



Little Sandy

National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update #1 September 2009

This is the first in a series of updates on the development of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge. It announces the beginning of the planning process and asks for your help in identifying the issues that need to be addressed in the Refuge's Plan. When completed, the Plan will provide management direction for the Refuge for the next 15 years.

The purposes for which Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge was established and shall be managed include:

“ for use as an inviolate sanctuary, for any other management purposes, for migratory birds.”

Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 712d).

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission

“...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).

Greeting from the Refuge Manager

Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge invites you to participate in the public scoping process, which will help us identify the issues, to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Refuge. This multi-year, master planning process will produce a plan that will help guide refuge management for the next 15 years.

Your ideas and comments will be an important part of the process, so I'd like to invite you to participate. Turn the page for more information about comprehensive conservation planning and getting involved in the process.

I hope you'll feel free to contact us, if you have any questions. You'll find our phone numbers and email addresses within this update. I look forward to seeing you at one of our future meetings.

Thank you

Mark Williams

Refuge Manager, Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge



What is a Comprehensive Conservation Plan?

In general, a comprehensive conservation plan does the following:

- Ensures that the purposes for which the refuge was established and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System are being fulfilled
- Ensures national policy is integrated with refuge management direction
- Ensure that the refuges continue to conserve fish, wildlife and ecosystems in the face of climate change and other stressors.
- Provides opportunity for public participation in developing management guidance
- Provides a step-by-step process for making and recording refuge decisions
- Establishes a broad management direction for refuge programs and activities
- Provides a way to evaluate accomplishments over time

Public Involvement

Involvement of the public is essential to this planning process. Everyone interested in the management of Little Sandy NWR will have plenty opportunities to be involved during the planning process.

Your response to this newsletter is one way for refuge staff to learn your views about the refuge and the development of the Conservation Plan. You will also have opportunities to comment at a public meeting planned in Hawkins, Wood County, Texas.

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Jarvis College
CTC Building, Community Affairs Room
Hawkins, TX 75765

Please direct all inquires to the Refuge at 903/679-9144.

Steps of the Planning Process

We are here →
What should we consider?

Identify the Issues



How can we act on the issues?

Develop Alternatives



How well will each alternative work?

Analyze Alternatives



Which would work best?

Select an Alternative



Public review and comment

Publish Draft Plan



Another chance for public to review and comment

Publish Final Plan



Final decision made public

Publish Record of Decision



Implement Plan and revise as needed

Draft Refuge Vision Statement

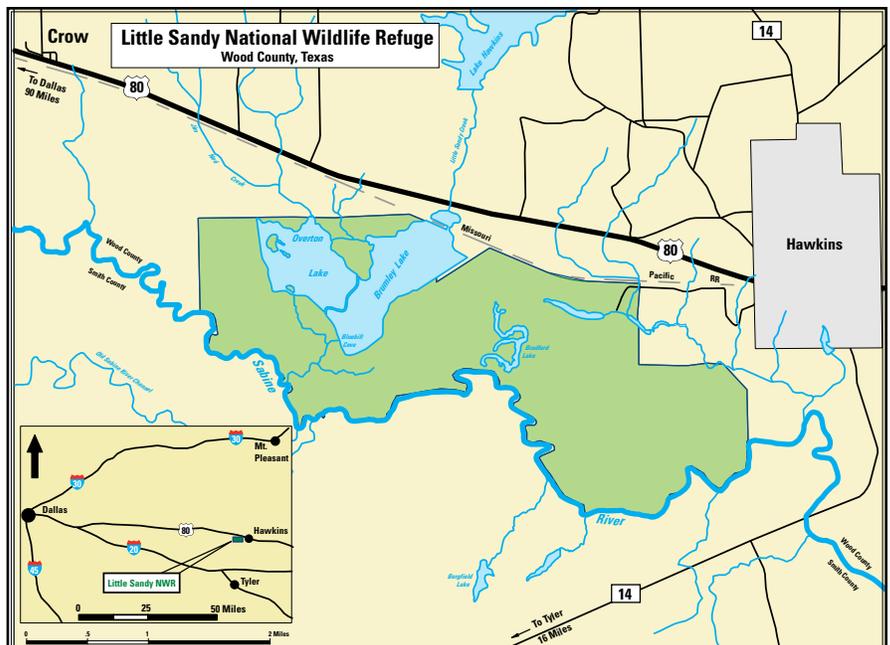
Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) will preserve, restore, and enhance the ecological integrity of the Oak Woods and Prairies and Piney Woods bottomland forests, oxbow lakes, and shrub swamps. The Refuge will continue to provide quality habitats for a variety of native plants and wildlife, with emphasis on migratory birds and threatened and endangered species, for the benefit of present and future generations.



About the Refuge

Beginning in 1898, several farsighted sportsmen began traveling east from Dallas seeking land for a hunting and fishing club. Specifically, the gentlemen were looking for big woods where they could establish a club devoted to squirrel hunting, duck hunting, and fishing. Traveling on the Texas & Pacific Railroad, they reached a great eastern deciduous forest approximately 80 miles east of Dallas. The original 3,009-acre tract, which forms the nucleus of the club, was purchased in 1906 and incorporated as Little Sandy Hunting and Fishing Club (LSHFC) on April 17, 1907. The club was named after Little Sandy Creek, which arises from springs in the Eocene sand outcrops of eastern Wood County. The club property included the land between the Texas & Pacific tracks and the north bank of the Sabine River.

LSHFC was added to the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) in 1986. With bottomland hardwoods, oxbow lakes, and shrub swamps, that are emblematic of the east Texas ecosystem, the mission of the Refuge is to promote complete preservation of possibly the best remnant old growth bottomland hardwood in Texas, thus protecting, enhancing, and preserving wildlife dependent on this habitat. Approximately 80 percent of breeding birds that frequent the refuge are dependent on the bottomland hardwoods for nesting. The birds that frequent the refuge are reliant on deep tracts of bottomland hardwoods like those located on the Refuge.



Issues Workbook

Let's Get Started

Please answer the following questions. Feel free to add additional comments in the space provided. The comments we receive will help us identify issues and identify the best alternatives for long term management of Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge.

Questions Pertaining to Your Refuge Experience

1. With a larger perspective in mind, what do you value most about the Refuge?

5. What do you consider to be the most important problem facing the Refuge today?

Questions Pertaining to Natural Resources Conservation

1. What do you think of our DRAFT Vision Statement?
Do you have any comments or suggestions for improving it?

2. Are any of the following natural resource issues a concern to you in the ecosystems on and surrounding the Little Sandy NWR? If so, please rank your top three choices.
1 = highest concern and 3 = lowest concern of your three choices.

- _____ the development and fragmentation of habitats
- _____ invasion of exotic plant and animal species
- _____ increased use in sensitive habitat areas
- _____ degradation of water quality
- _____ lack of active management to improve wildlife habitats
- _____ bottomland forest restoration
- _____ environmental education for our youth
- _____ community outreach
- _____ impacts to refuge resource contributed by a changing climate
- _____ other issues (please specify)

3. If possible, please provide additional details on why you selected the above.
In particular, we would be interested to know specific locations of concern.

4. Please include here any additional comments on conserving fish and wildlife habitat.

Next Steps

Once scoping is complete the planning team will review the concerns identified by the public along with management concerns identified by Refuge staff and those submitted by the state and federal agencies. Once the significant issues have been identified we will develop options, in the form of alternatives, to prepare the Draft Plan. A detailed description of alternatives will be included in the Draft Plan. This plan will include an analysis of how each alternative will affect the environment. After public review and comment of the draft document, including public meetings, a Final Plan, and a decision document will be prepared and distributed.

That's It!

Now that you are done, please mail the entire workbook back to us by September 9, 2009 (use the pre-printed return address sheet). We will summarize these comments and those received at public meetings in our next newsletter. Please help us keep our mailing list updated by completing the following:

If you wish to receive future "Planning Updates" about the Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge comprehensive conservation plan, please fill in the appropriate information below and return it with the Issues Workbook.

(Yes) Keep me on your mailing list/add me to your mailing list

Please specify in which form you would like to receive a copy of the draft plan for review.

Electronic (CD) Hardcopy

(No) Take me off your mailing list.

Name: _____
(Please Print)

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

If you are acting in an official capacity as the representative of an organization please complete the following two items.

Organization: _____

Title: _____

Please note that names on our mailing list and any submitted comments become part of the public record for this project. The Service must release names, if requested, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of 1974.

Thank you for your time!

Little Sandy *National Wildlife Refuge Planning Update*

Mail issues workbooks to:

Jeffrey Missal
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Planning
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103

For the additional information about the planning process, contact:

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505-248-6634
jeffrey_missal@fws.gov

For the additional information about the Refuge, contact:

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P.O. Box 230
Karnack, Texas 75661
903/679-9144
mark_williams@fws.gov

Workbooks may also be mailed to or dropped-off at the Little Sandy NWR office.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

All photographs, USFWS

September 2009

Coyote Tracks



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