

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge



*Release of Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan
November 2014*

The Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan is Now Available!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce the release of the final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (refuge).

This CCP represents our 15-year management plan for the refuge. The plan furthers the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; provides direction to achieve the refuge's purposes, vision, and goals; and contributes to State and regional conservation plans. Implementing the plan will help us to fulfill the refuge's important role in conserving and managing wildlife resources.

Public Comments on the Draft Plan

We released the draft CCP for public comment from May 14 to June 30, 2014. We thank everyone who provided

How to Access the Final Plan

View or download the final CCP on the planning Web site:
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Swamp/what_we_do/conservation.html.

Request a printed copy or CD-ROM version by contacting Bill Perry, Natural Resource Planner, at:

Phone: 413/253-8688

Email: northeastplanning@fws.gov (put "Great Swamp CCP" in the subject line)

Mail: 300 Westgate Center Drive

comments. We received 80 written comments on the draft CCP during the comment period, including those submitted at two public meetings held on June 10th in Chatham, NJ and June 11th in Long Hill, NJ.

The comments covered a variety of topics including:

- Facilities and trails
- Horseback riding
- Hunting
- Impoundment management
- Refuge staffing and facilities
- Prescribed burning

These comments helped us improve the management objectives and strategies in the final CCP.

We evaluated all of the substantive comments we received, and include our responses to them as Appendix G, "Summary and Response to Public Comments," in the final CCP.

The final CCP is based on alternative B, which we identified as the Service-preferred alternative in the draft CCP. In response to the comments we received on the draft CCP, we made several changes to alternative B for the final plan. These changes include the following:

1. We determined that the parking lot and wildlife viewing area that was proposed on White Bridge Road would provide additional maintenance challenges for a limited wildlife observation opportunity and has been removed from the final plan.
2. We corrected all format and typographical errors that were brought to our attention.

We selected alternative B for the final CCP, with the changes above, for several reasons. First, we believe it will achieve the refuge's purposes, vision, and goals, the Refuge System mission, and the goals of other



Turtles - USFWS

State and regional conservation plans. Second, we feel that this alternative most effectively addresses the key issues raised during the planning process.

The full basis and rationale for our decision is documented in Appendix H, "Finding of No Significant Impact," in the final CCP.

Implementing the Plan

We have approval to begin implementing projects outlined in the CCP. Some of the projects will require additional funds or staff and will not be accomplished until those resources are available. To successfully accomplish projects and achieve our vision and goals, it is critical that we continue to maintain and develop new partnerships and sustain our invaluable volunteer program. We encourage you to stay involved during the plan's implementation.



William Lynch

Highlights of the Final Plan

Here is a brief summary of our planned management for Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. For more detailed information, please refer to the final CCP.

Habitat Management

Our habitat management program will emphasize increasing forest acreage by allowing fields, grasslands, and impoundments to naturally reforest.

Major habitat management activities include the following:

- Consolidate managed habitats into fewer, larger (greater than 50 acres) continuous units.
- Continue focused habitat management for bog turtle and Indiana bat.
- Improve inventory and monitoring efforts to support and inform refuge goals, and to better understand the effectiveness and efficiency of our management actions.
- Study and develop recommendations for impoundment management to provide the highest benefit to focal species.
- Strengthen partnerships with Federal and State agencies, academic institutions,



Michael Stadelmeier

nonprofit organizations, and volunteers to share information on habitat, wildlife, and impacts.

- Initiating new interpretive programs and environmental education opportunities both on and offsite.

Public Use

We will enhance our existing public use program by:

- Increasing opportunities to connect with urban populations, including urban school visits, community group outreach, and opportunities to bring the refuge to the classroom.
- Continuing the administrative processes that would allow the refuge to be opened for spring turkey hunting and fall archery deer hunting.
- Expanding facilities for wildlife observation, viewing, and photography opportunities, such as expanded trails, and observation towers.



USFWS



Tree Swallow - USFWS

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>
1 800/344 WILD
Federal Relay Service
for the deaf or hard of hearing
1 800/877 8339

Refuge Vision Statement

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is a rich natural oasis immersed within the bustling New Jersey-New York metropolitan area. At Great Swamp migrating birds feed and rest amongst whispering trees while butterflies flitter through wildflower-laced meadows. Turtles bask in the warm summer's sun, as the drum of a red-headed woodpecker echoes across an expansive marsh. Barred owls break the evening silence with unmistakable calls from deep within the forest while frogs chorus in excited trills and croaks in the wet meadows. These sights and sounds are the very same ones that were heard by the Lenape Tribes centuries before.

Great Swamp is an ecological treasure that invites people to engage with the natural world in ways that are educational, memorable, and rewarding. Visitors are refreshed by the beauty, peace and solitude of this wild and natural setting, where wildlife comes first. Vital partners continue working together to protect the Great Swamp and its watershed to ensure its myriad of benefits for future generations.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
NWRS - Refuge Planning
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

