

## **PART B: REFUGE BOUNDARY EXPANSION ALTERNATIVES**

The second proposal addressed in this EIS is that of expanding the acquisition boundary of the four constituent refuges. The purpose of implementing a refuge boundary expansion proposal is to help the USFWS achieve larger mandates provided by law and treaty that are related to the protection of migratory birds and other Trust resources. Implementation of a boundary expansion proposal is expected to assist the USFWS meet its goals and objectives of the ecosystem plan for the Texas Gulf Coast. Although achievement of the refuge purposes is not necessarily dependent upon additional land acquisition, the possible inclusion of other lands within the refuges would assist the USFWS in more effectively managing existing refuges in this Refuge Complex and achieving its larger ecosystem-wide goals and objectives to ensure the long-term sustainability of migratory bird populations. Expansion of any of the Refuge Complex' constituent refuge acquisition boundaries would thereby authorize the USFWS to work with willing sellers using the acquisition standard and parameters defined in USFWS law, policy, and government regulations. Lands acquired by the USFWS would be managed as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since the USFWS is considering conducting a new action, expansion of refuge boundaries, the NEPA "No Action" alternative is the agency not acting at all. Therefore, the "No Action" Alternative proposes no change from existing refuge boundaries.

Wetland habitats within the areas identified in the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives provide important wintering and migrational habitat for many species of Central Flyway waterfowl, including several species whose continental populations are below goals established under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and/or listed by the USFWS as Game Birds Below Desired Condition (USFWS 2004). These species include Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, and Ring-necked Duck. The Mottled Duck is a year-round resident of Gulf Coast, and conservation and management of this species is a major goal of the NAWMP's Gulf Coast Joint Venture Chenier Plain Initiative Plan (Esslinger and Wilson 2001). Steep declines in Mottled Duck numbers on coastal national wildlife refuges in Texas have been documented in recent years (USFWS, Division of Migratory Birds unpublished reports), and this species is considered to be Rare and Declining in the Coastal Prairies Region of Texas (Shackleford and Lockwood 2000). Coastal marsh, coastal prairie and agricultural habitats within Chambers, Jefferson and Orange counties, including the areas identified in the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives historically supported the highest densities of breeding Mottled Ducks in Texas (Stutzenbaker 1988), and continue to be critically important to the long-term conservation of this species. Meeting the waterfowl population objectives established by the GCJV Chenier Plain Initiative Plan (Esslinger and Wilson 2001) require several habitat protection, management and restoration actions for coastal marshes and enhancement of agricultural habitats to increase their value to waterfowl. These include several strategies for reducing marsh loss (conversion to open water) and restoring already degraded marshes, prescribed burning, controlled grazing, exotic/invasive species control, additional habitat protection through land acquisition and cooperative agreements, and increased technical assistance for waterfowl habitat enhancement on private lands.

The areas identified in the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives lie within the Gulf Coast Prairie (GCP) Region under the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (USSCP). Thirty-nine shorebird species occur in this Region, and it is considered to be of "extremely high importance" to 14 species and of "considerable importance" for 21 additional species. Of these 35 species, 17 are considered to be species of conservation concern under the USSCP. Four are considered "Highly Imperiled" – Snowy Plover, Piping Plover, Long-billed Curlew, and Eskimo Curlew (believed extirpated). Thirteen species are considered "Species of High Concern" – American Golden Plover, Wilson's Plover, Mountain Plover, American Oystercatcher, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, American Woodcock, and Wilson's Phalarope. Wetland habitats within the areas identified in the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives provide important migrational and wintering habitat for many of the shorebird species identified as needing conservation attention within the GCP Region, including for three of the "Highly Imperiled" species: Piping Plover, Long-billed Curlew, and Snowy Plover, and for ten "Species of High Concern": American Golden Plover, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, American Woodcock, and Wilson's Phalarope. The GCP Region Shorebird Plan recommends several

management actions for maritime and non-maritime shorebirds including increased protection and enhanced management of beach nesting areas, additional habitat protection through land acquisition, restoration of beach and barrier island habitat, incorporation of shorebird conservation into U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects, addressing freshwater inflow needs of estuaries as part of water resources planning and development, expansion and enhancement of exotic/invasive species management efforts (Chinese tallow), continued use of prescribed burning to enhance shorebird habitat in wetland and prairie habitats, and expanded and enhanced management of rice agriculture, crawfish impoundments, and moist soil units to benefit shorebirds. Standardization and coordination of systematic population monitoring of priority shorebird species is also recommended.

The North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (Kushlan *et al.* 2002) classified colonial and semi-colonial breeding waterbird species into one of several “at risk” categories, including “not currently at risk”, “low”, “moderate”, “high”, “highly imperiled”, and identified those species for which there is “insufficient information available to assess risk”. Wetland habitats on the areas identified in the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives provide important wintering, migrational and/or nesting habitat for 14 colonial and semi-colonial waterbird species deemed at moderate risk, and 6 species deemed at high risk. High risk species include Tricolored Heron, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Least Tern (all four nest on the Refuge Complex), Wood Stork, and Gull-billed Tern. The population status of solitary breeding marshbirds will be assessed in the second version of the NAWCP. The areas identified in the Refuge Expansion alternatives are extremely important for many of these species, including several already identified by the USFWS as Species of Conservation Concern. These include Yellow Rail, Black Rail, and American Bittern. For the Southeast U.S. Region, the NAWCP identifies major concerns or threats to waterbirds to be fisheries “by-catch”, loss and deterioration of habitat, disturbance of nesting areas (particularly to beach-nesting terns and skimmers), and effects from contaminants. Standardization and coordination of systematic population monitoring of priority waterbird species is also recommended.

The Partners in Flight (PIF) Conservation Program is an international, multi-agency and multi-organization conservation initiative for North American landbirds and waterbirds. PIF recently completed an assessment of the status and conservation needs of all North American land and waterbirds. This assessment included consideration of population trends, habitat trends, and threats on breeding and wintering grounds. National, regional, and more local conservation priorities were determined. These species represent conservation priorities for the USFWS and other PIF partners including state wildlife agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, and other governmental and private partners. Multi-agency PIF conservation strategies for Texas are currently under development, and these strategies will guide management activities at the local and regional scale. In Texas, the PIF partners have identified priority species for conservation, monitoring and management in relation to specific habitat types and seasons within the Texas Coastal Prairies region (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 2000), which includes the areas identified under the Refuge Expansion alternatives. Habitats on areas identified under the Refuge Expansion alternatives provide wintering, migrational and/or nesting habitat for 16 species of wetland-associated birds, 10 species of grassland birds, and 13 species utilizing woodland habitats which are listed as Rare and Declining within the Texas Coastal Prairies Region.

## **Summary of Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives**

The four Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives (A-D) are listed below with a short summary for each.

### ***Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative A (NEPA No Action Alternative) - No Expansion, Current Status***

This Alternative assumes no change from the existing refuge boundaries within the Complex. This is the “no action” alternative as required under NEPA and is considered the base from which to compare the other expansion alternatives. There would be no expansion of any of the four refuge boundaries within the Refuge Complex.

### *Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative B - 33,590 Acre Expansion*

This Alternative continues the four refuges' historic focus on land acquisition primarily in the coastal marsh and the adjacent agricultural uplands. Acquisition would continue to focus on habitats of particular value to the waterfowl resource and other wetland-dependent migratory birds. This Refuge Expansion Alternative concentrates on high-value wintering waterfowl habitats near the coast that are contiguous to existing refuges. In addition to these high biological value wetland habitats, this alternative also includes areas identified as necessary for refuge management. Expansion is proposed for each of the four refuges in the Refuge Complex.

### *Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative C (Preferred Alternative) - 64,260 Acre Expansion\**

**\*Please note that this alternative includes all of the lands in the preceding Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative B.** Similar to Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative B, this Alternative continues the four refuge's historic focus on land acquisition primarily in the coastal marsh and adjacent agricultural uplands. Much of the acquisition would still focus on habitats of particular value to the waterfowl resource and other wetland-dependent migratory birds. The wetlands portions of this expansion alternative concentrate on high-value wintering waterfowl habitats near the coast that are contiguous to existing refuges. In addition to these primarily wetland areas, this Alternative includes two areas of important native coastal prairie with high habitat value for resident Mottled Ducks, many species of grassland-dependent migratory birds, and a wide variety of other native wildlife species. In addition to these two kinds of high biological value habitats, this Alternative also includes areas identified as necessary for refuge management. Expansion is proposed for each of the four refuges in the Refuge Complex.

### *Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative D - 104,120 Acre Expansion\**

**\*Please note that this alternative includes all of the lands in the preceding Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative C.** Similar to Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative C, this Alternative continues the four refuge's historic focus on land acquisition primarily in the coastal marsh and adjacent agricultural uplands. Much of the acquisition would still focus on habitats of particular value to the waterfowl resource and other wetland-dependent migratory birds. The wetlands portions of this expansion alternative concentrate on high-value wintering waterfowl habitats near the coast which are contiguous to existing refuges. In addition to these primarily wetland areas, this Alternative again includes two areas of important native coastal prairie with high habitat value for resident Mottled Ducks, many species of grassland-dependent migratory birds, and a wide variety of other native wildlife species. This Alternative also includes an important near-coast bottomland hardwood area, which is an acquisition target new to this Refuge Complex. The primary habitat type in this area is forested wetlands which provide high quality wintering, migrational, and nesting habitats for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent migratory bird species and important migration and nesting habitat for neotropical migratory songbirds. And finally, in addition to these various kinds of high biological value habitats, this Alternative also includes areas identified as necessary for refuge management. Expansion is proposed for each of the four refuges in the Refuge Complex.

Each of these four Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives are described in much more detail starting below with *Section I. Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative A (NEPA No Action Alternative)*. Before describing each alternative in detail, the next section describes the elements which are common to all of the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives.

## **Elements Common to All Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives**

Although the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives all differ in the areas proposed for acquisition, the land acquisition program for each of the Alternatives has a number of elements or features common to all. The following is a list and description of those elements or features common to all of the Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternatives.

### *Willing Sellers Only*

Although the USFWS, like all agencies of the United States Government, has condemnation authority, it is USFWS policy to acquire land and interests in land from **willing sellers only**. No lands have been condemned in the past for any refuge in the Texas Chenier Plain Refuge Complex and the USFWS does not propose condemnation of any lands in the future. The USFWS can acquire land or interests in land **only within an approved refuge boundary**. In fact, the USFWS can't even accept a donation of land outside of an approved refuge boundary. Lands in any of the refuge boundary expansions would be acquired only from willing sellers as funding becomes available. Landowners within an expanded refuge boundary would be completely free to keep their land, to sell their land to whoever they wished, to leave their land to their heirs, or to change uses of their land.

Including lands within a NWR boundary does not require the landowner to sell only to the USFWS nor does it limit that landowner's other conservation options and opportunities. The USFWS actively encourages all private landowners who are interested in wildlife or environmental conservation, whether their lands are within an approved refuge boundary or not, to avail themselves of the many conservation program and options available. A list and detailed description of many of the other conservation programs and options available to private landowners in the Texas Chenier Plain region is located in Appendix C.

Since 1971, the acquisition of land for a variety of Federal government programs and projects has been subject to the Uniform Relocation and Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended in 1987 (the Uniform Act). The full rules for the Uniform Act can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 24. The Uniform Act applies to the USFWS acquisition program and two very important provisions of this Act effect willing sellers: 1) relocation assistance for sellers of land, and 2) the requirement to offer to purchase for the full fair market value as established by an approved appraisal. The relocation provisions provide financial assistance to landowners, tenants, and small businesses that are required to move because of the sale of real property, in whole or part, to the USFWS. The relocation assistance is provided so that displaced persons will not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of programs designed for the benefit of the public as a whole. Fair market value appraisals are done to ensure that potential sellers will be treated fairly, consistently, and equitably. The appraisal is independent, impartial, prepared by a qualified appraiser, and reviewed to ensure that all applicable appraisal standards and requirements were met. The amount the USFWS offers to purchase the land will never be less than the fair market value established by the approved appraisal. The USFWS also pays all of the incidental expenses incurred in transferring title; such as recording fees, title insurance costs, necessary surveys, escrow fees, and other similar expenses.

### *Acquisition methods*

For all land and interests in land acquired by the USFWS, title is taken by the United States of America. The USFWS acquires most land in one of two ways: 1) in fee, or 2) conservation easement. The "fee" means virtually all of the rights and interests in the land, that which would be generally recognized as "ownership of the land". Fee acquisition removes the land from the tax rolls. Fee acquisition gives the USFWS exclusive possession and use of the land which would allow for compatible public recreational activities. Fee acquisition allows the USFWS to perform any of the management activities (i.e., water management, prescribed burning) deemed necessary for habitat conservation on that land. The fee acquisitions are typically subject to reserved or outstanding subsurface mineral interests and other existing surface easements, such as pipelines or other rights-of-way. The purchase of a conservation easement is the acquisition of a much lesser interest in the land. "Ownership of the land" does not transfer to the United States and the land remains on the tax rolls with the underlying private landowner having the tax obligations. Conservation easements can consist of one or more of the two following categories of interests in land: 1) negative covenants, which prevent a specific use (i.e., no development); and 2) possessory interests, which grant a specific use right (i.e., public hunting). Conservation easements are an acquisition option when adequate habitat conservation can be achieved without the USFWS acquiring full ownership of the land. Conservation easements are not always a viable option with willing sellers because some sellers wish to dispose of all of their interests in the land for various reasons.

Conservation easements are appraised and purchased in the same way as fee acquisitions. Also, the USFWS generally accepts donations of both fee and conservation easements.

Both fee acquisition and the acquisition of conservation easements have been used in the past on the refuges in the Texas Chenier Plain Refuge Complex. A detailed acquisition history for each of the refuges is located in the description of Refuge Boundary Expansion Alternative A: No Action. At Moody NWR, all of the USFWS' interests in land are in the form of a conservation easement. At Anahuac NWR, all of the USFWS' interests in land are in fee except for a public access road easement. At McFaddin NWR, the mix of the USFWS' interest in land is 86% fee and 14% conservation easement. At Texas Point NWR, all of the USFWS' interests in land are in fee. The USFWS will consider both fee and conservation easement for future acquisitions dependent upon the habitat conservation requirements and the willing seller's agreement.

In a few instances, the USFWS acquires interests in land by lease, right-of-way easement, or agreement. These are typically either for a shorter period of time or for more limited use purposes compared to fee and conservation easements.

#### *Acquisition funding sources*

The USFWS has only two primary land acquisition funding sources: 1) the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, and 2) the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of 1934, as amended (16 U.S.C. 718-718h) requires all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and over to annually purchase and carry a Federal Duck Stamp. Approximately 98 cents of every Duck Stamp dollar goes directly into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to purchase wetlands and wildlife habitat for inclusion into the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since 1934, more than \$500 million has gone into this Fund to purchase more than 5 million acres of primarily waterfowl habitat. The Fund is administered by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and acquisition expenditures from this Fund require the approval of the governor of the state where the land to be purchased is located. This Fund has been the primary source of funding for land acquisition for all of the refuges within the Texas Chenier Plain Refuge Complex and it is expected that it will remain the primary source of funding in the future. This discretionary land acquisition funding source is very actively competed for on a national level within the USFWS.

The other primary land acquisition funding source was authorized by the Land Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601-11). The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) appropriations are derived from Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas leases, tax on motorboat fuels, and the sale of certain surplus Federal lands. Forty per cent or more of Land and Water Conservation Funds are appropriated for Federal land acquisition for the National Park System, the National Forest System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the Bureau of Land Management. The balance of the Funds provide financial assistance to the States for planning, land acquisition and development of outdoor recreation opportunities. The LWCF is not a discretionary funding source and Congress appropriates money to a specific project or refuge for land acquisition. Some LWCF money has been appropriated to purchase land at McFaddin NWR, but it has been a minor amount compared to the amount of Migratory Bird Conservation Funds used for land acquisition on the Refuge Complex.

#### *Refuge Revenue Sharing*

Lands acquired by the USFWS in fee are removed from the tax rolls, because as an agency of the United States Government, the USFWS, like city, township, county and state governments, is exempt from taxation. Those lands in which the USFWS only acquires a conservation easement remain on the tax rolls and the tax obligation remains with the private landowner. The Refuge Revenue Sharing Act (the Act of June 15, 1935, as amended in 1978 by Public Law 95-469) or (16 U.S.C. 715s) authorizes the USFWS to make payments to the county or other local unit of government to offset the tax losses for lands administered solely or primarily by the USFWS.

The net income the USFWS receives from the sale of products or privileges on refuges (like timber sales, grazing fees, right-of-way permit fees, etc.) is deposited in the National Wildlife Refuge Fund for revenue sharing payments. Originally, 25% of the net receipts collected from the sale of various products or privileges from refuge lands were paid to the counties in which they were located. However, if no revenue was generated from the refuge lands the county received no payment. The Refuge Revenue Sharing Act was amended in 1964 to allow a payment of either 1) 25% of the net receipts, 2)  $\frac{3}{4}$  of 1% of the adjusted purchase price of refuge land, or 3) 75 cents per acre, whichever was greater, on acquired lands. Payments still had to be made out of refuge receipts in the National Wildlife Refuge Fund. Beginning in Fiscal Year 1976, the refuge receipts were not sufficient to make the county payments and the payments were reduced accordingly. Partly because of this, the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act was again amended in 1978. This amendment allowed Congress to appropriate funds to make up any shortfall in the revenue sharing fund. It also approved use of the payments for any governmental purpose; whereas, before, the payments could only be used for roads and schools.

Because refuge receipts have not kept up with the general increase in property values, the  $\frac{3}{4}$  of 1% of market value of refuge lands has effectively become the largest amount of refuge revenue sharing payment allowable under the Act since 1976. Initially, Congress appropriated the additional funds necessary to make the largest payment, but only through Fiscal Year 1980. Since that time Congress has not appropriated sufficient additional funds to make the largest payment allowed by law. If the amount Congress appropriates is not enough to match the largest payment allowable, the units of local government receive a pro-rata share. Even without the full supplemental appropriations, the dollar amount of Refuge Revenue Sharing payments is substantial and significantly offsets the local tax losses. In some instances, largely for lands subject to the agricultural exemption, the Refuge Revenue Sharing payments have been equal to or even greater than the amount paid in taxes while in private ownership. The USFWS supports full Congressional appropriations to achieve the maximum Refuge Revenue Sharing payments.

Table 3-52, representing the ten-year history of refuge revenue sharing payments for the Refuge Complex, is located in Chapter 3, *Affected Environment*. The table breaks down the payments by refuge and county for each year. All lands acquired in the future or lands donated in the future to the refuges would be included in the calculation and payment of Refuge Revenue Sharing payments. The market value for newly acquired lands is initially the purchase price; however, the USFWS reappraises the market value of all the lands in a refuge once every 5 years to keep the market value of the lands updated for revenue sharing purposes. The Refuge Revenue Sharing payments are usually made during the first quarter of each calendar year. By law the USFWS makes the payments to the unit of local government that levies and collects general purpose real property taxes, which in Texas, is the county government.

#### *Habitat and public use management on newly acquired lands*

Lands which are acquired in the future within the expanded refuge boundaries will be managed under the concepts expressed in the Preferred Refuge Management Alternative (Refuge Management Alternative D) in the first part of this Chapter. Also, this management concept is developed in detail in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) in Appendix D of this document. This concept's emphasis is on an integrated management approach combining: expanded habitat management and restoration programs; new research and wildlife population monitoring; and, increased efforts to address major threats to ecosystem health. The management activities proposed for specific habitat types in the Preferred Refuge Management Alternative would be implemented in the same or similar habitat types on newly acquired lands. The six priority wildlife-dependent uses, which include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation, would be administered on newly acquired lands utilizing facilities and programs similar to those described in the Preferred Refuge Management Alternative D.

# I. REFUGE BOUNDARY EXPANSION ALTERNATIVE A (NEPA NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE) – NO EXPANSION, CURRENT STATUS

## Alternative Concept with Map

### *Alternative Focus*

This Alternative assumes no change from the existing refuge boundaries within the Refuge Complex. This is the “No Action” alternative as required under NEPA and is considered the base from which to compare the other Refuge Boundary Expansion alternatives. There would be no expansion of any of the four refuge boundaries within the Refuge Complex. The acreage figures for the current approved boundaries of the four refuges are as follows: [acreage figures are approximate]

### Current Approved Refuge Boundaries

Moody NWR	3,516 acres
Anahuac NWR	34,339 acres
McFaddin NWR	70,710 acres
Texas Point NWR	8,952 acres

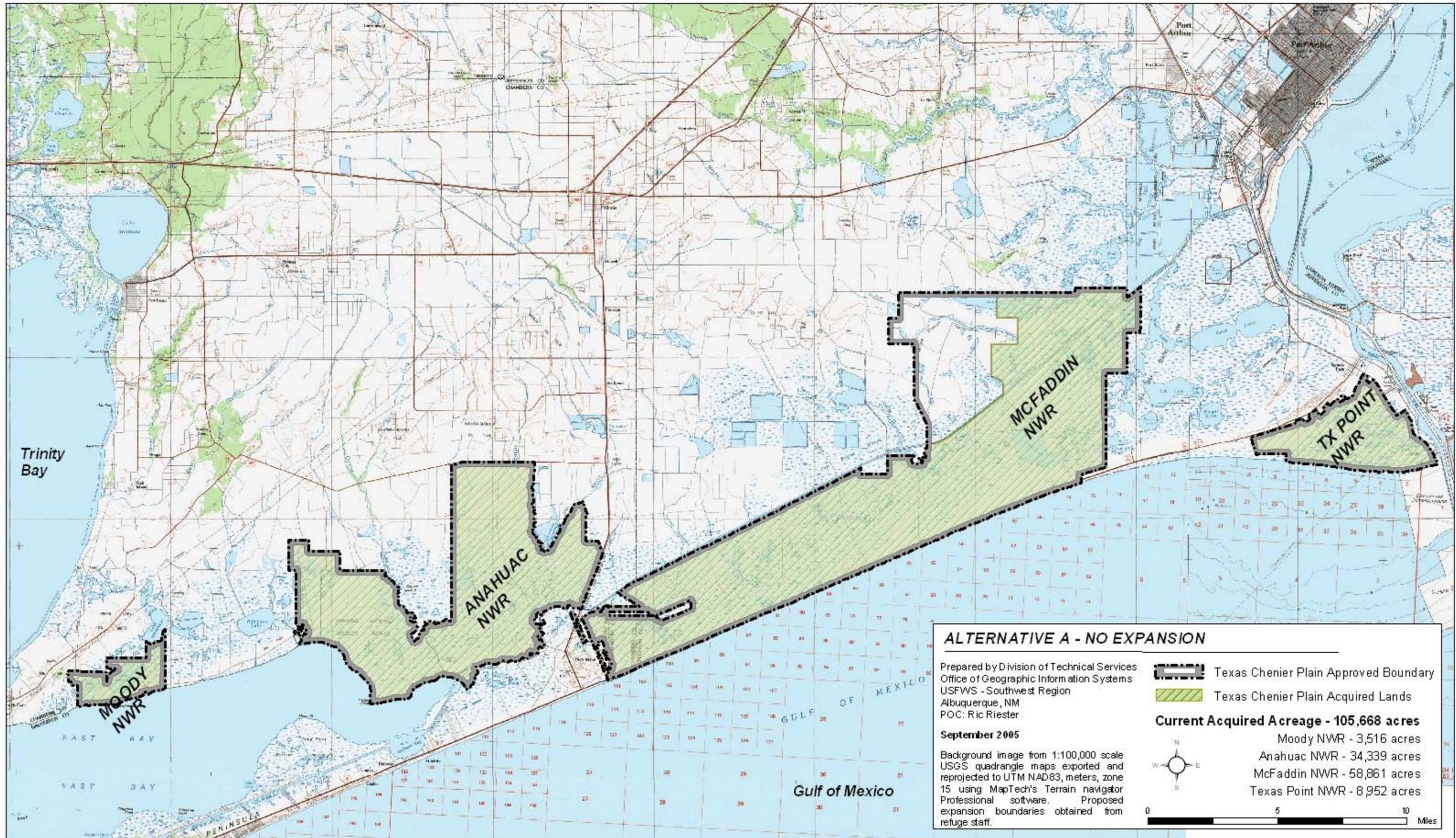
There would be no land acquisition outside of these already existing boundaries. Most, but not all, of the lands within the current approved boundaries for the four refuges has already been acquired. However, acquisition, on a willing seller only basis, of the remaining lands within the current approved refuge boundaries would continue. The land acquisition status within current boundaries for each refuge is as follows:

- Moody NWR: A conservation easement on all lands within the approved boundary has already been acquired.
- Anahuac NWR: All lands within the approved boundary have already been acquired.
- McFaddin NWR: All lands within the approved boundary have already been acquired, except for one major ownership. That ownership, locally known as the Sabine Ranch, is approximately 11,850 acres and was included in the original refuge boundary established in 1977. The USFWS has been unable to purchase this property since the Refuge was established in 1977.
- Texas Point NWR: All lands within the approved boundary have already been acquired.

### *Summary of Current Land Acquisition Status*

<u>Refuge</u>	<u>Approved Boundary</u>	<u>Acquired Lands</u>	<u>Percentage Acquired</u>
Moody NWR	3,516 acres	3,516 acres	100%
Anahuac NWR	34,339 acres	34,339 acres	100%
McFaddin NWR	70,710 acres	58,861 acres	83%
Texas Point NWR	8,952 acres	8,952 acres	100%

See map of existing refuge boundaries on the following page.



### *Rationale for Alternative*

The coastal marshes, prairies and woodlots of the Chenier Plain region of southwestern Louisiana and southeast Texas comprise a hemispherically important biological area. The Texas Gulf Coast is the primary site for ducks wintering in the Central Flyway, with an average of 1.3-4.5 million birds, or 30-71% of the total flyway population (Stutzenbaker and Weller 1989). This area also winters 90% of the snow, Canada, and greater white-fronted geese in the Central Flyway (Buller 1964). Additionally, the coastal marshes, prairies and prairie wetlands of the Chenier Plain region of the Texas Gulf Coast serve as a critical staging area for Central Flyway waterfowl migrating to and from Mexico and Central and South America. Hundreds of thousands shorebirds, wading birds, and other marsh and waterbirds also winter or migrate through the region, including several now identified by the USFWS as avian Species of Conservation Concern. Coastal prairie and coastal woodlots support over 150 migratory and resident landbird species, including 9 species of grassland birds and 7 species utilizing woodland habitats listed as Rare and Declining within the Coastal Prairies Region of Texas (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department 2000). Overall, wetland, prairie and woodland habitats on the Refuge Complex provide habitat for 33 avian Species of Conservation Concern in the Gulf Prairies Bird Conservation Region (under the North American Bird Conservation Initiative).

Wetland habitats, including coastal marsh and prairie wetlands, on acquired lands within the current approved boundaries would be managed to benefit waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds and other wetland-dependent migratory birds using prescribed burning, grazing, water level and salinity management, rice farming, moist soil management, mowing, and haying. Restoration and protection of native habitats including wetlands, prairie, and woodlands would continue as planned on acquired lands within existing boundaries. The Refuge Complex biological program involving systematic field surveys to monitor population status and trends of various species and habitats would continue on Refuge Complex lands. Planned efforts to address threats to ecosystem health posed by coastal land loss, hydrological alterations, exotic species and contaminants would continue on Refuge Complex lands. The Refuge Complex would continue to provide opportunities for all six of the Refuge System's priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation through the use of existing programs and facilities. Refuge Complex staff would continue to provide technical assistance to private landowners wishing to enhance wetland and upland habitats on private lands for waterfowl and other wildlife.

### **Land Acquisition History for Moody National Wildlife Refuge, 1961-Present**

<u>Unit or Tract</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Original Refuge, fee donation	1961	714
Exchange, Conservation Easement	1982	<u>3516</u>
	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>3516</b>

**Land Acquisition History for Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, 1963 – Present**

<u>Unit or Tract</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Acres*</u>
Original Refuge	1963	9835.48
Easement Road (Easement)	unknown	63.09
Mitigation Area	1978	185.474
Pace Tract	1979	1508.864
Barrow Ranch (East Unit)	1985	12779.50
Roberts Mueller	1989	3069.80
Galveston County Donation	1989	167.10
Jackson Granberry	1990	575.60
Barrow SW (East Bay Bayou)	1991	315.06
Alice Jackson White	1994	2017.82
Middleton Marsh Tract	1996	3718.57
Cade Estate	2005	<u>43.00</u>
	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>34279.358</b>

**Land Acquisition History for McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge, 1980 – Present**

<u>Unit or Tract</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Acres*</u>
Original refuge	1980	1,682.382
Sea Rim Professionals Easement	1980	881.894
Cordts Easement	1980	420.00
White Fee Tract	1995	4,960.07
White Easement	1995	6,475.23
Middleton Tract	1996	1,293.00
Way Tract	1996	491.37
Cade Estate	2005	<u>2681.059</u>
	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>58,885.639</b>

**Land Acquisition History for Texas Point National Wildlife Refuge, 1979-Present**

<u>Unit or Tract</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Original refuge	1979	<u>8952</u>
	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>8952</b>

\*Recited acreage figures from property descriptions in deeds varies from acreage figures used elsewhere.