



602 FW 1

## Refuge Planning Overview

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**1.1 What is the purpose of Part 602 and this chapter?** Part 602 provides guidance for National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) planning, including specific chapters on the Comprehensive Conservation Planning Process ([602 FW 3](#)) and Step-Down Management Planning ([602 FW 4](#)). This chapter (602 FW 1) provides an overview of refuge planning.

**1.2 To what does Part 602 apply?** Part 602 applies to all units of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

**1.3 What is our policy for managing refuges?** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or we) will manage all refuges in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), which, when implemented, will achieve refuge purposes; help fulfill the Refuge System mission; maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; help achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and meet other mandates. The CCP will guide management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies to accomplish these ends. We also may require step-down management plans to provide additional details about meeting CCP goals and objectives and to describe strategies and implementation schedules. Each plan will be founded on principles of sound fish and wildlife management and available science, and be consistent with legal mandates and our other policies, guidelines, and planning documents. We will prepare refuge plans that, above all else, ensure that wildlife comes first on national wildlife refuges.

**1.4 What are our authorities?** Authorities listed below include laws that require us to manage units of the Refuge System in accordance with approved CCPs and to integrate refuge planning decisions with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

**A. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, 16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee (Refuge Administration Act).** This law states that " . . . the Secretary shall -- (i) propose a comprehensive conservation plan for each refuge or related complex of refuges . . . in the System; (ii) publish a notice of opportunity for public comment in the Federal Register on each proposed conservation plan; (iii) issue a final conservation plan for each planning unit consistent with the provisions of this Act and, to the extent practicable, consistent with fish and wildlife conservation plans of the State in which the refuge is located; and (iv) not less frequently than 15 years after the date of issuance of a conservation plan under clause (iii) and every 15 years thereafter, revise the conservation plan as may be necessary." This law

provides additional detail on conservation planning for the Refuge System. Above all else, the law directs that wildlife comes first in the National Wildlife Refuge System. It does so by establishing that wildlife conservation is the principal mission of the Refuge System; by requiring that we maintain the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of each refuge and the Refuge System; and by mandating that we monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants on each refuge.

**B. Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 as amended, 16 U.S.C. 140hh-3233, 43 U.S.C. 1602-1784 (ANILCA).** Section 304 states, in part, "The Secretary shall prepare, and from time to time, revise, a comprehensive conservation plan . . . for each refuge." You may find additional guidance on the content of these plans and management direction in this and other sections of ANILCA. If any provisions of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 conflict with the provisions of ANILCA, the provisions of ANILCA will prevail for refuges in Alaska.

**C. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, 40 CFR 1500-1508.** NEPA is the basic national charter for protection of the environment. The procedural provisions in CEQ's regulations require Federal agencies to integrate the NEPA process with other planning at the earliest possible time in order to provide a systematic interdisciplinary approach; identify and analyze the environmental effects of their actions; describe appropriate alternatives to the proposal; involve the affected State and Federal agencies, Tribal governments, and the affected public in the planning and decision-making process; and fully integrate all refuge proposals that may have an impact on the environment with the provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1501.2).

### **1.5 What are the goals of refuge planning?**

**A.** To ensure that wildlife comes first in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

**B.** To ensure that we manage the Refuge System for the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats and that refuge management achieves our policies, the Refuge System mission, and the purposes for which the refuge was established.

**C.** To ensure that the administration of the Refuge System contributes to the conservation of the ecological integrity of each refuge, the Refuge System, and to the structure and function of the ecosystems of the United States.

**D.** To ensure opportunities to participate in the refuge planning process are available to our other programs; Federal, State, and local agencies; tribal governments; conservation organizations; adjacent landowners; and the public.

**E.** To provide a basis for adaptive management by monitoring progress, evaluating plan implementation, and updating refuge plans accordingly.

- F.** To promote efficiency, effectiveness, continuity, and national consistency in refuge management.
- G.** To help ensure consistent Systemwide consideration of the six priority public uses--hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation--established by the Refuge Administration Act and to ensure that these uses receive enhanced consideration over general public uses in the Refuge System.
- H.** To ensure that we preserve the wilderness character of refuge lands.

**1.6 What do the following terms mean? (Quotations are from the Refuge Administration Act unless otherwise noted.)**

- A. Adaptive Management.** The rigorous application of management, research, and monitoring to gain information and experience necessary to assess and modify management activities. A process that uses feedback from refuge research and monitoring and evaluation of management actions to support or modify objectives and strategies at all planning levels.
- B. Alternatives.** Different sets of objectives and strategies or means of achieving refuge purposes and goals, helping fulfill the Refuge System mission, and resolving issues.
- C. Biological Diversity.** The variety of life, including the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities in which they occur.
- D. Biological Integrity.** Biotic composition, structure, and functioning at the genetic, organism, and community levels consistent with natural conditions, including the natural biological processes that shape genomes, organisms, and communities.
- E. Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP).** A document that describes the desired future conditions of a refuge or planning unit and provides long-range guidance and management direction to achieve the purposes of the refuge; helps fulfill the mission of the Refuge System; maintains and, where appropriate, restores the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; helps achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and meets other mandates.
- F. Coordination Area.** A wildlife management area made available to a State, by "(A) cooperative agreement between the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the State fish and game agency pursuant to Section 4 of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 664); or (B) by long-term leases or agreements pursuant to the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (50 Stat. 525; 7 U.S.C. 1010 et seq.)." States manage Coordination Areas, but they are part of the Refuge System. We do not require CCPs for Coordination Areas.
- G. Ecological Integrity.** The integration of biological integrity, natural biological diversity, and

environmental health; the replication of natural conditions.

**H. Ecosystem.** A biological community together with its environment, functioning as a unit. For administrative purposes, we have designated 53 ecosystems covering the United States and its possessions. These ecosystems generally correspond with watershed boundaries, and their sizes and ecological complexity vary.

**I. Environmental Health.** Abiotic composition, structure, and functioning of the environment consistent with natural conditions, including the natural abiotic processes that shape the environment.

**J. Goal.** Descriptive, open-ended, and often broad statement of desired future conditions that conveys a purpose but does not define measurable units.

**K. Issue.** Any unsettled matter that requires a management decision, e.g., an initiative, opportunity, resource management problem, threat to the resources of the unit, conflict in uses, public concern, or the presence of an undesirable resource condition.

**L. National Wildlife Refuge (refuge).** "A designated area of land, water, or an interest in land or water within the Refuge System, but does not include Coordination Areas." Find a complete listing of all units of the Refuge System in the current [Report of Lands Under Control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

**M. National Wildlife Refuge System Mission (mission).** "The mission of the System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

**N. Objective.** A concise statement of what we want to achieve, how much we want to achieve, when and where we want to achieve it, and who is responsible for the work. Objectives derive from goals and provide the basis for determining strategies, monitoring refuge accomplishments, and evaluating the success of strategies. Make objectives attainable, time-specific, and measurable.

**O. Planning Area.** The area upon which the planning effort will focus. A planning area may include lands outside existing planning unit boundaries currently studied for inclusion in the Refuge System and/or partnership planning efforts. It also may include watersheds or ecosystems outside of our jurisdiction that affect the planning unit. At a minimum, the planning area includes all lands within the authorized boundary of the refuge.

**P. Planning Team.** Planning teams are interdisciplinary in membership and function. Teams generally consist of a Planning Team Leader, Refuge Manager and staff biologists, a state natural resource agency representative, and other appropriate program specialists (e.g., social scientist, ecologist, recreation specialist). We also will ask other Federal and Tribal natural resource agencies to provide team

members, as appropriate. The planning team prepares the CCP and appropriate NEPA documentation.

**Q. Planning Team Leader.** The Planning Team Leader typically is a professional planner or natural resource specialist knowledgeable of the requirements of NEPA and who has planning experience. The Planning Team Leader manages the refuge planning process and ensures compliance with applicable regulatory and policy requirements.

**R. Planning Unit.** A single refuge, an ecologically or administratively related refuge complex, or distinct unit of a refuge. The planning unit also may include lands currently outside refuge boundaries.

**S. Purposes of the Refuge.** "The purposes specified in or derived from the law, proclamation, executive order, agreement, public land order, donation document, or administrative memorandum establishing, authorizing, or expanding a refuge, refuge unit, or refuge subunit." For refuges that encompass congressionally designated wilderness, the purposes of the Wilderness Act are additional purposes of the refuge.

**T. Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS).** The Refuge Operating Needs System is a national database that contains the unfunded operational needs of each refuge. We include projects required to implement approved plans and meet goals, objectives, and legal mandates.

**U. Step-Down Management Plan.** A plan that provides specific guidance on management subjects (e. g., habitat, public use, fire, safety) or groups of related subjects. It describes strategies and implementation schedules for meeting CCP goals and objectives.

**V. Strategy.** A specific action, tool, technique, or combination of actions, tools, and techniques used to meet unit objectives.

**W. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mission.** Our mission is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

**X. Wilderness Review.** The process we use to determine if we should recommend Refuge System lands and waters to Congress for wilderness designation. The wilderness review process consists of three phases: inventory, study, and recommendation. The inventory is a broad look at the refuge to identify lands and waters that meet the minimum criteria for wilderness. The study evaluates all values (ecological, recreational, cultural), resources (e.g., wildlife, water, vegetation, minerals, soils), and uses (management and public) within the Wilderness Study Area. The findings of the study determine whether or not we will recommend the area for designation as wilderness.

**Y. Wildlife-Dependent Recreational Use.** "A use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, or environmental education and interpretation." These are the six priority public uses of the Refuge System as established in the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration

Act, as amended. Wildlife-dependent recreational uses, other than the six priority public uses, are those that depend on the presence of wildlife. We also will consider these other uses in the preparation of refuge CCPs; however, the six priority public uses always will take precedence.

**Z. Vision Statement.** A concise statement of what the planning unit should be, or what we hope to do, based primarily upon the Refuge System mission and specific refuge purposes, and other mandates. We will tie the vision statement for the refuge to the mission of the Refuge System; the purpose(s) of the refuge; the maintenance or restoration of the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; and other mandates.

**1.7 What is the relationship between Refuge System planning and other planning efforts?** Refuge planning should maintain continuity and consistency with other planning efforts. The relationship between these planning efforts is hierarchical, starting from national plans to regional, State, and ecosystem-level plans, stepping down to refuge-specific plans. See [Exhibit 1](#). The process of adaptive management uses feedback from refuge research and monitoring, and evaluation of management actions to support or modify objectives and strategies at all planning levels.

**A. National and Regional Plans.** We will review other Service documents that address particular programs, species, habitats, public uses, economic uses, archaeological resources, etc., when identifying issues to address in refuge planning. National and regional goals, objectives, strategies, and policies influence management planning for refuges. Source documents include: [Fulfilling the Promise: The National Wildlife Refuge System](#), the [Fish and Wildlife Service Manual](#), the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, National Outreach Strategy, regional resource plans, endangered species recovery plans, migratory bird and flyway plans, fishery resource plans, Joint Venture plans, Partners in Flight plans, and strategies to promote the conservation of natural biological diversity. The contribution of the refuge to achieving regional and national goals will help implement our mission and ensure integrity of the Refuge System.

**B. Service Ecosystem Plans, State Fish and Wildlife Conservation Plans, and Other Landscape-Level Plans.** Refuge planning will reflect conservation goals and objectives for the landscapes in which the refuges are located. Refuges must review goals and objectives of existing ecosystem plans and determine how the refuge can best contribute to the functioning of the ecosystem. We will coordinate refuge planning with State conservation agencies, tribal governments, other government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. To the extent practicable, refuge plans will be consistent with the fish and wildlife conservation plans of the State and the conservation programs of Tribal, public, and private partners within the ecosystem.

**C. Land Acquisition Planning.** We integrate land acquisition and CCP planning throughout the land acquisition planning process. We describe three opportunities for integration in the following paragraphs:

**(1)** Refuge planning typically begins before the establishment of an area as a unit of the Refuge System.

Land acquisition planning (usually resulting in a Land Protection Plan [LPP] and associated NEPA document) is a preliminary step in the continuous, integrated refuge planning process. This process eventually results in completion of a CCP and appropriate refuge step-down management plans. Other land use, species, or habitat protection planning efforts, or legislative or executive directives may precede land acquisition planning. Refuge establishment documentation (LPP and associated NEPA document) should identify the approved refuge boundary, refuge purpose(s), goals, and general management direction. See [341 FW 2](#).

(2) Planning for proposed new refuges or major expansions to existing refuges not undergoing a CCP will include the development of a Conceptual Management Plan (CMP) for the new unit. The CMP provides general, interim management direction. The CMP should identify refuge purpose(s), interim goals, and pre-existing compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation) that we will allow to continue on an interim basis. The interim period is the duration of time between establishment of a new refuge or refuge expansion and the completion of an approved CCP. Refuges functioning under CMPs also will develop step-down management plans, as appropriate.

(3) Fully integrate land acquisition planning efforts into CCP preparation whenever possible. Some proposed new refuges or refuge expansions may warrant CCP development at the time of acquisition planning. Include appropriate Realty staff on the planning team when considering land acquisition during the CCP process to ensure consistency with land acquisition policy. See [341 FW 2](#).

**D. Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCP).** The CCP is a document that describes the desired future conditions of a refuge or planning unit and provides long-range guidance and management direction to achieve the purposes of the refuge; helps fulfill the mission of the Refuge System; maintains and, where appropriate, restores the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; helps achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and meets other mandates. See [602 FW 3](#). For refuges established after October 9, 1997, prepare CCPs when the refuge obtains staff and acquires a land base sufficient to achieve refuge purposes, but no later than 15 years after we establish the refuge. Convert refuge long-range management plans (e.g., master plans and refuge management plans) approved prior to October 9, 1997, into CCPs with appropriate public involvement and NEPA compliance no later than October 2012.

**E. Step-Down Management Plans.** Step-down management plans provide the details (strategies and implementation schedules) necessary to meet goals and objectives identified in the CCP. CCPs will either incorporate or identify step-down management plans required to fully implement the CCP. After completion of the CCP, modify existing step-down management plans to accomplish stated goals and objectives as needed. See [602 FW 4](#).

**F. Integration With Budget Development and Implementation.** We will use CCPs to guide annual budget requests. We will identify the unfunded costs of implementing strategies in refuge plans using

our budget databases, including the Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS), Maintenance Management System (MMS), and Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS). As we complete or update each plan, we will review and update these databases to incorporate projects identified in CCPs. The total funding and staffing identified in these databases represents the additional resources required to fully implement the refuge plans.

## **1.8 Who is responsible for implementing our policy?**

**A. Director.** The Director is responsible for providing national policy and ensuring adherence to refuge planning policy.

**B. Regional Director.** The Regional Director: (1) ensures compliance with national planning policy, NEPA, and other applicable laws and policies; (2) approves CCPs, amendments to CCPs, and associated NEPA and other agency compliance documents; and (3) ensures that we manage refuges in accordance with approved CCPs. The Regional Director or designee approves step-down management plans, determines planning priorities, and allocates funds to develop and implement plans.

**C. Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System.** The Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System is responsible for initiating and completing refuge plans, budgeting for planning, ensuring programmatic staff participation, and developing regional planning priorities. The Special Assistant for Ecosystems is responsible for ensuring that ecosystem teams participate in developing plans and implementing approved plans.

**D. Refuge Planning Coordinator.** The Washington Office, Division of Refuges, and each Region will designate a Refuge Planning Coordinator. In cooperation with representatives of our National Conservation Training Center, the Coordinators will establish and maintain appropriate training courses. Refuge Planning Coordinators will provide guidance and direction to assist Planning Team Leaders, regional and field-based planning staff, and planning team members. The Coordinators also are responsible for maintaining regional planning schedules and updating status reports and funding needs for the planning program. The Coordinators periodically will meet to review and recommend changes to planning policy, resolve common planning problems and issues, and help ensure national consistency.

**E. Planning Team Leader.** The Planning Team Leader is responsible for initiation of the planning process, preparation and completion of refuge plans, and ensuring that we meet compliance requirements. The Planning Team Leader, in consultation with the Refuge Manager, is responsible for identifying appropriate and proper representation on the interdisciplinary planning team, including team members, support personnel, and outside or contract assistance. The Refuge Manager and Planning Team Leader will submit the final CCP through line supervision for concurrence and approval by the Regional Director.

**F. Refuge Supervisor.** The Refuge Supervisor is responsible for overseeing participation of the Refuge Manager in CCP preparation and implementation, and for providing direction and guidance on



compliance with Refuge System policy and regulations. Once the Planning Team Leader and Refuge Manager submit the plan, the Refuge Supervisor will be responsible for review and concurrence of the plan prior to its submission to the next level.

**G. Refuge Manager.** The Refuge Manager participates in the preparation of the CCP working closely with the Planning Team Leader. The Refuge Manager assures that the refuge staff participates in plan development. The Refuge Manager and Planning Team Leader submit the final CCP through line supervision for concurrence and approval by the Regional Director. The Refuge Manager is responsible for: making compatibility determinations; implementing approved CCPs and step-down management plans; tracking progress; and recommending changes to plans based on monitoring and evaluation. The Refuge Manager also reports plan accomplishments through standard reporting mechanisms and budgeting procedures.

**H. Planning Team.** The planning team, coordinated by the Planning Team Leader, is responsible for the initiation and completion of all planning steps, including public involvement and NEPA compliance, resulting in a refuge CCP. We describe the steps in [602 FW 3.4 C](#). The planning team is responsible for the CCP's content in terms of information relating to management of refuge resources and use activities. The planning team will ensure that the CCP, when implemented, will achieve the purposes of the refuge and help fulfill the Refuge System mission.

**I. Regional Environmental (NEPA) Coordinator.** The Regional Environmental (NEPA) Coordinator provides technical assistance on NEPA-related matters.

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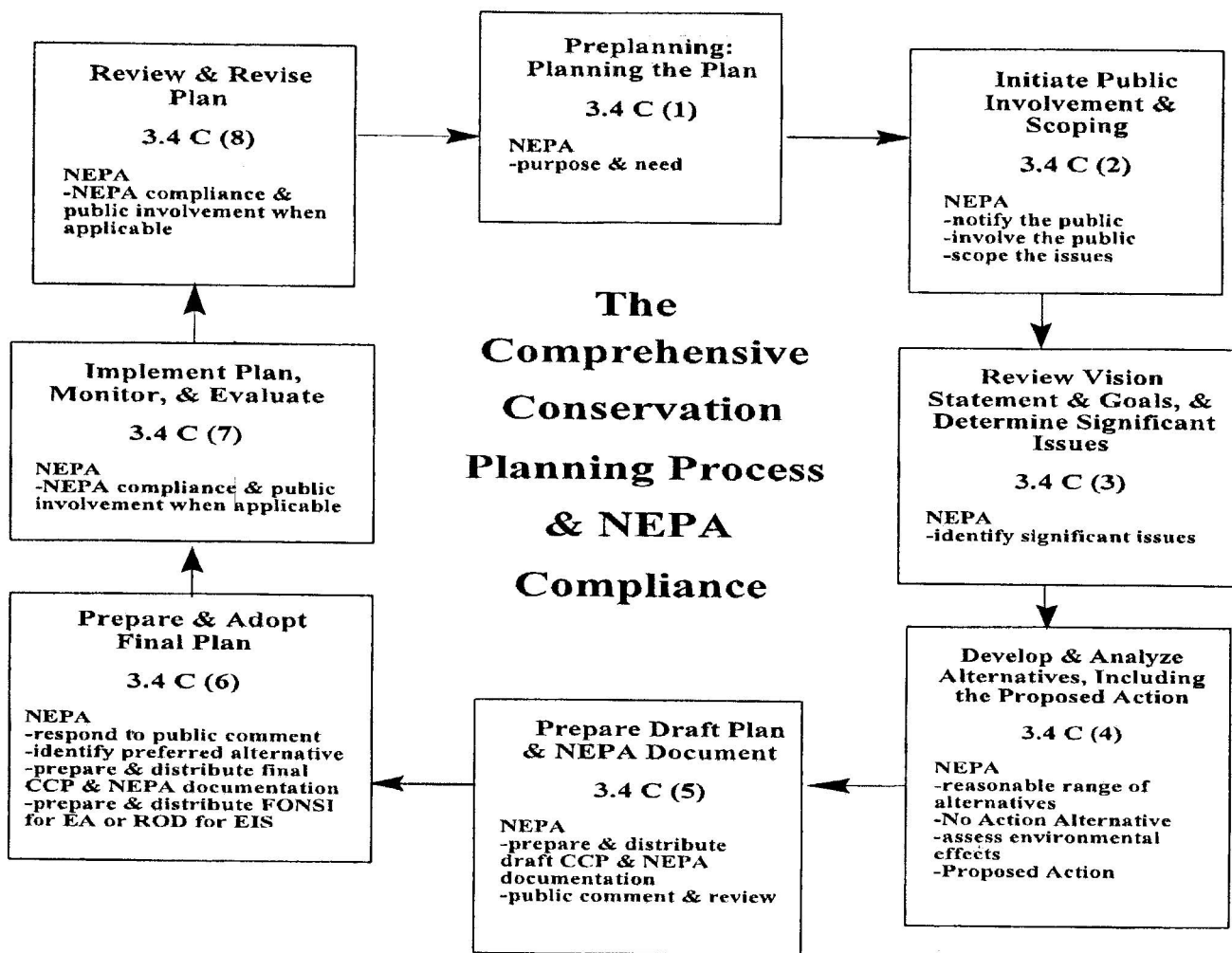
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**Note:** Although the steps are sequential, CCP planning and NEPA documentation are iterative processes. It is normal to cycle through some of the steps more than once or to have several steps occurring simultaneously. Actions within each of the eight steps may not be sequential.



**602 FW 3**

## **Comprehensive Conservation Planning Process**

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FW 3, 6/23/96, FWM 201)  
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**3.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) describe the desired future conditions of a refuge and provide long-range guidance and management direction to achieve refuge purposes; help fulfill the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) mission; maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; help achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and meet other mandates. The purpose of this chapter is to describe a systematic decision-making process that fulfills the requirements we are establishing for developing a CCP. This chapter provides guidance, step-by-step direction, and establishes minimum requirements for all CCPs. Experienced planners lead the CCP process. We require all of our planners and strongly encourage refuge managers and other key planning team members to attend the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) course on Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Planning.

**3.2 What is our policy for CCPs?** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or we) must manage all national wildlife refuges according to an approved CCP. We will prepare a CCP by October 2012 for each refuge in existence at the time of passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. For refuges established after passage of this Act, we will prepare CCPs when we staff the refuge and acquire a land base sufficient to achieve refuge purposes, but no later than 15 years after establishment of the refuge. To the extent practicable, we will coordinate the development of CCPs with affected States. We will continue to manage each refuge or planning unit with existing plans effective prior to October 9, 1997, to the extent these plans are consistent with the Refuge Administration Act, until we revise such plans or new CCPs supersede them. Upon completion of a CCP, we will manage the refuge or planning unit in a manner consistent with the CCP. We will revise the CCP every 15 years thereafter, or earlier if monitoring and evaluation determine that we need changes to achieve planning unit purpose(s), vision, goals, or objectives.

### **3.3 What are our goals for Comprehensive Conservation Planning?**

**A.** To ensure that wildlife comes first in the National Wildlife Refuge System and that we manage each refuge to help fulfill the mission of the Refuge System, maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System, as well as achieve the specific purposes for which the refuge was established.

- B.** To provide a clear and comprehensive statement of desired future conditions for each refuge or planning unit.
- C.** To encourage use of an ecosystem approach when we conduct refuge planning. This includes conducting concurrent refuge planning for refuges within the same watershed or ecosystem and considering the broader goals and objectives of the refuges' ecosystems and watersheds when developing management direction (see Ecosystem Approach to Fish and Wildlife Conservation [[Part 052](#) of the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual]).
- D.** To support management decisions and their rationale by using a thorough assessment of available science derived from scientific literature, on-site refuge data, expert opinion, and sound professional judgment.
- E.** To ensure that the six priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses receive priority consideration during the preparation of CCPs.
- F.** To provide a forum for the public to comment on the type, extent, and compatibility of uses on refuges, including priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses.
- G.** To provide a uniform basis for budget requests for operational, maintenance, and capital improvement programs.
- H.** To ensure public involvement in refuge management decisions by providing a process for effective coordination, interaction, and cooperation with affected parties, including Federal agencies, State conservation agencies, tribal governments, local governments, conservation organizations, adjacent landowners, and interested members of the public.

### **3.4 What is the Comprehensive Conservation Planning process?**

- A.** The CCP process (see [Exhibit 1](#)) provides consistent guidelines for developing CCPs. We designed the planning process to result in the development of vision statements, goals, objectives, and strategies that achieve refuge or planning unit purpose(s); help fulfill the Refuge System mission; maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; help achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and meet other mandates.
- B.** Each CCP will comply with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) through the concurrent preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will accompany or be integrated with the CCP. We have integrated NEPA compliance requirements directly into the CCP process. When preparing an EA, consider integrating it into the draft CCP. When preparing an EIS with a CCP, integrate the documents. Following completion of the final CCP/NEPA document, the product of the planning process will be a stand-alone CCP, separate from the EA or EIS.

**C.** Our CCP planning process consists of the following eight steps. Although we display the steps sequentially, CCP planning and NEPA documentation are iterative processes. Cycling through some of the steps more than once or having several steps occurring simultaneously is normal. Actions within each of the eight steps may not be sequential.

**(1) Preplanning: Planning the Plan**

**(a) Planning Team.** The Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System appoints the planning team leader. The planning team leader assembles the planning team, which consists of the planning team leader, the refuge manager and key staff members, and appropriate support staff or specialists from both regional and field offices (e.g., fisheries, cultural resources, endangered species, external affairs/outreach, realty, contaminants, migratory birds, water resources, etc.). We will provide representatives from appropriate State and tribal conservation agencies, and any public agency that may have a direct land management relationship with the refuge, the opportunity to serve on planning teams. The planning team leader will prepare a formal written request for participation by appropriate State and tribal conservation agencies for signature by the Regional Director. Included in this request is an invitation to attend the NCTC course on Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Planning. If we meet the requirements of Section 204(b) of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-4), participation by these State and tribal agencies is not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

**(b) Identify Refuge Purpose(s), History, and Establishing Authority.** Document the history of refuge establishment and management, as well as refuge purposes and authorizing authority (e.g., legislation [including wilderness designation, if applicable], executive orders, administrative memoranda). These will become driving forces in the process and subsequently be reflected in the refuge vision statement, goals, objectives, and strategies in the CCP.

**(c) Identify Planning and Compliance Requirements and Special Designations.** Review our agency and Refuge System mission statements and policies, as well as other existing legislation to help identify planning and compliance requirements. See [Exhibit 2](#) for a list of laws and executive orders that may apply and [Exhibit 3](#) for a checklist of elements we must include within a CCP. Identify and review other Service guidance, such as [Fulfilling the Promise: The National Wildlife Refuge System](#) and mandates including laws, executive orders, regulations, and our policies, especially those with compliance requirements. Also review any existing special designation areas such as wilderness, research natural areas, wild and scenic rivers, wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites), Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserves, etc., and specifically address the potential for any new special designations. Concurrent with the CCP process we will conduct a wilderness review and incorporate a summary of the review into the CCP. (See [Part 610](#) of the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual for guidance on conducting wilderness reviews.) Complete the inventory phase of the review during preplanning. If you identify a Wilderness Study Area, proceed with the study and recommendation phases of the review. (Note: An EIS is the NEPA document we must include in a recommendation or report on a legislative proposal to Congress [40 CFR 1506.8]. This requirement applies to all CCPs that contain wilderness

recommendations.)

**(d) Purpose and Need for the Plan.** The purpose of developing the CCP is to provide the refuge manager with a 15-year management plan for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their related habitats, while providing opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses. The CCP, when fully implemented, should achieve refuge purposes; help fulfill the Refuge System mission; maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; help achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and meet other mandates. The CCP must be specific to the planning unit and identify the overarching wildlife, public use, or management needs for the refuge.

**(e) Planning Area and Data Needs.** Delineate the planning area on a map. Identify the relationship between the planning unit and its ecosystem(s) and watershed(s) as well as relationships between the planning unit and any other refuges or other important fish and wildlife habitats in the vicinity. Identify data available to address issues discussed in [subparagraph \(h\)](#), Internal Scoping. Obtain information from Federal, tribal, State, and local agencies, and private landowners concerning land management issues that may impact or relate to the planning unit. To assist in determining species or resources of concern, consult the following: Federal threatened and endangered species lists; Migratory Nongame Birds of Management Concern in the United States; Partners in Flight Watch List; State lists of rare, threatened, endangered, or species of concern; National Audubon Society State Watch Lists; The Nature Conservancy's heritage program and ranking system; as well as State heritage databases and conservation data centers for additional sources of information. Also identify resource experts familiar with the key species and habitats in the planning area, and consult with these experts during the development of habitat objectives. Base CCPs on a comprehensive assessment of the existing scientific literature. Potential sources of information include planning documents, EAs, EISs, annual narrative reports, information from previously conducted or ongoing research, data from refuge inventories or studies, published literature on related biological studies, State conservation management plans, field management experience, etc. While we may not be able to develop new data for the CCP, we may identify the need for further data collection. A lack of data should not delay the completion of the CCP. Identify and describe the following conditions and their trends for the planning unit and, as appropriate, for the planning area:

- (i)** Context of the planning unit in relation to the surrounding ecosystem.
- (ii)** Structures, components, and functions of the ecosystem(s) of which the planning unit is a part.
- (iii)** Natural and historic role of fire and other natural occurrences affecting ecological processes. Past land use and history of settlement, including a description of any changes in topography, hydrology, and other factors.
- (v)** Current and historic description of the flora and fauna and the diversity of habitats and natural communities.

- (vi) Distribution, migration patterns, and abundance of fish, wildlife, and plant populations, including any threatened or endangered species, and related habitats.
- (vii) Fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats and communities that are rare and/or declining within the ecosystem.
- (viii) Water resources including quality and quantity.
- (ix) Archaeological and other cultural resources.
- (x) Significant problems that may adversely affect the ecological integrity or wilderness characteristics and the actions necessary to correct or mitigate the problems.
- (xi) Identify opportunities to improve the health of habitats or the functioning of ecosystems.
- (xii) Significant problems that may adversely affect the populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants (including candidate, threatened, and endangered species) and the actions necessary to correct or mitigate the problems.
- (xiii) Known or suspected sources of environmental contaminants and their potential impacts on the planning unit (refer to the Contaminant Assessment Program).
- (xiv) Land acquisition or habitat protection efforts.
- (xv) Habitat management practices.
- (xvi) Existing administrative resources, including staffing, funding, and facilities.
- (xvii) Existing transportation patterns and related visitor facilities.
- (xviii) Potential need for administrative sites, transportation improvements, or visitor facilities and areas within the planning unit that are suitable for such sites.
- (xix) Existing and potential opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation.
- (xx) Existing special management areas, or the potential for such designations (e.g., wilderness, research natural areas, and wild and scenic rivers).

**(f) Review All Available Information, Plans, Data, Maps, and Data Standards.** Based on this review, determine what the initial planning area includes and identify any additional information and data needs, including mapping and GIS needs. Note: All Federal agencies and their contractors must

comply with data standards endorsed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (Executive Order 12906; [59 FR 17671](#), April 13, 1994). Of particular relevance to refuge planning are the National Vegetation Classification Standard (FGDC-STD-005) and the Classification of Wetlands and Deep Water Habitats (FGDC-STD-004). Compliance with these standards will facilitate the sharing and exchange of high-quality vegetation and wetland data among Federal agencies and their partners. We also are developing other data standards, such as cartographic standards for delineation of refuge boundaries and land status.

**(g) Vision and Goals.** Review the existing planning unit vision statement and goals and determine the need for revision. If these do not exist, prepare a draft vision statement and goals for consideration during public scoping. The vision statement should focus on what will be different in the future because of our efforts, capture the essence of what we are trying to do, and why. It should be future-oriented, concise, clear, compelling, and give a sense of purpose to our efforts. At a minimum, each refuge should develop goals for wildlife species or groups of species, habitat (including land protection needs), compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, other mandates (such as refuge-specific legislation, executive orders, special area designations, etc.), and fish, wildlife, and plant populations, as appropriate. The vision statement and goals will reflect planning unit purposes; help fulfill the mission of the Refuge System; maintain and, where appropriate, restore ecological integrity; and will be consistent with mandates and principles of sound fish and wildlife management. Planning unit goals also will reflect our ecosystem goals to the extent these goals do not conflict with the Refuge System mission or the purposes for which the refuge was established. We also may develop refuge goals for our other mandates. Subsequently, we will develop objectives for achieving planning unit goals (see [3.4C\(4\)\(d\)](#), Objective Development). For additional information on developing goals and objectives, see the current edition of *Writing Refuge Management Goals and Objectives: A Handbook*.

**(h) Internal Scoping.** Begin the internal scoping process by identifying management concerns, issues, and opportunities to resolve them, as well as any potential impacts and alternatives that we may need to address in the CCP and NEPA analysis. Review the background, rationale, and the success or failure of any controversial management actions and identify any additional information and data needed where appropriate.

**(i) Public Involvement/Outreach Planning.** Prepare a Public Involvement/Outreach Plan indicating how and when we will invite the affected public to participate in CCP development. This plan will include establishing a mailing list and identifying appropriate techniques and materials to use in public involvement. We integrate public involvement and outreach into each step, and it continues throughout the planning process. For additional information on public involvement techniques, consult the Public Participation Handbook (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1985) or the NCTC Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Planning Course Handbook and Reference Notebook.

**(j) Work Plan/Planning Schedule.** Establish a work plan or planning schedule for the CCP. Determine who will be responsible for carrying out identified tasks, gathering information and data, and preparing products identified in the work plan or schedule. Identify all key NEPA compliance steps and



public involvement activities. Identify any additional expertise, besides the planning team, required to prepare the CCP. This may include an economist, a facilitator for public and other meetings, other contracted professional services, etc.

**(k) Planning Record.** Establish a planning record to document the preparation of the CCP and NEPA compliance, and assign its maintenance to a team member. The planning record will serve as a valuable reference and provide important background and historical information. If there is a legal challenge to the CCP, use the planning record to construct the administrative record. For additional information on the planning record, consult the NCTC Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Planning Course Handbook and Reference Notebook.

## **(2) Initiate Public Involvement and Scoping**

**(a) Notice of Intent.** Prepare a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a CCP, with appropriate NEPA compliance, and publish the NOI in the Federal Register. The NOI initiates public scoping for the CCP/NEPA planning and decision-making process. If we initially determine that we will prepare an EIS for the CCP, the NOI should specify that. If at any time during the planning process we decide to prepare an EIS, we will publish in the Federal Register a new NOI to prepare an EIS and provide additional time for the public to comment. Should we publish a new NOI, we will use news releases and other appropriate means to notify the public.

**(b) Public Scoping.** Using news releases to the local media and other appropriate means, notify the affected public of the opportunity to participate in the preparation of the CCP and begin the scoping process. Involve the public and gather comments on any existing planning unit vision statement and goals. Encourage the public to help identify potential issues, management actions and concerns, significant problems or impacts, and opportunities or alternatives to resolve them. Public scoping will continue until we prepare a draft CCP/NEPA document.

**(c) Issues and Data Needs.** Analyze all comments gathered and recorded during the scoping process. Identify any new information, issues, concerns, or significant problems, opportunities to resolve them, and potential refinements or revisions of any existing planning unit vision statement and goals. Based on this analysis, identify any additional information and data needed.

## **(3) Review Vision Statement and Goals and Determine Significant Issues**

**(a) Vision and Goals.** Review and evaluate the public's comments on the planning unit vision statement and goals. Based on this review, modify the vision and goals for the planning unit as appropriate.

**(b) Determine Significant Issues.** Review and evaluate all potential issues, management concerns, and problems and the opportunities to resolve them that the planning team and the public have identified. Identify those issues and concerns that are significant, and the appropriate scale at which to consider

those issues. Document the rationale for selecting significant issues, as well as the rationale for not selecting the other issues and concerns (e.g., outside the scope of the CCP, does not contribute to achieving refuge purposes, Refuge System mission, etc.). Significant issues typically are those that are: within our jurisdiction, suggest different actions or alternatives, and will influence our decision. We will refer those issues identified outside the scope of refuge planning to the pertinent Service program office or division.

**(4) Develop and Analyze Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action.** This part of the process is not sequential, it is iterative. Iterative procedures in this step of the process include: issue assessment; refinement and development of goals, objectives, and strategies; analysis and comparison of impacts and benefits of management actions; and the packaging or combining of similar themes or programs to develop preliminary alternatives and assessment of their environmental consequences. The alternatives should reflect different sets of objectives and strategies to achieve refuge purposes, vision, and goals, help fulfill the Refuge System mission, and resolve issues. Prepare maps depicting the different strategies reflected in each alternative. Also display this information in a matrix comparing issues, impacts, and benefits for each alternative.

**(a) No Action Alternative.** Define the No Action Alternative, which is usually a continuation of current planning unit objectives and management strategies, with no changes or changes that would have occurred without the CCP.

**(b) A Range of Alternatives.** Develop a range of alternatives, or different approaches to planning unit management, that we could reasonably undertake to achieve planning unit goals and refuge purposes; help fulfill the Refuge System mission; maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; help achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; meet other mandates, and resolve any significant issues identified. Alternatives consist of different sets of objectives and strategies for management of the refuge. Give equal effort to each alternative regarding specific objectives and strategies so that the decision maker can make an informed choice. NEPA requires an equal and full analysis of all alternatives considered for implementation.

**(c) Proposed Action.** The planning team will recommend a proposed action in the NEPA document for the CCP identifying the alternative that best achieves planning unit purposes, vision, and goals; helps fulfill the Refuge System mission; maintains and, where appropriate, restores the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; addresses the significant issues and mandates; and is consistent with principles of sound fish and wildlife management. The proposed action is, for all practical purposes, the draft CCP for the planning unit.

**(d) Objective Development.** Develop objectives to address each goal. Word objectives so it is clear what we can measure during monitoring to assess progress toward their attainment. Consult the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual chapters on habitat management, populations management, wilderness management, and wildlife-dependent recreation during the development of objectives. Develop detailed, measurable objectives using available scientific literature and other appropriate information.

Develop objectives with consideration of regional and Service ecosystem goals and objectives. Develop objectives for specific refuge habitat types, management units, key species (e.g., migratory birds and threatened and endangered species), wildlife-dependent recreation, monitoring populations of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats, and other areas of management, as appropriate. Objectives also may deal with refuge information needs (for example, including the development of baseline data), administrative needs, and any other issues we need to address to meet the goals of the refuge. Document in a short narrative summary the rationale, including appropriate literature citations, that supports each objective. Also consult the current edition of *Writing Refuge Management Goals and Objectives: A Handbook*. Developing detailed objectives at this stage will expedite development of step-down management plans when required.

**(e) Strategy Development.** Develop strategies to identify the specific actions, tools, or techniques that are necessary to accomplish each objective. Strategies represent specific projects that provide the detail required to assess and develop funding, staffing, and partnerships needed to implement the plan. Develop inventory and monitoring strategies to measure implementation results in quantifiable and verifiable ways. We may require step-down management plans to provide the specific details of how to achieve goals and objectives identified in the CCP.

**(f) Environmental Consequences.** Assess the environmental consequences (direct, indirect, and cumulative) of implementing each alternative as required by NEPA. Compare the consequences of implementing each alternative in relation to the No Action Alternative, which serves as a baseline. Describe the adverse and beneficial impacts of implementing each alternative on fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats; any threatened or endangered species; cultural resources; the local economy; the ability to provide opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses; conflicts between priority uses and other uses; and other issues identified earlier in the planning process. This analysis must provide the level of detail necessary to assess the compatibility of all proposed uses. Describe each alternative's ability to achieve planning unit purpose(s), vision, and goals; help fulfill the Refuge System mission; ensure that we maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; and address the significant issues and mandates. This assessment also will identify the funding, staffing, and facilities required for implementation of each alternative.

## **(5) Prepare Draft Plan and NEPA Document**

**(a) Draft CCP and NEPA Document.** Concurrently prepare the draft CCP and appropriate NEPA documentation (EA or EIS). When preparing an EA, consider integrating the draft CCP with the EA. When preparing an EIS with a CCP, integrate the documents. If the decision is to prepare a separate EA, see [Exhibit 4](#) for a recommended CCP outline. If the documents are separate, the proposed action in the EA must contain all of the major actions of the draft CCP. If the decision is to merge the CCP and EA, see [Exhibit 5](#) for a recommended outline. During the process of preparing the CCP, refer to [Exhibit 3](#) to ensure inclusion of all required elements in the plan. Ensure compliance regarding other programs and policies, including: Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act; Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act; Section 14 of the

Archaeological Resources Protection Act; Executive Order 13007 - Indian Sacred Sites; Executive Order 11988 - Floodplain Management; Executive Order 11990 - Protection of Wetlands; etc. See [Exhibit 2](#) for a list of mandates to consider during the planning process.

**(b) Compatibility Determinations.** Complete new compatibility determinations or reevaluate existing compatibility determinations as part of the CCP process for all individual uses, specific use programs, or groups of related uses associated with the proposed action. Prepared concurrently with the CCP, incorporate the draft compatibility determinations into the draft CCP as an appendix. We require public review and comment for all compatibility determinations. We can achieve this concurrently through public review and comment of the draft CCP and NEPA document. While other alternatives do not require compatibility determinations, assess the environmental consequences, and, for all practical purposes, compatibility of all uses proposed in those alternatives in the NEPA document.

**(c) Pre-acquisition Compatibility Determinations.** If our proposed action includes expanding the planning unit by acquiring new lands, the draft CCP and NEPA documents also must identify any existing wildlife-dependent recreational public uses deemed compatible that we will allow to continue after acquisition. Incorporate these pre-acquisition compatibility determinations into the draft CCP and NEPA document.

**(d) Internal Review.** Submit the draft CCP and NEPA document for internal review within the Region following established procedures. Include in the review refuge program managers, ecosystem managers, refuge staff and other appropriate Service programs and divisions, as well as other agency partners. Also submit these documents for internal review to the Regional and Washington Office Planning Coordinators. Consider all comments received from the internal reviews and make appropriate changes to the draft document. Print the draft CCP and NEPA document and prepare for public review.

**(e) Public Notice, Review, and Comment.** Prepare a Notice of Availability of the draft CCP and NEPA document and publish it in the Federal Register. Notify the affected public of the availability of these documents through other appropriate means, as identified in the Public Involvement/Outreach Plan. Public notices will make clear that we are seeking concurrent review on compatibility determinations. Provide a minimum of 30 days for public review of a draft CCP with an EA and 45 days for a draft CCP with an integrated EIS. Make copies of the draft CCP and NEPA document available to appropriate elected officials; Federal, State, and local agencies; tribal governments; organizations; libraries (including NCTC); resource experts; adjacent landowners; and individuals requesting them. Conduct appropriate public involvement activities as called for in the Public Involvement/Outreach Plan. Document all public comments, both written and oral, received on the draft CCP and NEPA document as part of the planning record.

## **(6) Prepare and Adopt Final Plan**

**(a) Public Comment, Analysis, and Response.** Review and analyze all written and oral comments received from the public on the draft CCP and NEPA document. Determine which comments are

substantive and warrant written response. Modify the document(s) as appropriate. Prepare a summary of the public comments received and a statement of the disposition of concerns expressed in those comments, noting where we have changed the document(s) or why we did not make such changes. Incorporate the summary and statement of disposition into the final document(s) (usually in the NEPA document or a CCP appendix).

**(b) Final CCP and NEPA Document(s).** Identify the preferred alternative and prepare the final CCP and appropriate NEPA documentation. The preferred alternative can be the proposed action, the no action alternative, another alternative, or a combination of actions or alternatives discussed in the draft CCP and NEPA document. Following completion of the final CCP/NEPA document, the product of the CCP process is a stand-alone CCP (the preferred alternative for the planning unit). During the process of preparing the final plan, refer to [Exhibit 3](#) to ensure inclusion of all required elements.

**(c) Internal Review.** Submit the final document(s) for internal review within the Region according to established procedures. Refer to [3.4C\(5\)\(d\)](#) for a list of those to include in the review. Consider all comments received from the internal review and make appropriate changes to the final document(s).

**(d) Decision Document.** The decision document (either a Finding of No Significant Impact [FONSI] or a Record of Decision [ROD]) will certify that we have met agency compliance requirements and that the CCP, when implemented, will achieve the purposes of the refuge and help fulfill the Refuge System mission.

**(i) CCP with an EA and FONSI.** The refuge manager and planning team leader submit the final CCP and FONSI through line supervision for concurrence and approval by the Regional Director. The Regional Director will sign and date both the FONSI and the final CCP. Following approval, print and distribute the final document(s) and appropriate appendices. Provide the FONSI to all interested and affected parties. Concurrent with the distribution of the FONSI, provide the final, approved, stand-alone CCP or a summary to all interested parties. In some cases we may require a 30-day public review period for the FONSI (see [550 FW 3.3B\(4\)\(c\)](#)). In these cases, we may not sign or release the final CCP until the end of the 30-day review.

**(ii) CCP with an EIS and ROD.** The refuge manager and planning team leader submit the final EIS/CCP through line supervision for concurrence and approval to release these documents to the public. Provide these documents to interested and affected parties for at least 30 days prior to issuing a ROD. Following this period, submit the ROD through line supervision for concurrence and approval by the Regional Director. The Regional Director will sign and date both the ROD and the final CCP. Following approval, print the final documents and appropriate appendices. Provide the ROD or notification of its availability to all interested and affected parties. Concurrent with the release of the ROD, provide or make available the final, approved, stand-alone CCP or a summary to interested parties. Effective with the signing and release of the ROD, implement the CCP.

**(iii) Stand-Alone CCP.** The final product of the CCP process is a stand-alone CCP (the preferred

alternative for the planning unit).

**(e) Public Notice.** Prepare a Notice of Availability of the final approved CCP and NEPA document(s) and publish it in the Federal Register. Notify the affected public of the availability of the final document (s) through other appropriate means, as identified in the Public Involvement/Outreach Plan. Send copies of all final documents to the Regional and Washington Office Planning Coordinators. Make copies of the final approved CCP and NEPA document(s) available to appropriate elected officials; Federal, State, and local agencies; tribal governments; organizations; libraries (including NCTC); adjacent landowners; and individuals requesting them.

**(7) Implement Plan, Monitor, and Evaluate.** Following approval of the CCP and public notification of the decision, begin implementing the strategies identified in the CCP. Allocate funding and staff time to the priority strategies as defined in the CCP. Initiate the monitoring and evaluation process identified in the CCP to determine if we are making progress in achieving the planning unit purpose(s), vision, and goals. Monitoring should address habitat or population objectives, and the effects of management activities. See [701 FW 2](#). Describe the sampling design sufficiently so it may be replicated. Through adaptive management, evaluation of monitoring and research results may indicate the need to modify refuge objectives or strategies.

## **(8) Review and Revise Plan**

**(a) Plan Review.** Review the CCP at least annually to decide if it requires any revisions. Modify the plan and associated management activities whenever this review or other monitoring and evaluation determine that we need changes to achieve planning unit purpose(s), vision, and goals.

**(b) Plan Revision.** Revise the CCP when significant new information becomes available, ecological conditions change, major refuge expansion occurs, or when we identify the need to do so during plan review. This should occur every 15 years or sooner, if necessary. All plan revisions should follow the procedures outlined in this chapter for preparing plans and will require NEPA compliance. Document minor plan revisions that meet the criteria of a categorical exclusion in an Environmental Action Statement, in accordance with [550 FW 3.3C](#). Contact the Regional NEPA Coordinator for an up-to-date list of categorical exclusions and for other NEPA assistance. If the plan requires a major revision, then the CCP process starts anew at the preplanning step. See [602 FW 3.4C\(1\)](#).

**(c) Ongoing Public Involvement.** Continue informing and involving the public through appropriate means.

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***For additional information regarding this Web page, contact [Hope Grey](#), in the Division of Policy and Directives Management, at [Hope\\_Grey@fws.gov](mailto:Hope_Grey@fws.gov). For information on the specific content of this chapter, contact the Division of Refuges.***

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**Exhibit 1,602 FW 4**  
**LIST OF POTENTIAL**  
**STEP-DOWN MANAGEMENT PLANS**

FWM#: 355 (New)  
 Date: June 21, 2000  
 Series: Refuge Management  
 Part 602: National Wildlife Refuge System  
 Planning  
 Originating Office: Division of Refuges

[PDF Version](#)

<b>Step-Down Management Plans</b>	<b>Service Manual Reference</b>
Occupational Safety and Health	<a href="#">Parts 240-249</a>
Safety Program	240 FW 1-9
Safety Operations	241 FW 1-9
Industrial Hygiene	242 FW 1-13
Hazardous Materials Operations	<a href="#">242 FW 6</a>
Water Rights	<a href="#">Part 403</a>
Policy, Objectives, and Responsibilities	<a href="#">403 FW 1</a>
Law Enforcement	<a href="#">Parts 440-459</a>
Pollution Control	<a href="#">Parts 560-569</a>
Policy and Responsibilities	<a href="#">560 FW 1</a>
Pollution Prevention	<a href="#">560 FW 2</a>
Compliance Requirements	<a href="#">Part 561</a>
Clean Water Act	<a href="#">561 FW 3</a>
RCRA - Hazardous Waste	<a href="#">561 FW 6</a>
Pesticide Use and Disposal	<a href="#">Part 562</a>
Pest Management	<a href="#">562 FW 1</a>
External Threats to FWS Facilities	<a href="#">Part 563</a>
Air Quality Protection	<a href="#">563 FW 2</a>
National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Uses	<a href="#">Part 603</a>
NWRS Uses (Appropriate Refuge Uses)	603 FW 1
Priority Wildlife-Dependent Recreation	<a href="#">Part 605</a>
Hunting	605 FW 2

Fishing	605 FW 3
Wildlife Observation	605 FW 4
Wildlife Photography	605 FW 5
Environmental Education	605 FW 6
Interpretation	605 FW 7
Wilderness Management	<a href="#">Part 610</a>
Special Area Management	<a href="#">Part 611</a>
Research Natural Areas	611 FW 1
Public Use Natural Areas	611 FW 2
Wild and Scenic Rivers	611 FW 3
National Trails	611 FW 4
Man in the Biosphere Reserve	.
Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserves	.
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	.
Minerals Management	<a href="#">Part 612</a>
Minerals and Mining	<a href="#">612 FW 1</a>
Oil and Gas	<a href="#">612 FW 2</a>
Cultural Resources Management	<a href="#">Part 614</a>
Habitat Management Planning	<a href="#">Part 620</a>
Fire Management	<a href="#">Part 621</a>
Population Management	<a href="#">Part 701</a>
Inventory and Monitoring	701 FW 2
Propagation and Stocking	701 FW 3
Marking and Banding	701 FW 4
Disease Prevention and Control	701 FW 7
Trapping	701 FW 11
Fishery Resources Management	<a href="#">Part 710</a>
Exotic Species	<a href="#">Part 751</a>

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**Exhibit 2,602 FW 3**  
**MANDATES TO CONSIDER DURING**  
**COMPREHENSIVE**  
**CONSERVATION**  
**PLANNING**

FWM#: 355 (Supersedes 602 FW 3,  
 6/23/96, FWM 201)  
 Date: June 21, 2000  
 Series: Refuge Management  
 Part 602: National Wildlife Refuge System  
 Planning  
 Originating Office: Division of Refuges

[PDF Version](#)

STATUTES	APPLICABLE	
	YES	NO
Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, as amended	.	.
American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978	.	.
Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990	.	.
Anadromous Fish Conservation Act of 1965, as amended	.	.
Antiquities Act of 1906	.	.
Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974	.	.
Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended	.	.
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, as amended	.	.
Clean Air Act of 1970	.	.
Clean Water Act of 1974, as amended	.	.
Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended	.	.
Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986	.	.
Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended	.	.
Farmland Protection Act of 1981, as amended	.	.
Federal Cave Protection Act of 1988	.	.
Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1990	.	.
Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956	.	.
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958	.	.
Fishery (Magnuson) Conservation and Management Act of 1976	.	.
Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended	.	.
Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929	.	.

Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of 1934	.	.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended	.	.
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969	.	.
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended	.	.
National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amende	.	.
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990	.	.
Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, as amended	.	.
Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899	.	.
Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 (sole-source aquifers)	.	.
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended	.	.
Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended	.	.
<b>EXECUTIVE ORDERS</b>	.	.
EO 11644, Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Land	.	.
EO 11987, Exotic Organisms	.	.
EO 11988, Floodplain Management	.	.
EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands	.	.
EO 12898, Environmental Justice for Minority Populations	.	.
EO 12962, Recreational Fisheries	.	.
EO 12996, Management & General Public Use of the National Wildlife Refuge System	.	.
EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites	.	.
EO 13084, Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments	.	.

**Note:** This list is not all inclusive. There may be other executive orders and statutes that apply to a particular planning unit.

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**Visit the [Division of PDM Directives Home Page](#)**

**Visit the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Home Page](#)**



**Exhibit 3,602 FW 3**  
**CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED**  
**COMPREHENSIVE**  
**CONSERVATION**  
**PLAN ELEMENTS**

FWM#: 355 (Supersedes 602 FW 3,  
6/23/96, FWM 201)

Date: June 21, 2000

Series: Refuge Management

Part 602: National Wildlife Refuge System  
Planning

Originating Office: Division of Refuges

[PDF Version](#)

\_\_\_ Short description of the planning unit to include:

- \_\_\_ Size
- \_\_\_ Establishment date
- \_\_\_ Regional setting (include area map)
- \_\_\_ Land acquisition or habitat protection efforts
- \_\_\_ Current management (including a map)
- \_\_\_ Current staffing
- \_\_\_ Existing partnerships
- \_\_\_ Purpose(s) for which the refuge was established
- \_\_\_ Past land use and history of settlement, including a description of any changes in topography, hydrology, and other factors
- \_\_\_ Existing transportation patterns and related visitor facilities
- \_\_\_ Habitat management practices

\_\_\_ Refuge System mission and goals.

\_\_\_ Ecosystem goals and objectives.

\_\_\_ Goals and objectives for other landscape-level plans.

\_\_\_ National goals and objectives for species, species groups, habitats and communities, or programs (e. g., shorebirds, an endangered species, priority public use program).

\_\_\_ Identify any mandates that apply to the area or the proposed plan.

\_\_\_ Description of the planning unit environment to include:

- \_\_\_ distribution, migration patterns, and abundance of fish, wildlife, and plant populations, including any threatened or endangered species and related habitats;
- \_\_\_ current and historic description of the flora and fauna, and the diversity of habitats and natural communities;
- \_\_\_ wildlife habitat and species relationships;

- \_\_\_ ability of the planning unit to meet the habitat needs of fish, wildlife, and plants, as they occur throughout their natural ranges;
- \_\_\_ vegetation types (Federal Geographic Data Committee compliant map required);
- \_\_\_ vegetation/land cover and wildlife habitat relationships;
- \_\_\_ significant problems that may adversely affect the ecological integrity or wilderness characteristics and the actions necessary to correct or mitigate the problems;
- \_\_\_ context of the planning unit in relation to the surrounding ecosystem;
- \_\_\_ structures, components, and functions of the ecosystem(s) of which the planning unit is a part;
- \_\_\_ fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats and communities that are rare and/or declining within the ecosystem;
- \_\_\_ archaeological and cultural resources of the planning unit;
- \_\_\_ refuge land status map;
- \_\_\_ natural and historic role of fire and other natural occurrences affecting ecological processes;
- \_\_\_ existing special management areas (e.g., wilderness, wild and scenic rivers);
- \_\_\_ relationship between the planning unit and other refuges and protected areas

\_\_\_ Document and describe the following:

- \_\_\_ significant problems that may adversely affect the populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants within the planning unit (including candidate, threatened, and endangered species) and the actions necessary to correct or mitigate such problems;
- \_\_\_ water resources including quantity and quality;
- \_\_\_ known or suspected sources of environmental contaminants and their potential impacts on the planning unit (refer to the Contaminant Assessment Program);
- \_\_\_ potential for special management area designations (e.g., wilderness, research natural areas, and wild and scenic rivers);
- \_\_\_ summary of management history;
- \_\_\_ other significant issues of management or public concern;
- \_\_\_ existing and potential opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation;
- \_\_\_ existing administrative resources, including staffing, funding, and facilities;
- \_\_\_ potential need for administrative sites, transportation improvements, or visitor facilities and areas within the planning unit that are suitable for such sites.

\_\_\_ Vision statement.

\_\_\_ Goals for at least the following areas:

- \_\_\_ wildlife species or groups of species;
- \_\_\_ habitat (including land protection needs);
- \_\_\_ fish, wildlife, and plant populations, as appropriate;
- \_\_\_ compatible wildlife-dependent recreation;
- \_\_\_ others as needed to meet mandates (such as refuge-specific legislation, executive orders, special area designations, etc.).

\_\_\_ Objectives for each goal.

\_\_\_ Strategies to achieve each objective.

\_\_\_ Map(s) of desired future conditions (e.g., habitat management areas, facilities, wildlife- dependent recreation sites, etc.).

\_\_\_ Identification of step-down management plans required to fully implement the CCP.

\_\_\_ Prioritized list of projects and estimated project costs (update priorities and cost estimates annually).

\_\_\_ Staffing and funding required to implement the plan.

\_\_\_ Potential partnership opportunities.

\_\_\_ Monitoring plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and project implementation, including monitoring of target fish, wildlife, and plant populations and their habitats.

\_\_\_ Summary of public involvement process, comments received and their disposition, and consultation and coordination with other Federal agencies, State conservation agencies, and adjacent landowners.

\_\_\_ Compatibility determinations (including pre-acquisition compatibility determinations).

\_\_\_ Wilderness review.

\_\_\_ Habitat/Land Protection Plans (if applicable).

\_\_\_ NEPA documentation.

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**Exhibit 4,602 FW 3**  
***REFUGE COMPREHENSIVE  
CONSERVATION  
PLAN RECOMMENDED OUTLINE***

FWM#: 355 (Supersedes 602  
FW 3, 6/23/96, FWM 201)  
Date: June 21, 2000  
Series: Refuge Management  
Part 602: National Wildlife  
Refuge System Planning  
Originating Office: Division of  
Refuges

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Cover Sheet

Title/Approval Page

Acknowledgments

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Summary

## I. Introduction/Background

- Refuge Overview: History of Refuge Establishment, Acquisition, and Management
- Purpose of and Need for Plan
- NWRS Mission, Goals, and Guiding Principles
- Refuge Purpose(s)
- Refuge Vision Statement
- Legal and Policy Guidance
- Existing Partnerships

## II. Planning Process

- Description of Planning Process
- Planning Issues

## III. Summary Refuge and Resource Descriptions

- Geographic/Ecosystem Setting
- Refuge Resources, Cultural Resources, and Public Uses
- Special Management Areas

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List of Preparers  
Others, as appropriate

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**Exhibit 5,602 FW 3**  
***EA OR EIS INCORPORATING***  
***ELEMENTS***  
***OF A CCP RECOMMENDED OUTLINE***

FWM#: 355 (Supersedes 602 FW 3,  
6/23/96, FWM 201)  
Date: June 21, 2000  
Series: Refuge Management  
Part 602: National Wildlife Refuge  
System Planning  
Originating Office: Division of Refuges

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Cover Sheet

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## 602 FW 4 Step-Down Management Planning

FWM#: 355 (New)

Date: June 21, 2000

Series: Refuge Management

Part 602: National Wildlife Refuge System

Planning

Originating Office: Division of Refuges

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**4.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter provides guidance on step-down management planning.

**4.2 What is our policy for step-down management planning?** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or we) will prepare step-down management plans when required by policy or when they may be necessary to provide strategies and implementation schedules for meeting goals and objectives identified in Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs). Step-down management plans should include public involvement and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance documentation, as appropriate. Develop step-down management plans following the planning process guidance in [602 FW 1](#) and [602 FW 3](#).

**4.3 What is the applicability of step-down management planning and its relationship to Comprehensive Conservation Plans?**

**A.** Step-down management planning is the formulation of detailed plans for meeting goals and objectives identified in the CCP.

**B.** Step-down management plans describe the specific strategies and implementation schedules we are to follow, "stepping down" from general goals and objectives. The preparation of new step-down management plans or substantial changes to existing step-down management plans typically will require further compliance with NEPA and other policies, and an opportunity for public review. For public use plans or other step-down management plans dealing with proposed uses of the refuge, prepare and append compatibility determinations to the plans.

**C.** The CCP will identify which step-down management plans are necessary and provide a schedule for their completion. After completion of the CCP, modify existing step-down management plans as needed to accomplish stated objectives. See [602 FW 3](#). In the absence of an approved CCP, we will develop step-down management plans to describe goals, objectives, strategies, implementation schedules, and details necessary to implement a management program.

**D.** As an alternative to separate step-down management plans, we may address management programs in detail during preparation of the CCP. Determining which programs we can address in detail in the CCP

depends on several factors, including the degree of public interest, the amount of available information, and the complexity of the issues.

**4.4 How do we combine step-down management plans?** Address management subjects individually or combined into a single, integrated step-down management plan. This decision rests with the refuge manager. Base the decision on strategies defined in the CCP, the relationship between program areas, and the complexity of the programs under consideration. Some program areas, such as fire management and habitat management, logically suggest an integrated approach.

**4.5 What is the list of potential step-down management plans?** [Exhibit 1](#) is a list of potential refuge step-down management plans. Consider all of these plans during the CCP process. The CCP will document which plans we require for the planning unit.

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**Exhibit 1,602 FW 4**  
**LIST OF POTENTIAL**  
**STEP-DOWN MANAGEMENT PLANS**

FWM#: 355 (New)  
 Date: June 21, 2000  
 Series: Refuge Management  
 Part 602: National Wildlife Refuge System  
 Planning  
 Originating Office: Division of Refuges

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<b>Step-Down Management Plans</b>	<b>Service Manual Reference</b>
Occupational Safety and Health	<a href="#">Parts 240-249</a>
Safety Program	240 FW 1-9
Safety Operations	241 FW 1-9
Industrial Hygiene	242 FW 1-13
Hazardous Materials Operations	<a href="#">242 FW 6</a>
Water Rights	<a href="#">Part 403</a>
Policy, Objectives, and Responsibilities	<a href="#">403 FW 1</a>
Law Enforcement	<a href="#">Parts 440-459</a>
Pollution Control	<a href="#">Parts 560-569</a>
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Pollution Prevention	<a href="#">560 FW 2</a>
Compliance Requirements	<a href="#">Part 561</a>
Clean Water Act	<a href="#">561 FW 3</a>
RCRA - Hazardous Waste	<a href="#">561 FW 6</a>
Pesticide Use and Disposal	<a href="#">Part 562</a>
Pest Management	<a href="#">562 FW 1</a>
External Threats to FWS Facilities	<a href="#">Part 563</a>
Air Quality Protection	<a href="#">563 FW 2</a>
National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Uses	<a href="#">Part 603</a>
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Trapping	701 FW 11
Fishery Resources Management	<a href="#">Part 710</a>
Exotic Species	<a href="#">Part 751</a>

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