



Antioch Dunes

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Planning Update #1

December 1998

Greetings!

This is the first in a series of updates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to keep you informed about planning efforts for the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge. We will be sending these planning updates regularly to landowners near the study area, government agencies, private organizations, and others who express interest.

This update presents a description of the Refuge and the planning process we are undertaking.

If you have concerns, comments, or suggestions concerning the Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge, please send them to us in writing. Our address is at the end of this

update.

Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge Today

The Antioch Refuge, located in Contra Costa County, California in the City of Antioch, consists of 55 acres owned by the Service. The Refuge was set aside in 1980 as the first national wildlife refuge established for the benefit of endangered plants and insects. There are no facilities on this refuge.

In 1986, the Refuge was closed to the public for two reasons. First, several wildfires had been caused by visitors to the Refuge building cooking fires along the waterfront. Second, when a wayward whale swam up the San Joaquin River past the Refuge, hundreds of people trampled the endangered plants as they flocked to the Refuge to see Humphrey the whale. It was impossible to protect the plants.

The Refuge encompasses two units of unique riverine dune habitat located along the San Joaquin River. These few acres of remnant dune habitat support the last natural populations of the federally endangered Antioch dunes evening primrose, Contra Costa wallflower, and Lange's metalmark butterfly.

Around the early 1900s, the isolated dune habitat began to experience a dramatic change as human development expanded. The easily accessible sand was harvested to make bricks, with many of the bricks used to rebuild San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. Large-scale sand mining and industrial development continued to fragment the sand dune habitat so that only a small portion of the

original ecosystem was left. Non-native grasses and vegetation encroached on the sand dunes to crowd the few remaining endangered plants. By the time the Refuge was established, only a few acres of remnant dune habitat remained.

The Plan

The Service is preparing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Antioch Refuge. The purpose of this plan is to develop the Refuge goals and objectives and to create strategies for achieving these objectives. This plan is intended to guide wildlife and other natural resource management and public use for the next 15 years.

The Service is preparing this plan for the Refuge for the following reasons:



Antioch Dunes evening primrose

Planning Process

- : Identify public and agency issues and concerns
- : Gather data
- 9 Develop goals and objectives
- 9 Develop strategies
- 9 Evaluate impacts
- 9 Write draft
- 9 Circulate draft
- 9 Public notice of decision

- To provide a vision statement of the desired future condition of the Refuge. The vision statement provides direction for accomplishing the Refuge purposes and goals.

- To inform interested individuals, groups, and agencies about management activities on the Refuge.

- To ensure that management of the Refuge reflects Refuge purposes and the mission, policies and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

- To provide long-term continuity in Refuge management.

- To provide budget justification for operation and maintenance and facility development requests.

The plan is flexible; it will be reviewed periodically to ensure that its goals, objectives and implementation strategies and timetables are still appropriate.

Interim Goals

In 1996, the Refuge developed interim goals that goals have guided the management of the Refuge. We will review these goals as part of the planning process to make sure that the goals are still appropriate.

The interim goals are as follows:

- 1) to protect, enhance, and recover populations of endangered, threatened, and rare species of the Antioch Dunes ecosystem.

- 2) to protect, restore, and enhance the Antioch Dunes ecosystem for a diversity of native plant and insect species.

Public Participation

We have issued a Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Document in the Federal Register. With that notice and this planning update, we are soliciting public comment. We recognize that planning efforts at Antioch Dunes can affect different people in different ways and we believe that it's important to consider these different viewpoints in planning efforts for Antioch Dunes.

Below are some key issues we have identified to be addressed by the plan. In the course of our planning process we may discover other issues that need to be considered.

Issues:

- Invasive, non-native plants
- Habitat restoration
- Trespassing
- Prescribed burning

How You Can Help



Lange's metalmark butterfly

We would like your comments, concerns, and ideas for the Refuge. The comment period closes February 12, 1999. After the comment period closes, we will distribute another planning update that presents the comments we've received. These comments will be considered when we develop the plan for the Refuge.

The plan will describe management actions. The environmental

compliance document will describe the affected environment, the alternatives considered and the consequences the alternatives will have on the affected environment. You will have an opportunity to review and provide comment on both the plan and the environmental compliance document.

For More Information

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

Information on the CCP
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Please call or write to us to be placed on our mailing list or to report a change in your mailing address.

Photographs by San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex Staff

