



Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update 1, November 2010



The refuge headquarters against the backdrop of Mt. Hood / © Bjorn Fredrickson

Invitation from the Refuge Manager: Comprehensive Conservation Planning Begins

With much enthusiasm, Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is embarking upon a planning process to review the wildlife, habitat, public use activities, and needs of the refuge, including the recently established Wapato Lake Unit. We welcome you to be part of this process.

The refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) will create a roadmap to guide refuge management over the next 15 years and beyond. An environmental assessment will be developed with the CCP to analyze the effects of the proposed plan and alternatives.

Help Us Plan for the Future!

As we begin planning, we have the opportunity to look at our wildlife and habitat management and public use programs from fresh perspectives. We need to consider what is working well now and where we can make improvements.

The purposes of the refuge will remain the same: to protect habitat for wildlife and to provide compatible wildlife-dependent recreation and education. As part of the CCP, we will assess our current management of wildlife and habitat. We will also review our public use programs, such as wildlife observation and environmental education. We will consider the need for new visitor programs and facilities, particularly at the Wapato Lake Unit.

We invite you to get involved. Learn more about Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge and the

planning process at our website www.fws.gov/tualatinriver.

The first planning step is to identify the issues, concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the CCP. Your insights and observations are an important part of the process and are essential to provide a complete and thoughtful plan.

Please share your ideas with us by attending our open houses (see page 3 for details) or by submitting comments to the refuge (see page 8 for contact information). Your comments will be most helpful if received by January 10, 2011.

Your participation is critical to the success of this effort – we want to hear from you!

*Ralph Webber, Refuge Manager
Tualatin River National Wildlife
Refuge*

National Wildlife What?

Refuges are places where wildlife comes first.

The National Wildlife Refuge System comprises the world's largest collection of lands set aside specifically for wildlife and provides important habitat for native plants and animals. The National Wildlife Refuge System is administered by the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the nation's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for the benefit of the American people.

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."



Pied-billed grebes / © Ed Bustya

Urban Refuge Protects Diverse Wildlife and Habitats

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System and is among a handful of urban refuges in the country. Situated within the floodplain of the Tualatin River, the refuge provides habitat for some of the most diverse

and abundant wildlife in the river valley. Currently, the refuge manages 2,154 acres; however, there are 7,370 acres within the approved acquisition boundary.

Since its establishment in 1992, refuge managers have been acquiring and restoring lands and waters for the benefit of native fish and wildlife. Native habitats include rivers and streams, seasonal and permanent wetlands, riparian areas, grasslands and savanna areas, and forested uplands. The refuge is now home to nearly 200 species of birds, over 50 species of mammals, 25 species of reptiles and amphibians, and a wide variety of insects, fish and plants.

The refuge also provides a variety of recreational and educational activities focused on fish and wildlife and their habitats.

Visitor facilities include the Wildlife Center, environmental education shelter, trails, overlooks, observation deck, photography blind, environmental education study sites and exhibit panels. Current visitation is approximately 90,000 people per year.



Common yellowthroat / © Barbara Scoles





Visitors enjoying the wetland observation deck / USFWS

You Are Invited to Our Open Houses

These are opportunities for you to help us identify the issues to be addressed in the CCP.

Sherwood

Date: Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Place: Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge
19255 SW Pacific Highway, Sherwood, OR



Forest Grove

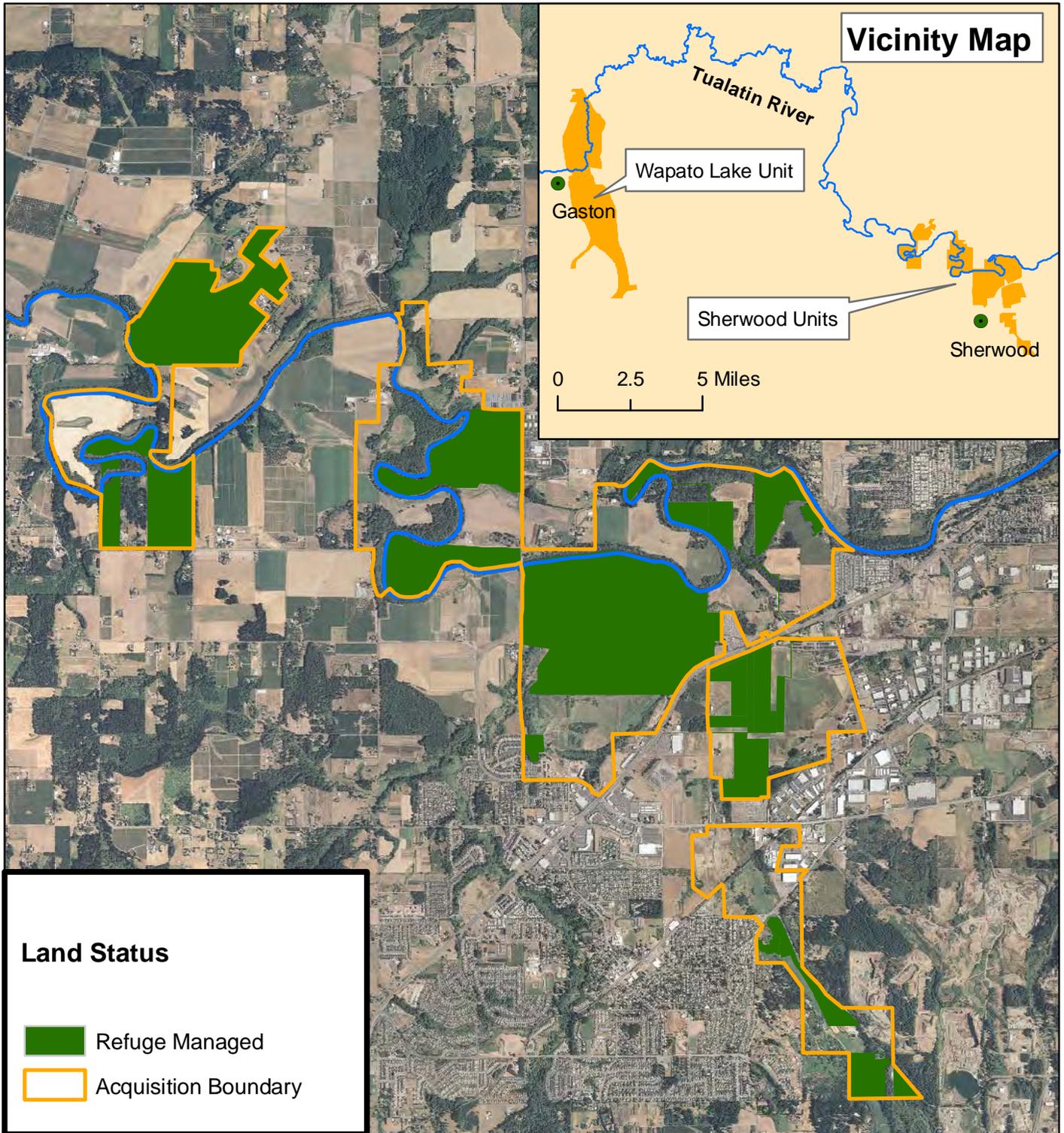
Date: Thursday, December 2, 2010

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Place: Forest Grove Senior and Community Center
2037 Douglas Street, Forest Grove, OR

Your comments will be most helpful if received by January 10, 2011

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, Sherwood Units

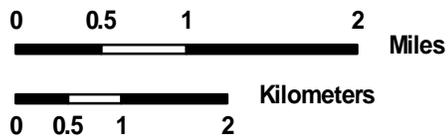
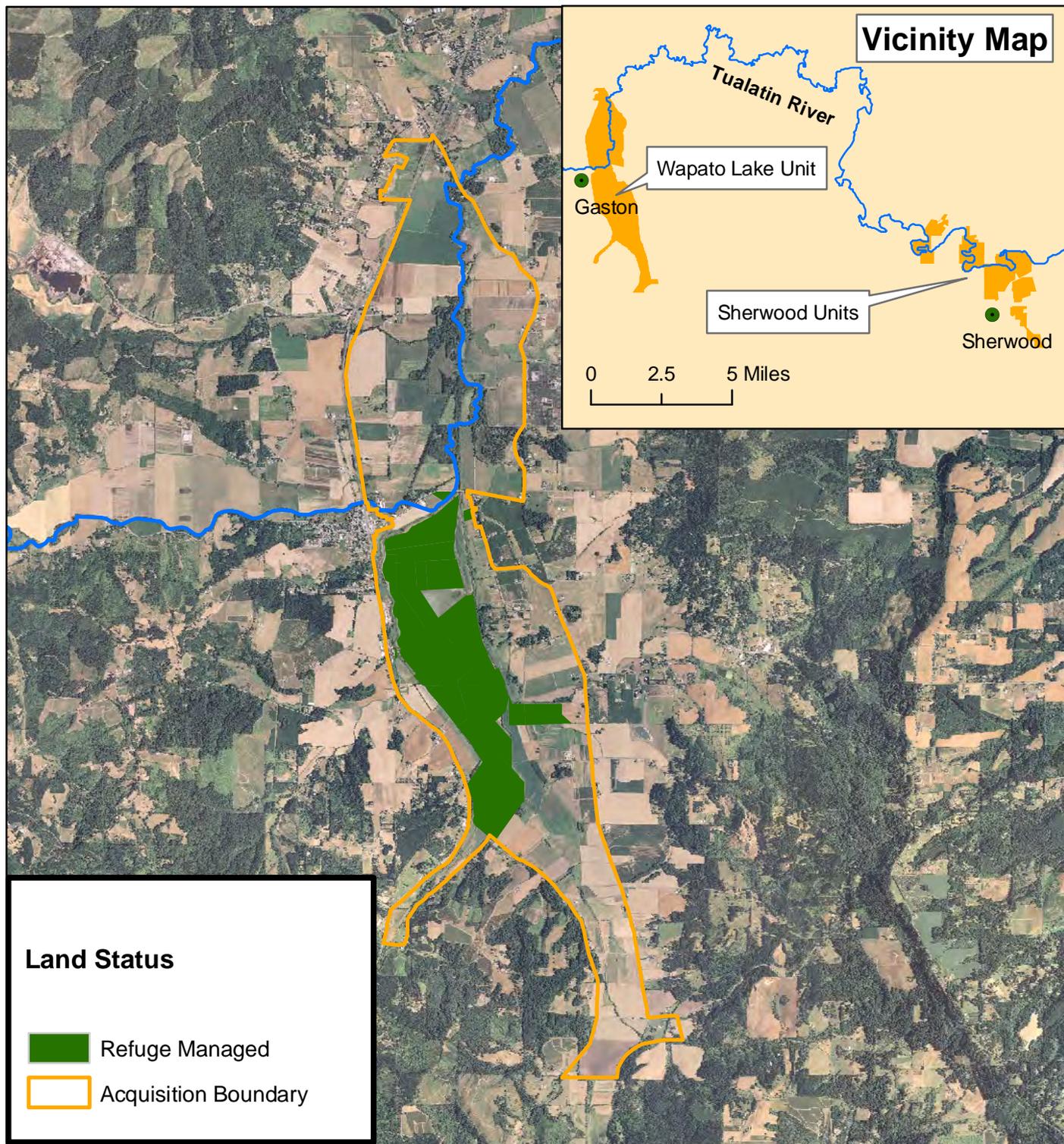


0 0.5 1 2 Miles

0 0.5 1 2 Kilometers



Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, Wapato Lake Unit



Preliminary Issues to be Considered

In preparing the CCP, a range of reasonable alternative management approaches will be explored and evaluated, including current management practices. We have identified some potential issues to be considered in the plan. We would like to hear your comments on these issues, and any other concerns and opportunities you think we should address in the plan.

Habitat Restoration and Management: Habitat restoration requires understanding hydrologic processes in the Tualatin River watershed. CCP development will include computer modeling to determine historic, current and future extent, frequency and duration of Tualatin River flooding. Important habitats will also be identified and mapped. Information from modeling and mapping will be used to identify ways that current river hydrology could be integrated into habitat restoration and management, including at the Wapato Lake Unit.



Wildlife and Habitat Management: All habitats on the refuge are managed for the benefit of native fish and wildlife. The CCP will examine current management practices and potential new actions, such as the use of prescribed fire, to meet refuge purposes while minimizing adverse effects on neighbors.

Canada Goose Management: Some populations of Canada geese are declining, while others are increasing, creating potential problems for agricultural crops and urban open spaces. The CCP will explore how refuge management, including cooperative farming, may play a role in addressing this issue.



Browsing Canada geese / © Ed Bustya

Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Management: Migrating and wintering fish, such as coastal cutthroat, winter steelhead and Pacific lamprey, benefit from barrier-free river and stream channels and backwater sloughs. The CCP will consider the effects of various habitat restoration and management actions on native fish.



Roosevelt elk / US National Park Service

Elk Management: The refuge is located within an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife-designated Elk De-emphasis Area, which has the management objective of limiting the number of elk to minimize damage to agricultural crops. Populations of elk in the Coast Range are less than one mile from the Wapato Lake Unit. The CCP will evaluate alternative actions to manage elk attracted to the refuge.

Invasive Species and Non-Native Species Management: One of the most widespread and serious challenges facing the refuge is infestation of refuge habitats by non-native and invasive species. Reed canarygrass, cocklebur, velvetleaf, knotgrass, and Himalayan blackberry are established examples. Non-native animals on the refuge include nutria, bullfrog, carp and feral cats. These species degrade habitat and directly affect native wildlife. The CCP will consider various management actions and control tools.

Mosquito-Borne Disease Concerns: Public concerns over diseases that are potentially transmissible from wildlife to

humans have increased in recent years. The CCP will explore the refuge's role and appropriate responses to these concerns in cooperation with local agencies.

Preliminary Issues to be Considered *continued*

Public Use: The CCP will consider how the refuge can best address desires for wildlife-dependent public use opportunities (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation) while also protecting wildlife and habitat. Special emphasis will be given to public use planning at the Wapato Lake Unit. The CCP will also consider whether entrance and/or user fees should be charged for public use.



Visitors of all ages learn about refuge habitats / USFWS

Community Partnerships: The CCP will consider how the refuge can maintain and expand existing partnerships and better engage community members in citizen science and habitat restoration activities.

Research and Monitoring: The CCP will identify refuge research needs, particularly related to human disturbances affecting migrating and wintering waterfowl, management of invasive species, and baseline

data needed to guide adaptive management. Additional study is needed of the dynamic interaction between the Tualatin River and Wapato Lake, and the associated water quality effects.



Looking out over Wapato Lake / Courtesy of blog.oregonlive.com



Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge
19255 SW Pacific Highway
Sherwood, OR 97140

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Contact Us!

Email: TualatinCCP@fws.gov
Please include "Tualatin River CCP/EA" in the subject line of the message.

Fax: Attn: Refuge Manager, 503-625-5947

US Mail: Attn: Refuge Manager
Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge
19255 SW Pacific Highway, Sherwood, OR 97140

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