

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces final decision on future management of Timber Point estate

Agency reviews diverse public comments and selects alternative that balances wildlife management with enhanced interpretation of the historic structures

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has selected the preferred alternative to preserve the structures and enhance interpretation at Timber Point on Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Biddeford, Maine. The Service made this decision after reviewing diverse public comments received during a public involvement process and is announcing its final decision.

The Service received more than 280 public comments, held two public meetings and conducted three public tours of the Main House during a 30-day public comment period last fall. The Service is releasing a summary of the public comments and the Finding of No Significant Impact. All of the documents are posted on the website at:

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/rachel_carson/what_we_do/conservation/TimberPointEA.html

The Service evaluated the physical, biological and human impacts of all four management alternatives, and believes that the preferred alternative (alternative B) strikes the right balance between fulfilling the wildlife purposes of the site with other public interests. The Service will implement Alternative B to ensure conservation of wildlife and habitat, as well as provide opportunities for cultural and natural resources interpretation. In addition to continuing with current management, the refuge will initiate additional repairs and improvements to ensure the long-term preservation of the buildings eligible for the National Register as funding becomes available. A spur trail through the Ewing residential estate will be added to the existing Timber Point Trail and interpretive signs and materials will be developed, in partnership with others. Implementation will be delayed approximately 1 year to allow time for the Service to work with the city of Biddeford to address traffic concerns associated with refuge visitors travelling on Granite Point Road through the residential neighborhood.

The Service has retained an architectural historian who is evaluating the proposed historic preservation status for the buildings and will work with the State of Maine Historic Preservation Office to complete a nomination package for consideration by the National Historic Preservation Office. The Service hopes to complete the nomination package this year and will keep the public apprised of that process.

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