

Chapter 5



USFWS

Federally threatened northeastern beach tiger beetle

Consultation and Coordination

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Introduction

We presented in chapter 2, figure 2.1, the steps in the comprehensive conservation planning process and how it integrates NEPA requirements, including public involvement. This chapter describes how we engaged others in developing this CCP and how we plan to continue consulting and coordinating with others in the future. In chronological order, it details our efforts to encourage the involvement of the public and conservation partners, the partnership of other Federal and State agencies, civic, public, and private conservation and education organizations, and user groups. It also identifies who contributed in writing the plan or significantly contributed to its contents.

It does not detail the dozens of informal discussions refuge staff have had over the last 12 years in which the CCP was a topic of conversation. Those involved a wide range of audiences, including congressional representatives or their staffs, local community leaders and other residents, refuge neighbors, refuge visitors, and other interested individuals. During those discussions, the refuge manager and staff often would provide an update on our progress and encourage comments and other participation.

We initially released the draft CCP/EIS for 60 days of public review and comment from April 10 to June 9, 2014. In response to several requests, we subsequently extended the public comment period through October 10, 2014. In total, the comment period was 6 months long. During the comment period, we held five public meetings in Town: one public hearing and four open houses. We also spoke to the Chatham Summer Residents Advisory Committee, at their request, at a televised meeting. We evaluated all the letters and e-mails sent to us during the comment period, along with comments recorded at our public hearing. We received 255 separate written responses (some letters had multiple signatures), and 39 oral comments from the public hearing on the draft CCP/EIS. Of the 255 written comments, 41 were a form letter. We also received two petitions: one signed by approximately 650 individuals and the other by approximately 1,276 individuals. Some individuals signed both petitions. Appendix K to this document summarizes all of the substantive comments we received and provides our responses to them.

We released the final CCP/EIS for public review on October 30, 2015, for a 37-day period which closed on December 7, 2015. We received comments from 34 individuals, agencies, and organizations on the final CCP/EIS.

According to Service policy, we must review and update our final CCP at least once every 15 years, sooner in response to important new information that would markedly change management direction, or if our Director or Regional Director deems it necessary. If so, we will once again announce our revised planning and encourage your participation.

Planning to Protect Land and Resources

Our refuge planning began in 1999 when we initiated a CCP that would encompass all the refuges in the Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex. We published a notice of intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*, and began public scoping efforts. In February 1999, we held open houses in each unit for public comment on different issues including current and future management strategies, land protection, and public uses. We were pleased with the participation at many of our meetings, which ranged from 30 people to more than 100. We recognized that attending our open houses would be difficult for many, and designed an issues workbook to encourage additional comments for those unable to attend. Those workbooks allowed people to share what they valued most about the refuge, their vision for its future and the Service's role in their community, and any other issues they wanted to raise. More than 8,000 people representing a variety of interests received workbooks. Workbooks were also available at open

houses and at the refuge headquarters. We received over 660 responses. The responses for Monomoy NWR were considered in the development of issues for this CCP.

In February 2001, we determined that writing a plan for eight refuges was too cumbersome, so we delayed our planning for Monomoy NWR and changed our focus on CCPs for the three northernmost refuges in the complex. In 2004, in an effort intended to initially “re-scope” the issues surrounding management of the refuge, we asked the independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit facilitator, the CBI, to conduct an assessment that would provide specific, detailed recommendations for stakeholder involvement and participation in the planning process. Between November 15 and December 23, 2004, CBI conducted 15 interviews with 19 individuals either in-person or over the phone. We sought to provide CBI with a diverse set of stakeholders who might identify many, if not most, of the issues relevant to management of the refuge. Some interviewees suggested additional individuals to interview. CBI interviewed a selection of stakeholders, from local businesses and residents to elected and appointed officials. CBI received several comments via e-mail and phone.

Also in 2004, we decided to prepare a joint CCP for Nomans Land and Monomoy refuges, and subsequently convened a new core planning team. An NOI to prepare the Monomoy CCP and environmental impact statement was published in the *Federal Register* on December 13, 2004.

Public scoping meetings were held in April 2005 in Chatham, Sudbury, and Chilmark, Massachusetts. More than 300 people attended these meetings. Most of the planning effort during this period was focused on the CCP for the Monomoy refuge. We discussed management issues, drafted a vision statement and tentative goals, and compiled a project mailing list of known stakeholders, interested individuals, organizations, and agencies. However, work on writing the CCP stalled as research was conducted on Monomoy Island by Service staff and consultants hired by the Town. Additionally, in 2007, the refuge planner coordinating the CCP transferred to a different position within the Service. In the summer of 2008, it was decided to conduct separate CCPs for Nomans Land Island and Monomoy NWRs.

After identifying additional data gaps, we contracted with the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies to conduct a geomorphological analysis of the Monomoy barrier system. We also contracted for an analysis that estimated the impact of sea level rise on the refuge.

Throughout 2009 and 2013, the core planning team, consisting of refuge and regional staff, met in Chatham and Sudbury. Other members of the core planning team, including a representative from the Department of Fish and Game and Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), did not participate in the meetings.

At each meeting, the objectives and strategies were discussed, as well as the issues identified by previous scoping efforts and the core planning team. We reworked a vision statement, revisited previously drafted goals and objectives, identified new issues, determined what additional resource information we needed to collect and summarize, and discussed what other experts we should consult to help us address planning issues. A summary of the planning process was presented, and people were encouraged to provide feedback and identify general concerns or issues they have about the refuge. We worked to develop our three alternatives and wrote the draft CCP/EIS, including 6 chapters, 10 appendices, and a bibliography and glossary and acronyms. In March 2013, we distributed a newsletter summarizing the alternatives in detail and updating our

planning timeframes. In May 2013, we prepared the draft CCP/EIS for internal review. It was released for public comment in April 2014. After the close of the public comment period in October 2014, we revised our preferred alternative and drafted a final CCP/EIS, which was released in October 2015. This CCP represents the completion of the planning process for the Monomoy NWR.

During this time, we completed the Nomans Land Island NWR CCP and the Nantucket NWR CCP, and began working on the Mashpee NWR and Massasoit NWR CCPs, which are still in progress.

Updating Various Constituents on our Progress

The refuge has provided updates on the CCP process to the local community and other constituents through a variety of methods. Following the release of the NOI, the public was informed and public comments solicited through a variety of additional mechanisms. The CCP process information was posted on the CCP planning Web site. In addition, news releases requesting public input as part of the draft CCP/EA scoping process were sent to 49 local and regional newspapers. A flyer requesting input and advertising the public meetings was made available at the refuge visitor contact station. Lastly, public scoping newsletters and public meeting invitations were sent via e-mail or U.S. Postal Service to more than 300 individuals (private citizens, interest groups, academia, and representatives of local, State, and Federal agencies, and Tribes). About 500 individuals and organizations were informed by e-mail or U.S. Postal Service about the availability of the draft and final CCP/EIS documents. Planning updates were sent to individuals and agencies on the CCP mailing list in Winter 2004, Summer 2005, Winter 2005, Fall 2006, Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Summer 2008, March 2012, April 2014, and October 2015.

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