Environmental Education Program that integrates curriculum-based programs and focuses on long-term partnerships with schools and other organizations. Program will include teacher training through workshops and continuing education credits.
2	Standardize and Make Distinct our Appearance and Messages to make more welcoming to the public (signs, brochures web sites entrances, visitor centers, and uniforms, and wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities).
3	Involving our partners, Develop Comprehensive Visitor Service Plans that identify appropriate recreational activities, partners and funding needs and opportunities.
4	Recognizing the increasing cultural diversity of our country, Establish Individual Refuge Outreach/Communication Plans in each region that include action items for each refuge as guided by a national strategy.
5	Develop standards, criteria, and methodologies that address Disturbance Thresholds to

	Wildlife. Standards must also address monitoring and adjusting visitation as necessary.
	Science
1	Develop a National Strategy for Scientifically Valid, Uniform Monitoring within Refuge System. Plan and provide resources for refuge-based implementation including all related Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS) projects.
2	Conduct scientifically rigorous Baseline Biological and Abiotic Assessments for each refuge to determine status and priorities for inventory and monitoring. Each refuge will implement its inventory and monitoring plan.
3	Provide Sufficient Scientific Expertise to adequately address resource management complexity. Provide a minimum of 1 PFT biologist per staffed field unit and provide teams of 3-5 PFT biologists for the 50 most complex refuges.
4	Develop a user-friendly Web-based Repository and real-time clearing house for science based management information. This includes data quality assessment and links to outreach specialists.
5	Increase Research/Management Partner Programs by inviting conservation scholars programs, and strengthening relationships with USGS, universities, and others.
	Strategic Growth
1	Implement the Habitat Goals Process . In partnership with other Federal agencies, States, tribes, NGOs and the scientific community, the Service will implement a collaborative planning process to develop science-based ecoregional assessments (including spatially explicit priority maps) that integrate the national goals and objectives of existing conservation plans, such as the North American Bird Conservation Plan, Endangered Species Recovery Plans, etc. Such a process will identify "habitat goals" as the basis for the Service to collaborate with partners in identifying "who can do what" across the landscape in achieving national conservation goals. A prototype of this process is outlined in the Refuge System Report on "Habitat Goals".
2	Use Threshold Standards to assess new an expanded refuges and also use them to evaluate existing refuges and as needed expand boundaries to meet standards or as a basis for exchange for lands of higher biological value to trust resources.
3	Reduce acquisition delays by developing a Contract Between Acquisition Services Directorate (ASD) and Service to shorten the timeframe for appraisal services and developing a list of contract appraisers in States with an active acquisition program.
4	Expand the LAPS to include a non-biological component to include public use, operation and maintenance, restoration, revenue sharing, and cultural resources (etc.) and consider these factors along with the four biological components, when considering expanded and new proposals.
5	Conduct a continental, ecoregional, and site Assessment of Refuge and Other Conservation Lands in terms of habitat representation, resiliency, redundancy in order to build capacity to do effective ecoregional planning, include an assessment of historic conditions and future impacts of global change.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

This appendix includes performance metrics for both Outcome Measures and Annual Performance Measures. The data sources for the Outcome Measure metrics are explained in the Outcome Measures section of this plan. The data sources for the Annual Performance Measures vary, but the vast majority of them come from the Refuge Annual Performance Planning database. The largest exceptions to this are the measures associated with Facility Condition Indexes (FCI's) which come from the Service Asset and Maintenance Management System (SAMMS), and the Fire program measures which are tracked by Service staff at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID.

Although this plan spans the five-year period of FY 2006 through 2010, at print time "Actual" performance numbers were available for FY2006, and official "Targets" (including numerators and denominators) were available for FY 2007, thus they are included. For the out years of 2008 through 2010 only the targeted measure is included, as the numerators and denominators may vary in those years.

The metrics in these tables have been drafted to guide management and improvement of the Refuge System through FY 2010. Because the FY 2007 targets are based on actual data collected from field stations, they directly indicate what the field stations expect to achieve in FY 2007 with expected budgets. However, the targets for the out years were drafted as a framework for performance improvement. Typically out year targets indicate an improvement of performance of one-tenth of a percent each year, or some other increment that has been demonstrated by past experience. Because performance target-setting for the Refuge System must always be done in context of Service priorities, these targets must be revisited by Refuge System leadership every year and either verified or revised.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Outcome Measures						
	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Actual	FY 07 Target	FY 08 Target	FY 09 Target	FY 10 Target
1. Habitat - Percent of acres of Refuge System lands and waters with habitat in good condition.	88.5%	90%	90.4%	90.8%	91.4%	91.8%
2. Migratory Birds - Percent of migratory bird species achieving healthy and sustainable levels.	61.4%	61.4%	61.7%	61.8%	61.9%	62.0%
3. Threatened and Endangered Species - Percent of threatened or endangered species listed a decade or more that are stabilized or improved.	37%	43%	38%	39%	40%	41%
4. Fish - Percent of depleted native and inter-jurisdictional fish species achieving healthy and self-sustaining levels.	30%	40%	42%	43%	44%	45%
5. Recreation - Percent of adult Americans participating in wildlife-associated recreation.	39%	39%	40%	40%	40%	40%

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Strategic Goal 1. Conserve, Manage, and Where Appropriate, Restore Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Resources and Their Habitats to Fulfill Refuge Purposes, Trust Resource Responsibilities, and Biological Diversity/Integrity						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target
1.1) # refuges/WMDs with approved Wildlife Inventory and Monitoring Plan as prescribed in 701 FW 2. ¹	18.21%	20.79%	28.01%	28.11%	28.21%	28.31%
	106	121	163			
	582	582	582			
1.2) % of needed wildlife inventory and monitoring actions actually completed. ²	100.00%	107.42%	100.00%	100.10%	100.20%	100.30%
	4,997	5,223	4,599			
	4,997	4,862	4,599			
1.3) % of needed population management actions completed to benefit native fish, wildlife, and plants that are not threatened or endangered. ³	100.00%	116.57%	100.00%	100.10%	100.20%	100.30%
	1,347	1,555	1,467			
	1,347	1,334	1,467			
1.4) % of populations of indicator species with improved or stable numbers.	66.00%	83.00%	53.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%
	294	370	327			
	444	444	615			
1.5) % of actions prescribed in approved recovery plans completed for the benefit of threatened and endangered species	36.33%	59.90%	97.60%	97.70%	97.80%	97.90%
	803	1,374	1,327			
	2,210	1,329	1,355			

¹ Plan year estimates generated from the year selected by field stations in RAPP

² Denominator is actually the target number of actions planned for that year except for 05 baseline.

³ Ibid

1.6) % of refuges/WMDs with approved Habitat Management Plans as prescribed in 620 FW 1 ⁴	13.40%	19.93%	33.85%	33.95%	34.05%	34.15%
	78	116	197			
	582	582	582			
1.7) % upland habitat acres in class 1 status (receiving needed treatments or where no active manipulation needed [good condition])	83.72%	90.67%	90.86%	90.96%	91.06%	91.16%
	48,746,138	52,791,511	52,901,557			
	58,224,901	58,224,901	58,224,901			
1.8) # wetland habitat acres in class 1 status (receiving needed treatments or where no active management is needed [good condition])	90.00%	89.57%	89.96%	90.10%	90.20%	90.30%
	23,634,639	21,357,697	21,450,067			
	23,844,210	23,844,210	23,844,210			
1.9) # riparian habitat miles in class 1 status (receiving needed treatments or where no active management is needed [good condition])	n/a	87.94%	83.24%	83.10%	83.20%	83.30%
		61,614	58,321			
		70,061	70,061			
1.10) # marine habitat acres in class 1 status (receiving needed treatments or where no active management is needed [good condition]) ⁵	n/a	54.05%	55.26%	55.10%	55.20%	55.30%
		2,359,228	2,411,988			
		4,365,158	4,365,158			
1.11a) # upland acres restored annually	174,421	198,663	126,034	138,637	152,501	167,751
1.11b) # wetland acres restored annually	40,027	49,765	35,316	38,847	42,732	47,005
1.11c) # riparian miles restored annually	80	97	71	78	86	94
1.11d) # marine acres restored annually. ⁶	n/a	5,897	13,550	14,905	16,396	18,035
1.12) # wetland acres restored per million dollars of gross investment. ⁷	7,591	8,288	8,537	8,793	8,793	8,793
	40,027	49,765	35,316			
	\$5.273M	\$6.005M				

4 Plan year estimates generated from the year selected by field stations in RAPP

5 Defined as Class 1 habitat for 159 coastal refuges excluding Alaska. Comparable numbers were not available for 05.

6 Defined as acres restored for 159 coastal refuges excluding Alaska (wetland and open water). Comparable numbers were not available for 05.

7 Assume that dollars increase by 0.1 percent and efficiency stays the same.

1.13) Ratio of acres treated for invasive plants to acres infested with invasive plants	4.78%	13.90%	12.42%	12.50%	12.60%	12.70%
	111,630	284,363	250,317			
	2,335,987	2,045,243	2,015,841			
1.14) # of refuge acres infested with invasive plants that have been controlled at the end of the year	111,630	95,217	94,384	103,822	114,205	125,625
1.15) % of invasive animal populations at the beginning of the plan year that have been controlled at the end of the year	3.10%	6.00%	7.00%	7.10%	7.20%	7.30%
	155	288	331			
	4,964	4,471	4,493			

Strategic Goal 2. Provide Quality Environments with Adequate Water						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Actual	FY 07 Target	FY 08 Target	FY 09 Target	FY 10 Target
2.1) % of refuges meeting Federal and State standards for air quality, water quality, and contamination	n/a	77.00%	78.00%	78.00%	78.00%	78.00%
		451	456			
		582	582			
2.2) % of 21 Class 1 Wilderness units that meet national ambient air quality standards	95.24%	95.24%	95.24%	95.24%	95.24%	95.24%
	20	20	20			
	21	21	21			
2.3) % of refuge/WMD surface water acres that meet EPA approved water quality standards ⁸	n/a	96.61%	96.71%	96.80%	96.90%	97.00%
		13,924,569	13,938,266			
		14,412,967	14,412,967			
2.4) % of refuges/WMDs without documented water quality problems serious enough to trigger a 303d listing under the Clean Water Act	63.57%	81.27%	81.62%	81.70%	81.80%	81.90%
	370	473	475			
	582	582	582			

⁸ Defined as refuge acres with no State 303d-listed impaired waters. Comparable data not collected in 05.

2.5) % of refuges/WMD's free of other documented water quality problems (i.e. other than 303d listings)	81.44%	75.43%	75.95%	76.00%	76.10%	76.20%
	474	439	442			
	582	582	582			
2.6) # of surface or groundwater systems directly managed or influenced by refuges/WMD's. 9	n/a	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,397
2.7) % refuges/WMD's that have conducted a baseline inventory of water resources necessary to support habitat and other management goals	25.60%	30.93%	30.93%	30.90%	31.00%	31.10%
	149	180	180			
	582	582	582			
2.8) % of refuges where water rights are sufficiently protected to maintain use	48.80%	59.11%	59.79%	60.10%	60.20%	60.30%
	284	344	348			
	582	582	582			
2.9) % of known contaminated sites remediated during this fiscal year	40.91%	55.81%	36.84%	36.90%	40.00%	40.10%
	18	24	14			
	44	43	38			

Strategic Goal 3. Ensure that Unique Values of Wilderness, other Special Designation Areas, and Cultural Resources are Protected						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target
3.1) % of Wilderness acres with wilderness character protected as prescribed in the Wilderness Act	88.47%	88.68%	88.71%	88.80%	88.90%	89.00%
	18,308,501	18,351,938	18,356,938			
	20,693,596	20,693,596	20,693,596			

9 Comparable data not collected in 05.

3.2) % of Wild and Scenic River miles achieving unique values in Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ¹⁰	99.72%	99.72%	99.72%	99.80%	99.90%	100.00%
	1,083	1,083	1,083			
	1,086	1,086	1,086			
3.3) % of known cultural properties in good condition	19.43%	24.13%	24.94%	25.00%	25.10%	25.20%
	2,250	2,795	2,889			
	11,583	11,583	11,583			
3.4) % of known paleontological sites in good condition	0.88%	0.88%	0.88%	1.00%	1.10%	1.20%
	8	8	8			
	910	910	910			
3.5) % of museum collections in good condition	33.70%	31.34%	33.44%	33.50%	33.60%	33.70%
	644	599	639			
	1,911	1,911	1,911			

Strategic Goal 4. Welcome and Orient Visitors						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target
4.1) % of refuges/WMD's with adequate directional signs in place to help visitors find the refuge as prescribed in sign standards.	47.59%	53.44%	61.68%	61.78%	61.88%	61.98%
	277	311	359			
	582	582	582			
4.2) % of refuges/WMD's with adequate directional signs in place on the refuge to help orient visitors as prescribed in sign standards.	51.50%	60.48%	66.84%	66.94%	67.04%	67.14%
	300	352	389			
	582	582	582			
4.3) % of refuges/WMD's with \geq 70% of directional, safety and interpretive signs in good condition	51.50%	64.43%	70.79%	70.89%	70.99%	71.09%
	291	375	412			
	582	582	582			

¹⁰ FY 05 and 06 Actual numbers are corrected from what is shown in the FWS Operational Plan

4.4) % of refuges/WMDs with the standard entrance sign in place	51.50%	63.57%	69.42%	69.52%	69.62%	69.72%
	332	370	404			
	582	582	582			
4.5) % of refuges/WMD's with ≥ 70 % of boundary miles posted consistent with boundary standards	51.50%	58.42%	65.29%	65.39%	65.49%	65.59%
	288	340	380			
	582	582	582			
4.6) % of refuges/WMDs with adequate supplies of general brochures that are up-to-date and follow established standards	47.80%	55.50%	67.01%	67.11%	67.21%	67.31%
	278	323	390			
	582	582	582			
4.7) % of refuges/WMDs with a web site that follows prescribed standards and is kept current	51.50%	67.87%	76.80%	76.90%	77.00%	77.10%
	345	395	447			
	582	582	582			

Strategic Goal 5. Provide Quality Wildlife-Dependent Recreation and Education Opportunities						
Annual Performance Measure	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target
5.1) % of refuges that provide compatible wildlife dependent recreation programs where compatibility determinations indicate such programs can exist.	N/A	90.00%	89.00%	89.00%	89.00%	89.00%
	N/A	522	520			
	N/A	582	582			
5.2) % of refuges/WMDs open to public visitation with a current Visitor Services Plan (minimum public use standard #1)	18.12%	24.95%	22.39%	22.49%	22.59%	22.69%
	85	117	105			
	463	463	463			
5.3a) where hunting is offered, % of refuges/WMDs that have quality hunting programs (minimum public use	70.70%	76.50%	76.49%	76.59%	76.69%	76.79%
	253	280	283			

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standard #3)	358	366	370			
5.3b) total hunting visits	812,770	2,286,711	2,284,508	837,153	845,281	853,409
5.4a) where fishing is offered, % of refuges/WMDs that have quality fishing programs (minimum public use standard #4)	53.80%	59.38%	60.00%	60.10%	60.20%	60.30%
	189	209	213			
	351	352	355			
5.4b) total fishing visits	6,177,779	6,057,233	6,186,619	6,363,112	6,424,890	6,486,668
5.5a) where wildlife observation is offered, % of refuges/WMDs that have quality wildlife observation programs (minimum public use standard #5)	63.50%	69.77%	70.02%	70.12%	70.22%	70.32%
	297	330	334			
	468	473	477			
5.5b) total wildlife observation visits	23,380,889	24,498,107	22,914,035	24,082,316	24,316,125	24,549,933
5.6) where wildlife photography is offered, % of refuges/WMDs that have quality wildlife photography programs (minimum public use standard #5)	52.50%	58.85%	60.09%	60.19%	60.29%	60.39%
	234	266	271			
	446	452	451			
5.6b) total wildlife photography visits	5,814,736	5,466,819	5,473,986	5,989,178	6,047,325	6,105,473
5.7a) where environmental education is offered, % of refuges/WMDs that have quality environmental education programs (minimum public use standard #6)	64.40%	69.17%	68.80%	68.90%	69.00%	69.10%
	232	258	258			
	360	373	375			
5.7b) total environmental education visits	781,712	774,213	692,816	805,163	812,980	820,798
5.8a) where interpretation is offered, % of refuges/WMDs with quality interpretive programs (minimum public use standard #7)	61.60%	67.45%	67.21%	67.31%	67.41%	67.51%
	252	286	289			
	409	424	430			
5.8b) total interpretation visits	4,136,505	3,228,185	2,843,262	4,260,600	4,301,965	4,343,330

5.9a) where other recreational uses are compatible, % of refuges/WMDs open to other recreational uses (minimum public use standard #8)	45.70%	45.70%	45.70%	45.80%	45.90%	46.00%
	266	266	266			
	582	582	582			
5.9b) total visits in other recreational uses	11,711,018	10,579,329	10,529,948	12,062,349	12,179,459	12,296,569
5.10) # of acres made available for recreation	90,490,541	93,748,439	93,890,245	90,490,541	90,490,541	90,490,541
5.11) total facilitated visits	11,441,551	8,510,958	8,071,163	11,441,551	11,441,551	11,441,551
5.12) % of visitors satisfied with the wildlife-dependent recreation/education opportunities provided	85%	85%	85%	85.10%	85.20%	85.30%
5.13) % of recreation fee revenues spent annually on fee collection	15%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

Strategic Goal 6. Facilitate Partnerships and Cooperative Projects to Engage Other Conservation Agencies, Volunteers, Friends, and Partners in the NWRS Mission						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target
6.1) % of refuges/WMDs with a volunteer program	72.70%	72.85%	73.02%	73.12%	73.22%	73.32%
	423	424	425			
	582	582	582			
6.2) # hours of volunteer assistance annually contributed	1,284,857	1,277,523	1,170,799	1,182,507	1,194,332	1,206,275
6.3) # of individuals who provided volunteer assistance during the year	34,034	32,321	29,568	29,864	30,162	30,464
6.4) % of refuges/WMDs with a Friends Organization	42.80%	49.48%	51.37%	51.47%	51.57%	51.67%
	249	288	299			
	582	582	582			

6.5) % of refugees/WMD with one or more community support groups working with them	41.20%	50.52%	51.37%	51.47%	51.57%	51.67%
	240	294	299			
	582	582	582			
6.6) % of refugees/WMD's with at least one non-Federal partnership project	44.80%	45.88%	46.74%	46.84%	46.94%	47.04%
	261	267	272			
	582	582	582			

Strategic Goal 7. Protect Resources and Visitors through Law Enforcement						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Actual	FY 07 Target	FY 08 Target	FY 09 Target	FY 10 Target
7.1) % of refugees/WMDs with law enforcement staffing comparable to the need identified in the NWRS Law Enforcement Deployment Model	10.00%	7.93%	7.93%	8.03%	8.13%	8.23%
	24	18	18			
	233	227	227			
7.2) # actual LE field hours (excludes training, administrative functions, and physical fitness time) carried out during the year	284,446	326,728	341,756	288,713	290,135	291,557
7.3) # notices of violation (NOV's) issued (report only, not a target)	7,069	7,860	8,519	Report only	Report only	Report only
7.4) # criminal law enforcement incidents documented	68,932	71,807	67,733	67,898	67,553	67,209
7.5) # other law enforcement incidents documented	11,286	11,230	11,173	11,117	11,060	11,004
7.6) % of easement contracts (wetland easements, FmHA easements, etc) being complied with	98.00%	95.44%	94.60%	94.70%	94.80%	94.90%
	31,914	31,189	31,482			
	32,565	32,678	33,278			

7.7) % of refuges/WMDs with a community policing program in place	2.70%	7.22%	9.11%	9.21%	9.31%	9.41%
	16	42	53			
	582	582	582			

Strategic Goal 8. Provide Infrastructure and Equipment Adequate to Support Mission and Maintained in Good Condition						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Actual	FY 07 Target	FY 08 Target	FY 09 Target	FY 10 Target
8.1) Average FCI for conservation, cultural, recreation, buildings, and other facilities (5 subcategories below)	N/A	.1000	.0930	.0930	.0930	.0930
8.1a) FCI of conservation and biological research facilities	.0605	.0507	.0507	.0507	.0507	.0507
8.1b) FCI of cultural and natural heritage facilities	.1365	.1095	.1095	.1095	.1095	.1095
8.1c) FCI of recreation assets	.0877	.0833	.0833	.0833	.0833	.0833
8.1d) FCI of buildings (Administrative, Employee Housing, etc.)	.1249	.1264	.1264	.1264	.1264	.1264
8.1e) FCI of other facilities (roads, dams, trails and bridges)	.0923	.0943	.0943	.0943	.0943	.0943
8.2) % of equipment (\$5-\$25K) replaced consistent with prescribed normal useful life replacement standards	59%	65.05	66.55%	68.05%	69.55%	71.05%
	6,056	6,056	6,196			
	10,241	9,310	9,310			
8.3) % of heavy equipment (>\$25K) replaced consistent with prescribed normal useful life replacement standards	49%	43.6%	44.87%	45.50%	46.13%	46.77%
	1,668	1,720	1,770			
	3,446	3,945	3,945			

8.4) % of universally accessible facilities in relation to total number of recreation areas (i.e. refuges open to public)	57.14%	63.0%	63.0%	63.0%	63.0%	63.0%
	268	293	293			
	463	463	463			

Strategic Goal 9. Complete Quality and Useful Comprehensive Conservation Plans on Schedule and with Full Engagement of Partners						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Actual	FY 07 Target	FY 08 Target	FY 09 Target	FY 10 Target
9.1a) # of refuges/WMDs with a Comprehensive Conservation Plan completed during the year.	40	97	70	76	56	51
9.1b) # of refuges/WMDs with a Comprehensive Conservation Plan completed, cumulative total.	107	204	274	350	406	457
9.2) # refuges/WMDs with planning underway at the end of the FY.	192	125	156	122	108	85
9.3) % of CCP's underway or complete, where the State fish and wildlife agency has been invited to serve on the planning team.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	299	329	430			
	299	329	430			
9.4) % of CCP's underway or complete, where effective cooperation and collaboration by stakeholders is underway	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	299	329	430			
	299	329	430			

Strategic Goal 10. Strategically Grow the System						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Actual	FY 07 Target	FY 08 Target	FY 09 Target	FY 10 Target
10.1) % of land acquisition projects where landscape level planning is completed in collaboration with other Federal agencies, State fish and wildlife agencies and other partners to focus on highest priority needs	n/a	36%	22%	36%	38%	40%
	n/a	15	16			
	n/a	42	73			
10.2) # of fee-title wetland acres added to the NWRS during the fiscal year	18,329	13,246	5,366	5,366	5,366	5,366
10.3) # of non fee-title (easements, agreements, etc.) wetland acres added to the NWRS during the fiscal year	19,654	4,725	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500
10.4) # of fee-title upland acres added to the NWRS during the fiscal year	74,570	20,185	13,067	13,067	13,067	13,067
10.5) # of non fee-title (easements, agreements, etc.) upland acres added to the NWRS during the fiscal year	95,258	8,977	63,000	63,000	63,000	63,000
10.6) # of fee-title marine acres added to the NWRS during the fiscal year	n/a	232	255	255	255	255
10.7) # of non fee-title (easements, agreements, etc.) marine acres added to the NWRS during the fiscal year	n/a	0	0	0	0	0
10.8) # of fee-title riparian miles added to the NWRS during the fiscal year	n/a	11	9	9	9	9
10.9) # of non fee-title (easements, agreements, etc.) riparian miles added to the NWRS during the	n/a	0	0	0	0	0

fiscal year						
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Strategic Goal 11. Reduce Wildfire Risks and Improve Habitats						
Annual Performance Measures	FY 05 Actual	FY 06 Actual	FY 07 Target *	FY 08 Target	FY 09 Target	FY 10 Target
11.1) # acres in fire regimes 1, 2, or 3 moved to a better condition class that were identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the Implementation Plan.	93,557	119,034	48,960	48,960	48,960	48,960
11.2) # acres in prior measure moved to a better condition class per million dollars of gross investment	3,353	3,611	1,705	1,705	1,705	1,705
11.3) # acres treated in condition classes 2 or 3 in fire regimes 1-3 outside WUI, and identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the Implementation Plan.	154,577	101,972	77,760	77,760	77,760	77,760
11.4) # acres treated outside the WUI per million dollars of gross investment	20,808	15,893	12,450	12,450	12,450	12,450
11.5) # acres treated in the WUI and identified as high priority through collaboration consistent with the Implementation Plan.	158,711	173,109	159,250	159,250	159,250	159,250
11.6) # acres in WUI treated per million dollars gross investment	10,205	8,515	10,448	10,448	10,448	10,448
11.7) % of fuels	70%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%

project funds expended by contract	9,488,617	tbd	tbd			
	13,606,427	tbd	tbd			
11.8) # acres treated for hazardous fuels reduction (all funds)	616,841	373,917	325,000	325,000	325,000	325,000
11.9) "percent of acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels by mechanical means with by-products utilized."	25%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
	5,479	tbd	tbd			
	21,734	tbd	tbd			
11.10) % of unplanned and unwanted wildland fires controlled during initial attack	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	568	tbd	tbd			
	601	tbd	tbd			
11.11) # acres burned by unplanned and unwanted wildland fires	243,968	127,885	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
11.12) % of acres degraded by wildland fire with post-fire rehabilitation treatments underway, completed, and monitored	20%	5.1%	20%	20%	20%	20%
	47,531	40,549	tbd			
	836,328	790,025	tbd			

*** FY2007 Plan is based on FY2006 Plan.**

Strategic Goal 12. Promote and Enhance Organizational Excellence**Annual Performance Goals**

- 1) The NWRS Leadership Team (Chief, Deputy Chief, Regional Chiefs, and Headquarters Division Chiefs) will meet quarterly each FY to consider and implement actions needed to maintain organizational excellence of the NWRS.
- 2) National level function-based teams (i.e. Visitor Services, Biology/Natural Resources, Realty, etc.) will meet twice each FY to consider and implement actions needed to maintain organizational excellence of their respective programs, and to elevate necessary issues to the NWRS Leadership Team.
- 3) By January 1, 2008, a final workforce analysis will be completed for the NWRS, establishing a strategic and recurring process for managing the NWRS workforce into the future.
- 4) All NWRS line officers will review accuracy and rationale of targets and actuals in portions of the Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP) for which they are responsible.

LINKING BUDGETS WITH STRATEGIC GOALS

Budget Element	Corresponding Strategic goals
Wildlife and Habitat Management	1. Conserve, Manage, and Where Appropriate, Restore Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Resources and Their Habitats 2. Provide Quality Environments with Adequate Water 3. Ensure that Unique Values of Wilderness, other Special Designation Areas and Cultural Resources are Protected
Visitor Services	4. Welcome and Orient Visitors 5. Provide Quality Wildlife-Dependent Recreation and Education Opportunities 6. Facilitate Partnerships and Cooperative Projects to Engage Other Conservation Agencies, Volunteers, Friends, and Partners in the Refuge System Mission.
Refuge Law Enforcement	7. Protect Resources and Visitors through Law Enforcement
Refuge Maintenance (includes Transportation & Construction budgets)	8. Provide Infrastructure and Equipment Adequate to Support Mission and Maintained in Good Condition Infrastructure and Equipment is Adequate and in Good Condition to Support Mission
Conservation Planning	9. Complete Quality and Useful Comprehensive Conservation Plans on Schedule and with Full Engagement of Partners
Land Acquisition & Planning Planning LWCF & MBCF Transfer/donate/other	10. Strategically Grow the System
Fire Management	11. Reduce Wildfire Risks and Improve Habitats

Note: Strategic Goal 12, Promote and Enhance Organizational Vitality, is not displayed as a separate line in the above table because it is an approach to management that is inherent within all of the strategic goals.

REFUGE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANNING PROCESS

Purpose: This process is to be used throughout the Refuge System to set measurable goals for management of activities. It uses a bottom up approach whereby station specific goals and measures are annually identified and then rolled up to the regional and national level. It also sets targets for 5 years into the future within constraints of projected budgets. The context for how these projected targets fit within the overall needs for the Refuge System will continue to be documented within other data sets; primarily the Refuge Operating Needs System, the Service Asset and Maintenance Management System, Regional and National Realty data sets, and the various fire management databases.

The table below outlines the communications process to engage the Refuge System organization in completing an annual performance plan with station, regional, and national components that includes reviewing actions from the past fiscal year, and sets targets for the coming 2 fiscal years, and for 5 years into the future.

STEP	ACTION	USE OF PRODUCT
1	During July of each year, the Washington Office confers with Regional Offices and issues a memorandum giving the latest budget projections and policy related guidance for the coming FY.	Latest information on budget outlook and policy considerations is provided to regions and field to help focus priorities for the coming year.
2	About Sept 10 of each year, field stations complete the Refuge Annual Performance Planning database to capture three items for each performance measure in the Refuge System strategic plan: 1) accomplishments for the past FY, 2) planned activities for the coming 2 FYs based on projected budgets, and 3) planned activities for five years into the future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accomplishments from the past FY are rolled up to the regional and national level for three requirements: GPRA performance reporting, financial audits, and agency budget requests. 2. Planned activities for the coming FY form a preliminary Annual Work Plan with numeric goals, and measures for each field station rolled up to the regional and national level. 3. Planned activities for the coming FY plus one help set priorities and guide development of budget requests. 4. Planned activities 5 years into the future give a longer term context for priority setting, budget justifications, and budget allocations.
3	Oct 1 – Nov 15 each year, Regional Supervisors engage field managers in discussions (either one-on-one or in group meetings) to refine planned activities based on a better understanding of fund allocations, shared efforts among field stations, likely project costs, shared perspectives on priorities, etc. *	This is a refinement of the preliminary list of planned activities for the coming FY that is completed under step 2. It is the process whereby tentative agreement is reached between the region and the field station manager on planned activities for the year. Changes to planned activities as a result of these discussions are made in the Refuge Annual Performance Planning database.
4	About Nov 15 of each year (or earlier if possible), the Washington Office issues a memorandum with best estimates of regional funding allocations.	Region uses to make final adjustments to planned activity measures for all field stations.
5	About Dec 10 of each year, goals for planned activities for the coming year are finalized and incorporated into individual performance plans.	At this point, planned activity targets are locked in for the FY. Targets for individual stations are made part of performance plans for station managers, regional

		rollups are made part of performance plans for regional managers, and national rollups are made part of performance plans for national managers.
6	Repeat the above cycle starting with July issuance of national memorandum.	Starts the next iteration of management planning, building from the past years successes, failures, and lessons learned; and moving forward into the future using a new round of priority setting.

* A meaningful dialogue between Refuge Supervisors and Project Leaders regarding the Refuge Annual Performance Planning database is a key element. For each strategic goal, the Refuge Supervisor and Project Leader should systematically review and discuss measures taking into account factors such as the appropriate role of the refuge in supporting national or international conservation plans, whether required refuge planning has been completed, whether adequate interagency coordination and cooperation is underway, whether priorities are agreed upon, whether the refuge is capable of meeting public demands for recreation, the context of the refuge with nearby public lands, and the most urgent or pressing needs or opportunities at this time.

Refuge Annual Performance Planning Database: A Refuge Annual Performance Planning database will be used to collect and apply information needed for this process to be successful. The database is patterned after the Refuge Comprehensive Accomplishment Report which has been used for a number of years to report year end accomplishments but has been modified to add activities forecast for the next fiscal year and for 5 years into the future. To streamline reporting and avoid redundancies, the RCAR database and the RMIS Public Education and Recreation module will be retired and incorporated into this database. Further, this database effort will be coordinated with related initiatives, including Annual Habitat Work Planning, the Refuge Management Actions Database (RMAD), and the Refuge System Lands GIS so that data collection and management efficiencies can be gained.

Multi-level Goal Setting: Each refuge or wetland management district will complete the Refuge Annual Performance Planning database in a manner that will enable articulation of outcomes to be accomplished at the local level in a structure that can then be rolled up to form national level results. A national level synopsis of results will be prepared to describe annual accomplishments and trends and describe strategies for pursuing emerging new priorities. The national roll up of performance metrics is displayed in Appendix D of the Refuge System strategic plan. All efforts will be completed within the context of priority setting processes which incorporate considerations from activities such as Fulfilling the Promise, Comprehensive Conservation Plans, and the Conservation in Action Summit.

Activity Based Costing: Activity Based Costing codes will be streamlined and made more meaningful by aligning with the Refuge System strategic plan and the FWS Operational Plan. It is also anticipated that the Refuge Operating Needs System will be refined to better mesh with this new annual performance planning process.

Budget and Performance Integration: This effort brings together the entire mix of budget and performance information in an integrated manner. Planning, budget development, financial management, performance management, and workforce management will all follow similar

tracks that can be related to each other in a way that provides a comprehensive approach to managing to achieve the Refuge System mission.