



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Butte Sink, Willow Creek-Lurline, & North Central Valley Wildlife Management Areas

April, 2010 Planning Update #2

Thank you for participating!

This is the second Planning Update from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to keep you informed and involved regarding the comprehensive conservation planning process for Butte Sink, Willow Creek-Lurline, and North Central Valley Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) (Figure 1).

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the public scoping meetings held in December 2009, as well as those who provided comments. A summary of the comments can be found in this planning update. Although the scoping period has ended, we welcome any comments or suggestions that you may have.

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Butte Sink WMA, photo by Mike Peters

Comprehensive Conservation Plan: Public Scoping

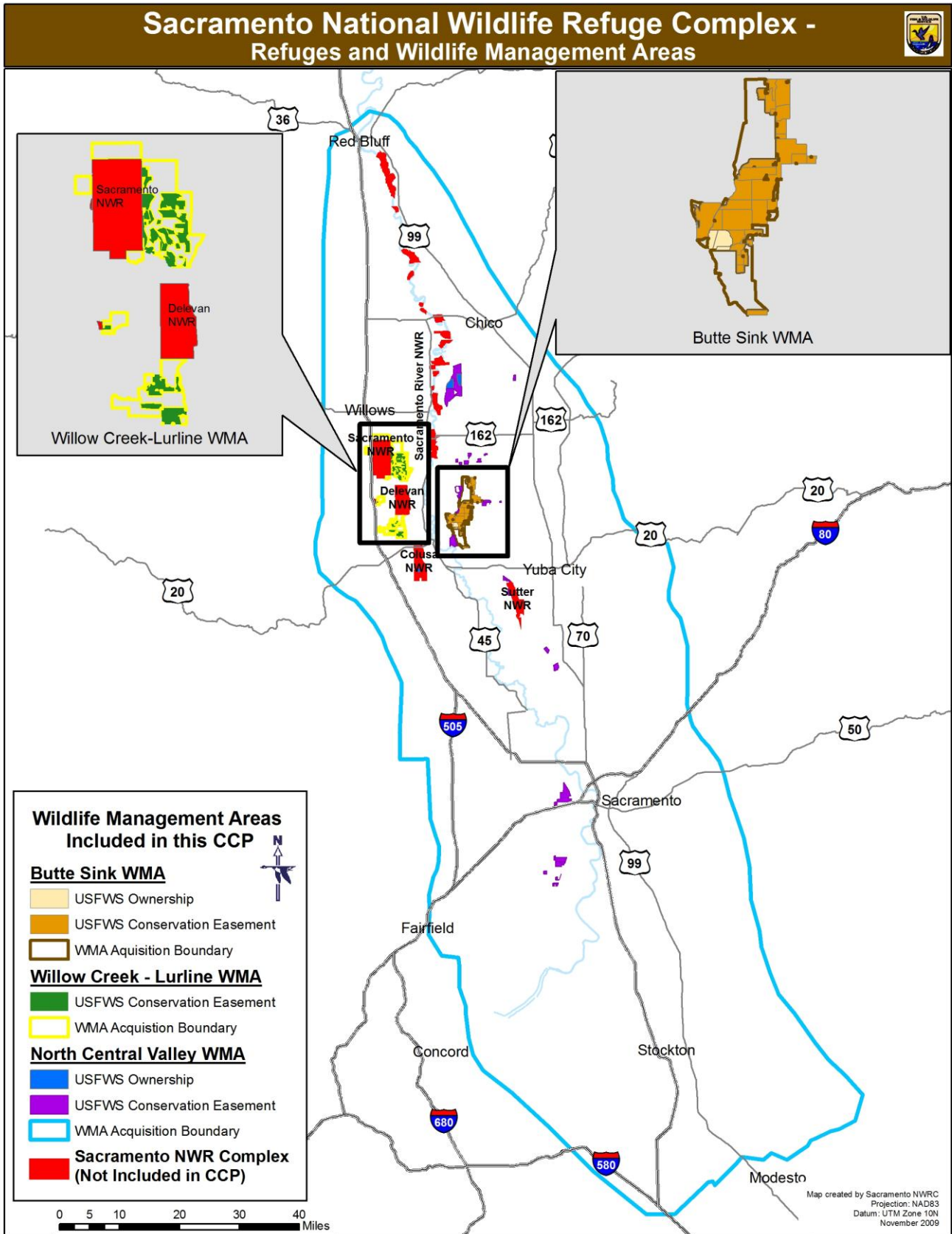
We began the Comprehensive Conservation Planning (CCP) process in December 2009 with public scoping meetings in Colusa, Gridley, and Davis. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the public to Butte Sink, Willow Creek-Lurline, and North Central Valley Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and the CCP process, and to hear people's comments and concerns about the WMAs.

Nineteen people attended the three public scoping sessions. Table 1 summarizes the issues, concerns and opportunities raised in the 51 comments we received during the 45-day scoping period, from December 1, 2009 to January 15, 2010. These comments were grouped into eight main categories: non-breeding waterfowl habitat (17), breeding waterfowl habitat (7),

climate change (6), crop depredation (4), partnerships (3), law enforcement (3), landscape protection (3), and other questions and comments (8).

Non-breeding waterfowl habitat received the most comments. The category was subdivided into easement acreage goals (7) and water issues (10). One comment about the easement acreage goals stated that the Service should determine the unprotected wetland acreage within the WMA and attempt to protect it with conservation easements. Another comment stated that the Service should use the restoration goals of the Central Valley Joint Venture Implementation Plan (2006) as a minimum for determining easement objectives.

Figure 1. Map of Wildlife Management Areas in the Sacramento Valley.





Gridley scoping meeting, photo by USFWS

Water issue comments included: recommending the Service conduct a water resources assessment for the WMAs, inventory water rights and their quantity and quality, determine whether those rights are sufficient to meet the purposes of the WMAs and secure long-term water supply for the WMAs.

Breeding waterfowl habitat received the second highest number of comments. These comments focused on finding additional partnerships and opportunities to provide breeding waterfowl habitat and incentives to private landowners.

Six comments urged the Service to discuss global climate change within the CCP. These comments stated that the CCP should address climate change in the vision statement for the WMAs and through its goals, objectives and strategies related to inventory and monitoring, environmental education and other threats to wildlife and habitat.

We received four comments regarding crop depredation issues. These comments urged the Service to consider the impacts and compensate landowners for damage caused to crops by migratory birds.

The importance of maintaining and creating new partnerships received three comments. The need for and support of both State and Federal law enforcement officers in California also received three comments.

Landscape protection also received three comments. These comments urged the Service to find a balance between providing for wildlife and agriculture.

The eight comments in the other questions and comments category ranged from easement minimum size to what type of funding is used to acquire an easement. A youth hunt on the Llano Seco unit of the North Central Valley WMA was also suggested.

Table 1. Refuge Issues Identified Through Public Comment.

Issue Categories	Number of Comments Received ¹	Percentage of Total Comments
Non-breeding Waterfowl Habitat	17	33%
<i>Easement Acreage Goals</i>	7	14%
<i>Water Issues</i>	10	19%
Breeding Waterfowl Habitat	7	14%
Climate Change	6	13%
Crop depredation	4	7%
Partnerships	3	6%
Law Enforcement	3	6%
Landscape Protection	3	6%
Other Comments & Questions	8	15%
Total	51	100%

¹ Total number of comments received is greater than the total number of people commenting since each of the letters, emails, faxes, and comments cards may contain more than one comment.

The Service considers all of these comments during the planning process. Each will receive an in-depth analysis that will help to define the management of the WMAs over the next fifteen years. Although the official scoping comment period ended on January 15, 2010, comments are welcome at any time during the planning process.

Draft Vision Statement and Goals

The Service is in the process of refining the draft vision statement and goals for the WMAs. We welcome any comments or suggestions that you may have.

Draft Vision Statement

“Butte Sink, Willow Creek-Lurline, and North Central Valley Wildlife Management Areas help to conserve an important network of private and public wetland, upland, and riparian habitats in the Central Valley of California. This network protects some of the most important wintering areas for Pacific Flyway waterfowl. These lands also protect and enhance habitat for other migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and resident wildlife.

Through cooperation with landowners and other conservation partners, the Wildlife Management Areas continue to be premier examples of private land partnerships promoting fish and wildlife conservation.

Environmental education and compatible wildlife-dependent recreation on designated Service-owned lands within the Wildlife Management Areas foster a greater understanding and appreciation of Central Valley wetland ecosystems and the National Wildlife Refuge System.”

Draft Goals

- Protect wetlands and associated upland and riparian habitats to support an abundance and natural diversity of wintering and migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, birds of prey, songbirds, and other wetland-dependant species in the Central Valley.
- Restore, enhance and manage wetlands and associated upland and riparian habitats to maximize their value to wintering and migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, birds of prey, songbirds, and other wetland-dependant species in the Central Valley.
- Promote partnerships to protect, restore, enhance and manage a diverse, healthy, and productive ecosystem in which the Wildlife Management Areas play a key role.
- On the Llano Seco Unit, provide visitors of all ages and abilities with quality wildlife-dependent recreation (wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation), and volunteer opportunities to enhance public appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of fish, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources.
- Work with partners to address the potential impacts of climate change on Central Valley water supplies, habitat and wildlife.



Yellow Warbler, photo by Steve Emmons

Other Refuge News



Kevin Foerster and the Blue Goose at the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, photo by USFWS

Refuge Manager of the Year!

Kevin Foerster, former Refuge Manager of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex, has been selected to receive the Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year Award by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Refuge System Awards are given every year to those who show outstanding dedication and passion for wildlife conservation.

Kevin has exhibited his skill, passion and commitment as a leader in the National Wildlife Refuge System, and has been a superior leader and mentor for the Complex's 55 permanent, seasonal and temporary employees. In October 2009, Kevin left Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex to become the project leader for Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Complex in Winona, Minnesota.

New Refuge Manager Selected

Sacramento Complex will be welcoming our new Refuge Manager, Dan Frisk, in mid-May. Dan has twenty-seven years of federal service and is currently the Refuge Manager at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in Marion, Illinois. Before heading up the operation at Crab Orchard NWR, he was the Refuge Manager at both Ottawa NWR in Ohio and Pee Dee NWR in North Carolina. Dan also worked for the Endangered Species Office in North Carolina. Prior to that, he spent 12 years as an officer with the military, serving with the Army Corp of Engineers (COE). While with the COE, Dan completed a MS degree with a research focus on bald eagle populations in Kentucky and Tennessee. Dan says he appreciates challenges and is looking forward to the opportunity to wield the helm at this California flagship refuge.



Wetland Management Workshop Tour, photo by USFWS

Mark Your Calendars for the Annual Wetland Management Workshop

The annual landowner workshop will be held on Friday May 14 at the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge in Colusa. The intent of the workshop is to discuss current wetland/waterfowl issues and to provide practical wetland/wildlife management information that you can apply to your own property. There is no cost to participate.

What's Next?

The next major step in the CCP process is to generate objectives and strategies that will provide the foundation of the management plan. Several management alternatives are being developed, including a “no action” alternative, which maintains the existing management and provides a baseline from which all other alternatives can be compared. Each alternative will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment accompanying the CCP. Preliminary alternatives will be presented for review and comment in the next update.



Northern pintail, photo by Mike Peters

For More Information

If you have questions, comments, concerns, or would like information about the WMAs, please feel free to call, e-mail, or write us:

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Visit us online at
<http://sacramentovalleyrefuges.fws.gov>.

Call or write to us to be placed on our mailing list or to report a change in your mailing address, or if you want to be removed from the mailing list.



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