

Patuxent Research Refuge



Release of Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan

December 2013



Lake Reddington - USFWS

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 Patuxent Research 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/EA for public comment from October 10 to November 26, 2012. We thank everyone who provided comments. We

How to Access the Final Plan

View or download the final CCP on the planning Web site:
<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/patuxent/ccphome.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 "Patuxent CCP" in the subject line)

Mail: 300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035

received 75 written comments on the draft CCP/EA during the comment period, including those submitted at two public meetings held on October 22nd at the refuge Visitor Center in Laurel, Maryland and October 23rd in Annapolis, Maryland.

The comments covered a variety of topics including:

- Reforestation of impoundments and grasslands
- Horseback riding
- Hunting

- Impoundment management
- Refuge staffing and facilities
- Cultural resource management

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 I, "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/EA. In response to the comments we received on the draft CCP/EA, we made several minor changes to alternative B for the final plan. These changes include the following:

1. We determined that individuals participating in horseback riding will not be required to clean up horse manure along the trails. We encourage individuals to do so if they are able, but we recognize that requiring riders to dismount could increase the possibility of injury. We will work with local riding groups to develop options for clean-up of specific areas as necessary.
2. We determined that individuals participating in horseback riding will be allowed to travel at speeds



Turtles - USFWS

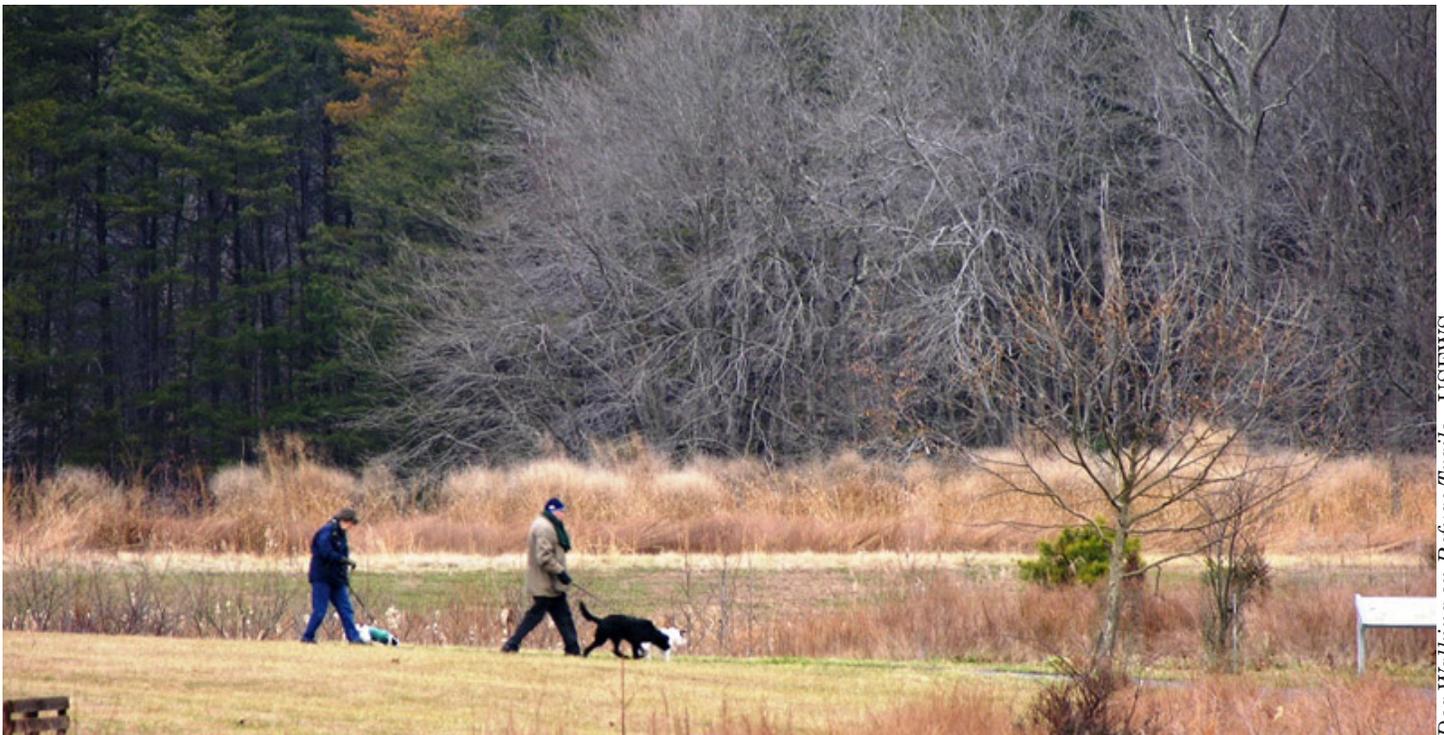
other than a walk. They should take precautions when approaching other users and reduce speeds accordingly.

3. 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 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.



Dog Walking on Refuge Trails - USFWS

Highlights of the Final Plan

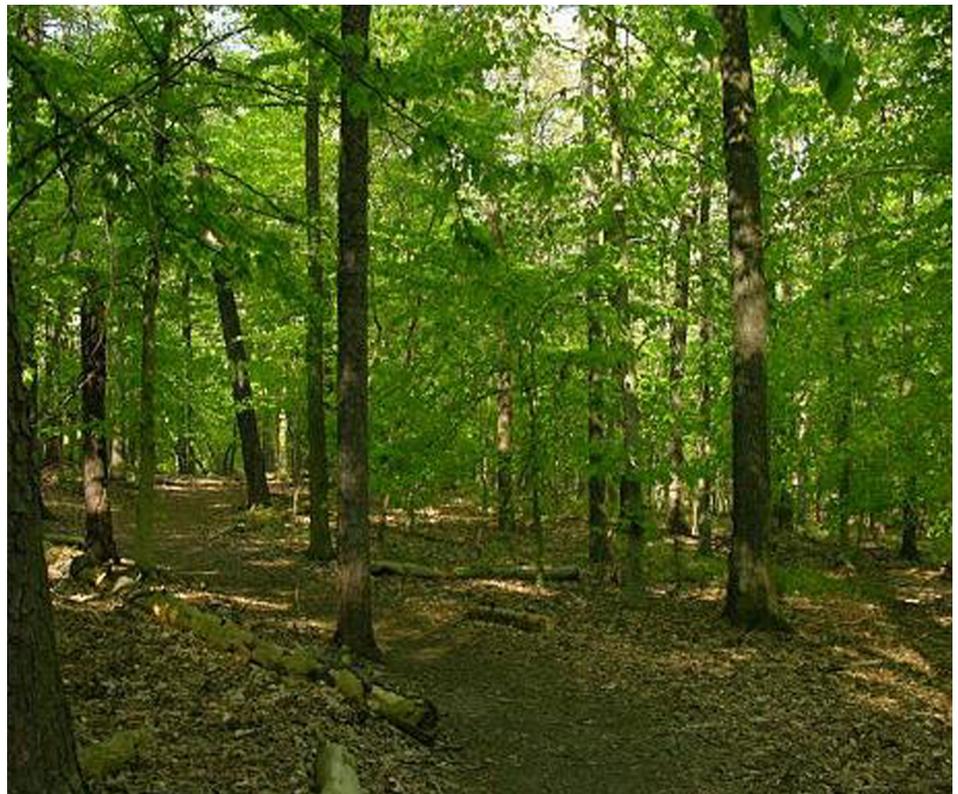
Here is a brief summary of our planned management for Patuxent Research Refuge. For more detailed information, please refer to the final CCP.

Habitat Management

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

Major habitat management activities include the following:

- Restore 478 acres of grasslands and impoundments to forest. This will benefit forest interior dwelling species and improve water quality.
- Maintain and increase the rare habitat type, pine oak savannah, to support species such as darkling and tiger beetles.
- Improve inventory and monitoring efforts to support and inform refuge goals, and to better understand the effectiveness and efficiency of our management actions.
- Strengthen partnerships with Federal and State agencies, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, and volunteers to obtain information on habitat, wildlife, and impacts.



Valley Trail - Steve Noyes

- Facilitate research that benefits wildlife on refuge lands as well as other natural areas.

Public Use

We will enhance our existing public use program by:

- Promoting high-quality hunting and fishing programs through improved management strategies.
- Expanding facilities for wildlife observation, viewing, and photography opportunities - new trails, an observation tower, and an outdoor nature exploration area.
- Initiating new interpretive program and environmental education opportunities both on and offsite.
- Supporting existing, compatible non-wildlife-dependent uses such as jogging, cycling, cross-country skiing, dog walking,

and horseback riding.

- Allow new non-wildlife-dependent uses: virtual and no-impact geocaching, and waterfowl-related dog training.

Implementing the Plan

We will immediately begin implementing projects outlined in the CCP. To successfully accomplish those 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 also stay involved during the plan's implementation.

We also hope you will come visit us at the refuge!

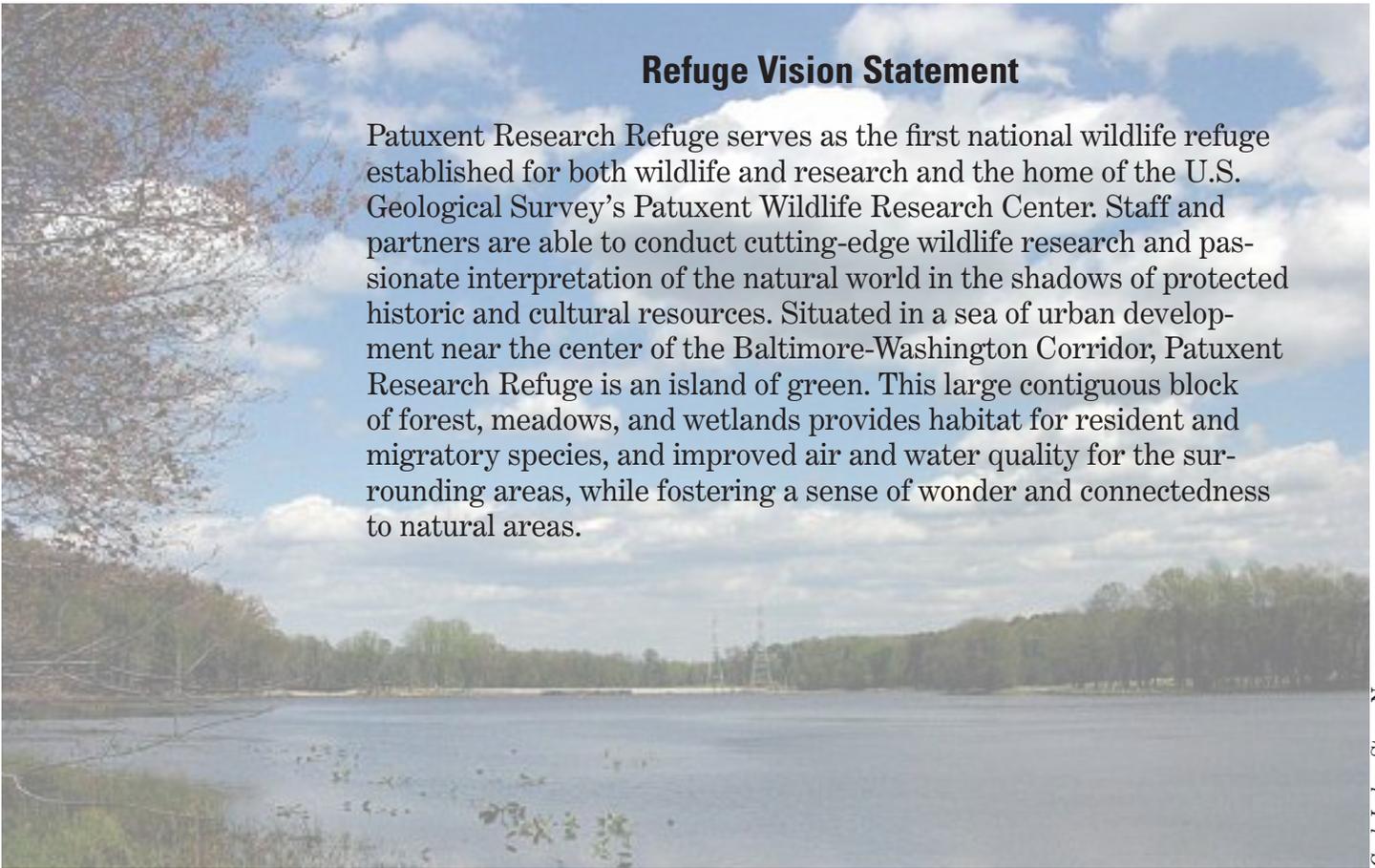
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>
1 800/344 WILD
Federal Relay Service
for the deaf or hard of hearing
1 800/877 8339



Tree Swallow - USFWS

Refuge Vision Statement

Patuxent Research Refuge serves as the first national wildlife refuge established for both wildlife and research and the home of the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Staff and partners are able to conduct cutting-edge wildlife research and passionate interpretation of the natural world in the shadows of protected historic and cultural resources. Situated in a sea of urban development near the center of the Baltimore-Washington Corridor, Patuxent Research Refuge is an island of green. This large contiguous block of forest, meadows, and wetlands provides habitat for resident and migratory species, and improved air and water quality for the surrounding areas, while fostering a sense of wonder and connectedness to natural areas.



Cash Lake - Steve Noyes

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