

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Summary of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge



This is a summary of the comprehensive conservation plan for the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

Approved in 2013, the plan guides management of the refuge for the next 15 years.



Black-necked Stilt

We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, completed a comprehensive conservation plan in 2013 to guide management and use of the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in Kansas over the next 15 years.

The Refuge

The refuge consists of 22,135 acres in Stafford, Rice, and Reno Counties in

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for each national wildlife refuge.

The plan is needed to address problems that could negatively affect fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats.

The plan determines opportunities for people to use the refuge complex in ways that are compatible with resource conservation and refuge purposes.

Cover photograph of a female Wilson's phalarope.

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south-central Kansas. Our staff at the Quivira Refuge also manages the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, Kansas, in partnership with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism and the City of Wichita Department of Park and Recreation.

The Quivira Refuge is located in the Great Plains. Its purposes are to provide migration, nesting, resting, and feeding habitat for migratory birds and to develop, advance, manage, conserve, and protect fish and wildlife resources.

The refuge also provides opportunities for the public to enjoy compatible wildlife-dependent public use activities including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

Management Direction

The plan guides management of the Quivira Refuge to accomplish its purposes and objectives. As the plan is implemented, we will develop stepdown plans that have more details on management and evaluation strategies.



Snowy Plover

Goals

We developed goals and proposed activities for managing the refuge's resources that are consistent with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the refuge's purposes, and the information we gathered during planning.

Landscape Conservation Goal

Actively protect, preserve, manage, and restore the functionality of the diverse ecosystems of the Rattlesnake Creek watershed.

- Collaborate with other programs and natural resource agencies to promote land protection, restoration, and management in the watershed, particularly on lands within 10 miles of the refuge.
- Reduce the fragmentation of refuge grassland habitats to benefit grassland-dependent wildlife, particularly species that exhibit area sensitivity

during essential life cycle events.

- Initiate the restoration of remaining refuge agricultural lands to suitable, native plant communities, based on ecological site descriptions, to help native grassland species.
- Promote ecological resilience by restoring and maintaining native communities:

Native Ecological Community Conservation Goal

Actively conserve and improve environmental conditions within refuge boundaries to promote sustainable, native ecological communities and support species of concern associated with this region of the Great Plains.

- Maintain the integrity and persistence of a diversity of wetland types and conditions. Support hydrological cycles characteristic of each wetland

type, to the extent possible, by adjusting elements according to seasons and life cycle needs.

- Within grasslands, consider the habitat relationships of focal species, known characteristics of the soil-plant associations on the refuge, the need for periodic management treatments, and limitations of management. Maintain integrity and persistence by adjusting elements according to seasons and life cycle needs.

- Retain at least 125 acres of woodlands largely located on the perimeter and within 55 yards of main roads.

Visitor Services Goal

See that visitors enjoy quality, wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities.

- Allow compatible waterfowl, upland bird, and small game hunting within traditional boundaries in a manner that protects whooping cranes and promotes employee and public safety.
- Increase safe and compatible hunting opportunities on the refuge by allowing the hunting of deer, turkey, and furbearers, requiring refuge-specific permits and regulations.
- Allow fishing in refuge waters with minimal disturbance to other wildlife and the natural aquatic ecosystem.
- Enhance fishing and education opportunities for youth by maintaining the Kids' Fishing Pond.
- Increase awareness and access to wildlife observation and photography opportunities.
- Promote and expand opportunities for birdwatchers and photographers at woodland groves.
- Design and conduct programs that improve the advocacy and awareness of our mission and





Muskrat

management; fish and wildlife resources; and our refuge management activities and natural, cultural, and historic resources.

- Increase interpretive media to reach more of the public both onsite and offsite.

Lesser Yellowlegs



- Conduct onsite and offsite programs every year at the Great Plains Nature Center focusing on “at risk” youth and other underserved audiences.
- Create a definition of environmental education and increase the level of professionalism of our environmental education programs.
- Increase outreach and marketing efforts to teachers and students to grow the Junior Federal Duck Stamp program.
- Maintain foot trails, and increase interpretative signs on them.
- Provide other appropriate and compatible opportunities for wildlife-dependent and nonwildlife-dependent recreation that support the six priority public uses or contribute to the appreciation of the refuge.

Public Outreach Goal

Help visitors of all abilities understand, appreciate, and support our mission, the refuge’s unique habitats, and the refuge’s importance to migratory birds and other wildlife and plant species.

Vision for the Refuge

The vision describes the focus of refuge management and portrays a picture of the refuge in 15 years.

Near the confluence of the Rattlesnake Creek and Arkansas River in central Kansas, water remains the great driver of a diverse complex of saltmarsh and unique native sand prairie community that is Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

The combination of these productive habitats as well as the refuge’s midcontinent location continue to attract millions of birds needing to replenish essential reserves and to find protection in the mosaic of largely open grasses, sedges, rushes, and water.

Through environmental education and outreach, we promote understanding and appreciation of the refuge’s dynamic landscapes. For visitors, each moment is unique—the smell of moist earth and salty air, the primitive call of a crane, the whispering bluestem, the cacophony of geese, the early steps of a snowy plover chick, or the discovery of a subtle pattern or design in nature.

In a land of recurring extremes, ongoing collaboration between refuge professionals, partners, and the public sustains a healthy system. Through land stewards transcending refuge boundaries, the integrity of these ecosystems are conserved with awe, respect, and appreciation of the gifts it offers for all to receive.



Kansas

- Design and conduct outreach programs and present these to civic and environmental organizations annually in communities within 50 miles of the refuge and the Great Plains Nature Center.
- Work with Friends groups to increase public appreciation and knowledge of the refuge and the Great Plains Nature Center by holding at least ten special events every year and by using Friends' newsletters and Web sites.
- Increase public appreciation and knowledge through public visits to the refuge and the Great Plains Nature Center, off-site stations like the Kansas State Fair, and online media.

Cultural Resources Goal

Identify, value, and preserve the cultural resources and cultural history of the refuge and connect staff, visitors, and the community to the area's past.

- Protect cultural resources on the refuge by coordinating with our Mountain-Prairie Region 6 cultural resources branch,

which helps us meet the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and other cultural resources-related legislation.

Visitor and Employee Safety and Resource Protection Goal

Provide for the safety, security, and protection of visitors, employees, natural and cultural resources, and facilities of the refuge and the Great Plains Nature Center.

- Ensure visitor and employee safety. Strive to keep the refuge accident free.
- Protect wildlife and other natural and cultural resources from damage, theft, or illegal taking.

Administration Goal

Provide and support facilities, strategically fill approved positions and allocate staff, increase volunteer opportunities and partnerships, and effectively raise and use money to maintain the long-term integrity of infrastructure, habitats, and wildlife resources at the refuge and at the Great Plains Nature Center.

- Strive to keep a funding level for 11 permanent full-time and 1 permanent part-time staff positions; provide regional or zone office space as needed; and continue to seek money for vacant, seasonal, temporary, and youth positions.
- Recruit and fill new positions that were identified as needed to protect habitat, infrastructure, and wildlife resources.
- Review and update the deferred maintenance projects list, document deficiencies, and submit a ranked project list every year.
- Within 5 years at the Great Plains Nature Center, identify changes and additions that will improve our cooperative partnership and agency's performance while enhancing the visitor experience.
- Design and develop a new environmental education site near the headquarters area.
- Design and construct another cold storage building and fire cache on the refuge.

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
1434 NE. 80th Street
Stafford, Kansas 67578
quivira@fws.gov
www.fws.gov/refuge/quivira
620 / 486 2393

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