



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589



In Reply Refer To:
FWS/Region 5/NWRS

AUG 01 2016

Open letter to the Town of Chatham:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) appreciates the active engagement and substantive input that the Town of Chatham and its residents provided to develop the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge. Your leaders provided feedback on how you would like to see these Federal lands managed, and we listened. We came together from the draft to the final plan on numerous issues, including continuing to allow several commercial fisheries. We learned a lot about the ongoing efforts of the Commonwealth, the Town of Chatham, and the commercial fishermen to safeguard these resources, and I believe the final plan is better as a result.

With this improved final plan, it's time to come together again with the town to outline how we will collaboratively implement management called for in this plan. We recently shared with town officials our interest in developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to take this next step.

We believe this agreement should be long-term and run for the length of the CCP. We recognize that the Service and the Town of Chatham have overlapping jurisdictions, mutual interest, and a long history cooperatively managing coastal resources in the submerged lands east of the refuge's western boundary. With an MOU in place, together we could work to manage activities like: continued harvest and management of bay scallops and other commercial fisheries; continued harvest of shellfish; and continued protection, monitoring, and management of eel grass, horseshoe crabs and mussel beds. The MOU could also outline how the Service and the town will coordinate management of any new or emerging fisheries, ensuring a public process where all have a voice.

This MOU would also establish regular communication between the Service and the town, and through collaboration bring the best science to bear to manage the resources we all care about.

We look forward to our continued work together, ensuring that this important national wildlife refuge continues to support both wildlife and people.

Sincerely,

Scott B. Kahan
Regional Chief
National Wildlife Refuge System