

# News Release

## *Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge*

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Steve Henry, Acting Refuge Manager

### **Management plan proposed for Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; opportunity for public comment**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has released for public review the draft comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and environmental assessment (EA) for Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in New Jersey. The document describes four alternatives that were evaluated for managing the refuge for the next 15 years. It also provides an analysis of the potential effects on the environment from implementing each alternative.

The draft document will be available for public review and comment through June 27, 2014. We will consider all comments as we complete a final CCP for the refuge. The document can be viewed online at:

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/great\\_swamp/what\\_we\\_do/conservation.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/great_swamp/what_we_do/conservation.html).

It is also available at the Bernards, Chatham, Harding, and Long Hill Township public libraries during normal operating hours.

Two meetings have been scheduled to provide the public with opportunities to learn more about the draft CCP and ask questions of Service staff:

June 11, 2014, 10:00am-12:00pm, Chatham Township Municipal Building, 58 Meyersville Road, Chatham, NJ 07928

June 12, 2014, 6:30-8:30pm, Long Hill Township Municipal Building, 915 Valley Road, Gillette, NJ 07933

The Service has identified alternative B as the preferred alternative for management of the refuge. Under alternative B, we describe the actions we believe would best meet refuge purposes and goals, including:

- **Wildlife and habitat management:** We would maintain a diversity of refuge habitats to promote wildlife use and decrease fragmentation for migratory birds and threatened and endangered species, including the Indiana bat and bog turtle.

- **Public Use:** We would expand the hunt program by providing archery opportunities for deer and opening the refuge to turkey hunting. We would also improve wildlife viewing and photography opportunities by creating trails, providing more parking, and constructing observation towers. We would also expand visitor center hours and increase the number of environmental education and interpretative programs on and off the refuge.

Great Swamp NWR was established in 1960 to conserve natural resources, while protecting threatened and endangered species. The refuge encompasses 7,768 acres with varied habitats of grasslands, mature forests, forested wetlands, and marshes. Of this, 3,660 acres are designated wilderness. The refuge provides habitat for migratory birds, Indiana bats, bog turtles, a variety of fish, frogs, wildflowers, and plants.

The mission of the Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).