Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge

September 2004

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9/16/04
Date

Comprehensive Conservation Plan Approval

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge

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Summary

Birth of a Plan

This is a summary of the comprehensive conservation plan for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge in Jackson County, Colorado. This plan, approved in 2004, will guide management of the refuge for the next 15 years.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a comprehensive conservation plan by 2012 for each national wildlife refuge in the system.

The Need

The plan is needed to address problems that could negatively affect fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats.

The plan determines opportunities for people to use the refuge in ways that are compatible with resource conservation and refuge purposes.

The Purpose

The purpose of the plan is to

- provide a clear statement of desired conditions
- provide guidance for management decisions
- ensure management is consistent with laws, policies, and plans
- provide an opportunity for the public to help shape the future of the refuge
- provide a clear understanding of management actions and priorities
- provide a sound basis for budget requests

Purposes of the Refuge

The Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1967, primarily to provide suitable nesting and rearing habitat for migratory birds. It was created, in part, to offset losses of nesting habitats in the prairie wetland region of the Midwest.

A national wildlife refuge is different from multiple-use public land—it is closed to the public unless specific uses are determined compatible with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and purposes of the refuge.

Virginia Heitman

Born of the need to protect habitat for migratory birds, the refuge has grown from a 4,400-acre ranch in the 1960s to an area today of quality riparian and upland habitats. [Gadwall with brood pictured.]

Headwaters of the North Platte

The breathtaking, windswept basin known as North Park forms the headwaters of the North Platte River. At the heart of North Park in north-central Colorado, lies the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge.

The Illinois River crosses and irrigates the refuge, which is situated at an elevation of 8,200 feet. This water sustains the wetlands, meadows, and riparian areas and the migratory birds and native wildlife that depend on these habitats.

A Wealth of Resources

As snow-capped mountains towering over North Park shed their wintry blankets and flow water to the lowlands, refuge habitats welcome wild travelers and sustain local plants and animals.

The refuge hosts more than 300 different animals, and annually produces 6,000–8,000 ducks.

Irrigated hay meadows furnish nesting habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. Brood-rearing habitat for waterfowl has been created or enhanced in 72 wetlands.

History of the "Bullpen"

Ute and Arapaho peoples shared North Park's wealth of natural resources. The large numbers of bison that grazed the basin led Native Americans to refer to this area as the "bullpen."

Abundant furbearers and waterfowl seized the attention of European trappers and hunters. Prospectors were attracted by the likelihood of a wealth of minerals. These activities spearheaded exploration, leading to settlement.

A ranching heritage was established, and it continues to dominate the area's culture. Beef cattle and nationally renowned mountain hay are major sources of income for today's ranchers in North Park.

Government naturalists studied the area's resources during the 1920s–60s and urged the establishment of a national wildlife refuge. This happened at a time when migratory birds, especially waterfowl and other water birds, were suffering enormous habitat and population declines nationwide.

Engaging the Community

With the refuge at the core, but the health of the entire North Park area as the thrust, refuge staff engaged the Colorado community, government agencies, Native American tribes, organizations, and congressional representatives.

The vision and goals can only be met through close coordination with the local community, partners, and volunteers.

USFWS

Refuge staff listens to the public.

The regional director for Region 6 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sent letters inviting participation in development of the plan to agencies and tribal governments.

Representatives from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Geological Survey responded to the invitation and joined the planning team.

Vision for a Future Landscape

Wildlife and their habitats come first in management of the refuge, before all other uses.

The plan places great importance on the role the refuge has in the North Park ecosystem—for the environment and the residents of North Park.

Vision Statement

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is managed to benefit the diversity of plants and wildlife found in this high mountain valley of the southern Rocky Mountains.

The refuge and its resources are also managed for the benefit of the citizens of the United States.

The refuge includes wetland, meadow, sagebrush uplands, and riparian communities that provide habitat for large mammals, Neotropical migratory birds, nesting waterfowl, fishes, and species of concern from national and regional conservation plans.

In particular, efforts by refuge staff to restore the Illinois River channel hydrology and areas of sagebrush uplands, and to effectively manage wetlands and meadows, contribute to the ecological integrity of the refuge, North Park, and the overall North Platte River system.

Through wildlife-dependent recreation and education, people have opportunities to learn of the wonder and significance of North Park's fauna and flora.

Firsthand experiences with the refuge encourage people to participate as stewards, not only of the refuge, but also of the natural resources in their own communities.

Working in collaboration with the local community and other agencies and organizations helps the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manage the refuge as a contributing ecological, cultural, and economic component of the unique mountain valley within which it sits.

An Ideal and Steps to Get There

The refuge seeks to be a conservation force that promotes sound resource management and helps in the preservation of North Park's historical heritage.

The plan looks at the role of the refuge and its partners to provide the residents of North Park—along with its wildlife and plants—with diverse and productive habitats.

Goals

The plan sets the following goals for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge.

Riparian Habitats. Provide a riparian community representative of historic flora and fauna in a high valley of the southern Rocky Mountains to provide habitat for migratory birds, mammals, and river-dependent species.

Wetland Habitats. Provide and manage natural and constructed permanent and semipermanent wetlands (in three wetland complexes) to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and associated wetland-dependent wildlife.

Meadow Habitats. Provide and manage irrigated grass-dominated meadows, historically developed for hay production, to support sage grouse broods, waterfowl nesting, and meadow-dependent migratory birds.

Upland Habitats. Provide an upland community representative of the historical flora and fauna in a high valley of the southern Rocky Mountains to provide habitat for sage grouse, large mammals, and other shrub-associated species.

Cultural Resources. The cultural resources of the refuge are preserved, protected, and interpreted for the benefit of present and future generations.

Public Use. Through wildlife-dependent recreation and education, people of a range of abilities and interests are able to learn of, and appreciate, the natural resources of this unique high mountain park. Thereby, citizens become better stewards of nature in their own communities and stronger supporters of the refuge specifically and the National Wildlife Refuge System generally.

Research. The refuge is a learning platform for compatible research that assists management and science of high mountain park sage-steppe communities.

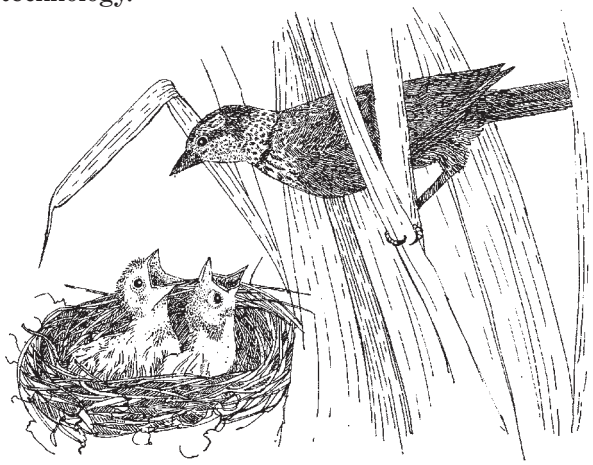
Partnerships. A wide range of partners joins with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in promoting and implementing the refuge vision.

Strategies

Habitat management tools are used to maintain and enhance habitat for waterfowl, as well as other wildlife. These include a variety of grazing and non-grazing strategies, prescribed fire, invasive plant control, and the most important tool for refuge wetlands—water management.

Management techniques such as adjusting grazing and prescribed fire levels, and water manipulation will benefit wildlife by providing seasonal life-cycle requirements.

Monitoring will show progress on meeting the plan's goals. The plan can be revised after 5 years if unexpected effects or situations happen, or to take into consideration new information, guidance, and technology.



Red-winged Blackbirds
© Cindie Brunner

Outcomes of the Plan

Meeting the plan's goals will create an ecologically functional system of habitats.

Wildlife and plants will prosper alongside ranching practices, preserving the natural and cultural heritage of this unique area of the Rocky Mountains.

The refuge will become

- an area where people can enjoy and learn from wildlife-related recreation and where cultural resources are protected and cherished
- a place where people, partners, and refuge staff work together for the welfare of human and wildlife communities

Habitats and Wildlife

The refuge will improve habitats that are in poor condition.

- restoration of riparian habitats
- study of uplands

Restored riparian and meadow habitats will benefit more wildlife species than at present—not only waterfowl, but also Neotropical migratory birds, shorebirds, and a large variety of insects and mammals.

North Park will benefit from partnerships with the refuge that promote sound habitat and wildlife management.

Cultural Resources

The refuge will identify, evaluate, and protect cultural resources. Interpretation of cultural resources and their importance to North Park's wildlife will be encouraged.

USFWS/Rhoda Lewis

The historic Case Barn was modeled after a New Zealand sheep barn.

Air and Water Quality

Increased visitation and road travel is not expected to have long-term impacts on the quality of the air in North Park.

There will be marked improvement in water quality. Habitat restoration efforts should create conditions to better trap sediments and create shade that will improve water quality. This will improve the overall habitat quality for a variety of wildlife.

Public Use

Hunting will be promoted as a sound wildlife management activity to achieve refuge goals. Related facilities will be improved.

As stream habitat and fisheries are restored, the refuge will promote fishing activities.

The refuge will provide, and encourage development of, resources to improve wildlife photography and observation.

Recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and hiking can be enjoyed on the refuge.

Environmental education will focus on how and why the refuge intensively manages habitats to achieve goals. The education program will address not only the ecology of the refuge, but of the entire North Park area.

Interpretive facilities will be used to promote sound wildlife management. Interpretation will explain the role that agriculture and ranching have had in the conservation of habitats and wildlife.

Socioeconomics

Socioeconomic conditions of North Park, especially in Walden, are expected to improve as refuge activities lead to increased visitation throughout North Park.

Public use activities will not only promote appreciation of wildlife, but will also encourage visitors to return to North Park. The sale of items and services such as equipment, lodging, and meals will contribute to the economy.

The plan will have some negative economic effects due to decreases in cattle grazing needed to meet habitat goals. The reductions from current grazing levels may be from 10–64 percent, depending on habitat conditions.

1 Introduction

1 Introduction

The Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is located in northwestern Colorado. The refuge is part of the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge complex, which also includes four satellite refuges in Wyoming: Bamforth, Hutton Lake, Mortenson Lake, and Pathfinder National Wildlife Refuges (figure 1–vicinity map).

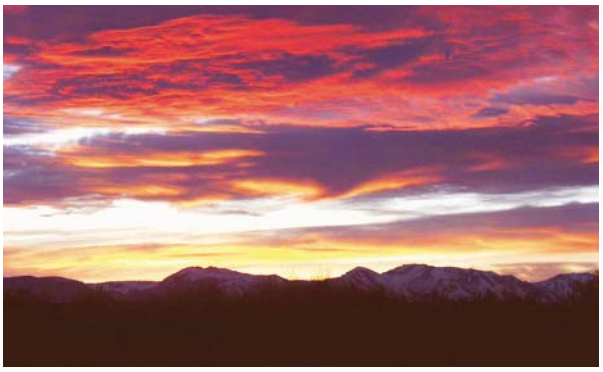
This comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) addresses management of the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge. A future planning effort will result in a CCP for the satellite refuges.

This chapter includes the following topics:

- area description
- purpose of and need for the CCP
- refuge overview
- refuge vision
- legal and policy guidance

Area Description

The Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is located in an intermountain, glacial basin south of the town of Walden, the county seat of Jackson County. The 8,200-foot elevation basin is approximately 30 miles wide and 45 miles long. The basin is commonly known as "North Park" since it is the most northerly of three such "parks" in Colorado. Jackson County is contained within the basin that lies in the northern tier of Colorado counties (figure 2–North Park).



Everett and Nancy Collin

Sunset View From the Refuge

Forming the headwaters of the North Platte River, the basin opens north into Wyoming and is rimmed on the west by the Park Range, on the south by the Rabbit Ears Range, and on the east by the Medicine Bow Range (figure 3–physical features of North Park). Elevation ranges from 7,800 to 12,965 feet above sea level. The floor of the basin is interspersed with many slow, meandering streams that come together in the north-central part of the county to form the North Platte River. Main tributary rivers are the Michigan, Illinois, Canadian, and Grizzly (figure 4–Platte River watershed).

A major portion of the bottomland along the streams is irrigated hay meadow and pasture. The low rises between streams are dry grassland and sagebrush uplands. The picture changes rapidly on the edges of the basin, where the land pitches abruptly upward to the mountaintops. Aspen, spruce, pine, and fir cover the slopes up to timberline at about 11,000 feet, then tundra and rock up to the mountain summits.

The ecosystems in North Park have developed through hundreds of years in a fire-dependent system, with fire as an important, dominating influence. High elevations and a short growing season, with a cool, often moist, climate influences the fire regime. The area's class 4 fire regime consists of combined crown fires and severe surface fires (with a 25- to 100-year return interval). Most woody vegetation or stand elements were killed over large areas.

The fire regime in North Park has been altered, which subsequently changed the cultural activities, e.g., grazing patterns over a 100-year period. Early explorers noted tall grasses found in North Park. Native Americans dubbed North Park the "bullpen," referring to the bison inhabiting the area. This gives an indication that the area may have been more dominated by grasses and, thus, likely was more influenced by fire than the present sagebrush-dominated condition. Records for North Park indicate little significant wildfire activity in the past 50 years.

Native Peoples and European Settlement

Prior to 1820, the Ute peoples spent their summers in North Park, living on mule deer, bison, pronghorn, and many other kinds of game. The severity of the winters forced both the Native Americans and the game down to lower altitudes in the fall.

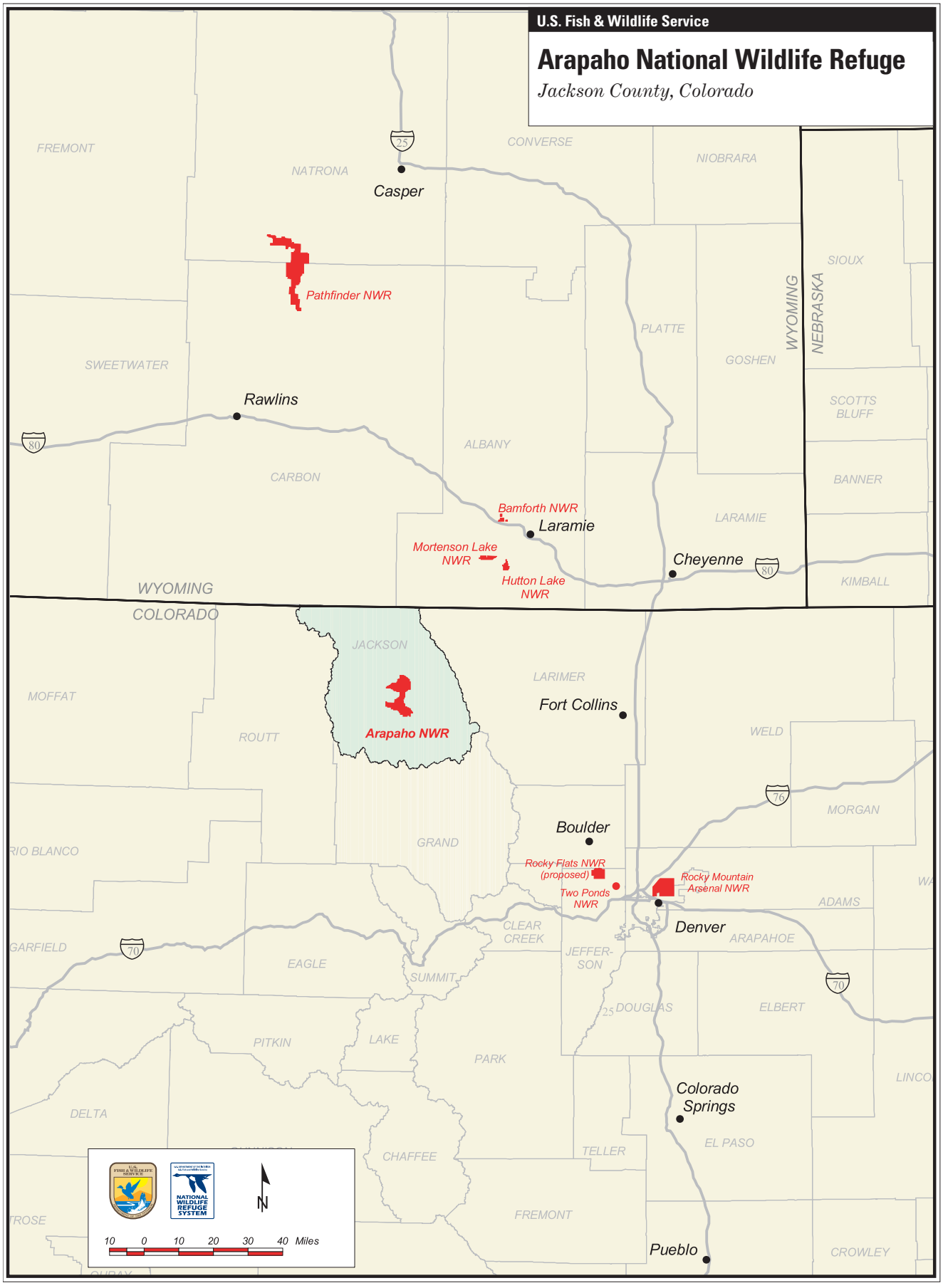


Figure 1. Vicinity map for Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

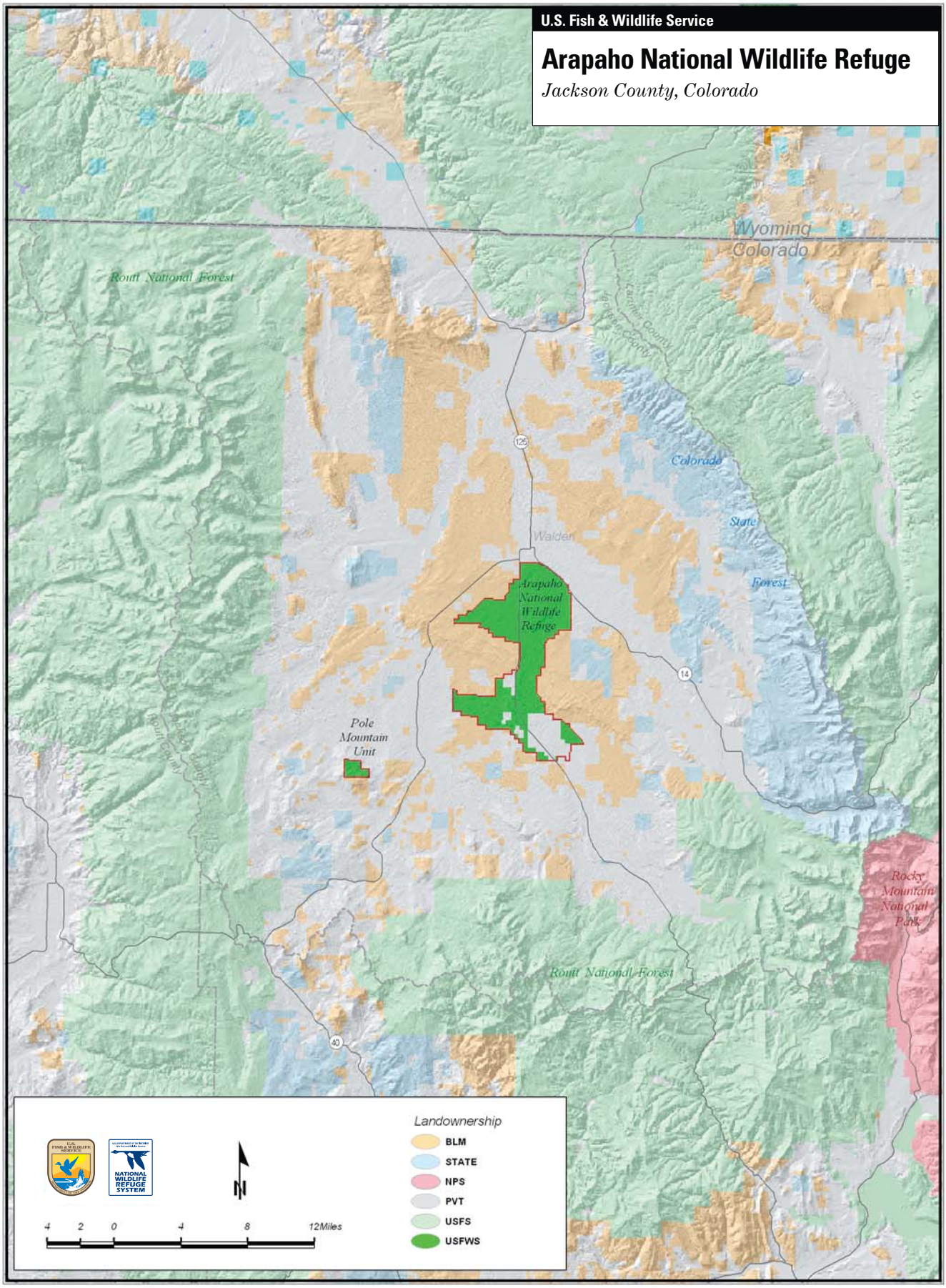


Figure 2. North Park area of Colorado

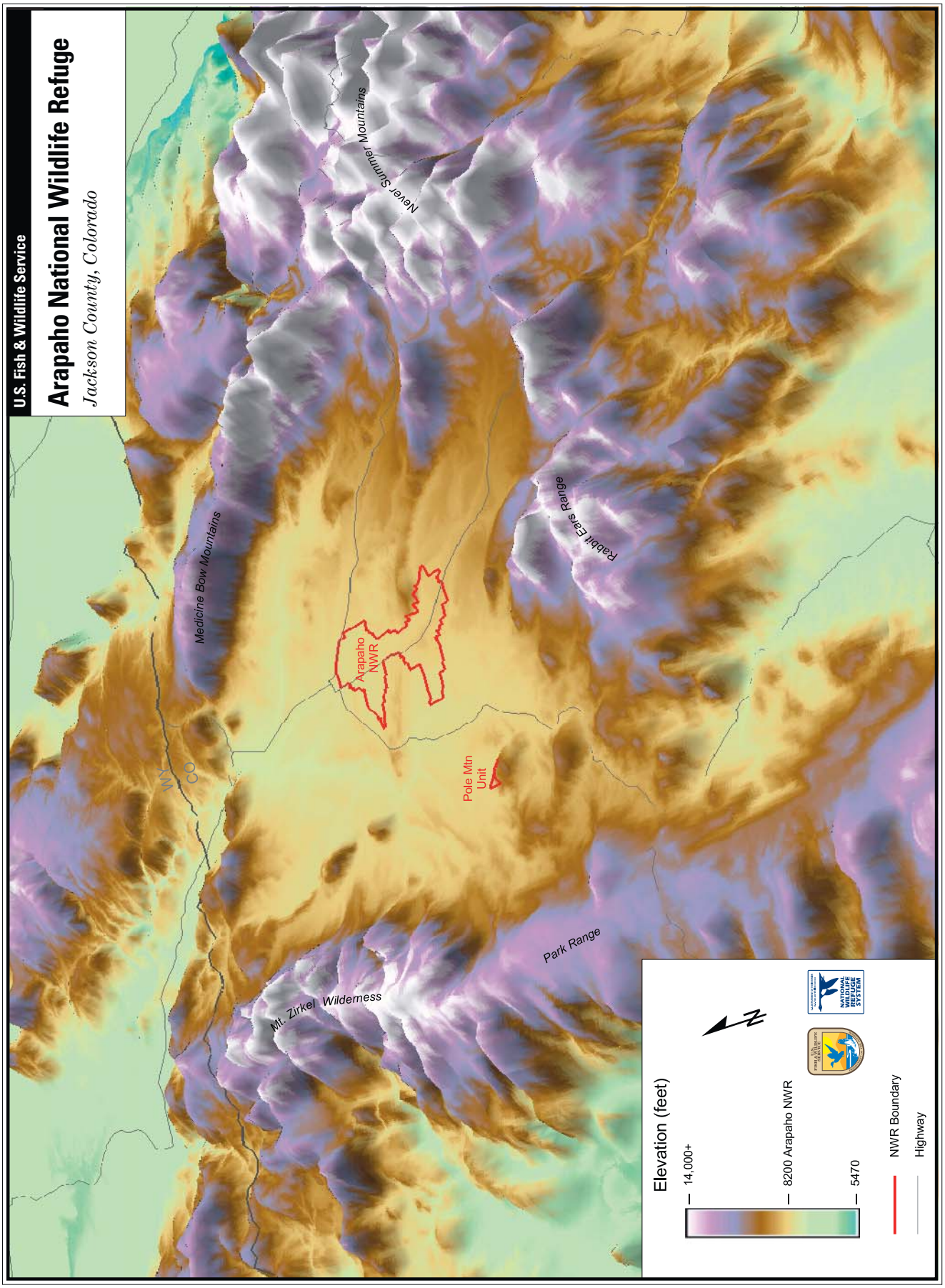


Figure 3. Physical features of North Park, Colorado

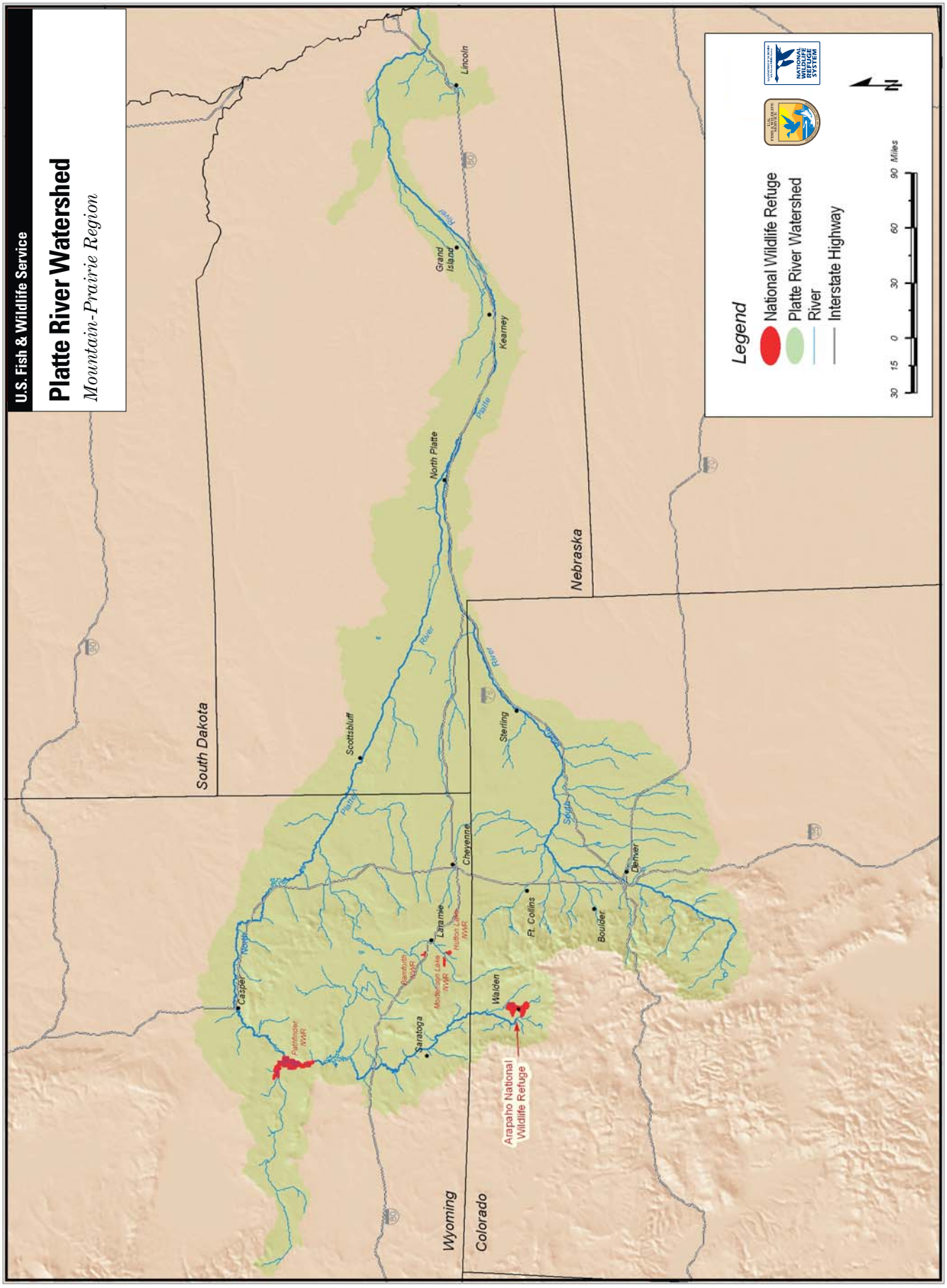


Figure 4. Platte River watershed of Colorado

The Arapaho peoples also made frequent hunting trips into North Park, coming in from the southwest over a pass described by Lt. John F. Fremont, as one of the most beautiful he had ever seen. The Utes and Arapahos were bitter enemies and many battles occurred when they chanced to meet. Besides their well-worn trails, other mute evidence of Native American life of pre-settlement time still exists in North Park. A band of Utes who participated in the 1879 massacre in Meeker, Colorado, fled to North Park after the incident. Several large, log tepees left by this band of Utes still stand in a sheltered, secluded spot.

The first Europeans to visit and explore North Park were probably trappers, who were in northwestern Colorado as early as 1819. Beaver were particularly abundant along North Park's streams. In 1820, Joseph Bijeau told of the good trapping he had experienced in North Park a few years prior, while with the Chateau and DeMunn expedition. Jacques Laramie trapped in North Park in 1820 for the Northwest Fur Company. He was followed by a party of trappers headed by Alexander Sinclair and Robert Bean, who trapped beaver in 1825. A number of trappers visited North Park into the 1840s, including Peg Smith, John Gantt, Kit Carson, Henry Fraeb, Calvin Jones, Bill Williams, Jim Baker, Jim Bridger, Sublette, Gervais, and Vasquez. In 1855, the famous Irish hunter, Sir George Gore, made a spectacular hunting trip through North Park, killing thousands of mule deer, bison, and pronghorn.

Miners and prospectors followed the trappers and hunters to North Park. James O. Pinkham was one of the first prospectors in North Park and began panning gold in the area in the early 1870s. Pinkham spent the long, cold winters in Laramie, Wyoming, and the summers in North Park. He believed that North Park was the richest and finest country in the world, and built a home there in 1874. Mr. Pinkham interested others in North Park through his tales of rich placer land. By 1875, nearly 100 men were prospecting for placer gold around the Rabbit Ears, Independence, and Owl Mountains.

During August and September 1879, George Bird Grinnell—naturalist, writer, and hunter—entered North Park to collect museum specimens. Traveling by horse from the train station in Laramie, Wyoming, this 29-year-old Yale graduate noted, "The country at this point had been burned over and was black and extremely desolate in appearance. I inquired the cause of the fire and learned from the owner of the ranch (Pinkham) that the burn had been made to clear off the sagebrush which takes up so much room that might be occupied by grass." Several days later, while camped on a meadow along the North Platte River, Grinnell writes, ". . . was perhaps a mile and a half wide, a superb level meadow, covered with fine grass, on which in the morning and evening from two to five hundred pronghorn were in sight at one time. Sage and dusky grouse, ducks, and jackrabbits abounded here also . . . . It is only necessary to get back from the road to find both mule deer and elk."

The first settlers lived on wild game, and hunting was as important for the men as attending to their ranch work. North Park, in the late 1880s, was a paradise of game. Thousands of pronghorn summered in there before migrating to the lower valleys in Wyoming during the winter. Hundreds of mule deer and elk were in North Park, but their numbers diminished after the arrival of settlers. Few bison remained in the area when the first settlers came, and they soon disappeared. Many bears, mountain lions, mountain sheep, and beaver existed in North Park in the early days, along with thousands of sage grouse, blue grouse, and ducks.

No trout existed in any North Park streams when the first settlers came; however, in the 1880s, settlers stocked the streams with eastern brook trout and rainbow trout.

In 1880, large numbers of cattle were driven down from the railroad lines in Laramie, Wyoming. However, the winter of 1883–84 was severe, and half of the stock died. As a result, most of the ranchers purchased mowers and rakes prior to the following summer's haying season in preparation for putting up wild hay for winter feed. Hay has historically been the main agricultural crop in Jackson County, with about 100,000 acres being in native mountain hay and only 370 acres in other crops. For years, all the hay was fed inside North Park; in 1914, ranchers began to bale and sell the hay outside North Park.

By the early 1890s, North Park was fairly well settled in every direction and was a central point when securing supplies became necessary. As a result, the town of Walden (elevation 8,100 feet) was established in the middle of North Park. Walden was located near two wagon roads from Laramie to Teller City and from Albany to Granby. The town was named after Marcus Walden, postmaster of the nearby settlement of Sage Hen Springs.

Today in North Park

Since the 1890s, North Park has been known for high waterfowl productivity. Historically, high, river flows in the spring flooded meadows, which provided suitable nesting habitat for a host of nesting bird species, especially waterfowl. Today, North Park serves as the second most productive waterfowl area in Colorado.

Jackson County is rural and sparsely populated with a population of only 1,577 individuals (2000 census data). Approximately 900 individuals live within the Walden city limits. The economy of Jackson County is based primarily on agriculture and recreation. Additionally, mining and logging have provided economic stimulus to the county. The economic base has been fairly stable throughout the history of Jackson County, with some fluctuations caused by the instability of the mining and logging industry.

Ranching, including both hay production and cattle, continues to be the dominant land use of North Park. Fortunately, the traditional ranching history of North Park has not only produced hay and cattle, it has preserved and protected thousands of acres of wildlife habitat.

Recreation is becoming more and more economically important to Jackson County. The county's many streams, lakes, uplands, forests, and mountains are mostly open to public access. These areas offer unusual opportunities for outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, bird watching, backpacking, camping, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, bicycling, and horseback riding.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

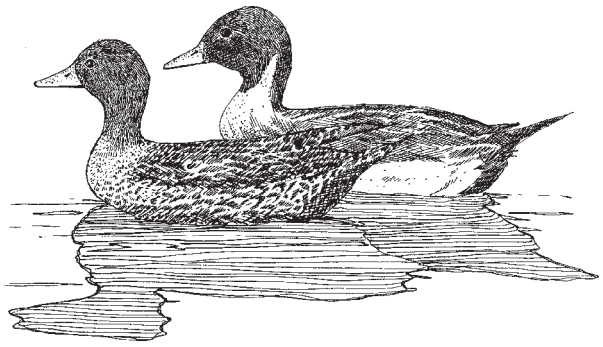
To fulfill the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Congress has charged the agency with conserving and managing migratory birds, endangered species, anadromous and inter-jurisdictional fish, and certain marine mammals.

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

The Service enforces federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid Program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars (from excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment) to state wildlife agencies.

The Service operates more than 540 national wildlife refuges and waterfowl production areas, 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices, and 78 ecological services field stations.

The National Wildlife Refuge System of the Service is the world's largest collection of lands set aside specifically for the protection of wildlife. The first unit of the refuge system was created in 1903, when President Theodore Roosevelt designated 3-acre Pelican Island, a pelican and heron rookery in Florida, as a bird sanctuary.



Northern Pintail
© Cindie Brunner

> *The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a 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."*

Today, the refuge system encompasses more than 95-million acres, located in all 50 states and a number of U.S. Territories.

The refuge system provides habitat for native mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, invertebrates, and plants "trust resources" for which the Federal Government is ultimately responsible. It plays a vital role in preserving endangered and threatened species, preventing species from becoming endangered, and offers wildlife-dependent recreation for over 34 million visitors annually.

Purpose of and Need for the Plan

Initiated by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, comprehensive conservation plans (CCPs) will be developed for all units of the National Wildlife Refuge System of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Plans must include public involvement in their development, and must set forth strategies to fulfill the refuge

system mission, as well as the purposes for which the refuge was established.

This CCP provides a 15-year guidance for the management of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge. Management goals and objectives were developed for the refuge (chapter 4–management direction).

Based on the life requirements of selected wildlife species, these goals and objectives provide specific targets toward which refuge staff will manage. Future management efforts will focus on achieving these goals and objectives for the benefit of wildlife and the American people.

Wildlife has first priority in the management of refuges. Recreation or other uses are allowed if they are compatible with wildlife conservation. Six wildlife-dependent recreational activities will be emphasized—wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation.

Platte/Kansas Rivers Ecosystem

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has divided the country into 53 watershed-based ecosystem management units. The Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem unit encompasses approximately 182,000 square miles of the central Great Plains of the United States (figure 5–Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem). The Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem covers portions of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

Ecosystem Vision

The vision of the Platte/Kansas Rivers eco-team is to provide partnership-based, landscape-level conservation for the diversity and abundance of natural resources within the ecosystem. The team envisions

- landscapes that exhibit natural, healthy, ecological processes
- ongoing protection of threatened, endangered, and endemic species
- protection and promotion of native prairie vegetation
- involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes
- recognition that partnerships are the key to success

Ecosystem Description

This diverse area begins at the headwaters of the North and South Platte Rivers, high in the Rocky Mountains. It includes the sagebrush uplands of north-central Colorado and southeastern Wyoming, short-grass prairie regions of eastern Colorado, and mixed-grass prairie regions of Nebraska and Kansas. The primary ecological processes affecting this system are climate, cultivation, grazing, and fire. The ecosystem is arid with an average annual precipitation between 8 to 16 inches per year.

Approximately 85 percent of the Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem is privately owned. The remainder is primarily owned and managed by State and Federal agencies.

The Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem planning team, with input from partners and field stations, identified and prioritized three primary geographic sub-units: mixed-grass prairie, mountain, and short-grass prairie. Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge falls within the mountain sub-unit of the ecosystem plan and plays a vital role in uplands management and protection. Within each geographic sub-unit, priorities were established based on significance in the ecosystem, species diversity, risk or threat to the entire ecosystem, public benefits, and trust resources. Also considered were legal mandates, opportunity for partnerships, likelihood of success, and cost effectiveness.

Refuge Overview

On August 15, 1967, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved the first land acquisition project for the establishment of the refuge. The original land purchase was the Allard Ranch of 4,433.07 acres. Subsequently, nine additional land tracts were purchased, and land exchanges completed with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the State of Colorado.

On September 26, 1967, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, acting under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, approved the established area known as the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is 23,243 acres in size and is located in Jackson County (figure 6–base map). Purchased acres total 18,451, while 4,792 acres were withdrawn.

Refuge complex staff administers an additional 21,717 acres on the Wyoming satellite refuges, for a total of 44,960 acres under complex management.

Purposes

National wildlife refuges are established for a particular purpose. Formal establishment is generally based on a statute or executive order that specifies a purpose for that refuge. However, refuges can also be established by the Service using the authorization found within laws such as the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Conservation Act, and the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956.

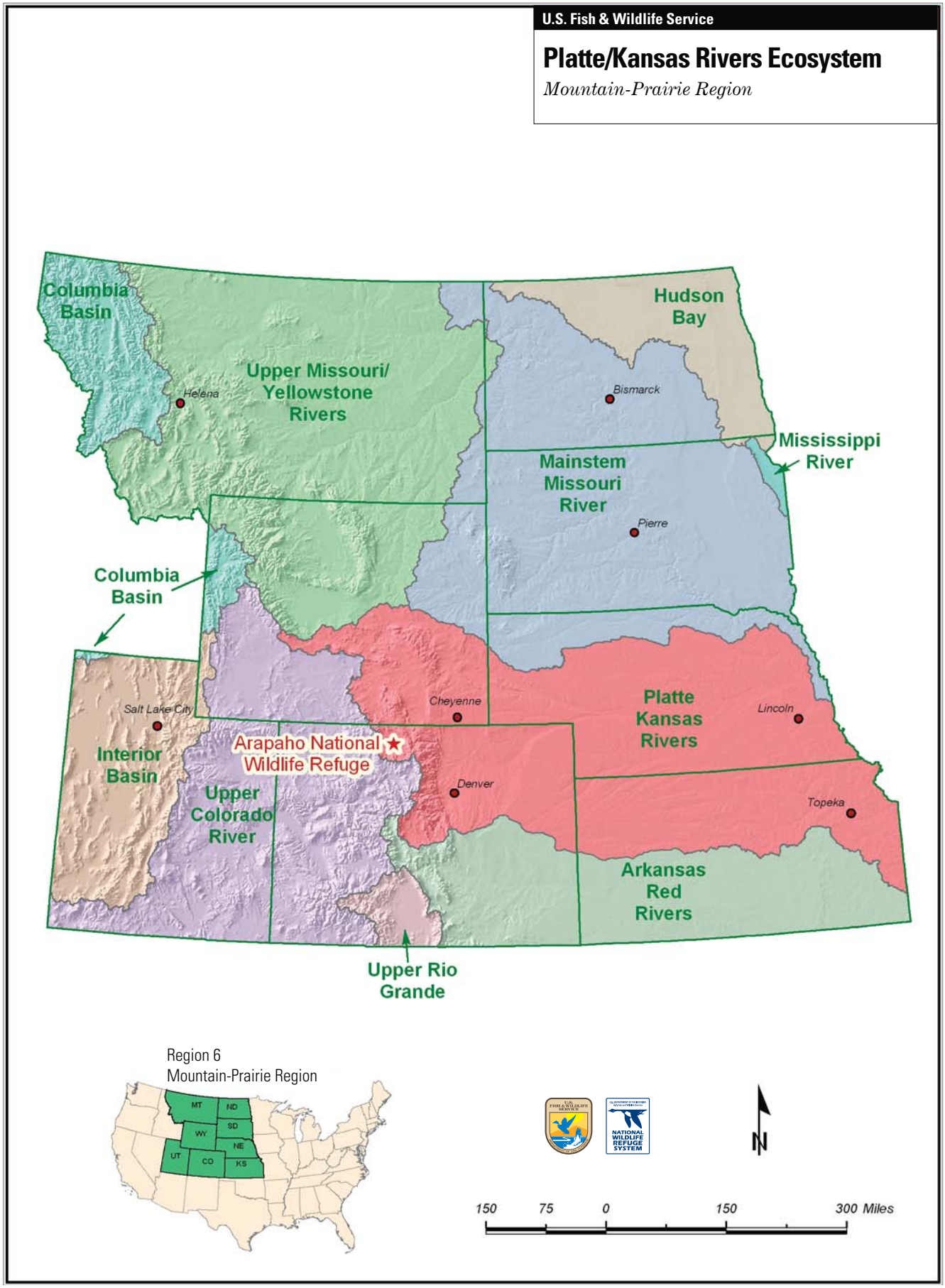


Figure 5. Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem

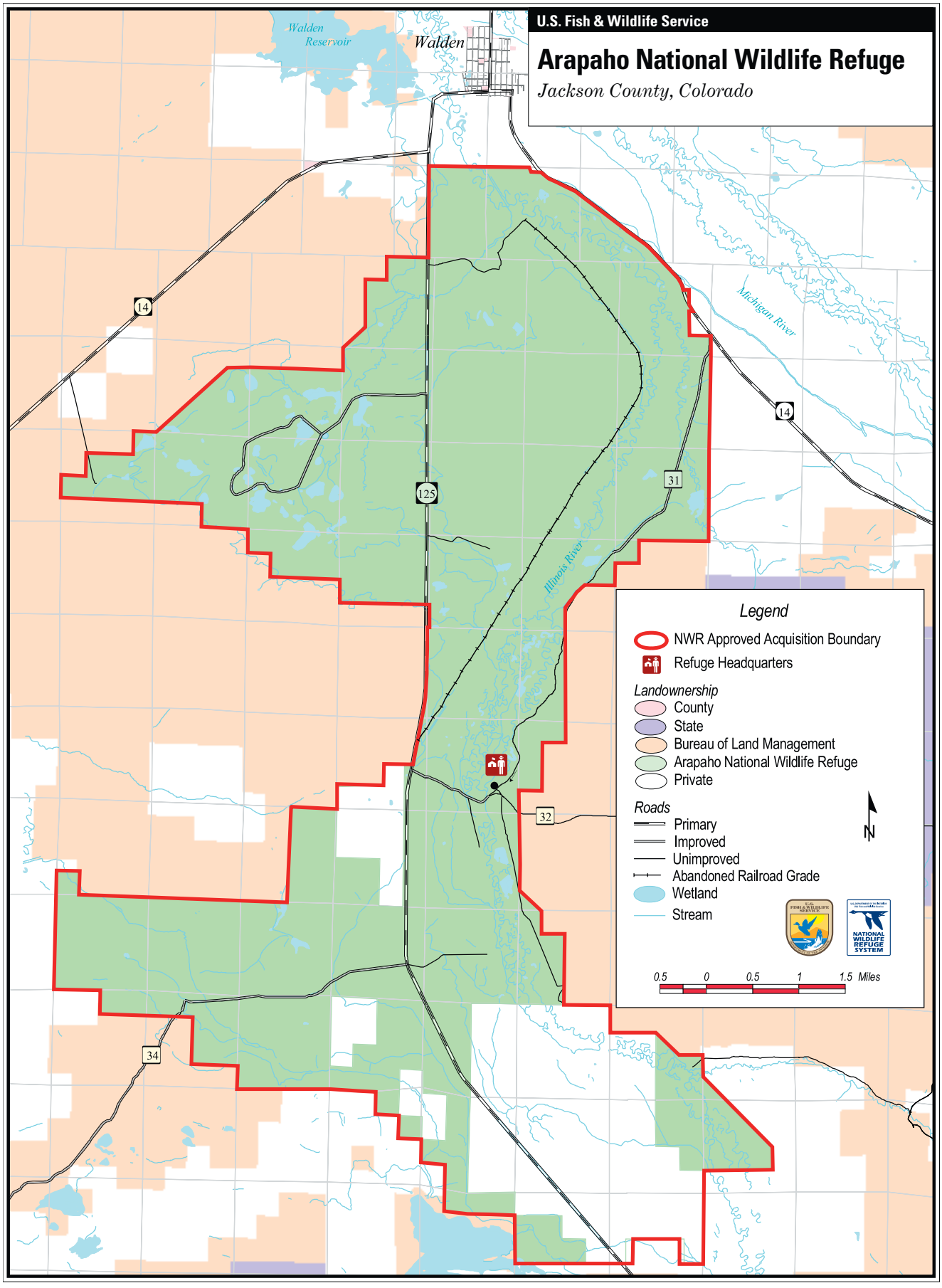


Figure 6. Base map of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge was established for the following purposes:

- ". . . for uses as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." (16 U.S.C. § 715d, Migratory Bird Conservation Act)
- ". . . for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources . . . " [16 U.S.C. § 742f (a)(4)] ". . . for the benefit of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in performing its activities and services. Such acceptance may be subject to the terms of any restrictive or affirmative covenant, or condition of servitude . . . " (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956)

These two broad statements provide the sideboards to guide future management of the refuge.

Management and Use

Since 1967, the refuge has been managed primarily for waterfowl nesting and production. Using existing irrigation ditches for the water-delivery system, the refuge staff constructed or enhanced 72 wetland impoundments in the Illinois River. These impoundments, and associated wet-meadow habitats, provide the habitat necessary to produce waterfowl.

The refuge provides quality habitat for many mammals and other birds common to high-mountain, sagebrush-steppe environments. The willow riparian area alone supports more than 40 species of songbirds (Neotropical migrants) during part of their migration or nesting cycle. Sage grouse are common on the refuge, and wet-meadow habitats provide critical feeding areas for sage grouse young.

Moose, mule deer, elk, and pronghorn are common wildlife species on the refuge. These big-game species migrate on and off the refuge; however, an average of 1,200 elk, 200 pronghorn, and 20 moose may inhabit the refuge at any one time.

Managing invasive plants and limiting their impact on vegetative resources of the refuge is a priority. The refuge falls within the invasive plant management area of the North Platte headwaters.

Refuge staff work closely with the Jackson County weed coordinator to ensure adequate control of invasive plants.

Grazing is the primary management tool used to manage meadow and upland habitats. Seven grazing cooperators help maintain and enhance grassland habitats. Water-level manipulation, irrigation, fire, mowing, harrowing, and disking are additional tools used to improve grassland and wetland habitats.

The refuge headquarters is located 8 miles south of Walden, on Highway 125. A full-time staff of six employees and four seasonal employees works to manage the refuge wetlands, irrigation system, wildlife habitats, and visitor facilities.

The refuge accommodates approximately 7,200 visitors annually (5-year average 1998–2002). The 6-mile auto tour route, the walking trail, and Brocker Overlook account for the majority of visitor use. Approximately 500 recreation days are provided to hunters and anglers. The refuge is open to limited hunting opportunities for small game, waterfowl, sage grouse, and pronghorn. The lower one-third of the refuge provides fishing opportunities for brown and rainbow trout.

Partnerships

The refuge promotes partnership opportunities to accomplish natural resource-related goals both on and off the refuge. Existing partnerships include groups and agencies shown in table 1 (next page).

Refuge Vision Statement

As part of the planning process, the refuge staff and planning team reviewed past national, regional, and complex planning documents and current planning guidance. Using the legislation and plans, the planning team developed the following vision statement for the refuge.

- Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is managed to benefit the diversity of plants and wildlife found in this high mountain valley of the southern Rocky Mountains. The refuge and its resources are also managed for the benefit of the citizens of the United States.
- The refuge includes wetland, meadow, sagebrush uplands, and riparian communities that provide habitat for large animals, Neotropical migratory birds, nesting waterfowl, fishes, and species of concern from national and regional conservation plans. In particular, efforts by refuge staff to restore the Illinois River channel hydrology, riparian areas, and sagebrush uplands, and to effectively manage wetlands and meadows, contribute to the ecological integrity of the refuge, North Park, and the overall North Platte River system.
- Through wildlife-dependent recreation and education, people have opportunities to learn of the wonder and significance of North Park's fauna and flora. Firsthand experiences with the refuge encourage people to participate as stewards, not only of the refuge, but also of the natural resources in their own communities.

Table 1. Existing partnerships, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Name	*Partnership*
Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)	wildlife and fishery habitat improvement, resource sharing, law enforcement
CDOW Habitat Partnership Program	reduction of cattle and big-game conflicts throughout North Park
Colorado Scenic Byways	overlooks and roads development, interpretation
Colorado State Forest Service	natural resources improvement projects, forest management plans, fire management
Colorado State University	assistance with planning, wildlife research, and habitat management
Jackson County	invasive plant management, fire support
Natural Resource Conservation Service	assistance with soils and vegetative management
Owl Mountain Partnership	land health improvement projects on public and private lands, grazing management plans, wildlife watering areas, and sagebrush management projects
Platte/Kansas Rivers Eco-team	assistance with funding and planning natural resource projects
National Center for Atmospheric Research	research snowpack characteristics to create reliable snowpack models
Sage Grouse Working Group	sage grouse habitat protection and enhancement
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	partner in several programs, equipment sharing, resource sharing
USDA Forest Service	partner in several programs, equipment sharing, fire management, resource sharing
U.S. Geological Survey	cooperative wildlife research, planning, and water monitoring projects

- Working in collaboration with the local community and other agencies and organizations helps the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manage the refuge as a contributing ecological, cultural, and economic component of the unique mountain valley within which it sits.

Legal and Policy Guidance

National wildlife refuges are guided by

- the mission and goals of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Wildlife Refuge System
- the legal purpose of the refuge unit as described in the enabling legislation or executive orders
- international treaties
- federal laws and regulations
- Service policies

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, provides guidelines and directives for administration of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Use of any area within the refuge system was permitted, provided such uses were compatible with the major purposes for which such areas were established.

Appendix A contains descriptions of other laws and policies that are related to national wildlife refuges.

National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 amends the Refuges System Administration Act by including a unifying mission for the refuge system, a formal process for determining compatible uses on refuges, and a requirement that each refuge be managed under a comprehensive conservation plan. Specific details regarding additional amendments are available through the refuge or regional Service offices.

This Act states that wildlife conservation is the priority of refuge system lands and that the Secretary of the Interior shall ensure that the

biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of refuge lands are maintained. Each refuge must be managed to fulfill both the specific purposes for which it was established and the mission of the refuge system.

Lands within the refuge system are different from other public lands in that they are closed to all public uses unless specifically and legally opened. Unlike other federal lands that are managed under a multiple-use mandate (e.g., national forests administered by the USDA Forest Service and public lands administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management), the refuge system is managed specifically for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources.

The Act defines six priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses.

- wildlife observation
- wildlife photography
- hunting
- fishing
- environmental education
- interpretation

Use Compatibility

Compatibility is a legal requirement of all refuge uses. By federal law, all uses of national wildlife refuges, including wildlife-dependent recreational activities, must be formally determined to be compatible.

A compatible use is "a use that, in the sound professional judgment of the refuge manager, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the refuge system or the purposes of the refuge." Sound professional judgment is further defined as "a finding, determination, or decision that is consistent with the principles of sound fish and wildlife management and administration, available science and resources (funding, personnel, facilities, and other infrastructure), and adherence with applicable laws." No use of a national wildlife refuge may be allowed unless determined to be compatible.

Uses that have been determined to be compatible for Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge include the following:

- wildlife observation and photography
- hunting
- fishing
- environmental education
- interpretation

Additionally, habitat management tools include, but are not limited to, fire, mowing, grazing, invasive plant control (chemical, mechanical, and physical methods), Dixie harrowing, fencing, water management, routine refuge maintenance activities, and public use related structures (appendix B).

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Cow Moose With Twins

2 Planning Process

2 Planning Process

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guides the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, along with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the established purposes of the refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service compatibility standards, and other Service policies, plans, and laws related to refuge management.

This plan establishes habitat-based goals, objectives, strategies, and monitoring priorities for refuge management. The plan will be used to prepare more specific step-down management plans that address programs such as hunting, fishing, and environmental education, with annual priorities and budgets.

Comprehensive conservation plans (CCPs) are initiated, developed, and published in a 2-year time frame. The plan duration is 15 years; however, the plan may be revised if necessary. This CCP supersedes current management plans.

Key steps in the planning process include the following:

- preplanning
- identifying issues and developing a vision
- gathering information
- developing alternatives
- assessing environmental effects
- identifying the proposed alternative
- publishing a draft plan and soliciting public comments
- reviewing the comments and making appropriate changes to the draft plan
- preparing the final plan for approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6 regional director

The planning team for this CCP (appendix C) coordinated these steps, working with the public and partners.

The associated environmental analysis (see the draft CCP document) is the basis for the "Environmental Action Statement" and Finding of No Significant Impact" found in appendix D.

A biological evaluation for the CCP was completed in compliance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (appendix E).

Projects completed by the refuge will be monitored and documented to ensure progress toward achieving overall refuge goals. Step-down plans also provide flexibility to accommodate annual changes in refuge staff levels, funding, equipment, and other resources.

Public Involvement

Issues addressed in this plan were identified by the public, refuge staff, and cooperating agencies. Details about the public involvement process are shown in appendix F. The mailing list for this document is in appendix G.

USFWS

Interested participants learn more about comprehensive conservation planning.

Planning Issues

Primary issues concerning future management of the refuge include the following:

- changing from a species-based management approach to a habitat-based management approach
- sage grouse preservation and management
- use of grazing as a wildlife management tool
- water management

Additionally, continued close coordination with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) is critical to plan success.

The following issues are described below:

- prairie dogs
- Pole Mountain
- grazing
- elk
- sage grouse hunting
- inholdings
- invasive plants

Prairie Dogs

Much of the more open upland areas, as well as drier areas within meadow/riparian habitats, on the refuge support prairie dogs. In 2002, the white-tailed prairie dog was petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act; a finding is expected by October 2004.

Issues

The white-tailed prairie dog is very popular with the visiting public and, to many, is a symbol of the west. However, most local ranchers see the prairie dog as a pest that competes with livestock for food, and creates burrows that are potentially dangerous to cattle and horses.

USFWS

Prairie Dog

Actions

It is appropriate for the refuge to consider prairie dog needs and potential impacts to them when management decisions are being made.

The CCP process has addressed potential impacts to this species.

Pole Mountain

During 1993, the Service acquired lands owned by E.B. Shawver and formerly known as the Stelbar Ranch. As part of the "all-or-nothing" purchase of lands adjacent to the refuge, this acquisition included an isolated tract of land known as Pole Mountain (T7N, R81W, Sections 33 and 34, 6th Principal Meridian), located approximately 6 miles southwest of the refuge in Jackson County, Colorado.

History

With a peak elevation of 9,200 feet, this 800-acre tract contains significantly different habitats than the rest of the refuge. Pole Mountain has private land on three sides and a piece of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to the south that has no public access to it. Similarly, the Service does not own a permanent access easement to the property, and gains access across private land by virtue of a positive working relationship with a neighboring landowner.

Pole Mountain is dominated by sagebrush uplands (50 percent) and mixed, aspen/conifer forest (50 percent), which is common throughout the county where uplands meet the forest. This property is grazed annually, and invasive plants are monitored and controlled.

Minimal wildlife monitoring has been conducted at Pole Mountain. Wildlife use includes mule deer, elk, blue grouse, porcupine, and a variety of passerine birds. Although the area has wildlife value, it does not match current or future objectives of the remainder of the refuge.

Issues

The habitat at Pole Mountain does not meet purposes of refuge establishment and is not unique in the area in terms of habitat or wildlife use. Few management options are available for habitat improvement.

Several entities are interested in the land for various reasons.

- members of the local sage grouse working group—to trade these lands for others in the county to protect sage grouse habitat
- the CDOW—for big-game management; however, they currently have a moratorium on acquiring new lands
- local ranchers—for use as grazing land
- developers—for home sites

Actions

This CCP calls for the divestiture of the Pole Mountain property within 5 years (option 3 below) using the priority criteria listed in option 4. Until that time, refuge staff will ensure proper stewardship of the land, but minimal management will occur, as follows:

- Place a conservation easement on the property prior to sale or trade to ensure wildlife benefits of the area remain intact.
- Continue grazing at recent levels, as deemed appropriate by management.

- Continue invasive plant control efforts as part of the pest management agreement with the county.
- Obtain a right-of-way access to the property for management and public use.
- If the tract is not divested, create a forest and rangeland management plan for the area prior to update of this CCP.

Seven options were considered for the Pole Mountain tract.

1. Keep the Pole Mountain tract, survey, re-sign, and change/add refuge objectives to include this parcel.
2. Work with Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to develop and implement a forest management plan for Pole Mountain.
3. Divest the Pole Mountain tract through appropriate government regulations.
4. Trade the Pole Mountain tract for (in priority order)
   a. Refuge inholdings
   b. Lands and waters adjacent to the refuge that are manageable to reach objectives listed in this CCP
   c. Lands and waters adjacent to other refuges, where it would help achieve their goals and objectives, for refuges
      i. In Colorado
      ii. In Region 6 of the Service
      iii. Anywhere in the Nation
   d. Lands with a natural resource interest by other Federal land management agencies
5. Place a conservation easement on the Pole Mountain property prior to divestment to limit or preclude development on the tract.
6. Secure a legal right-of-way easement to assure access to Pole Mountain.
7. Open Pole Mountain to hunting of all species, according to State of Colorado regulations.

Grazing

Cattle and sheep had grazed the lands that now comprise the refuge, for nearly a century prior to acquisition. Since establishment of the refuge in 1967, grazing has continued to be the most common management tool to manipulate refuge habitats, especially meadows. Immediately after land purchases, some grazing was permitted as part of purchase agreements, and some areas were rested to establish waterfowl nesting cover.

History

From 1969 to 1982, 47–95 percent of the refuge was grazed annually at a refuge-wide rate varying between 0.4 and 1.2 animal-unit months (AUMs) per acre. Grazing records from 1969 to 1991 were destroyed in an office fire. From 1991 to 2001 (excepting 1993 for which data is unavailable), 46–74 percent of the refuge was grazed annually at a refuge-wide average rate between 0.52 and 0.71 AUMs per acre. Actual rates vary significantly depending on the site, with some uplands being as low as 0.01 AUMs per acre and some meadows as high as 2.18 AUMs per acre.

Grazing in meadow/riparian areas has generally not commenced until after August 1 to minimize disturbance to nesting waterfowl. Uplands are sometimes grazed earlier, but grazing does not generally commence until June 1. Grazing systems used have included high-intensity, short-duration (Holistic Resource Management-type), rest-rotation, light annual grazing, and complete rest.

Issues

There is little refuge-specific data available to assess how past grazing practices have or will effect proposed habitat objectives, due to the following:

- All data from 1969–1991 was destroyed in an office fire.
- Any available data from other studies did not necessarily address the objectives as defined in this CCP and, therefore, is of limited use for assessment purposes.

Although grazing practices to date have not harmed habitats, current levels of grazing probably will not meet CCP objectives, and some reduction in grazing will be required. With more intensive monitoring of habitats to assess how well objectives are being met, a better understanding of appropriate grazing levels should be developed.

Actions

Livestock grazing has been the preferred management tool used on the refuge because the effect on vegetative communities is more controllable and predictable than other available management tools. All known and available management tools will be assessed for suitability of use in achieving defined habitat objectives.

Other treatment options include the following:

- **Prescribed fire**—Some prescribed fire has been used and more may be planned in the future. Prescribed fire, when used according to policy, can accomplish removal of excess decadent growth and reset successional stages, creating a diversity of wildlife habitat. Prescribed fire may be used in all habitat types to help meet management objectives.
- **Haying/mowing**—Minimal haying occurred on some parcels as agreements of purchase, but was short-lived. Haying would be effective in

removal of vegetative growth, but the primary objective of haying would likely be to remove decadent growth. In this case, hay quality would probably be poor, so finding someone interested in doing the work may be difficult. Mowing would successfully remove decadent growth, and the cut grass would ultimately break down to form litter and duff needed to meet objectives. This could be very costly in time and energy compared to other tools.

- **Fertilizing**—Applying fertilizers is an option to increase plant growth, and is used by many in the county to increase hay production. Cost, equipment, and time deter its use at present, but this tool should be considered if habitat objectives are not being met by other means.
- **Mechanical treatments**—These are treatments typically associated with efforts to manipulate sagebrush and could include using a disc, aerator, roller/chopper, Dixie harrow, or similar implements. Several hundred acres around the county have been treated in recent years in an effort to open up and vary the age diversity of sagebrush stands and increase plant diversity; success of these projects is still being assessed.

This CCP has estimated grazing numbers of 3,050–7,650 AUMs annually, and represents approximately 36–90 percent of the 1996–2001 average. This assumes an average use of between 0.4 and 1.0 AUMs per acre of grazable acres for riparian areas and meadows, and 0.05 to 0.15 AUMs on uplands.

Although not guaranteed, the plan assumes some grazing will likely occur every year to help achieve objectives on and off the refuge. Close coordination will occur with grazing permittees to combine and meet the refuge's needs and permittees' operational needs as much as possible for timing, areas, and to a certain extent, numbers. Permittees in good standing have a reasonable expectation of how many AUMs will be available to them for the upcoming year, barring extenuating circumstances such as drought.

If a permittee has intentions of not grazing any longer on the refuge, their previously permitted areas will be evenly distributed to the remaining permittees, to spread out use on the refuge and meet objectives. If all permittees are still interested in continued use in 2 years, all permits will be decreased annually approximately 5–10 percent from 1996 to 2001 averages until objective levels are met. Thereafter, grazing levels will be driven entirely by habitat needs based on identified objectives.

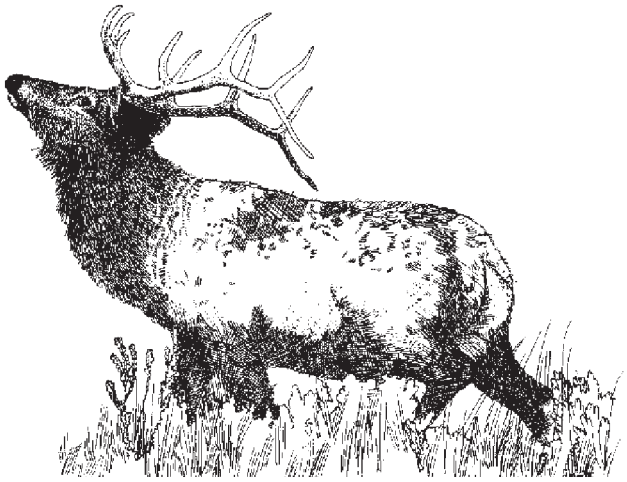
Elk

Until the mid- to late 1980s, seeing elk on or near the refuge, at any time of year, was a rarity. In the late 1980s, elk began to show up regularly in the winter, until about 500 were common on and around the refuge from December to March. Most of the animals would disperse for higher ground as the snow melted in the spring, but some began to stay along the Illinois River year-round. By the mid-1990s, a resident herd of approximately 150 elk had become established.

History

The number of elk using the refuge is continuing to grow and, with recent drought conditions, recent growth may be more than usual. It is unknown if this is a short-term gain in numbers with a likely decrease when conditions change, or if the elk have found a new place and are here to stay. It is also unknown whether the increase in elk on the refuge is proportional to the increase throughout the county, or if elk are occurring in a higher (or lower) proportion on the refuge.

The wintering herd has continued to grow to the point that winter counts conducted by the CDOW in late December 2002 found about 2,400 elk on and near the refuge. Elk typically are scattered into several herds that vary in size, but often occur in a herd of about 1,000 animals. During winter months (November through March), elk numbers vary considerably but average 1,000–1,400 animals.



Elk
© Cindie Brunner

North Park also has a resident herd. The CDOW initiated a distribution management hunt on private lands to thin this resident herd and disperse some of its numbers off private lands. This effort had short-term success in reducing the resident herd size. Management hunts will probably continue to be used by CDOW to control the resident herd size.

During the general, rifle, big-game, hunting seasons, the resident elk herd on the refuge typically becomes more noticeable. As the later

hunting seasons progress, more elk move onto the refuge from the forested areas of the county. With the exception of some private lands scattered around the county, the refuge is the only place on the south end of North Park where the elk are not pursued during the general seasons.

Issues

Although a large, wintering elk herd is a magnificent wildlife resource to behold, other things need to be considered. The first is that the refuge, though fairly large, cannot be all things for all wildlife. A point comes where too many individuals of one species (elk) can negatively affect the habitat for another species or group of species (waterfowl). With one of the purposes for establishing the refuge being used as a sanctuary for migratory birds, too many elk could keep this purpose from being met.

When on the refuge, elk are foraging, and trampling and eating grasses that are being managed as habitat for other wildlife. Elk can also have a severe impact on willow stands. Habitat objectives in this CCP identify maintenance of grasslands and willows to varying degrees for wildlife benefits. Although elk use the refuge extensively during the winter months, they do not use it exclusively, making it more difficult to determine what the cumulative impact of their use may be. A method needs to be developed to estimate elk use and impact to the refuge.

Historically, ranching was the primary use of North Park, and that continues to be the case in much of the county. Elk, as grazers and potential competitors with cattle, can get into hay harvested for livestock and cause damage to fences and other ranch structures.

Elk will continue to concentrate in areas of the county and, depending on the landowner and the number of elk in the particular herd, the perspective of whether an elk problem exists or not may change.

A landowner that does not rely on livestock for their livelihood may view 100 elk as a valuable resource, but may view 300 as a problem. Similarly, a landowner relying on the land to make a living might view the 100 animals as too many. It is important to find an elk population size that achieves refuge goals and meets North Park herd management objectives. A large, visible, herd of elk can be a reminder that herd objectives have been surpassed. When that herd is on the refuge, it may seem to some that they are in a likely spot to reduce numbers.

Elk, by law, are a state-owned resource, and high elk numbers may lead to resource or economic problems elsewhere in the county. The refuge will work with the CDOW to address elk issues on the refuge and throughout North Park.

If elk are on the refuge, they are not on private lands potentially damaging property or consuming forage meant for livestock. The problem is that they do not stay just on the refuge, so the potential exists for them to travel to adjoining private land and do damage. As numbers of elk using the refuge grows, so will the possibility of damage to private resources.

As more elk move onto the refuge during the general, rifle-hunting season, an impression is created with some hunters that "all the elk are on the refuge," especially if the animals are hard to find in other locations. The refuge is composed mainly of sagebrush uplands, meadow, and open areas, without many places for elk to hide, and they typically are in large herds at this time.

The lands surrounding the refuge are very open and the hunting that occurs on these areas often includes radio use, pushing animals with vehicles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), party hunting, and over-limits of animals. In general, this does not fit refuge system requirements, as outlined in the refuge manual, to offer a quality hunting experience that promotes "positive hunting values and hunter ethics such as fair chase and sportsmanship."

Chronic-wasting disease (CWD) has been documented in white-tailed and mule deer and elk in Jackson County. Though these are typically state issues, the refuge staff is also concerned, since elk use is high on the refuge. The potential for other diseases and their risk of spread rises dramatically because of the large herd sizes.

Actions

Habitat objectives will be met with range management practices including prescribed livestock grazing since it is a controllable tool. Elk use and impact on habitats will be monitored.

A protocol will be developed for action when management objectives are not being met, using management tools such as elk hazing, hunting, and transplant. The protocol should define what circumstances will trigger these actions and when. Coordination with CDOW will be critical to address potential impacts to other parts of the county.

Herbivory (elk, moose, and cattle) studies will be initiated to assess the independent and cumulative impacts to riparian, upland, and meadow habitats by these species. Studies will be conducted in conjunction with the state and other partners to evaluate impacts. Exclosures were installed in 2003 to begin the evaluation process.

- The primary concerns are the lack of willow regeneration, the percent cover provided by willows, and willow density along the Illinois River channel. Willow regeneration along the

Illinois River is slow, and small willow shoots are frequently grazed to a 1-inch height. Elk damage to riparian areas is well documented in the scientific literature (see riparian habitats in appendix H).

- A hunting plan will be developed, working with the state, for land on and adjacent to the refuge. This strategy could include a late-season, limited hunt for youth and disabled hunters. A protocol would outline the need for and administration of additional hunts based on such considerations as game damage, herd reduction, and habitat degradation.
- Elk numbers and elk damage are not necessarily a linear relationship. Snow depth, temperature, duration of feeding, and a host of other factors may determine wintering elk impacts. Elk wintering on the refuge may minimize game damage on adjacent private lands.

Sage Grouse Management

Greater sage grouse are only found in sagebrush-dominated rangelands in western North America. Sage grouse are dependent on sagebrush for winter cover, nesting, and feeding habitat. North Park supports habitat for the greater sage grouse and a viable grouse population. However, over the last 40 years, the population has exhibited extreme fluctuations.

Everett and Nancy Collin

Sage Grouse Hen With Young

Issues

In 1998, because of increased local concerns about the status of sage grouse in North Park, a group of concerned citizens and agencies formed the North Park sage grouse working group. The mission of the group is to develop, implement, and monitor a conservation plan to maintain a viable sage grouse population in Jackson County. Historically, the refuge has supported sage grouse hunting in accordance with State regulations and seasons.

Action

The refuge proposes to continue to offer sport-hunting opportunities for sage grouse, in accordance with State regulations and seasons. Upland habitats will be monitored and evaluated to improve conditions for nesting and brood-rearing sage grouse (see upland habitats in appendix H).

The refuge will support the purpose and guiding principles of the North Park greater sage grouse conservation plan.

Inholdings

Non-federally owned lands within public land areas are known as inholdings. Table 2 displays non-federally owned lands that lie within the approved acquisition boundary of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge.

Table 2. Private lands within Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Tract	*Approximate Acreage*
Private landowner A	160
Private landowner B	480
Private landowner C	200
Private landowner D	2,960
Private landowner E	24
Total	*3,824*

Non-federally owned lands that lie outside the approved boundary of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge are described in table 3.

Table 3. Private lands outside Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Tract	*Approximate Acreage*
Private landowner F	18
Total	*18*

Issues

These inholdings represent valuable wildlife habitat and are of interest to the refuge.

Action

Following the Service acquisition policy and guidelines, the refuge plans to acquire only these properties on a willing-seller/willing-buyer basis. Additionally, the refuge will attempt to acquire mineral resource interests on lands within the existing boundary. Minerals extraction may destroy wildlife habitats, and prevent goals and objectives from being met.

Invasive Plants

The refuge mirrors much of the rest of North Park in its species mix of invasive plants. Canada thistle has a strong foothold in Jackson County. This species has a noticeable presence along ditch banks, dikes, and in the edges of riparian and sub-irrigated areas. Four other species, declared by the county to be noxious, have been found on the refuge in small amounts, totaling less than 5 acres—musk thistle, yellow toadflax, whitetop, and houndstongue.

A handful of other invasive plants have been found in minute amounts on nearby lands—spotted, diffuse, and Russian knapweeds, as well as Dalmatian toadflax, and leafy spurge. These species have been especially troublesome along highway rights-of-way.

Issues

Managing invasive plants and limiting their impact on the refuge is a great concern.

Actions

As a landowner within the North Platte headwaters weed management area, the refuge works closely with Jackson County and the county weed coordinator. This partnership goes back to a 1986 weed- management document and includes 13 public, private, and local entities. Jackson County, although somewhat isolated from more serious invasive plant problems of nearby landscapes, is at the forefront in keeping out several invasive plant species.

Management approaches have been developed in conjunction with the county weed coordinator and are annually monitored for effectiveness. Mechanical, biological, cultural, and chemical tools are employed in combination, in hopes of eliminating these unwanted, invasive plants.

Treatment of Canada thistle is generally limited to areas around facilities and areas incurring heavy public use.

All known occurrences of musk thistle, yellow toadflax, whitetop, and houndstongue are attacked every year with a strategy appropriate to each species. Progress to date for these four species has been quite good. Persistence and diligence will be necessary to keep them out over the long term.

Careful scouting and fast action will be required to prevent the following, off-refuge, invasive plants from occurring on the refuge—spotted, diffuse, and Russian knapweeds, as well as Dalmatian toadflax, leafy spurge, and Dyers woad.

3 Refuge and Resource Descriptions

3 Refuge and Resource Descriptions

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, situated at an elevation of 8,200 feet, is located in an inter-mountain glacial basin in north-central Colorado. The refuge is situated along the western edge of the central waterfowl flyway (figure 7).

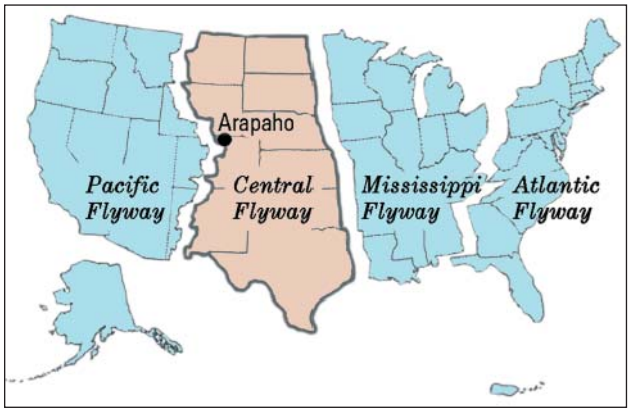


Figure 7. Waterfowl flyways within the United States

Jackson County opens north into Wyoming and is rimmed on the west by the Park Range, on the south by the Rabbit Ears Range, and on the east by the Medicine Bow Range. The basin floor between these ranges is locally known as North Park and encompasses approximately 600 square miles. The basin is relatively flat with an elevation range of 7,900–8,300 feet.

Slow, meandering streams, which crisscross the basin, flow toward the north-central part of the basin to form the North Platte River. Most of the floodplain is irrigated meadow (irrigated to produce a single hay crop per year), while sagebrush grasslands characterize the adjacent low rises. Sagebrush uplands are the dominant vegetative community and encompass 80 percent of North Park.

Bailey (1995) described the Jackson County area as part of the southern Rocky Mountain eco-region. The Service has adopted an ecosystem approach to natural resource management and has identified 53 watershed-based, eco-regions in the United States (figure 8). Within this approach, the refuge lies within the boundaries of the Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem.

The Service is developing a nationally coordinated approach involving ecosystem teams, partners, and stakeholders to preserve natural resources for the American people. Ecosystem teams are fundamental to the Service in sustaining good land health. Ecosystem teams should be the primary delivery mechanism for establishing priorities and identifying areas of greatest conservation concern in their ecosystems (Fulfilling the Promise, 1999).

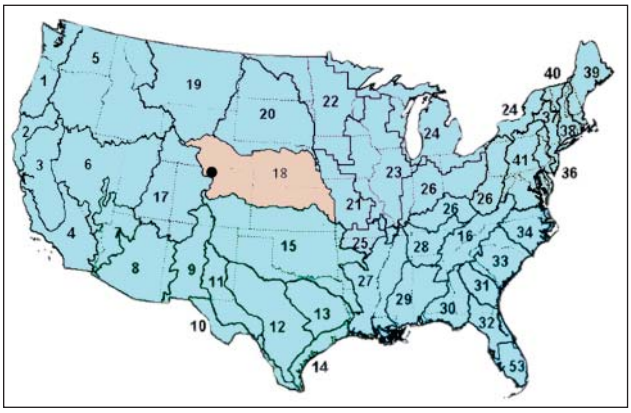


Figure 8. Eco-regions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The following sections describe the resources and use of the refuge:

- physical resources
- biological resources
- cultural resources
- special management areas
- public use

Physical Resources

The climate, geology, and soils of the refuge are described below. In addition, a brief description is given for the water, reserved, and mineral rights related to the refuge.

Climate

The climate is semiarid—characterized as having short, cool summers followed by long, cold winters.

Temperatures and precipitation vary greatly with elevation and location. Mean annual air temperature in Walden, near the center of North Park, is 36.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperature extremes are minus 39 degrees to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, based on the National Weather Bureau's 30-year average data.

The average length of the growing season in Walden is 43 days. The average date for the last killing frost in Walden is July 1, and the average first killing frost is August 14, based on North Park weather station's 70-year average. The relatively short frost-free season inhibits any form of agriculture, except hay near floodplain areas.

The mean rainfall in Walden is 10.83 inches of precipitation annually. Annual precipitation generally increases as elevation increases, from the floor to the outer edge of North Park. Elevation ranges from slightly below 8,000 feet on the valley floor to 12,965 feet on Clarks Peak. Seventy percent of the annual precipitation falls as snow. Walden averages 53 inches of snow per year, the lowest of any point in North Park. The highest average monthly precipitation occurs in March, April, May, and August (Lischka et al. 1983).

Geological Resources

North Park is a structural basin between the Precambrian granites, gneisses and schists of the Medicine Bow and Park Ranges and Independence Mountain. The sandstones, conglomerates, and shales of the Tertiary Coalmont Formation dominate the surface geology of the North Park floor. Coal is found in the lower members of the formation (Hail 1968).

The North Park Formation overlies the Coalmont Formation and consists of white, calcareous conglomerates. The Coalmont Formation is exposed along a long, narrow, syncline ridge trending northwest from Owl Mountain to the confluence of Roaring Fork and Grizzly Creeks. The syncline includes Owl Ridge and Peterson Ridges.

Pierre Shale underlies the Coalmont Formation and is exposed primarily in the northwestern and northeastern quadrants of North Park. Evidence of Tertiary volcanics is obvious along the south boundary of North Park. Quantities of breccia and other volcanics are common in the Rabbit Ears Range in the form of dikes, plush, flows, and ash.

Significant glacial activity occurred in North Park during the Pleistocene. Fluviatile gravels and inter-fluvial terraces are examples of the influence of glacial activity upon the current landscape of North Park's floor. Several natural lakes in the area are likely the remnants of Pleistocene glaciation.

Winds also influenced the geology of North Park. Prevailing southwesterly winds, possibly caused by the low ridge between Rabbit Ears Peak and Arapaho Pass, have deposited fine grains of alluvium, some of which reaches thicknesses of 30 feet. Winds may have created several shallow lakes within the basin, including Hebron Sloughs, located southwest of the refuge (Lischka et al. 1983).

Soil Resources

Soils that have the capacity to reproduce the same kinds, amounts, and proportions of range plants are grouped into range sites. Fletcher (1981) defined 15 different range sites and 2 forest types within Jackson County. Five range sites (floodplains) are found on the refuge.

- Randman-Blackwell-Dobrow association (deep, poorly drained, dominantly sandy soils)
- Spicerton-Stumpp association (deep, well-drained, sandy loams and clay loams on bench and upland sites); Fluetch-Bosler-Tealson association (deep and shallow, well-drained, sandy loams)
- Tiagos-Cabin association (deep, well-drained, fine, sandy loams); and Coalmont-Brinkerton-Aaberg association (moderately deep, of soft shale and well-drained sandy loams)

Everett and Nancy Collin

Prairie Lupine

The refuge contains 31 individual soil types within the 5 range sites (Fletcher 1977). Dominant soil types include Spicerton sandy loam, Fluetsch-Tiagos association, Bosler sandy loam, and the Boettcher-Bundyman association. These soils are found on slopes less than 15 percent, and generally have slow to moderate permeability. Mean soil temperature at Walden is 58 degrees Fahrenheit.

Water Resources and Rights

The refuge is located on the Illinois River and its tributaries. The Illinois River is tributary to the Michigan River, which is tributary to the North Platte River.

Prior to settlement, the bottoms and meadows of the Illinois River and its tributaries flooded annually from snow melt and spring runoff, creating significant waterfowl nesting habitat. With settlement, much of the natural floods and pond creation were reduced, with irrigated meadows replacing ponds and marshes.

Since the refuge's first land acquisition in 1967, the Service created new wetland habitat through

the management of acquired irrigation and stock reservoirs, diversion of water into natural depressions, and diversion of water into Service-constructed ponds.

The refuge has a decreed diversion rate of 515.05 cubic feet per second, most of which is diverted from the Illinois River. Lesser amounts are diverted from tributaries of Willow, Spring, Potter, and Antelope Creeks. This water is either ditched for storage in 9 decreed reservoirs and 73 un-decreed ponds, or ditched to meadows for direct irrigation.

The refuge has decreed rights to 7,626.4 acre-feet for reservoir and pond initial fills and refills, and is seeking an additional 2,582.5 acre-feet of junior storage rights. The total capacity of refuge storage units is 5,678.5 acre-feet. Approximately 814 surface acres in ponds and approximately 9,499 acres are irrigated meadow grass.

Since 2001, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has measured Illinois River flow at gauging stations at the upstream and downstream ends of the refuge to determine the effect of diversions, wildlife use, and return flow on river discharge.

Groundwater is present in an unconfined, sand, and gravel alluvial aquifer, which underlies the entire refuge. The water table is shallow, with the elevation of the groundwater table approximating the water-surface elevations in nearby rivers, creeks, reservoirs, and ponds.

The Colorado Division of Water Resources, commonly referred to as the State Engineer's Office, administers the refuge's water rights according to the prior appropriation doctrine.

Whereas much of the refuge's acquired land has senior appurtenant water rights, conversion of ranch land to wildlife habitat has required obtaining junior water rights that cannot be exercised in dry or semidry years.

Sufficient water rights are held by the refuge to implement goals and objectives (appendix I).

Reserved Rights and Privately Owned Mineral Estate

Purchase of some land tracts on the refuge were subject to existing rights-of-way at the time of purchase. Some of these rights-of-way include Jackson County Roads 31, 32, and 34. The Colorado State Highway Department owns a 100-foot right-of-way on Highway 125 and a 50-foot right-of-way on Highway 14.

Additional rights-of-way include buried telephone lines along Highway 125 and 14, and power lines along Highway 125, through the length of the east side of the refuge and across the Case tract on the south side.

With the purchases of land tracts, the refuge acquired surface mineral rights on all its land except the transfers from Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The refuge owns the majority of the subsurface mineral rights; the State of Colorado, BLM, and private landowners hold the remainder.

Biological Resources

Refuge habitats provide for a variety of animals and plants. Brief descriptions of these resources follow; more details can be found in appendix H.

Habitat Management Units

Habitat on the refuge can be divided into four broad types: riparian, wetland, meadow, and upland.

Acreages for each habitat type were calculated using geographic information system (GIS) software (Environmental Systems Research Institute's ArcView), with refuge boundary topographic base maps and map layers from the national wetland inventory (NWI).

Estimating width of the historic floodplain—using topography and vegetative community changes as a guide—determined width of the riparian area.

Meadow habitats were derived primarily using maps from the NWI, with corrections for recent wetland additions.

Acreage of the other three habitat types was subtracted from the refuge's base acreage to calculate upland acreage.

Descriptions of the refuge's habitat types follow.

Riparian Habitat

The riparian habitat covers 4,374 acres on the refuge. It is composed of the channel, floodplain, and transitional upland fringe along portions of the Illinois River and Spring Creek.

Historically, the floodplain and transitional fringe have been considered irrigated meadow. However, this plan uses the terms channel, floodplain, and transitional fringe because these components more appropriately represent the collective functions and processes of riparian habitats.

Such designation allows management potential of the entire area to be more thoroughly evaluated (figure 9–habitat management units).

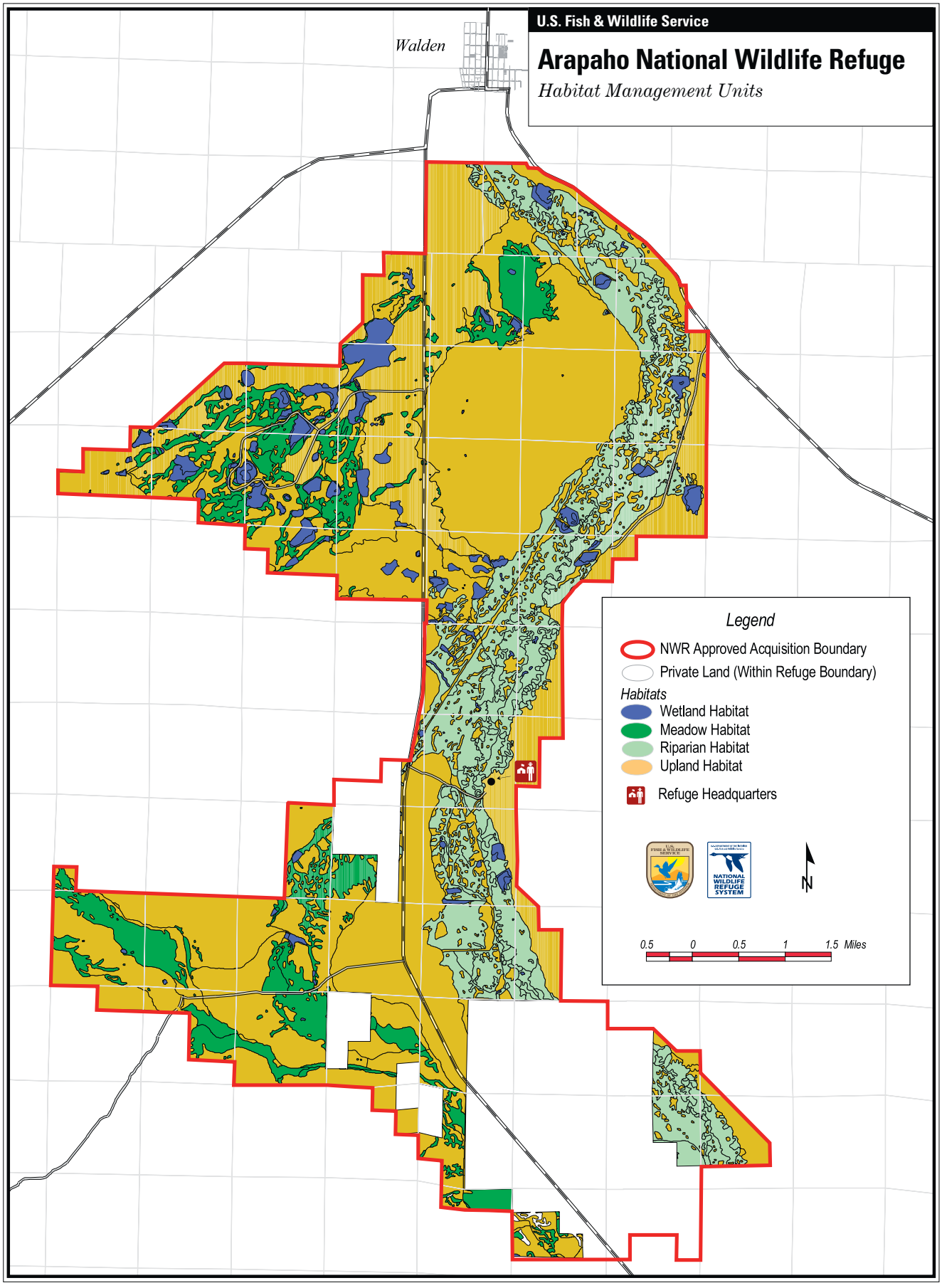


Figure 9. Habitat management units of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

These willow species are found along the Illinois River:

- Drummonds's willow
- coyote willow
- Geyer's willow
- whiplash willow
- mountain willow
- planeleaf willow

Grass species common to these moist soil areas include the following:

- bluejoint reedgrass
- timothy
- mannagrass
- smooth brome
- meadow foxtail
- meadow barley
- Nevada bluegrass
- sloughgrass
- tufted hairgrass
- saltgrass
- Nebraska sedge
- rush species
- Nuttall's alkaligrass
- redtop
- winter bentgrass

The runs and pools in the river channel typically contain aquatic vegetation including waterweed, pondweed, and filamentous algae. Canada thistle is the main invasive plant in this area.

Wildlife species that use the riparian-habitat grasslands include waterfowl such as northern pintail, mallard, gadwall, and green-winged teal. Sage grouse broods use these areas to forage for high-protein invertebrates.

The willow complex supports at least 40 species of migrating songbirds such as yellow warbler and willow flycatcher, along with moose, river otter, beaver, and wintering elk. Water birds—including common snipe, spotted sandpiper, sora, American white pelican, and black-crowned night-heron—extensively use this habitat type.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Yellow Warbler

The cold-water system of the Illinois River supports 7 species of native and non-native fish and at least 17 taxa of aquatic invertebrates.

Wetland Habitat

Wetland habitat includes 824 acres of natural and created ponds and lakes up to the high water mark, excluding surrounding meadows and riparian corridors. Ponds and lakes, henceforth referred to as basins or wetlands, were delineated using both NWI maps and refuge coverage maps. Approximately 79 shallow wetlands exist on the refuge (figure 6–base map).

For management purposes, three wetland complexes were developed: the Case, Illinois, and Soap Creek complexes (figure 10–wetland complexes). The majority (90 percent) of wetland basins are constructed. The purpose for these artificial wetlands is to offset wetland losses occurring elsewhere in the central flyway. Maintenance of these facilities provides benefits to a host of wetland-dependent species, including waterfowl.

Specific wetland objectives only account for approximately 50 percent of the total wetland surface area to be managed in a given year. Drought, evaporative losses, periodic drawdowns for aquatic vegetation enhancement, dike maintenance activities, and fall migration drawdowns account for the remainder of the wetland surface area.

Aquatic vegetation of wetland habitats includes both emergent species (e.g., cattail, spike rush, and bulrush) and submerged species (e.g., sago pondweed, leafy pondweed, and widgeongrass). Invertebrate abundance is high in wetland basins. Common invertebrates include true bugs, as well as invertebrate families of the water boatman, backswimmer, predacious diving beetle, and crawling water beetles.

Invertebrates are a critical food source to many waterfowl and shorebirds. Waterfowl species include both diving ducks (e.g., lesser scaup, canvasback, redhead, and ruddy duck) and puddle ducks (e.g., mallard, northern shoveler, gadwall, and American wigeon). Over-water nesting birds such as the black-crowned night-heron, white-faced ibis, marsh wren, coot, and blackbirds also extensively use wetland habitats.

Meadow Habitat

Meadow habitat includes 2,683 acres of grasslands and old hay meadows, except those along the riparian corridor, which are considered riparian habitat. These historically irrigated fields provide the majority of the nesting habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. Meadow habitats represent common feeding, resting, and loafing areas for most birds and mammals on the refuge (figure 9–habitat management units).

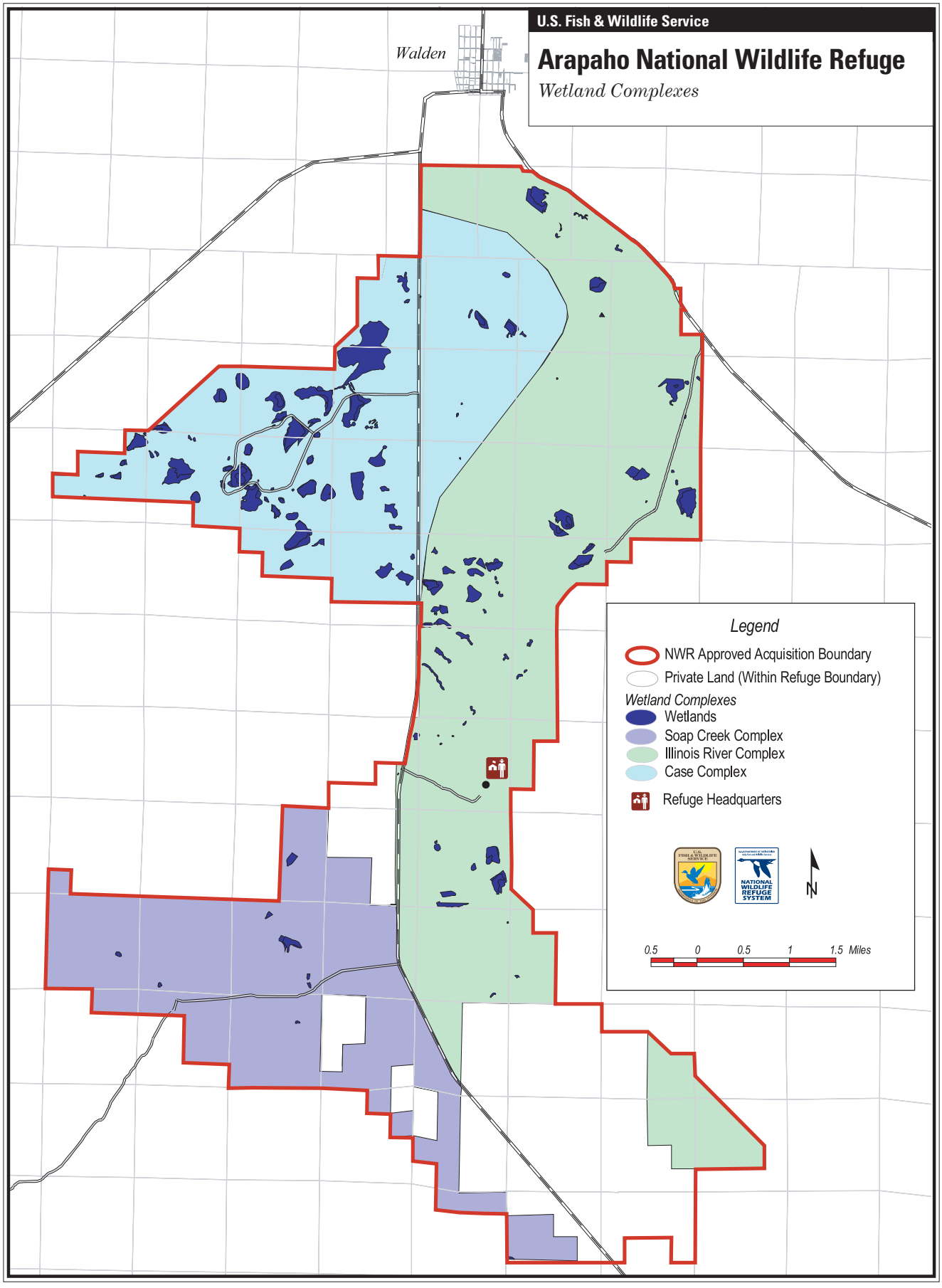


Figure 10. Wetland complexes of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

The following vegetation, primarily native plants, is common to meadow habitat:

- slenderbeak sedge
- capitate sedge
- Hayden's sedge
- narrowleaf sedge
- elk sedge
- woolly sedge
- Nebraska sedge
- dunhead sedge
- beaked sedge
- shortbeak sedge
- water sedge
- golden sedge
- softleaf sedge
- new sedge
- valley sedge
- Colorado rush
- Baltic rush
- dagger-leaf rush
- longstyle rush
- tuberous rush
- field woodrush
- smallflowered woodrush

Grass species common to these moist soil areas include the following:

- bluejoint reedgrass
- timothy
- mannagrass
- smooth brome
- meadow foxtail
- meadow barley
- Nevada bluegrass
- sloughgrass
- tufted hairgrass
- saltgrass
- Nuttall's alkaligrass
- redtop
- winter bentgrass

The following are common forbs:

- sulphur buckwheat
- Hood's phlox
- longleaf phlox
- rosy pussytoes
- silvery lupine
- prairie lupine
- groundsel species
- narrow-leaved maertensia
- small bluebells
- cinquefoil
- early cinquefoil
- stonecrop
- wormleaf stonecrop
- daisy species
- beardtongue

Canada thistle is the main invasive plant in this area.

Wildlife species that use the meadow habitat include waterfowl such as the northern pintail, northern shoveler, gadwall, and green-winged teal. Sage grouse broods use these areas to forage for high-protein invertebrates. Snipe broods and other grassland-nesting songbirds use this habitat type, along with elk, pronghorn, and coyote.

Upland Habitat

The upland habitat consists of 14,285 acres of a shrub-steppe plant community dominated by sagebrush, drought-tolerant perennial bunchgrasses, and forbs.

Uplands are the dominant refuge habitat type and include all lands not accounted for in the wetland, meadow, and riparian descriptions. Many upland habitats exhibit a mosaic pattern around meadow sites; these sites are generally managed as meadows (figure 9–habitat management units).

Historical reports of the sagebrush-steppe plant community are conflicting, and pre-settlement community conditions may never be fully known.

The focus of past management efforts has been devoted to wetland-dependent birds, therefore information is limited about the upland plant community.

Available information suggests that sagebrush historically was the dominant plant species, although perhaps taller (greater than 3 meters) plants may have existed.

Floristic diversity in North Park has likely decreased, especially within the grasses and forbs. Management efforts for the past 50 years have attempted to increase grass and forb abundance through mechanical and chemical means.

In general, the sagebrush plant community appears to be in fair condition, but given the lack of basic information, management alternatives are difficult to define. Therefore, management objectives center on developing an upland habitat database that defines plant species, location, abundance, and characteristics.

Secondly, the refuge proposes to "experiment" with 4,000 acres of uplands to create a preferred plant community structure. Lessons learned will be applied to larger pieces of upland habitats.

Upland vegetation consists primarily of the following shrubs:

- mountain big sagebrush
- Wyoming big sagebrush
- alkali sagebrush
- fringed sage
- black sagebrush
- rubber rabbitbrush
- Douglas rabbitbrush
- broom snakeweed
- gray horsebrush
- black greasewood
- winterfat

The grasses below are dominant in the uplands:

- muttongrass
- Nevada bluegrass
- Sandberg bluegrass
- bottlebrush squirreltail
- Idaho fescue
- bluebunch wheatgrass
- western wheatgrass
- blue grama
- elk sedge
- needle and thread
- green needlegrass

Common forbs are listed below:

- sulphur buckwheat
- Hood's phlox
- longleaf phlox
- rosy pussytoes
- silvery lupine
- prairie lupine
- groundsel species
- narrow-leaved maertensia
- small bluebells
- cinquefoil
- early cinquefoil
- stonecrop
- stonecrop wormleaf
- daisy species
- beardtongue

Invasive plants include yellow toadflax and musk thistle and occur primarily in disturbed sites.

Sage grouse are a sagebrush-obligate species, requiring sagebrush plants for cover and food. Vesper sparrow, Brewer's sparrow, and sage thrasher are songbirds common to the uplands.

Elk, mule deer, and pronghorn are common big-game users of upland habitats.

Wildlife Resources

A broad diversity of wildlife reflects the refuge's habitat diversity.

Only those species that are residents or frequent visitors to the refuge are discussed below. Many species, especially birds, may infrequently inhabit or migrate through the refuge.

All species of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, and reptiles are listed in appendix J.

Birds

A large number of ducks and Canada geese depend on wetland, riparian, and meadow habitats for foraging, nesting, brood-rearing, and molting. The most common type of ducks breeding on the refuge include lesser scaup, gadwall, American wigeon, northern shoveler, and cinnamon teal.

Most of the ducks common to the refuge use the three habitats listed above and, occasionally, some species use the upland habitat. These ducks include the green-winged teal, mallard, northern pintail, cinnamon teal, northern shoveler, blue-winged teal, gadwall, and American wigeon.

Redhead, ruddy duck, and lesser scaup depend on wetlands for most of their life needs, with the scaup and redhead nesting in meadows occasionally.

The ring-necked duck, canvasback, and bufflehead are generally spring and fall migratory visitors, but the canvasback does infrequently nest on the refuge. The common merganser primarily inhabits riparian areas to meet their life requirements.

Canada goose is an abundant species that is the first to arrive in the spring and the last to migrate in the fall. The geese use wetland, riparian, and meadow habitats for foraging, nesting, and brood-rearing.

Wading birds are water birds that usually do not swim or dive for food, but wade in shallow edges of water for prey. Black-crowned night-heron, great blue heron, and white-faced ibis are the common breeding species on the refuge.

The ibis and black-crowned night-heron use wetlands with heavy cattail/hardstem bulrush vegetation for nesting and brood-rearing. They forage in riparian, meadow, and wetland areas.

The great blue heron uses riparian habitat primarily for nesting and foraging, but can be observed in wetlands.

Shorebirds are most often found foraging for food along the water margins; they use the refuge as a migratory stopover and some nest there. American avocet, willet, killdeer, spotted sandpiper, and Wilson's phalarope are the common nesters.

Avocet and willet mainly use the wetland habitat for their needs. The killdeer is more of a generalist and can be found in all habitats.

The spotted sandpiper and common snipe reside mostly in riparian habitat. Wilson's phalarope use the meadow and riparian habitats for nesting and forage; they rear young in the wetlands. Black-necked stilt is an occasional nester in the wetlands.

Dowitchers, yellowlegs, and other sandpipers use the area for a stopover during spring and fall migration.

Other water birds are represented by a variety of species. Pied-billed grebe, eared grebe, and American coot use wetlands for nesting, foraging, and brood-rearing. Virginia rail, sora rail, and common snipe use the meadow/riparian habitats extensively.

American white pelican, double-crested cormorant, and California gull do not nest on the refuge but use the area for foraging. Black and forester's terns

nest in areas of dense sedge, cattail, and bulrush, and forage in the wetlands.

Raptors consist of several families of hawks, falcons, and owls. The most common raptors of the refuge include the following:

- northern harrier
- Swainson's hawk
- rough-legged hawk
- golden eagle
- American kestrel
- prairie falcon
- short-eared owl
- great horned owl

Only the golden eagle and great horned owl are year-round residents. The rough-legged hawk is a winter visitor while the rest of the birds are present in the spring, summer, and fall.

The raptors use all habitats for nesting and foraging. Red-tailed hawk, ferruginous hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, and Cooper's hawk use the area occasionally.

Upland bird species rely on the uplands primarily to subsist. Several of the common upland birds are sage grouse, horned lark, sage thrasher, vesper sparrow, and Brewer's sparrow.

The sage grouse and horned lark are year-round residents. The sage grouse resides primarily in the uplands, but uses the edges of riparian and meadow habitats.

The sage thrasher, horned lark, and sparrows depend on the upland area for nesting, but may forage in the other habitats.

Neotropical migrants are birds that breed in North America—north of Mexico—but winter in Mexico, Central and South America, or the West Indies.

Everett and Nancy Collin

House wren

The following species are commonly found on the refuge during either migration or the nesting season. These birds rely heavily on riparian habitat for foraging, cover, and nesting:

- common nighthawk
- belted kingfisher
- willow flycatcher
- warbling vireo
- house wren
- marsh wren
- yellow warbler
- MacGillivray's warbler
- common yellowthroat
- western kingbird
- gray catbird
- Wilson's warbler
- savannah sparrow
- fox sparrow
- song sparrow
- Lincoln's sparrow
- white-crowned sparrow

A few of these species also use the meadow and wetland habitat for nesting or foraging, such as the savannah sparrow and the marsh wren. The cliff, barn, and tree swallows use a combination of habitats including wetland, riparian, and meadow.

Resident and migrant songbirds breed in North America and migrate throughout a limited North American range:

- mountain bluebird
- American robin
- dark-eyed junco
- rosy finch
- pine siskin
- American goldfinch
- lark bunting

These birds use riparian, meadow, and upland habitats. Red-winged, yellow-headed, and Brewer's blackbirds use both wetlands and riparian for nesting and foraging. Species such as the black-capped chickadee, red-breasted nuthatch, and ruby-crowned kinglet use woody, riparian areas for foraging, but tend to nest off the refuge.

The northern flicker is the most common woodpecker. This species inhabits riparian willow habitat, but also uses uplands and meadows. Other less common woodpeckers include downy and hairy woodpeckers, and red-naped sapsucker.

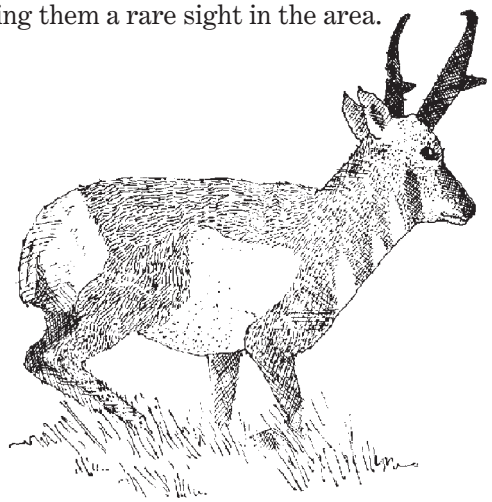
Mammals

Big game animals common to the refuge include pronghorn, mule deer, moose, and elk. As many as 20 moose can be found on the refuge at any one time, spending most of their time in the riparian habitat.

The mule deer population is approximately 40 animals that roam on and off the refuge, spending time in the riparian, meadow, and upland habitats. White-tailed deer, with a population of about 20 animals, use the same areas as mule deer.

Pronghorn use the upland habitat primarily, but can be found in the riparian and meadow habitats.

Pronghorn use the refuge in the spring, summer, and fall, with a population of about 50 animals present at any one time. In the winter, the pronghorn generally move north off the refuge, making them a rare sight in the area.



Pronghorn
© Cindie Brunner

A resident herd of approximately 150 elk resides primarily in the riparian area in the southern half of the refuge and on neighboring land.

During the winter (November through March) the refuge and surrounding area hosts about 1,200 elk. These animals are usually in several herds and use riparian, meadow, and upland habitats.

The refuge has many small mammals, which use all habitat types depending on their life requirements.

Common species of small mammals are listed below:

- Nuttall's cottontail
- white-tailed jackrabbit
- least chipmunk
- Wyoming ground squirrel
- white-tailed prairie dog
- beaver
- deer mouse
- montane vole
- muskrat
- porcupine
- coyote
- long-tailed weasel
- mink
- badger
- striped skunk

Fish

The Illinois River and wetlands are two main types of aquatic communities present on the refuge. The Illinois River is a transition stream.

The river begins as a trout stream at the headwaters and down to the southern end of the refuge, to a native species stream by the time it reaches the northern half of the refuge. The splitting of the stream channel into two channels appears to be the basis of this fishery transition.

The low flows of the split are ultimately responsible for trout giving way to the more tolerant native species.

These species are common in the Illinois River on the refuge:

- brown trout
- rainbow trout
- northern redbelly dace
- fathead minnow
- creek chub
- long-nosed sucker
- white sucker
- Johnny darter

Potter and Spring Creeks are tributaries of the Illinois River. These creeks provide little fishery habitat, with only a few native fish such as long-nosed sucker, white sucker, fathead minnow, and creek chub found in them.

Many of the wetlands will not support a fishery, with water depth and winter survival being the limiting factors. The most common fish found in the wetlands is the fathead minnow, a native fish that has evolved in this type of habitat.

Reptiles and Amphibians

The wandering garter snake is the only reptile known to inhabit the refuge. Sightings of this snake are rare, with only one or two seen in a year.

Amphibians are slightly more numerous with the following species: barred tiger salamander, western toad, wood frog, northern leopard frog, and striped chorus frog.

Tiger Salamander
© Cindie Brunner

Chorus frogs are found in the wetland, meadow, and riparian areas; they are the most abundant amphibian on the refuge. The salamanders are primarily associated with the wetlands but are seen in all habitats.

The wood frog has been documented once on the refuge, in riparian habitat. The western toad is extremely rare, as the habitat types on the refuge are not ideal for this species. Leopard frogs have been observed in the riparian habitat and in irrigation ditches in the meadow habitat.

Invertebrates

Some sampling of invertebrates has been done on wetland and riparian areas. Wetland invertebrates were the most diverse, with 20 different families represented in the sampling. Stream sampling identified 17 different taxa in the Illinois River.

Further sampling of invertebrates to establish a quantitative baseline would assist in identifying problems in wetland and riparian areas in the future.

Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species and Other Species of Special Concern

Table 4 lists special-status wildlife, fish, and amphibians that are known to use habitat types on the refuge.

The bald eagle, a federally-listed species, is an intermittent visitor on the refuge and a year-round resident of the county. Nesting habitat does not exist on the refuge but the eagle does use all habitat types for foraging.

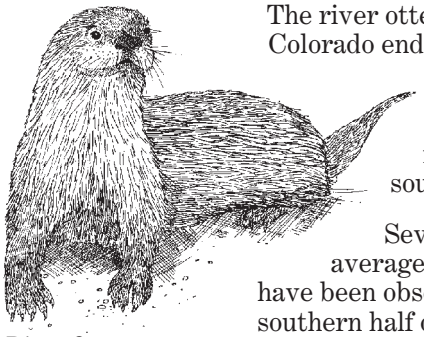
The peregrine falcon, which is proposed for federal de-listing, is also an intermittent visitor, using all the habitat types for foraging.

Burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, northern sage grouse, long-billed curlew, and white pelican are State of Colorado special-concern species.

Burrowing owls nest on the refuge, with an occurrence of one nest found every 5 years. They are a migrant in the fall of the year. Ferruginous hawk occurs in the spring, summer, and fall, foraging on refuge habitats.

Northern sage grouse are an abundant year-round resident. The grouse use the upland, riparian, and meadow habitats for breeding (one lek found on the refuge), nesting, foraging, and brood-rearing.

Long-billed curlews are observed every few years. White pelicans nest off the refuge on MacFarlane Reservoir, frequenting the refuge to forage in wetland and riparian habitats.



River Otter
© Cindie Brunner

The river otter is a State of Colorado endangered species.

The otter was reintroduced into a watershed south of the refuge.

Several otters (an average of one per year) have been observed in the southern half of the refuge's riparian habitat.

Little is known about the northern redbelly dace on the refuge. This State of Colorado endangered species is found in the Illinois River.

Northern leopard and wood frogs are special-concern species for the State of Colorado. The leopard frog is common and found in riparian and meadow habitats. Wood frogs occur along the Illinois River, south of refuge headquarters.

Table 4. Special-status wildlife, fish, plant, and amphibian species potentially occurring on Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Common Name	*Seasonal Occurrence*[1]	*Federal and State Status*[2]	*Date Last Observed*[3]
Birds			
American peregrine falcon	SR	CDOW species of concern	2004
bald eagle	YR	USFWS threatened species (proposed delisting)	2004
western burrowing owl	B, M	CDOW threatened species	2004
ferruginous hawk	SR	CDOW species of concern	2004
northern sage grouse	B, YR	CDOW species of concern	2004
long-billed curlew	M, SR	CDOW species of concern	2004
American white pelican	SR	CDOW species of concern	2004
Mammals			
river otter	YR, B	CDOW endangered species	2004
Plants			
North Park phacelia	YR	USFWS endangered species	2004
Amphibians			
northern leopard frog	YR	CDOW species of concern	2004
wood frog	YR	CDOW species of concern	2004

Source: Colorado Division of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[1]*Seasonal occurrence: B=breeding (assumes summer resident), SR=summer resident (no evidence of breeding), YR=year-round resident, M=migrant.*

[2]*See glossary for special-status definitions. CDOW=Colorado Division of Wildlife; USFWS=U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[3]*Data is from the refuge's wildlife observation log.*

Cultural Resources

Humans have used the mountains of Colorado for thousands of years. Spear points dating to the Paleoindian Period have been recovered in North Park. The Paleoindian Period extends from 12000 B.C. to around 5740 B.C.

Although numerous other Paleoindian sites have been located in Middle Park, including evidence of bison hunting 10,000 years ago, known occurrences of Paleoindian occupation in North Park have been limited to small campsites. Some archaeologists think Paleoindian groups lived in the Parks year-round; others propose winter camps in the foothills with exploitation of various mountain resources during summer months.

The Archaic Period followed the Paleoindian Period and lasted until A.D. 150. Hunters used darts and throwing sticks called atlatls. There was also a higher reliance on small game and plant resources. A major drought on the Plains (ca. 5000–2500 B.C.) caused change to settlement and subsistence patterns. People moved into the mountains for longer periods and exploited a wider variety of plant and animal resources. Increased moisture during the latter part of the Archaic Period brought people back onto the Plains, but the mountains continued to be an important part of their subsistence. Activity increased in North Park during this period.

The Late Prehistoric Period (A.D. 150–1540) saw the introduction of the bow and arrow and ceramics. Bison hunting again became an important part of the economy, but the people of this period continued to rely on a variety of available plant and animal resources. Researchers have proposed a seasonal round of activities. People would leave their foothills winter camps and head north into the Laramie Basin, then south through North and Middle Parks, collecting and hunting until fall. From there, they would turn east to hunt bighorn sheep along the Continental Divide on their way back to the foothills.

The Protohistoric Period starts with European contact, around A.D. 1540. Of the modern tribes, the Utes are most often associated with the mountains and long-term utilization of the resources of North Park. There are also historic accounts of visits to North Park by the Shoshone, Arapaho, and Cheyenne peoples.

Archaeological sites in North Park are generally small and associated with seasonal use of the area. They include open campsites and lithic scatters with stone circles (tepee rings) located along the ridges. Culturally scarred trees and wickiups in forested areas represent Protohistoric Ute use. Rock art and bison kill sites, although uncommon, have been reported in North Park.

The first European visitors to New Park (now known as North Park) were probably trappers. Alexander Sinclair and Robert Bean headed the first known party of trappers in 1825. Several famous trappers, miners, and hunters made their way through North Park. Kit Carson, Jim Baker, Sublette, Gervais and Vasquesz, Calvin Jones, Henry Fraeb, John Gantt, and Pegleg Smith visited North Park in the 1840s.

The second western expedition of John C. Fremont took him through North Park in 1844. Sir George Gore passed through the area on a hunting expedition in 1855, and found mule deer, elk, beaver, bear, and mountain sheep. By 1917, most of the game species were gone.

Blue Grama

Cyrus Mendenhall began grazing cattle in North Park in 1879. By 1885, the beef industry was booming, and North Park had its share of large ranches.

Overgrazing and severe winters decimated herd sizes in the area and by 1889 ranching was no longer as profitable as it had been.

In the late 1800s, the economy of North Park shifted to mining. Mining of coal, gravel, fluorspar, copper, silver, and gold—along with logging and ranching—became the main economic developments of the area.

Cultural resource studies have been completed on approximately 50 percent of the refuge. Significant cultural resources have been located, including prehistoric stone circles and open campsites, and historic ranches, graves, and other features associated with Euro-American settlement of North Park. Future efforts will continue to identify existing cultural resources and protect them from degradation. A detailed cultural resource overview of North Park (Larson and Letts 2003) is available from the Service's regional archaeologist.

Special Management Areas

Limited special management areas currently exist on the refuge. The refuge has no wilderness designation or other similar land-use restriction beyond refuge policy.

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge does not contain any area that qualifies for wilderness designation.

All the lands within the refuge have been highly manipulated and contain roads, since it was a working ranch prior to its becoming a refuge.

The only specific historical or cultural areas include grave sites, which will continue to be protected.

The refuge is operating under a 1982 habitat management plan that provides guidance for land management. This CCP replaces the 1982 plan. Additionally, the refuge uses a hunting plan and zone system (management units A, B, and C) to distribute hunters, anglers, and other public uses. This hunting plan will remain in effect until completion of step-down management plans for public use and hunting.

This CCP identified other issues that may require special management, as follows:

- **North Park phacelia**—Preservation of this endangered plant may require fencing and plans to minimize disturbance and ensure the survival and recovery of the species.
- **Elk road closures**—During winter months, the refuge will continue to close roads to minimize disturbance to wintering elk. Coordination with the CDOW and implementation of the revised, step-down management plan for hunting may alter this strategy.
- **Multi-use trail**—Although this trail will be located on the refuge boundary to minimize wildlife and habitat disturbance, the potential for litter and trespass will be higher. Signage and additional law enforcement patrols will be used to minimize these conflicts.
- **Owl Ridge Overlook**—Located 0.25 mile south of the headquarters, this site will facilitate viewing of moose, elk, and mule deer. This site is located on an existing road, therefore, the potential for litter and trespass will be higher. Signage and additional law enforcement patrols will be used to minimize these conflicts.
- **Case Barn interpretive site**—Located along the auto tour route, this site may facilitate historical interpretation of North Park and the role ranching has played to preserve wildlife habitats. The refuge will pursue partners to rehabilitate and interpret these important structures. This site is located on an existing road; therefore, the potential for litter, vandalism, and trespass will be higher. Signage and additional law enforcement patrols will be used to minimize these conflicts.
- **Hampton Barn**—Depending on the outcome of the review by the State Historical Preservation Office, the site may be used to facilitate historical interpretation of North Park and the role ranching has played to preserve wildlife habitats. The refuge anticipates only developing one barn interpretive site. The Case Barn will be first priority, based on its proximity to the auto tour route. This site is located on an existing road, therefore, the potential for litter, vandalism, and trespass will be higher. Signage and additional law enforcement patrols will be used to minimize these conflicts.

Public Use

The annual number of visits to the refuge is estimated at 7,200, which is an average for the past 6 years. This estimate is based broadly on a traffic counter on the auto tour route, visitors entering the visitor center, and general observation. Table 5 summarizes estimated visits in four categories from 1997–2002.

Figure 11 displays location information for the plan's approved public use.

The visitor center is open Monday through Friday (7:00 am–4:30 pm). Information, regulations, and universally accessible restrooms are available during the same hours.

A general leaflet contains a refuge map, describes the refuge and its management, addresses habitats, lists wildlife interpretational and recreational activities, and cites regulations.

Three other leaflets provide information for refuge visitors: wildlife list, hunting guide, and self-guided auto tour. The leaflets are available in three dispensers (auto tour entrance, headquarters entrance, and Brocker Overlook) and at the visitor center.

Compatible Wildlife-Dependent Recreation

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge offers visitors a variety of self-guided recreation opportunities. The Improvement Act states that public use of a refuge may be allowed only where the use is compatible with the refuge system mission and the purpose of the individual refuge.

The Improvement Act sets forth a current standard by which the Secretary of the Interior shall determine whether such uses are compatible. The term "compatible use" means a proposed or existing wildlife-dependent

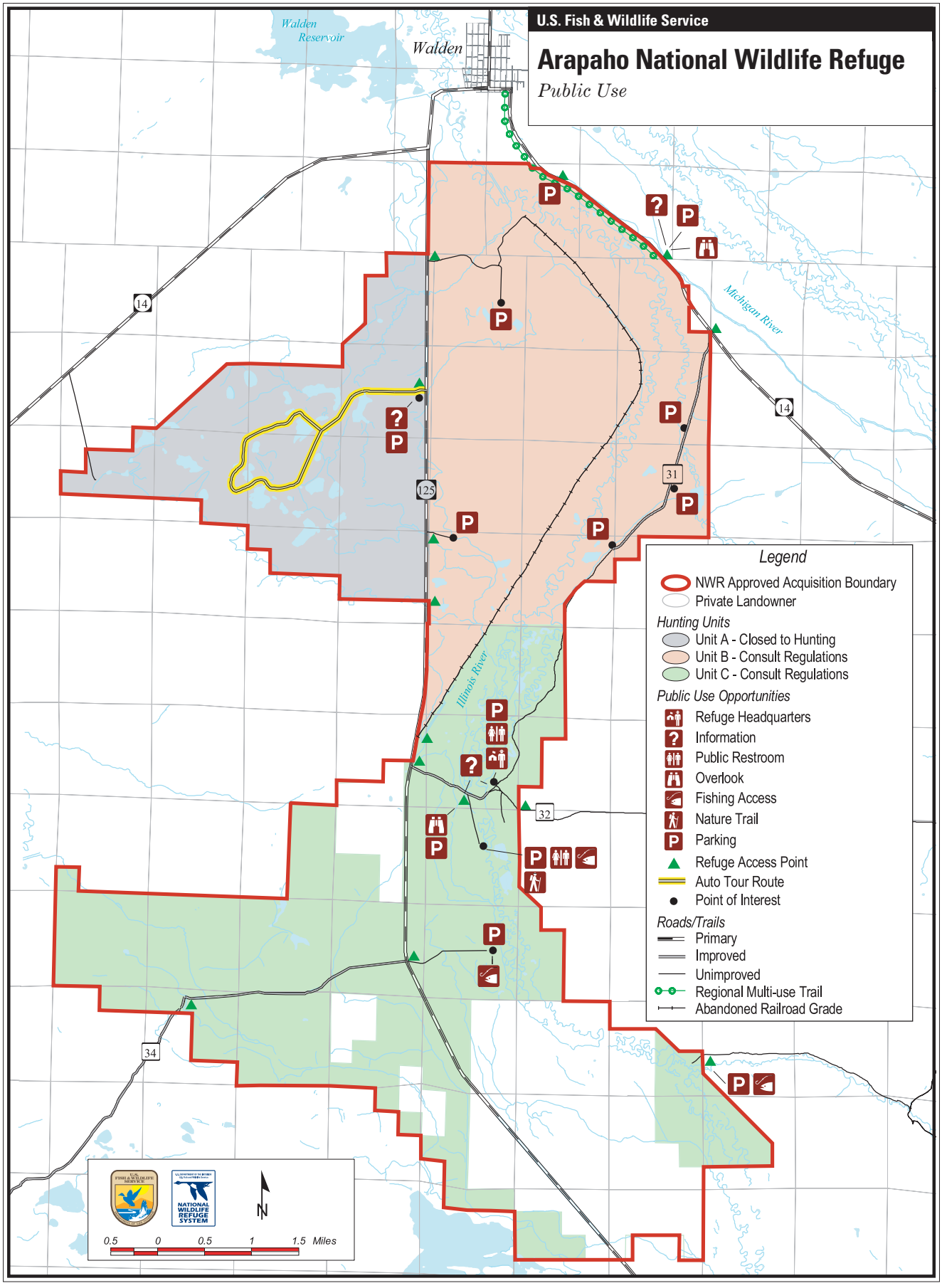


Figure 11. Public use of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Table 5. Estimated annual visitors to Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Visitor Activity	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Observation and interpretation	6,762	6,361	6,263	6,360	7,220	7,496
Hunting	357	228	302	522	152*	61*
Fishing	64	84	70	45	34*	18*
Environmental education	65	132	162	180	167	135
Total	*7,248*	*6,805*	*6,797*	*7,107*	*7,575*	*7,710*

**Severe drought conditions limited hunting and fishing opportunities.*

recreational use or any other use that, in the sound professional judgment of the Service, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the system's mission or refuge's purpose.

Wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation are the six priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Wildlife Observation and Photography

Wildlife observation with interpretation is the most popular public use on the refuge (table 5). Most observation activity occurs on the auto tour route and interpretive nature trail.

- The auto tour route is on the west side of the refuge and passes through meadow, wetland, and upland areas, offering a diversity of wildlife viewing (figure 11–public use). The wetlands on this route offer optimum waterfowl and water bird viewing.
- The interpretive nature trail is just south of the visitor center and meanders through a riparian area (figure 11–public use). This area is great for birding and the chance to encounter mammals large and small.

Hunting

Hunting seasons begin in late August with archery season for pronghorn, and continue through mid-January. The most common species hunted are pronghorn, sage grouse, Canada goose, and ducks. Other species that are open to hunting include Nuttall's cottontail, white-tailed jackrabbit, American coot, common snipe, Virginia rail, sora, and mourning dove.

Certain areas are closed to hunting to protect refuge facilities, limit public use conflicts, and provide resting and feeding habitat for migratory birds (figure 11–public use). Closed areas such as the Case tract (unit A) are posted with signs and mapped in the hunting leaflet.

Fishing

Fishing is limited to designated areas of the Illinois River. The Illinois River runs north, through the east side of the refuge. Three parking areas provide fishing access.

Fishing is in accordance with State of Colorado fishing regulations for the Illinois River. The refuge is closed to fishing from June 1 to July 31 each year to minimize disturbance to nesting waterfowl.

Environmental Education

Environmental education activities are limited at the refuge, with an on-demand approach. The refuge staff has worked with various groups such as Boy and Girl Scouts, colleges, the county extension office, and local elementary and junior and senior high schools.

USFWS

The refuge hosts the outdoor science class for North Park Middle School.

Interpretation

There are three interpretive kiosk sites: auto tour entrance, headquarters entrance, and Brocker Overlook. These sites have panels with information ranging from refuge management activities to specific wildlife species.

The self-guided tour route has numbered signs along the route corresponding to the tour route brochure. The interpretive nature trail is signed with information about management tools and wildlife species found in riparian and wetland habitats.

The refuge staff is in the midst of a contract to update the interpretive information for the visitor center. The new displays should be in place by September 2004.

The Brocker Overlook is currently under modification and construction. The updated, improved overlook will be completed by September 2004.

Several brochures are available:

The wildlife brochure is a list of all wildlife species documented on the refuge, along with the best time of year for viewing each species.

The hunting brochure contains regulations and a map of the hunting units.

The self-guided auto tour brochure contains basic refuge information, map, viewing tips, and interpretation for the auto tour route signs.

Non-wildlife-dependent Recreation

Currently, some non-wildlife-dependent uses occur on the refuge. These uses include biking, cross-county skiing, picnicking, and horseback riding.

These uses are infrequent and not a major management concern. However, they are not authorized uses of the refuge; law enforcement personnel handle these inappropriate uses.

The refuge will strive to eliminate these non-wildlife-dependent uses by maintaining quality signage and brochures for all users.

4 Management Direction

4 Management Direction

Development of refuge goals and objectives involved the melding of multiple sources of information: (1) the review and interpretation of national plans and existing scientific literature; (2) an evaluation of habitat conditions; and (3) the personal knowledge of planning team participants.

Objectives were derived using species' habitat requirements (appendix H). Many species deemed important in national plans were used as "indicators," to prepare objectives that satisfy the needs of multiple species.

Other consulted sources of information included Partners in Flight lists, Audubon Watch lists, Bird Conservation Region lists, and the refuge's wildlife observation logs.

Constraints considered during plan formulation include number of employees, financial resources, equipment availability, harsh winter conditions, arid climate, lessons learned from previous management efforts, and the likelihood of success.

This chapter presents management direction for the following habitats and resources, public use, and other management aspects:

- riparian habitats
- wetland habitats
- meadow habitats
- upland habitats
- hunting
- fishing
- wildlife observation and photography
- environmental education and interpretation
- cultural resources
- research
- partnerships

Virginia Heitman

Moose

Riparian Habitats

The riparian habitat goal will be met through the objectives and strategies that follow.

Goal

Provide a riparian community representative of historical flora and fauna in a high valley of the southern Rocky Mountains to provide habitat for migratory birds, mammals, and river-dependent species.

Detailed habitat rationale is described in appendix H.

Objective

Restore 50–100 acres of dense (40–100 percent) willow in patches greater than 0.5 acre and 20 meters wide in the central third of the Illinois River (from the north end of the island to the confluence with Spring Creek), to connect existing willow patches by 2014. Maintain 535 acres of dense willow in patches in the upper third of the Illinois River to benefit nesting Neotropical migratory songbirds (yellow warbler and willow flycatcher) and resident moose, river otter, and beaver.

Strategies

- Plant willow along the stream corridor, combined with 8-foot fences, to exclude large herbivores.
- Manipulate water refuge-wide, which may involve decreased diversions, to maintain in-stream flows for willow establishment.
- Construct small, artificial dams in the river to raise water tables locally and aid in willow establishment.
- Establish a vegetation-monitoring plan to assess health of established willow stands, and measure and document success or changes needed in reestablishment efforts. Plan should include herbivory and hydrology factors.
- Monitor wildlife to document changes in wildlife use and possible correlations to changes in habitat.
- Experiment with alternative willow restoration strategies.
- In partnership with the Jackson County weed coordinator, develop an integrated pest management plan for the refuge.

Rationale

Sections of the Illinois River on the refuge had willows removed prior to acquisition by the Service, probably in an effort to increase hay yields. These open stretches of river have the following:

- less bank stability, resulting in potential for increased sedimentation
- decreased shade over the stream, resulting in increased water temperatures for trout
- sparse woody vegetation for use by songbirds or other wildlife

A section of river further downstream from the proposed reestablishment site has had livestock grazing removed for 8 years, but has shown little willow regeneration.

Given the growth characteristics of willows, these results lead to the conclusions that there is either significant herbivory other than livestock restraining willow expansion, and/or hydrology has been altered enough with upstream diversions and recent drought conditions that lack of groundwater is keeping willow establishment from occurring.

With this in mind, willow plantings will only be done in association with fencing, and consideration of hydrological needs will be used as well.

Possible methods of increasing groundwater needs will include the following:

- diversion of less water upstream for other refuge purposes
- location of willow plantings adjacent to existing beaver dams to take advantage of higher water tables near these ponds
- placement of logs and other natural materials in the stream to create simulated beaver dams and raise water tables adjacent to areas to be planted

Monitoring will be essential to document reestablishment efforts and to note any significant changes to existing willow communities.

Objective

Provide 3,630–3,845 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native plants (rushes, sedges, grasses, and forbs) characterized by 10–30 centimeters visual obstruction reading, 0–10 centimeters duff layer, minimal (less than 5-percent) bare ground, and less than 40-percent (canopy closure) willow by 2019, to benefit nesting waterfowl (northern pintail, northern shoveler, gadwall, and green-winged teal) and sage grouse broods.

Strategies

- Use grazing, resting, and burning practices to stimulate or maintain meadow conditions.
- Irrigate areas, as water is available, to help stimulate vegetative growth.
- Develop a vegetation-monitoring protocol.

- Develop a wildlife-monitoring plan that correlates wildlife use and habitat condition.
- Consider elk hunting as a management tool.

Rationale

This grass-forb mix requires periodic manipulation to achieve the stated ranges of the objective. The combination of resting, grazing, and burning, combined with irrigation, where available and practical, are the best tools to accomplish this.

It is anticipated that, on average, one-third to two-thirds of this area will require grazing at an average rate of 0.4–1.0 animal unit months (AUMs) per acre, resulting in the removal of approximately 1,950–4,200 AUMs of forage.

Vegetative monitoring, combined with wildlife use data, will be needed to document that objective levels are correct.

Objective

Provide 210–425 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native species (grasses, sedges, forbs, and rushes) characterized by greater than 30 centimeters visual obstruction reading, 10–20 centimeters duff layer, minimal (less than 5-percent) bare ground, and less than 40-percent (canopy closure) willow, from mid-April through August, by 2009, to benefit nesting waterfowl (mallard, gadwall, northern pintail, and scaup), songbirds (savannah sparrow and meadowlark).

Strategies

- Use grazing, resting, and burning practices to stimulate or maintain meadow conditions.
- Irrigate areas, as water is available, to help stimulate vegetative growth.
- Develop a vegetation-monitoring protocol.
- Develop a wildlife-monitoring plan that correlates wildlife use and habitat condition.
- In partnership with the Jackson County weed coordinator, develop an integrated pest management plan for the refuge.

Rationale

This grass-forb mix requires periodic manipulation to achieve the stated ranges of the objective. The combination of resting, grazing, and burning, combined with irrigation, where available and practical, are the best tools to accomplish this.

To meet and maintain the taller vegetation and duff layers identified, it is anticipated that rest will be used more for this objective. It is anticipated that, on average, one-third to one-half of this area will require grazing at an average rate of 0.4 –1.0 AUMs per acre, resulting in the removal of approximately 100–350 AUMs of forage.

Vegetative monitoring, combined with wildlife use data, will be needed to document that objective levels are correct.

Objective

Provide a properly functioning river channel characterized by a well-defined thalweg, outside river edges deeper than inside edges, a river sinuosity of 2.0–2.5, pool spacing every 7–9 channel widths active point-bar formation, and gradients in riffles that are higher than in pools by 2019. A properly functioning river channel is needed to benefit willow establishment for Neotropical migrants and indirectly provide suitable habitat for native and non-native fishes.

Strategies

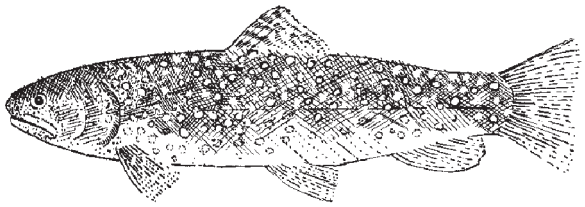
- Map river channel and identify problem areas. Prioritize stretches for rehabilitation.
- Alter irrigation diversions as needed to assist in-stream restoration.
- Install in-stream structures as necessary to adjust thalweg, create point bars, adjust depth ratios, increase sinuosity, and adjust pool spacing.
- Monitor wildlife and vegetative response to these strategies.

Rationale

Mapping the river to identify current characteristics is needed to define where restoration is needed.

Increasing flows in the river by diverting less water on upstream refuge water rights may assist in maintaining higher water tables, especially when used in conjunction with in-stream restoration projects.

Documenting vegetative, fishery, and wildlife response is necessary to ensure that the projects are working.



Brook Trout
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Objective

Establish a private lands program to encourage restoration of degraded riparian zones through funding and technical assistance by 2009, to accomplish similar objectives as those defined for the refuge. High priority areas are those that have immediate influence on the refuge because of drainage or proximity.

Strategies

- Add a full-time private lands position to the staff.
- Work with local partners and willing landowners to identify, prioritize, and restore degraded areas in North Park.

Objective

Work with partners to address land health issues throughout Jackson County. Existing partnerships will be maintained and new ones fostered to address landscape issues in Jackson County by 2014.

Strategies

- Continue active refuge participation in the sage grouse working group, North Park wetlands focus group, Owl Mountain partnership, North Park habitat partnership program, and any other group formed with the goals of improving land health and stewardship in Jackson County.
- Partner with the Jackson County weed coordinator to manage and minimize invasive plants on the refuge and throughout Jackson County.
- Effect variations in water diversion flows and/or grazing regimes to enhance habitat conditions.
- Use adaptive management techniques to implement new management ideas.

Rationale

The refuge has the ability and resources available to restore and maintain a productive riparian area for the benefit of wildlife, fisheries, water quality, and a healthy landscape, while also using local agriculture. The streams within the refuge boundaries are a small fragment of those located within Jackson County, Colorado. By working with interested landowners and partners, the possibility exists of expanding the benefits of a healthy riparian zone throughout North Park.

From time-to-time, projects may be proposed within the county by other agencies, non-government organizations, or private landowners, which have a benefit to ecosystem health and wildlife outside the refuge boundary.

To make an off-refuge project succeed, resources normally reserved for refuge purposes such as water or vegetative cover could be used. These would not be long-term commitments of refuge resources, but rather a management decision that a short-term diversion of these resources would better be served to benefit the ecosystem as a whole.

Wetland Habitats

The wetland goal will be met through the objectives and strategies that follow.

Goal

Provide and manage natural and constructed permanent and semipermanent wetlands (in three wetland complexes) to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and associated wetland-dependent wildlife.

Objective

Maintain 10 acres of, and attempt to establish in one other wetland basin, tall (greater than 60 centimeters visual obstruction reading) emergent vegetation in water depths greater than 4 centimeters over a 5-year period, to provide nesting habitat for over-water nesting birds (black-crowned night-heron, white-faced ibis, coot, rail, waterfowl, marsh wrens, and blackbirds).

Strategies

- Manipulate water levels, including drawdowns, and maintain water levels in specific wetlands from spring to fall when possible.
- Develop and apply a plan for transplanting cattail and hardstem bulrush into specific wetlands.
- Develop and use an over-water, nesting-bird monitoring plan.
- Develop and implement an annual water management plan as a component of an overall habitat management plan.

Rationale

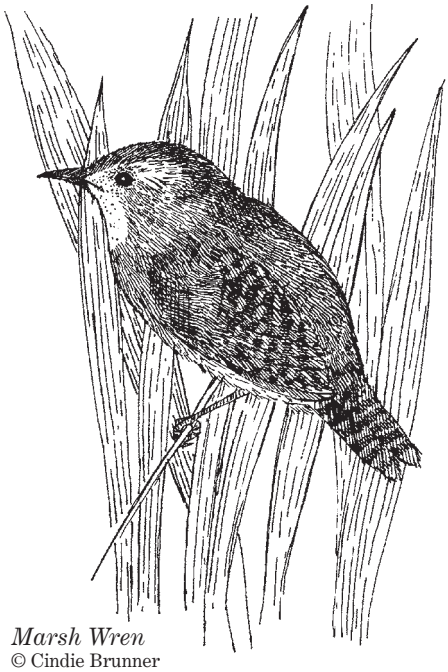
Wetlands with tall, dense vegetation provide a litter layer for use by nesting water birds, as well as flooded emergent litter for macroinvertebrate production.

Manipulation of water levels will contribute to maintaining the existing wetlands with tall emergent vegetation. Transplanting cattail and hardstem bulrush in wetlands with the highest potential for success will help increase the availability of this type of habitat. The criteria

for such wetlands would be based on such things as water control abilities, evaporation rates, and distribution.

Timing of needed drawdowns for expansion of the tall, dense vegetation will be planned in such a way as to get maximum benefit for all wetland objectives such as during shorebird migration or to stimulate submergent, aquatic vegetation beds.

Monitoring water bird species will help assess the level of success for habitat management.



Marsh Wren
© Cindie Brunner

Objective

Provide 10 percent of the wetland acres, over a 5-year average, in short (less than 10 centimeters), sparse (less than 10 centimeters visual obstruction reading) emergent vegetation in water depths less than 4 centimeters, from April to August, to provide foraging habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl, as well as nesting and brood-rearing habitat for shorebirds.

Strategies

- Manipulate water levels, including full and partial drawdowns, and maintain water levels in specific wetlands from spring to fall when possible.
- Use tillage of dry wetlands as a management tool.
- Rehabilitate and maintain dikes and infrastructures.
- Conduct shorebird surveys.
- Monitor monthly wetland bird use.
- Develop and apply a wetland emergent and submergent vegetation-monitoring plan.
- Develop and implement an annual water management plan as a component of an overall habitat management plan.

Objective

Provide 20 percent of the wetland acres, over a 5-year average, of emergent vegetation greater than 25 centimeters tall with visual obstruction reading greater than 80 percent of vegetation height in water depths 4–18 centimeters, to provide escape cover and foraging habitat for dabbling duck broods and molting ducks, and foraging habitat for water birds.

Strategies

- Manipulate water levels, including full and partial drawdowns, and maintain water levels in wetlands from spring to fall when water is available and conditions are appropriate.
- Use tillage of dry wetlands as a management tool.
- Rehabilitate and maintain dikes and infrastructures.
- Conduct waterfowl surveys.
- Monitor monthly wetland bird use.
- Develop and apply a wetland, emergent and submergent vegetation-monitoring plan.
- Develop and implement an annual water management plan as a component of an overall habitat management plan.

Rationale

The availability of a variety of wetland habitat conditions may benefit a greater diversity of wildlife species and support species for longer periods in their annual life cycle.

The above two objectives contribute to habitats—varying from shallowly flooded, short, sparse emergents to both shallow water and moderately dense cover. Water manipulation techniques including drawdowns and back flooding can be used to create these conditions.

Monitoring to evaluate the response of the flora and fauna will indicate success of management techniques.

Short-term variations of habitat objectives may be considered, on a case-by-case basis, to promote other important ecosystem projects within North Park.

Objective

Provide 10–20 percent of wetland acres within each wetland complex, over a 5-year average, with 70-percent coverage of submergent, aquatic vegetation species (pondweed and widgeongrass) in wetlands of greater than 18 centimeters water depth, to provide invertebrates and seed sources for foraging water birds, especially waterfowl broods, and escape cover for diving ducks.

Strategies

- Manipulate water levels, including full and partial drawdowns, and maintain water levels in wetlands from spring to fall when water is available and conditions are appropriate.
- Use tillage of dry wetlands as a management tool.
- Rehabilitate and maintain dikes and infrastructures.
- Conduct waterfowl surveys and brood counts.
- Monitor monthly wetland bird use.
- Develop and apply a wetland, submergent vegetation-monitoring plan.
- Develop and implement an annual water management plan as a component of an overall habitat management plan.

Rationale

Submergent vegetation provides complex structure for macroinvertebrate production and a seed source for foraging water birds.

Pondweed and widgeongrass both produce a food resource (plant foods and invertebrates) for waterfowl and broods. These submergents are used by other wetland birds for nesting, foraging, and escape habitat.

A variety of drawdown schedules and tillage are used to enhance the growth of these plants. Monitoring the responses of plant and wildlife will gauge the level of success in providing this habitat.

Objective

Enhance the existing private lands program to encourage creation and restoration of wetlands in North Park and surrounding areas through funding and technical assistance by 2009, to accomplish the same objectives as on the refuge.

Strategies

- Obtain funding and full-time equivalency for a Partners for Fish and Wildlife position.
- Work with willing stakeholders to create and restore wetlands in North Park.
- Develop a plan to identify wetland habitats throughout North Park.
- Consider wetland development opportunities as they become available.
- Continue participation in the North Park wetland focus group.
- Establish a monitoring plan for created habitats to ensure benefits are realized.

Rationale

Since the refuge is only part of the total North Park landscape efforts, to look beyond the boundaries is important in an ecosystem approach. Many wetland potentials exist in North Park, and working to restore or create these wetlands will benefit not only wildlife, but society as well.

To achieve the most positive results, priority projects will be close to existing wetland complexes, reasonably well-functioning river segments, or larger reservoirs.

Wetland management would mimic above refuge objectives when possible. Work would be completed with the help of others to identify wetland habitats throughout North Park, in partnership with willing stakeholders to restore, protect, and improve wetland habitats for wildlife use.

Demonstration areas would be set up for the practice of sound, wetland habitat management and water levels in wetlands would be improved from spring to fall when possible.

Meadow Habitats

The meadow goal will be met through the objectives and strategies that follow.

Goal

Provide and manage irrigated, grassland-dominated meadows historically developed for hay production, to support sage grouse broods, waterfowl nesting, and meadow-dependent migratory birds.

Detailed habitat rationale is described in appendix H.

Objective

Provide 20–50 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native plants (rushes, sedges, grasses, and forbs) characterized by less than 20 centimeters height, less than 10 centimeters visual obstruction reading, with dry to moist soils (no standing water), adjacent to (within 50 meters) or intermingled with sagebrush (10- to 25-percent sage canopy cover), from early-June to late-July, to benefit sage grouse broods.

Strategies

- Use grazing, resting, and burning practices to stimulate or maintain meadow conditions.
- Irrigate areas, as water is available, to help stimulate vegetative growth.
- Develop a vegetation-monitoring protocol.
- Develop a wildlife-monitoring plan that correlates wildlife use and habitat condition.
- In partnership with the Jackson County weed coordinator, develop an integrated pest management plan for the refuge.

Objective

Provide 1,650–1,850 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native species (grasses, sedges, forbs, and rushes) characterized by 10–30 centimeters visual obstruction reading, 0–10 centimeters duff layer, and minimal (less than 5-percent) bare ground from mid-April to the end of July, to benefit nesting waterfowl (gadwall, northern shoveler, northern pintail, and green-winged teal) and sage grouse broods.

Strategies

- Use grazing, resting, and burning practices to stimulate or maintain meadow conditions.
- Irrigate areas, as water is available, to help stimulate vegetative growth.
- Develop a vegetation-monitoring protocol.
- Develop a wildlife-monitoring plan that correlates wildlife use and habitat condition.
- In partnership with the Jackson County weed coordinator, develop an integrated pest management plan for the refuge.

Rationale

This grass-forb mix requires periodic manipulation to achieve the stated ranges of the objective. The combination of resting, grazing, and burning, combined with irrigation, where available and practical, are the best tools to accomplish this.

It is anticipated that, on average, one-third to two-thirds of this area will require grazing at an average rate of 0.4–1.0 AUMs per acre, resulting in the removal of approximately 950–2,100 AUMs of forage.

Vegetative monitoring, combined with wildlife use data, will be needed to document that objective levels are achieved, and whether or not objectives are correct.

Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel
© Cindie Brunner

Objective

Provide 630–790 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native plants (grasses, sedges, forbs, and rushes) characterized by greater than 30 centimeters visual obstruction reading, 10–20 centimeters duff layer, and minimal (less than 5-percent) bare ground, to benefit nesting waterfowl (mallard, gadwall, northern pintail, and scaup) and songbirds (savannah sparrow and meadowlark).

Strategies

- Use grazing, resting, and burning practices to stimulate or maintain meadow conditions.
- Irrigate areas, as water is available, to help stimulate vegetative growth.
- Working with partners, develop a vegetation-monitoring protocol.
- Working with partners, develop a wildlife-monitoring plan that correlates wildlife use and habitat condition.
- In partnership with the Jackson County weed coordinator, develop an integrated pest management plan for the refuge.

Rationale

This grass-forb mix requires periodic manipulation to achieve the stated ranges of the objective. The combination of resting, grazing, and burning, combined with irrigation, where available and practical, are the best tools to accomplish this. To meet and maintain the taller vegetation and duff layers specified, it is anticipated that rest will be used more for this objective.

It is anticipated that, on average, one-third to one-half of this area will require grazing at an average rate of 0.4–1.0 AUMs per acre, resulting in the removal of approximately 350–700 AUMs of forage.

Vegetative monitoring, combined with wildlife use data, will be needed to document that objective levels are achieved and whether results support species requirements.

Objective

Short-term variations of habitat objectives may be considered on a case-by-case basis for important ecosystem projects within North Park. Identification of these variations will be assessed every 5 years.

Strategies

- Work with partners to identify potential projects in the county.
- Implement variations in water diversion, grazing regimes, and other refuge management strategies as deemed appropriate.

Rationale

From time-to-time, projects may be proposed within the county by other agencies, non-government organizations, or private landowners, which have a benefit to ecosystem health and wildlife outside of the refuge boundary.

Resources normally reserved for refuge purposes such as water or vegetative cover could be used occasionally to help make a project successful. These would not be long-term commitments of resources, but rather a cooperative management decision that a short-term diversion of these resources would better be served to benefit the ecosystem as a whole.

Objective

Establish a private lands program to provide funding and technical assistance to encourage wildlife-compatible land management practices in meadow habitats by 2009, to accomplish objectives similar to those of the refuge.

Strategies

- Add a full-time private lands position to the staff.
- Work with local partners and willing landowners to identify, prioritize, and restore degraded areas and create new wildlife habitat in North Park.

Objective

Work with partners to address land health issues throughout Jackson County. Existing partnerships will be maintained and new ones fostered to address landscape issues in the county by 2014.

Strategies

- Continue active refuge participation in the sage grouse working group, North Park wetlands focus group, Owl Mountain partnership, North Park habitat partnership program, and any other group formed with the goals of improving land health and stewardship in Jackson County.
- Partner with the Jackson County weed coordinator to manage and minimize invasive plants on the refuge.

Rationale

The refuge has the ability and resources available to maintain productive meadows for the benefit of wildlife, water quality, and a healthy landscape, while also using local agriculture.

There are thousands of acres of private hay meadows in the country managed very much like the refuge's meadows, with the exception that the refuge does not cut hay.

This results in a significant amount of meadow habitat being created annually on private land that may, or may not, meet its wildlife-production potential depending on site-specific management.

By working with interested landowners and partners, the possibility exists of expanding the wildlife benefit of meadows on the refuge and maintaining the benefits that are occurring off-refuge.

Columbine
© Cindie Brunner

Upland Habitats

The uplands goal will be met through the objectives and strategies that follow.

Goal

Provide a sagebrush/grassland upland community representative of the historical flora and fauna in a high valley of the southern Rocky Mountains to provide habitat for sage grouse, large mammals, and other shrub-associated species.

Detailed habitat rationale is described in appendix H.

Objective

Provide 2,000 acres, over a 5-year average, of uplands composed of shrubs (greater than 70-percent sage) greater than 25 centimeters height and 20- to 30-percent canopy cover, greater than 20-percent grass cover, and greater than 10-percent forbs (native species preferred), to benefit sage grouse, vesper sparrow, Brewer's sparrow, elk, and pronghorn.

Strategies

- Complete a sagebrush/grassland upland habitat inventory.
- Use cattle grazing at varying stock rates, seasons, and intensities as a management tool.
- Use rest of varying lengths of time as a management tool.
- Develop and implement an integrated pest management plan.
- Use a variety of mechanical treatments of the habitat as a management tool.
- Develop and implement a vegetation-monitoring plan.
- Develop and implement a wildlife-monitoring program.

Objective

Provide 2,000 acres, over a 5-year average, of uplands composed of shrubs (greater than 70-percent sage) greater than 40 centimeters height and greater than 30-percent canopy cover, less than 20-percent grass cover, and greater than 5-percent forbs (native species preferred), to benefit Brewer's sparrow, sage thrasher, and pronghorn.

Strategies

- Complete a sagebrush/grassland upland habitat inventory.
- Use cattle grazing at varying stock rates, seasons, and intensities as a management tool.
- Use rest of varying lengths of time as a management tool.
- Develop and implement an integrated pest management plan.
- Use a variety of mechanical treatments of the habitat as a management tool.
- Develop and implement a vegetation-monitoring plan.
- Develop and implement a wildlife-monitoring program.
- In partnership with the Jackson County weed coordinator, develop an integrated pest management plan for the refuge.

Rationale

The refuge has five primary range sites that support sagebrush/grassland uplands. The 2,000 acres of each of the above objectives are scattered within several of these range types and intermingled with meadow areas. A completed inventory of uplands will assist in specifically defining these areas.

Sagebrush/grassland uplands in a mosaic of patchy sagebrush, with openings of grasses and forbs across the landscape, reflect the needs of most wildlife species. Moderate livestock grazing ranging from 0.05 to 0.15 AUM per acre in intensity, combined with rest, will help maintain these acres. This rest-rotational coverage will promote plant diversity, nutrient cycling, and cover.

Controlling or eliminating invasive plants that reduce the abundance and diversity of native forbs in the sagebrush/grassland habitats is important. Mechanical treatments will be considered for small areas to increase grass and forb components of the site.

Monitoring the response of the flora and fauna will aid in assessing the success of the tools applied and help improve these methods.

Objective

Manage the remaining 10,225 acres of sagebrush/grassland uplands based on a better understanding of refuge habitats, wildlife usage, and affected variables using best management practices by 2014.

Strategies

- Complete an upland habitat inventory, if financial resources are available.
- Conduct research and monitor outcomes of upland habitats over the next 15 years.
- Develop habitat-based goals and objectives for the remaining uplands (10,000 acres).

- Use cattle grazing at varying stock rates, seasons, and intensities as a management tool.
- Use rest of varying lengths of time as a management tool.
- Develop and implement an integrated pest management plan.
- Use a variety of mechanical treatments of the habitat as a management tool.
- Develop and implement a program for prescribed fire.
- Coordinate with existing projects, research, and monitoring efforts in the area.
- Short-term variations of habitat objectives may be considered on a case-by-case basis for important ecosystem projects within North Park.

Rationale

In an effort to manage the sagebrush/grassland uplands, an inventory of what the refuge has is essential. A variety of tools is available to provide a structurally diverse shrub community, with a grass-forb component, to support migratory birds and other wildlife species.

Livestock grazing used in moderation at rates ranging from 0.05 to 0.15 AUM per acre will be used. It is anticipated that approximately one-third to one-half of the uplands will be grazed annually, resulting in 450–1,200 AUMs of forage being removed.

Rest also needs to be used in moderation; too much rest can result in dominate brush communities that prevent herbaceous species from recovering. Grazing, used in conjunction with rest, can enhance the nutrient cycles, plant regrowth, and plant community diversity.

Efforts to control or eradicate invasive plants will help maintain the diversity of plant life required to provide wildlife habitat needs. Mechanical treatments break up the soil and remove a variable percent of the brush species, depending on the coverage, to promote grasses and forbs growth.

Historically, frequencies of fire in the upland were low and occurred as small, patchy fires. Prescribed fire may be beneficial in some upland sites to control dense stands of sagebrush so that herbaceous species can increase.

The use of other upland habitat projects in the area with range types similar to the refuge will help to identify successful methods for manipulating habitat to reach objectives.

A portion of these sagebrush/grassland upland acres will be used to establish research plots to get a better understanding of how to increase sage height and grass/forb abundance to benefit nesting and wintering sage grouse, songbirds (vesper sparrow, sage thrasher, Brewer's sparrow, and Swainson's hawk) and pronghorn. This information will focus on the tools that might get more upland acreage into the first two objectives.

In working with the entire North Park landscape, some habitat objectives may change to accommodate actions deemed essential elsewhere in the upland habitats of North Park to improve the overall quality of wildlife habitat.

Objective

Manage known populations of North Park phacelia to ensure its continued existence.

Strategies

- Initiate research to understand the plant's life history and develop a management plan.
- Develop a monitoring plan for the existing and new phacelia populations.
- Work with other entities to preserve North Park phacelia populations throughout North Park.

Rationale

The North Park phacelia is the only known federally listed endangered plant species on the refuge. The plant is only found in North Park, with several scattered populations. Only two known populations of the plant exist on refuge lands. Little is known about its life history, so management is limited.

Research on the life history of the plant is essential. As part of a partnership approach, information and management techniques will be shared to help ensure the continued existence of the phacelia and eventually the down-listing of the species.

Cultural Resources

The cultural resources goal will be met through the objectives and strategies that follow.

Goal

The cultural resources of the refuge are preserved, protected, and interpreted for the benefit of present and future generations.

Objective

Identify cultural resources and protect them from degradation by 2014.

Strategies

- Complete a cultural resources survey, as needed, for management purposes.
- Determine National Register of Historic Places status for the Hampton, Allard, and Case Barns.
- Protect cultural resources by minimizing disturbance in sensitive areas.
- When possible, preserve historical records by conducting oral interviews with local residents.
- Apply for monies such as grants and maintenance management funds to restore and preserve the Case Barn.
- Support provisions within the Archaeological Resources Protection Act by developing a plan for managing refuge archaeological resources.

Objective

Encourage protection of cultural resources and interpretation of their importance to North Park wildlife resources by 2014.

Strategies

- Determine the historical status of Hampton Barn; make a decision to keep or eliminate the barn.
- Interpret the history of North Park at the Brocker Overlook.
- Develop an interpretive area within the headquarters building that demonstrates the connectivity of the refuge with the remainder of North Park.
- When requested and dependent on available funding, collaborate with other individuals and agencies to protect and preserve cultural resources that relate to wildlife throughout North Park.

Rationale

A broader cultural resource role needs to be described for the refuge. The philosophy is to comply with existing cultural resource-related laws and policies and to protect cultural resources from degradation.

Protection and interpretation of cultural resources that relate to North Park wildlife is encouraged. Interpreting the role of ranches in the preservation of habitat can serve as an example for visitors to learn and gain a greater appreciation for wildlife and their habitats.

Public Use

The 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (P.L. 105-57) requires that each refuge be managed to fulfill the refuge system mission as well as the specific purpose(s) for which the refuge was established.

The Act also declares that compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are legitimate and appropriate priority general public uses of the refuge system.

These six uses (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation) are to receive enhanced consideration in planning and management over all other general public uses of the refuge system.

These activities receive a special focus because they help foster an appreciation and understanding of wildlife and the outdoors.

Wildlife conservation is always the top obligation of national wildlife refuges.

However, when compatible, these wildlife-dependent recreational uses are to be strongly encouraged on refuges.

© William H. Miller

Eared Grebe with Young

Consequently, these six activities are first in line for the refuge's available staff and financial resources.

Although other public uses may be allowed on refuges, the process for considering proposed uses other than priority uses is more stringent and these uses must be reevaluated more frequently.

A compatibility determination is required for a wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other public use of a refuge. A compatible use is one that, in the sound professional judgment of the refuge manager, will not materially interfere with or detract from fulfillment of the refuge system mission or refuge purposes. Compatibility determinations for public uses are found in appendix B.

Arapaho public use opportunities are combined into five categories and include the following:

- hunting
- fishing
- wildlife observation and photography
- environmental education and interpretation
- other uses

Each public use evaluation contains a specific list of objectives, a list of strategies, and a supporting rationale statement.

Everett and Nancy Collin

Wild Rose

Goal

Through wildlife-dependent recreation and education, people of a range of abilities and interests are able to learn of and appreciate the natural resources of this unique high-mountain park. Thereby, citizens become better stewards of nature in their own communities and stronger supporters of the refuge specifically and National Wildlife Refuge System generally.

Hunting

The following objectives and strategies will lead to meeting the overall public use goal.

Objective

Provide recreational hunting opportunities consistent with refuge goals and objectives and that facilitate North Park wildlife management objectives by 2014.

Strategies

- Working with the State, develop a hunting step-down management plan that provides hunting opportunities to meet North Park and refuge objectives.
- Provide a quality hunting experience for a variety of users by separating types of hunting opportunities.
- When compatible, on request, provide special-use permits for hunters with disabilities.

Objective

Work with the State of Colorado in promoting sound hunting practices as a wildlife management tool by 2014.

Strategies

- In partnership with the State of Colorado and North Park Chamber of Commerce, disseminate information about hunting opportunities on the refuge and throughout North Park.
- Provide hunting brochures and information to hunters at the headquarters building.
- Assist Colorado Division of Wildlife off-refuge with law enforcement, hunter recruitment, and hunter education when requested.

Objective

Maintain facilities and improve as necessary by 2014, to provide a quality recreational hunting experience while minimizing resource damage.

Strategies

- Develop parking areas (figure 11–public use) using post and cable methods and minimize resource damage caused by vehicles. Parking areas also provide opportunities to inform the hunting public about rules and regulations.
- Where needed for resource protection, develop permanent gates that can be locked to prevent resource damage.
- Develop a travel management plan that will re-vegetate two-track roads (figure 11–public use) not needed for maintenance, law enforcement, hunting access, or other management purposes.
- Develop a signage plan that enhances public appreciation for the National Wildlife Refuge System, understanding of refuge management activities, public use, and safety.

Rationale

The refuge is part of a larger system of lands known as North Park. Given that many wildlife species in North Park migrate on and off the refuge (waterfowl, elk, mule deer, pronghorn, and sage grouse), the refuge hunting program affects more than just refuge lands.

The key to success is a strong working relationship with sportsmen and sportswomen and with the State of Colorado, along with incorporation of refuge hunting goals and objectives into a step-down management plan for hunting.

Additional hunting opportunities will be determined in conjunction with the refuge objectives, the community, and the state. The refuge will continue to work with the state in promoting sound hunting practices as a wildlife management tool.

Public use facilities may be modified or expanded to include emphasis on hunting, both on the refuge and in North Park. The refuge will engage in

partnerships to disseminate information on hunting opportunities throughout North Park.

The refuge may continue to use habitat management units A, B, and C to provide resting areas for migratory birds, minimize conflicts between hunters and visitors, and distribute hunting pressure. However, the ABC system may be modified during development of a step-down management plan for hunting.

Fishing

The following objectives and strategies will lead to meeting the overall public use goal.

Objective

Where compatible, opportunities for fishing will be provided by 2019, based on refuge goals and objectives.

Strategies

- Encourage fishing opportunities on the refuge in accordance with state seasons and regulations and refuge management objectives. Close fishing during June and July to protect nesting waterfowl and other riparian nesting species.
- Evaluate angler impacts to goals and objectives.
- Work with the state to develop a step-down management plan for sport fishing.

Objective

Where possible, expand fishing opportunities throughout North Park and help promote fishing as a recreational activity by 2014.

Strategies

- Provide fishing information and regulations to visitors when requested.
- When requested, assist the state with fisheries planning issues in North Park.
- Assist the state with law enforcement, fishery management, fisheries sampling, fisheries habitat projects, and spawning throughout North Park when requested.
- In partnership with others, enhance fishery habitats in North Park.
- Monitor Illinois River gauges on the upstream and downstream end of the refuge to evaluate river flows.

Rationale

The above objectives encourage the refuge staff to not only provide sport-fishing opportunities on the Illinois River, but also to develop partnerships with the state and others to improve fishery habitats and promote sport-fishing opportunities throughout North Park.

The Illinois River fishery is influenced by management actions that occur upstream of the refuge. Logically, it is important that the refuge assist when requested with habitat projects that impact the Illinois River upstream of the refuge and when deemed valuable to refuge wildlife resources.

Similarly, habitats throughout North Park are connected through a system of waterways. Refuge efforts to improve aquatic habitats, when requested, benefit all in North Park. The downside to this strategy involves using very limited personnel and resources on areas other than strictly refuge grounds, which may result in refuge goals and objectives being delayed or not being met.

Partnerships are the key to success when funds and personnel are limited. The refuge strives to be included as a partner on fishery-related habitat improvement projects in North Park.

Wildlife Observation and Photography

The following objectives and strategies will lead to meeting the overall public use goal.

Objective

Enhance opportunities for wildlife observation and photography by 2017, based on refuge habitat goals and objectives.

Strategies

- Rebuild Brocker Overlook.
- Construct a multi-use trail from Walden to Brocker Overlook.
- Enhance the auto tour road.
- Maintain the visitor center for distribution of information.
- Keep brochures current with updated information.
- Complete and maintain the boardwalk section of the interpretive nature trail.
- Build a moose observation platform.
- Construct wildlife photography blinds on the auto tour route.
- Establish use limitations for wildlife observation and photography based on habitat goals and objectives.
- Maintain and potentially modify existing facilities to reflect new management strategies.

Rationale

Current visitation to the refuge ranges from 7,000–9,000 visits, with a visit defined as a person crossing the refuge boundary.

Many opportunities to enhance viewing and photography of wildlife while maintaining habitat goals are available. Each strategy should be designed to facilitate a quality experience for the visitor while fulfilling refuge goals and objectives.

Objective

Assist with funding, construction, and program development to enhance wildlife photography and observation in North Park by 2019.

Strategies

- In partnership with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and others, construct and provide observation facilities for moose and other desirable species.
- Pursue funding and partners to assist with the construction of viewing/photography blinds at various other locations in North Park.
- Assist partners with revision of the "Watching Wildlife in North Park" guide.
- Create partnerships with other wildlife-oriented organizations and individuals.

Rationale

Recreation plays a major role in the economy of North Park. Wildlife viewing and photography are key factors in the recreational opportunities available. Enhancing these uses will be beneficial to the economy as well as creating a better understanding of wildlife and its habitats.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

The following objectives and strategies will lead to meeting the overall public use goal.

Objective

Work with partners, including the North Park School District, to provide opportunities and facilities to conduct five environmental education programs per year based on habitat goals and objectives, by 2014.

Strategies

- Work with partners to develop specific environmental education programs covering:
  - —habitat management practices and principles
  - —the natural history of North Park
  - —agriculture and wildlife
  - —the life history of various local species including waterfowl, sage grouse, elk, and moose
  - —North Park and its importance to Colorado waterfowl
  - —how a refuge comes into existence and what its role is
  - —water issues and needs
- Use existing environmental education opportunities as they occur, such as the water carnival, bird banding, refuge field trips, and "Day in the Woods."
- Develop programs for students and volunteers to assist with management tasks.

Objective

Incorporate the refuge and its niche in the North Park landscape in other environmental education and interpretive messages developed in the county by 2014.

Strategies

- In partnership with other land management agencies, non-governmental organizations, local schools, and private individuals, expand the network of environmental education programs and facilities in North Park.
- Hire an outdoor recreation planner to conduct outreach and education activities on the refuge and North Park.
- In partnership with other entities, develop interpretive material involving the land management of North Park to identify the role of the refuge.

Objective

Update interpretive messages to reflect recent wildlife issues and concerns (elk and sage grouse), habitat-based decision-making, and local agricultural uses (how they are not mutually exclusive on or off the refuge), by 2009.

Strategies

- Replace signs on kiosks, overlooks, trails, and visitor center; replace pamphlets; and update the refuge's website to reflect a message of the refuge working for wildlife and county-wide environmental interests.
- Rehabilitate the Case Barn and develop an interpretive site presenting the relationship between the county's ranching history and wildlife.
- Interpret prehistoric cultural resources of the refuge in relation to natural resources found in North Park.

Rationale

The refuge is located almost in the geographic center of North Park. It is known to most residents as a major part of the county landscape, but exactly what the refuge does and how it contributes to that landscape is not fully understood. Similarly, most out-of-county visitors do not understand how the lands surrounding the refuge complement its wildlife-oriented goals.

An outdoor recreation planner position will facilitate integration of environmental education at the refuge and in Jackson County schools. Articulating the history of North Park and how the refuge and the surrounding lands benefit each other will be beneficial to all interests.


USFWS

Wild Iris

Other Uses

The following objectives and strategies will lead to meeting the overall public use goal.

Objective

Encourage compatible, non-wildlife-dependent uses, but limit to less sensitive areas based on habitat goals and objectives by 2009.

Strategies

- Allow walking leashed dogs, horseback riding, and bicycling along designated roads.
- Use law enforcement, signs, information, and brochures to minimize impacts of other non-wildlife-dependent public uses.
- Prepare and implement a travel management plan to minimize vehicle impacts to refuge habitats.

Objective

Consider non-wildlife-dependent public uses and their benefits to North Park and its residents by 2009.

Strategies

- With partners, design and construct the Case Barn interpretive site. Incorporate North Park and refuge history and the preservation of wildlife habitats as a theme in the interpretation.
- Encourage partners to be sensitive to wildlife needs when developing recreational opportunities in North Park.
- Continue to allow the Colorado Department of Transportation to plow snow windbreaks along Highway 125 (appendix B).

Objective

Allow compatible, non-wildlife-dependent uses that support the refuge mission by 2014.

Strategies

- Continue operation of the rifle range to facilitate law enforcement firearms re-qualification for refuge and CDOW officers, and other local law enforcement agencies on request.
- Identify and prioritize non-refuge mineral rights within refuge boundaries.
- Acquire, on a willing-seller basis, priority mineral rights.
- Continue operation of the Allard gravel pit to support both refuge and roads (on-refuge) requirements.

Rationale

Compatible, non-wildlife-dependent uses should be limited to less sensitive areas based on habitat goals and objectives.

The refuge views mineral resource development as having negative impacts on wildlife habitat. Non-federally owned minerals within the refuge boundary must be identified and purchased, on a willing-seller basis, to minimize future resource damage.

The rifle range will continue to operate as it facilitates refuge and North Park law enforcement needs. The travel management plan must meet compatibility determination standards, and facilitate management and public use requirements. The Allard gravel pit supports the refuge and roads (on refuge) and will remain active to support goals and objectives.

Research

The research goal will be met through the objectives and strategies that follow.

Goal

The refuge is a learning platform for compatible research that assists management and augments the science of high-mountain park, sage-steppe communities.

Objective

Identify and promote the biological research needed to help achieve the refuge's habitat goals and objectives by 2009.

Strategies

- Identify and prioritize habitat management research needs.
- Conduct in-house research on priority needs.

- Promote the refuge research needs within the scientific community.
- Encourage research that focuses on the refuge's habitat management goals.

Objective

Identify and promote non-biological research as it relates and contributes to achieving habitat goals and objectives on the refuge and within North Park by 2009.

Strategies

- Identify and prioritize research related to refuge and North Park wildlife in other disciplines' needs.
- Encourage research in non-biological disciplines that facilitates the refuge in achieving goals and objectives.
- Allow and encourage research that focuses on natural resource management goals throughout North Park.

Rationale

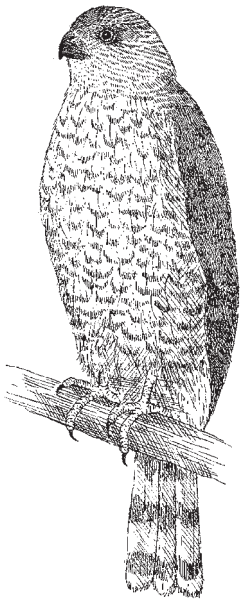
These objectives and strategies focus on identifying and implementing the biological research needs of the refuge and North Park.

Research will focus on achieving the habitat goals and objectives outlined in this plan. Identified research needs can then be promoted within the scientific community and actively encouraged by refuge staff.

Proposed research not falling within the categories identified would generally not be allowed. Conversely, research meeting identified refuge needs could be supported with funding, lodging, equipment sharing, etc.

Disturbance to resident wildlife and habitat is the primary concern.

Limiting non-refuge identified projects will minimize unnecessary disturbance and habitat damage.



Cooper's hawk
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Partnerships

The partnerships goal will be met through the objectives and strategies that follow.

Goal

A wide range of partners joins with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in promoting and implementing the refuge vision.

Objective

The refuge will participate in partnerships that promote sound wildlife management by 2009.

Strategies

- Engage in partnerships that result in wildlife and land-health improvements.
- Participate in the habitat partnership program, Owl Mountain partnership, sage grouse working group, Colorado Wetlands Initiative, Platte/Kansas Rivers ecosystem team, and others to protect, enhance, and restore wildlife habitats.
- Work with partners to achieve goals and objectives.
- Work with the Colorado Historical Society and other partners to restore and rehabilitate the Case Barn interpretive site.
- Develop a conservation easement on Pole Mountain property.
- Work with Colorado Land Trust and others to help acquire lands and mineral rights within the refuge's approved boundaries. Minerals extraction may cause habitat disturbance within the refuge.

Objective

Maintain existing, and form new, partnerships to achieve wildlife-related goals and objectives on the refuge and within North Park by 2009.

Strategies

- Promote new partnerships (consider Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Safari Club International, Audubon, Sierra Club, and others) to assist with achieving the refuge and North Park natural resource goals.
- Strive to develop a refuge "friends" group within 15 years to provide support through outreach and volunteer efforts on a variety of projects.
- Establish a full-time private lands coordinator position stationed at the refuge, to assist in wildlife habitat enhancement throughout North Park.

Rationale

These objectives and strategies describe the potential level of partnership activity that will improve wildlife habitats throughout North Park.

The refuge staff will form partnerships to promote sound wildlife management within and outside the refuge. The refuge will actively participate in partnerships that result in improvements to land health and provide appropriate wildlife habitat in North Park.

The refuge will collaborate with partners on management of critical wildlife habitats in North Park. The private lands position will enable the Service to contribute its biological expertise and resources to private and public landowners when requested.

5 Implementation and Monitoring

5 Implementation and Monitoring

Current staffing at the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge consists of six permanent and four seasonal employees. Additional permanent and seasonal staff will be required to implement the strategies in the comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and effectively monitor the flora and fauna to determine if the goals and objectives in the plan are being met.

The refuge has an annual base budget of $381,700 based on fiscal year 2002 figures. These monies support salaries for six permanent personnel and annual operating expenses for the refuge complex.

The current budget represents the minimum needed to maintain current annual activities. It does not adequately support the complex's habitat management, biological monitoring, maintenance, public use, and education programs, or the complex's facilities and structures.

Projects that have adequate funding and staffing will receive priority for accomplishment. Staffing and funding are requested for the 15-year period of the CCP.

This chapter describes resources and actions needed to carry out this CCP.

- personnel
- funding
- step-down management plans
- partnerships
- monitoring and evaluation
- plan amendment and revision

Personnel

Table 6 shows the current staff and additional, target staff required to fully implement the CCP.

If all positions are funded, the refuge complex's staff will be able to carry out all aspects of this plan. This would provide maximum benefits to wildlife, maximum efficiency, and improved facilities. Full staffing would also provide for increased public use.

Table 6. Current and target staff for Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

	Current Staff	*Target Staff*
Management	Project leader, GS-12 Refuge operations specialist, GS-11	Complex project leader, GS-13 Supervisory refuge operations specialist, GS-12 Refuge operations specialist, GS-9/11* Private lands biologist, GS-9/11
Biology	Wildlife biologist, GS-9/11 Career, seasonal, wildlife biological technician, GS-6 Seasonal biological technicians, GS-4 to GS-5 (3–4 positions)	Complex wildlife biologist, GS-11 Wildlife biologist, GS-9* Career-seasonal, wildlife biological technician, GS-6 Seasonal biological technicians, GS-3 to GS-5 (4–5 positions)* GIS coordinator/data manager, GS-9/11*
Public use		Outdoor recreation planner (dual-function law enforcement), GS-9/11*
Administration	Administrative assistant, GS-8	Administrative officer, GS-9* Administrative assistant, GS-5/6*
Maintenance	Maintenance worker, WG-8	Equipment operator, WG-10 Career-seasonal, maintenance worker (irrigator), WG-8 Career-seasonal, maintenance worker, WG-8*

**Position shared with other stations in Wyoming under management by the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge complex.*

Funding

Projects required to carry out the CCP are listed in appendices K and L, which display funding needs through two different systems.

- The refuge operations needs system (RONS) documents requests to Congress for funding and staffing needed to carry out projects above the existing base budget. Amounts shown include a start-up cost for each program, along with yearly costs that are significantly less.
- The maintenance management system (MMS) documents the equipment, buildings, and other property that require repair or replacement.

All of the RONS projects in appendix K directly support the implementation of the CCP. Table 7 is a summary of funding for these projects.

Table 7. Overall funding needs for Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Expense	*Start-up Needs*	*Annual Needs*
Personnel	$792,000	$430,000
Facilities	$541,000	$ 0
Habitat projects	$192,000	$ 36,000
Research/studies	$383,000	$ 10,000

Other funding needs include the maintenance or replacement of existing equipment and facilities. In the past, the complex has had a large backlog of these funding needs. However, in recent years, much of the funding has been provided to eliminate a large number of the backlog projects.

Table 8 lists the remaining needs required to carry out the CCP and maintain structures and equipment to a safe, productive standard for the 15 years of the plan.

Table 8. Funding needs for facilities, equipment, and maintenance at Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Expense	*Cost*
Water-control structures and dikes	$ 146,000
Road, gates, and fences	$2,341,000
Buildings and facilities	$ 516,000
Public use facilities	$ 276,000
Equipment	$ 531,000
Vehicles	$ 60,000

A list of the top 18 maintenance priorities is located in the MMS table in appendix L.

The remaining MMS projects do not directly affect CCP implementation and were not included in this plan. These were mostly projects that were required to be included in the MMS, such as equipment and vehicle replacement, for an additional $1,964,000 in funding.

Step-down Management Plans

Managers in the Service have traditionally used the refuge manual to guide field-station management. Policy in the manual provides direction for developing a wide variety of plans that are used to prepare annual work schedules, budgets, and public use and land management actions.

The CCP is a broad umbrella plan that provides the following:

- general concepts and specific wildlife, habitat, endangered species, public use and partnership objectives
- examples of strategies that might be used to complete the objectives

The purpose of step-down management plans is to provide detail to the managers and employees who will implement the strategies described in the CCP.

Through the guidance provided in the CCP, refuge staff will revise or develop several step-down management plans to be carried out over the next 15 years.

Step-down management plans to be revised or developed include the following:

- habitat management plan
- public use plan
- fisheries management plan
- Illinois River rehabilitation plan
- integrated pest management plan
- archaeological resources protection plan
- hunting management plan
- water management plan
- fire management plan
- habitat monitoring plan
- wildlife monitoring plan
- station safety plan

Partnerships

Partnerships are an integral part of existing refuge management and are the key to successful management in the future.

The refuge is not an ecosystem, rather it represents merely an island of wildlife habitat. The refuge is dependent on wildlife and habitats provided by

other land managers throughout North Park and the central flyway.

> *The refuge is not sustainable alone; in fact, it is dependent on other habitats and lands that surround it to be functional, and by itself may serve little wildlife value.* —Dr. Richard Knight

The CCP strives to recognize this connection to, and dependence on, other lands. Past and current agricultural practices have provided benefits for wildlife in North Park.

The livelihood of ranchers largely has been dependent on maintaining a healthy plant community. As a result, many plant and wildlife species have benefited from these practices. Ranching has impeded urban development that adversely affects natural communities. Ranchers are one of the land stewards that have protected and preserved wildlife habitats for the past 125 years. Sustainable ranching is one key to continued protection of North Park natural resources.

The refuge will cooperate and develop partnerships with other land managers in North Park to improve wildlife habitats. The refuge has identified a new, private-lands coordinator position within the CCP to facilitate partnerships.

The CCP recommends that short-term variations in management be considered to accommodate other wildlife-related projects within North Park. For example, the refuge would consider allowing additional grazing AUMs to accommodate a 2-year rest following Dixie harrow treatment on adjacent Bureau of Land Management lands. The downside to this approach is that the refuge will achieve its habitat objectives at a slower pace because resources are diverted away from refuge lands. However, the benefits of combining refuge resources with other land managers will result in improved land health for North Park and the refuge.

Additionally, the CCP encourages other partners to join habitat improvement efforts. Through partnerships, the refuge will serve as a demonstration site for sound, land management practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring is essential to successful implementation of the CCP.

- The new habitat-based goals and objectives will change the past monitoring practices.
- Vegetative community function and structure will drive management actions.
- Adaptive management will be used to incorporate new information into existing monitoring techniques.
- Periodic evaluations of vegetation community progress will be used to direct future management strategies.

Monitoring strategies were evaluated and are included in this plan.

- All habitat management activities will be monitored to assess whether the desired effect on wildlife and habitat components has been achieved.
- Baseline surveys will continue for waterfowl, big game, and small-game species.
- Baseline surveys will be conducted for wildlife species for which existing or historical numbers and occurrence is not well known.
- It is also important to conduct studies that monitor wildlife response to increased public use (multi-use trail and moose overlook) to assess impacts of these activities on wildlife.

Required step-down management plans that have been identified will further refine monitoring, methods, techniques, and locations. Additionally, the step-down plan will identify how, when, and who will conduct the monitoring.

Habitat monitoring methods and frequency are being developed cooperatively with wildlife researchers within the U.S. Geological Survey. Evaluation of those methods will occur periodically, and the refuge will consult with U.S. Geological Survey, universities, and other professionals to ensure proper data collection and analysis.

Wildlife research will be encouraged at the refuge. The staff will actively pursue research opportunities, especially those that advance understanding or answer questions related to

refuge management. Research that enhances monitoring (techniques or data analysis) will be encouraged.

The staff will work with researchers to ensure that the studies are applicable and compatible with refuge objectives. Research that does not relate to refuge goals and objectives will be discouraged.

Goals, objectives, and strategies are identified in the CCP. Periodic reviews (a minimum of every 5 years) will ensure goals and objectives are being met. Monitoring and evaluation will be an important part of this process.

Plan Amendment and Revision

The CCP will guide management on the refuge for the next 15 years.

This CCP is signed by the Service's Region 6 director, and provides regional direction to the station project leader.

The project leader at the station will review the CCP every 5 years to determine if it needs revision. In the case of severe circumstances, the project leader has the authority to modify management actions to respond appropriately. The plan will be revised no later than 2018.

6 Socioeconomic Analysis

6 Socioeconomic Analysis

The U.S. Geological Survey's biological resources division (BRD) prepared a socioeconomic study during the comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) process. The entire study "Regional Economic Effects of Current and Proposed Management Alternatives for Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge" is included in the draft CCP and environmental assessment.

The following summary of the study focuses on the economic effects estimated to result during implementation of this CCP.

Table 9 summarizes the economic analysis for the CCP.

- Under current management, economic activity directly related to all refuge operations would generate an estimated 14.7 jobs and $458,634 in Jackson County.
- Including direct, indirect, and induced effects, refuge activities would account for 20.7 jobs and $570,106 in personal income in Jackson County.
- Current refuge management activities account for 1.8 percent of county employment.

Table 9. Summary of the economic analysis for the comprehensive conservation plan, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Effects	*Total Staffing and Budgeting Impacts*	*Grazing Activities*	*Recreational Activities*	*Aggregate Impacts*
Direct Effects				
Annual income	$736,625	$24,407 to $67,780	$29,918	$790,950 to $834,323
Jobs	18.2	1.2 to 3.4	2.1	21.5 to 23.7
Total Effects				
Annual income	$811,883	$47,518 to $131,959	$39,308	$898,709 to $983,150
Jobs	22.4	2.5 to 6.9	2.5	27.4 to 31.8
% of County Employment	2.4 to 2.8			

Table 10 summarizes the estimated economic effects for carrying out this plan.

Under current management, economic activity directly related to all refuge operations would generate an estimated 14.7 jobs and $458,634 in Jackson County.

Including direct, indirect, and induced effects, refuge activities would account for 20.7 jobs and $570,106 in personal income in Jackson County.

Current refuge management activities account for 1.8 percent of county employment.

Further background information used for this analysis is summarized in the following descriptions of the socioeconomic setting and expected economic impacts.

Table 10. Summary of the economic effects associated with the comprehensive conservation plan, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Effects	*Total Staffing and Budgeting Impacts*	*Grazing Activities*	*Aggregate Impacts*
Direct Effects			
Income ($/year)	+$375,689	$0 to -$43,373	+$332,316 to +$375,689
Jobs	+9.0	0 to -2.2	+6.8 to +9.0
Total Effects			
Income ($/year)	+$413,044	$0 to -$84,441	+$328,603 to +$413,044
Jobs	+11.1	0 to -4.4	+6.7 to +11.1

Socioeconomic Setting

Walden, neighboring Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge to the north, is an historic mountain town established in the 1800s with a strong ranching heritage. Its business community provides most of the essential goods and services, however county residents must travel to bigger cities to purchase larger durable goods (e.g., cars and major appliances) and specialty items.

For this analysis, a region (and its economy) was defined as all counties within a 30- to 60-mile radius of the impact area. Only spending that took place within this local area was included as stimulating the changes in economic activity. The size of the region influenced both the amount of spending captured and the multiplier effects. Based on the relative self-containment in terms of retail trade and distance of Walden, Jackson County was assumed to comprise the economic region for this analysis.

Population

The 2000 census estimated Jackson County's population at 1,577 persons (U.S. Census Bureau). More than 900 of the county's residents reside in Walden, leaving more than a million acres inhabited by less than 700 people (Town of Walden 2001).

While Colorado experienced a 30.6-percent population increase from 1990–2000, Jackson County's population decreased 1.7 percent over the same period. In 2000, the population per square mile in Jackson County averaged one person, while the state's average was 41.5 persons.

The 2000 census reported the make-up of the county population as follows:

- 6.5 percent are persons of Hispanic or Latino origin
- 92.1 percent are persons of white (not Hispanic or Latino) origin
- 0.3 percent are black or African American persons
- 0.8 percent are American Indian and Alaska Native persons
- 0.1 percent are Asian persons

Fifty-seven percent of the county population 25 years and older were high school graduates, and 11 percent were college graduates (U.S. Census Bureau).

Employment

According to the Town of Walden (2001), employment in Jackson County is starting to rebound since the closure of the lumber mill in 1994. Ranching, retail trade, government, timbering, mining, support services, and recreation are major employers. Major exports include livestock, native mountain hay, timber, oil, and carbon dioxide (Town of Walden 2001).

Local and state employment is shown in table 11. In 2000, 60.6 percent of county jobs were in private wage and salary employment (i.e., people who work for someone else) as compared to 85.6 percent for the State of Colorado. Self-employment in Jackson County accounted for the remaining 39 percent of county jobs and grew by 92 percent from 1970 to 1997 (Morton 2000).

Table 11. Employment for Jackson County and Colorado, 2000

	Jackson County		*State of Colorado*	
Industry	*Number of Jobs*	*Percent of County Total*	*Number of Jobs*	*Percent of State Total*
Total farm	245	21.6	44,406	1.5
Total non-farm	889	78.4	2,916,514	98.5
Private	687	60.6	2,534,168	85.6
Agricultural services, forestry, and fishing	(D)	—	39,364	1.3
Mining	(D)	—	22,634	0.8
Construction	108	9.5	226,475	7.6
Manufacturing	56	4.9	217,473	7.3
Transportation and utilities	57	5.0	162,241	5.5
Wholesale trade	(D)	—	121,306	4.1
Retail trade	148	13.1	493,168	16.7
Insurance and real estate	(D)	—	304,660	10.3
Services	192	16.9	946,847	32.0
Government	202	17.8	382,346	12.9

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2002.
(D) Not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information, but the estimates for this are included in the total.

According to the Town of Walden (2001), while more than two-thirds of employment is in agriculture, only one-fifth of the county's income is generated by agriculture. Agricultural-related income (includes farming and agricultural services) fell from 35 percent of total, county personal income in 1973 to just 8 percent of total personal income in 1997 (Morton 2000). Table 12 displays personal income for Jackson County and Colorado.

Tourism and construction have started to play larger roles in the county's economy (Town of Walden 2001). Most of these jobs are found in the retail trade (supplies, souvenirs, restaurants, and grocery stores) and service (hotels, gas stations, amusement, and recreation activities) sectors in an economy.

In 1999, tourism-related jobs (mostly hunting) provided almost 17 percent of county employment and 12 percent of total income (Seidl and Garner 2001).

According to Colorado Department of Local Affairs (2001), traditional tourism is transitioning to second-home tourism where more affluent visitors and retirees are purchasing seasonal homes in Colorado mountain communities.

In 1999, retirees and tourism combined provided almost 30 percent of county employment and more than 50 percent of total base income (Seidl and Garner 2001).

Table 12. Personal income for Jackson County and Colorado, 2000

Area	*Personal Income*	*Non-farm Personal Income*	*Farm Personal Income*	*Per Capita Personal Income*
Jackson County	$32,567,000	$32,713,000	-$146,000	$20,612
State of Colorado	$140,224,394,000	$139,579,510,000	$664,884,000	$32,434

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2002.

Expected Economic Impacts

Economic impacts are typically measured in terms of number of jobs lost or gained, and the associated result on income. Economic input-output models are commonly used to determine how economic sectors will and will not be affected by demographic, economic, and policy changes.

The economic impacts of the implementing the CCP were estimated using IMPLAN, a regional input-output modeling system developed by the USDA Forest Service (Olson and Lindall 1996).

Refuge Jobs and Income

Refuge administration and activities generate 11.3 jobs and $398,839 in personal income in Jackson County and account for 1 percent of total employment in the county.

Current staffing at the refuge consists of six permanent and four seasonal employees, accounting for an annual payroll (including salaries and benefits) of $392,543 in 2002.

In addition to providing salaries and benefits, the refuge purchased goods and services totaling $105,207 in 2002, approximately 60 percent of which was spent locally in the Jackson County economy.

Additional annual funding needed for the target staff organization (see table 6 in chapter 5) is anticipated to cost $430,000. Additional, non-salary expenditures are estimated to cost $46,000 annually($36,000 for habitat projects and $10,000 for research and studies). It is assumed that approximately 60 percent of non-salary expenditures will still be spent locally in the Jackson County economy (table 13).

Table 13. Annual expenditures for Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Salary	*Non-salary*	*Total*
$822,543	$151,207	$973,750

Because of the way industries interact in an economy, a change in the activity of one industry affects activity levels in several other industries. For example, an increase in funding could have the following effects.

- The refuge could start new projects or hire additional staff members.
  —This added revenue would directly flow to the businesses from which the refuge purchases goods and services and to the new refuge employees.
  —As additional supplies are purchased or as new staff members spend their salaries within the community, local businesses would purchase extra labor and supplies to meet the increase in demand for additional services.

—The income and employment resulting from refuge purchases and refuge employees' spending of salaries locally represents the direct effects of refuge management activities within Jackson County.

- To increase supplies to local businesses, input suppliers must also increase their purchases of inputs from other industries.
  —The income and employment resulting from these secondary purchases by input suppliers are the indirect effects of refuge management activities within the county.
  —The input supplier's new employees use their incomes to purchase goods and services.
  —The resulting increased economic activity from new employee income is the induced effect of visitor spending.

The sums of the direct, indirect, and induced effects describe the total economic effect of refuge management activities in Jackson County (table 14).

Table 14. Combined refuge personnel and non-salary expenditures in Jackson County, Colorado

Effects	*Current Management*	*Target Management*
Direct Effects		
Annual income	$360,936	$736,625
Jobs	9.2	18.2
Indirect and Induced Effects		
Annual income	$37,903	$75,258
Jobs	2.1	4.2
Total Effects		
Annual income	$398,839	$811,883
Jobs	11.3	22.4
% of County Employment	1.0	2.0

Grazing Activities

According to the 1997 census of agriculture (U.S. Census Bureau), there were 126 ranches in Jackson County, totaling 477,063 acres (46 percent of the county area). Seventy percent of the operators listed ranching as their principal occupation, while 30 percent listed ranching as a secondary occupation.

Jackson County's cattle and calf inventory numbered 47,683, with 26,549 cattle and calves sold in 1997 (U.S. Census Bureau). Livestock production accounted for $12.3 million in sales (88 percent of all ranch product sales) in Jackson County in 1997.

Jackson County had 364,255 acres of total pasture land in 1997. Of the 126 ranches in the county in 1997, 69 ranches (55 percent) held public grazing permits with at least one federal agency. The Bureau of Land Management accounted for most of these permits followed by the USDA Forest Service (U.S. Census Bureau).

Pastures on Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge currently lease for cattle grazing to six local permittees, accounting for 2.9–4.7 percent of the total grazing capacity in the county.

The current average grazing level of 8,470 animal unit months (AUMs) converts to an average of 1,738 head per month on the refuge during the typical grazing season (averaging 4.5 months).

The sales associated with the current level of head grazed on the refuge account for an estimated 3.4 jobs and $67,780 in labor income in the range-fed cattle industry and 6.9 jobs (0.61 percent of county employment) and $131,959 in labor income throughout the county.

This CCP estimates the same range in grazing number reductions from the 1996–2001 average base levels. It anticipates a range of grazing numbers from 3,050 to 7,650 AUMs annually, representing approximately a 10- to 64-percent reduction from the 1996–2001 average.

- For a 10-percent reduction in grazing, 7,650 AUMs would be allowed on the refuge, supporting 1,570 head for 4.5 months. This reduction of 168 head would result in a revenue loss of $46,933. There would be a decrease of less than 1 job (0.3) and $6,562 in labor income in the range-fed cattle industry. It would have an impact of less than 1 job (0.6) and a decrease of $12,775 in labor income throughout Jackson County.
- For a 64-percent reduction in grazing, 3,050 AUMs would be allowed on the refuge, supporting 626 head for 4.5 months. This reduction of 1,112 head would result in a revenue loss of $310,213. There would be a decrease of 2.2 jobs and $43,373 in labor income in the range-fed cattle industry. It would decrease countywide employment by 4.4 jobs (-0.39-percent of county employment) and labor income by $84,441.

Under this CCP, it is anticipated the permittees will be able to depend on the refuge for a portion of their operations. While most of the permittees transfer to private land, it may be that permittees with high dependence on the refuge as part of their operation would have to cut production.

Recreational Activities

The abundance of recreational opportunities on federal and state lands makes Jackson County a popular recreation and tourism destination. Besides

the refuge, this county is home to the following areas:

- Mount Zirkel, Never Summer, Rawah, and North Platte River Wilderness Areas
- Sand Hills Recreation Area
- Routt National Forest
- Colorado State Forest
- More than 180,000 acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management
- Numerous state wildlife areas, including one of two gold medal trout lakes

These lands have many diverse uses including, recreation, wildlife management, livestock grazing, woodland products, and mineral resources. The Federal and State Governments manage 64 percent of Jackson County's land area (table 15). The refuge accounts for 2.4 percent of the county's land area and 4.6 percent of county land managed by the Federal Government.

The refuge offers visitors a variety of recreation opportunities including wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation. Table 16 displays the activities, estimated number of refuge visitors, and estimated daily expenditures related to use of the refuge.

Tourists usually buy a wide range of goods and services while visiting an area. Major expenditure categories include lodging, food, and supplies. Refuge personnel estimate that non-local visitors participating in hunting, fishing, and environmental education activities are state residents that live along the front range of Colorado (Fort Collins, Denver, and Colorado Springs). Therefore, state resident spending profiles for big-game hunting, small-game hunting, waterfowl hunting, and freshwater fishing were used.

Estimates for non-local interpretation and observation visitors are that approximately 40 percent are state residents from the front range area and 60 percent are non-resident visitors.

Although the economic impacts associated with current refuge visitation are somewhat limited in terms of overall tourism activities in the area, the refuge plays an important part in the overall recreational opportunities and scenic open space that makes North Park a popular tourist destination.

Table 15. Land area management in Jackson County and Colorado

Area	*Total Land Area (acres)*	*State Land (acres)*	*Federal Land (acres)*	*Private Land (acres)*	*State and Federal Land (%)*	*Private Land (%)*
Jackson County	1,036,497	124,765	541,073	370,659	64	36
Colorado	66,614,080	3,318,346	24,615,790	38,679,945	42	58

Source: Seidl and Garner 2001.

Table 16. Estimated annual visitors and daily expenditures, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

		Daily Expenditures (per person per day)	
Activity	*Number of Visitors*	*State Residents (355)*	*Non-residents (6,751)*
Interpretation and observation	6,593	$15	$100
Environmental education	141	$15	no data
Waterfowl hunting	280	$21	no data
Big-game hunting	15	$39	no data
Small-game hunting	18	$42	no data
Fishing	59	$28	no data
Total	*7,106*		

Glossary

Glossary

adaptive management—a process in which policy decisions are implemented within a framework of scientifically driven experiments to test predictions and assumptions inherent in management plan. Analysis of results help managers determine whether current management should continue as is or whether it should be modified to achieve desired conditions.

allelopathic—a plant that is able to suppress the growth of other plants by releasing toxic substances.

alternative—(1) a reasonable way to fix the identified problem or satisfy the stated need (40 CFR 1500.2); (2) alternatives are different means of accomplishing refuge purposes and goals and contributing to the National Wildlife Refuge System mission (Draft Service Manual 602 FW 1.5).

animal-unit month—a measure of the quantity of livestock forage. Equivalent to the amount of forage needed to support a 1,000-pound animal (or one cow/calf pair) for 1 month.

biological control—the use of organisms or viruses to control invasive plants or other pests.

biological diversity—the variety of life and its processes, including the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur (USFWS Manual 052 FW 1.2B). The National Wildlife Refuge System's focus is on indigenous species, biotic communities, and ecological processes. Also referred to as *biodiversity*.

canopy—a layer of foliage, generally the upper-most layer, in a forest stand. Can be used to refer to mid-level or understory vegetation in multi-layered stands. Canopy closure is an estimate of the amount of overhead tree cover (also canopy cover).

categorical exclusion (CE, CX, CATEX, CATX)—a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and have been found to have no such effect in procedures adopted by a Federal agency pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1508.4).

CDOW SC—Colorado Division of Wildlife species of special concern.

CFR—Code of Federal Regulations.

compatible use—a wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a refuge that, in the sound professional judgment of the director, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System or the purposes of the refuge (Draft Service Manual 603 FW 3.6). A compatibility determination supports the selection of compatible uses and identified stipulations or limits necessary to ensure compatibility.

comprehensive conservation plan (CCP)—a document that describes the desired future conditions of the refuge, and provides long-range guidance and management direction for the refuge manager to accomplish the purposes of the refuge, contribute to the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and to meet other relevant mandates (Draft Service Manual 602 FW 1.5).

concern—see definition of *issue*.

cover type—present vegetation of an area.

cultural resource—the remains of sites, structures, or objects used by people in the past.

cultural resource inventory—a professionally conducted study designed to locate and evaluate evidence of cultural resources present within a defined geographic area. Inventories may involve various levels, including background literature search, comprehensive field examination to identify all exposed physical manifestations of cultural resources, or sample inventory to project site distribution and density over a larger area. Evaluation of identified cultural resources to determine eligibility for the National Register follows the criteria found in .36 CFR 60.4 (Service Manual 614 FW 1.7).

cultural resource overview—a comprehensive document prepared for a field office that discusses, among other things, its prehistory and cultural history, the nature and extent of known cultural resources, previous research, management objectives, resource management conflicts or issues, and a general statement on how program objectives should be met and conflicts resolved. An overview should reference or incorporate information from a field offices background or literature search described in section VIII of the Cultural Resource Management Handbook (Service Manual 614 FW 1.7).

demography—the quantitative analysis of population structure and trend.

depredation—damage inflicted on agricultural crops or ornamental plants by wildlife.

designate—an invasive plant whose populations in a region or area are such that all seed production can be prevented within a calendar year.

designated wilderness area—an area designated by the United States Congress to be managed as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System (Draft Service Manual 610 FW 1.5).

disturbance—significant alteration of habitat structure or composition. May be natural (e.g., wildland fire) or human-caused (e.g., timber harvest) events.

Dixie harrow—a farming implement pulled behind a tractor, which reduces sagebrush density by breaking off sagebrush plants. Typically, one pass over sagebrush removes 60–70 percent of the live sagebrush plants.

early seral stage—an area that is in the primary stages of ecological succession.

ecological succession—the orderly progression of an area through time from one vegetative community to another in the absence of disturbance. For example, an area may proceed from grass-forb through aspen forest to mixed-conifer forest.

ecosystem—a dynamic and interrelating complex of plant and animal communities and their associated non-living environment.

ecosystem management—management of natural resources using system wide concepts to ensure that all plants and animals in ecosystems are maintained at viable levels in native habitats and basic ecosystem processes are perpetuated indefinitely.

endangered species (Federal)—a plant or animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

endangered species (State)—a plant or animal species in danger of becoming extinct or extirpated in Colorado within the near future if factors contributing to its decline continue. Populations of these species are at critically low levels or their habitats have been degraded or depleted to a significant degree.

endemic species—plants or animals that occur naturally in a certain region and whose distribution is relatively limited to a particular locality.

environmental assessment (EA)—a concise public document, prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, that briefly discusses the purpose and need for an action, alternatives to such action, and provides sufficient evidence and analysis of impacts to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9).

environmental impact statement (EIS)—a detailed written statement required by section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act, analyzing the environmental impacts of a proposed action, adverse effects of the project that cannot be avoided, alternative courses of action, short-term uses of the environment versus the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources (40 CFR 1508.1 I).

fauna—all the vertebrate and invertebrate animals of an area.

Federal trust resources—a resource managed by one entity for another who holds the ownership. The Service holds in trust many natural resources for the people of the United States of America as a result of Federal acts and treaties. Examples are species listed under the Endangered Species Act, migratory birds protected by international treaties, anadromous fish once they enter inland U.S. waterways, and native plant and wildlife species found on a National Wildlife Refuge.

Federal trust species—all species where the Federal government has primary jurisdiction, including federally endangered or threatened species, migratory birds, anadromous fish, and certain marine mammals.

finding of no significant impact (FONSI)—a document prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, supported by an environmental assessment, that briefly presents why a Federal action will have no significant effect on the human environment and for which an environmental impact statement, therefore, will not be prepared (40 CFR 1508.13).

fire regime—a description of the frequency, severity, and extent of fire that typically occurs in an area or vegetative type.

flora—all the plant species of an area.

floriferous—flower-bearing plant.

forb—broad-leaved, herbaceous plant; for example, a columbine.

fragmentation—the process of reducing the size and connectivity of habitat patches.

geographic information system (GIS)—a computer system capable of storing and manipulating spatial data.

goal—descriptive, open-ended, and often broad statement of desired future conditions that conveys a purpose but does not define measurable units (Draft Service Manual 620 FW 1.5).

habitat—suite of existing environmental conditions required by an organism for survival and reproduction; the place where an organism typically lives.

habitat type—see *vegetation type*.

habitat restoration—Management emphasis designed to move ecosystems to desired conditions and processes, and/or to healthy forestlands, rangelands, and aquatic systems.

historic range of variability (HRV)—The natural fluctuation of components of healthy ecosystems over time. In this EIS, HRV refers to the range of conditions and processes that are Rely to have occurred prior to settlement of the project area by people of European descent (approximately the mid-1800s), which would have varied within certain limits over time. Historic range of variability is discussed in this document as a reference point to establish a baseline set of conditions for which sufficient scientific or historical information is available to enable comparison to current condition.

indicator species—A species of plant or animals that is assumed to be sensitive to habitat changes and represents the needs of a larger group of species. Also referred to as a key species.

inholding—Privately owned land inside the boundary of a national wildlife refuge.

integrated pest management—Methods of managing undesirable species, such as weeds, including: education; prevention; physical or mechanical methods of control; biological control; responsible chemical use; and cultural methods.

invasive plant—a plant species designated by Federal or state law as generally possessing one or more of the following characteristics: aggressive or difficult to manage; parasitic; a carrier or host of serious insect or disease; or non-native, new, or not common to the United States. According to the Federal Noxious Weed Act (PL 93-639), a noxious weed (i.e., invasive plant) is one that causes disease or had adverse effects on humans or the human environment and, therefore, is detrimental to the agriculture and commerce of the Untied States and to public health.

inviolate—not violated or profaned; pure.

issue—any unsettled matter that requires a management decision, e.g., a Service initiative, opportunity, resource management problem, a threat to the resources of the unit, conflict in uses, public concern, or the presence of an undesirable resource condition (Draft Service Manual 602 FW 1.5).

management alternative—see *alternative*.

management concern—see *issue*.

management opportunity—see *issue*.

microhabitat—habitat features at a fine scale; often identifies a unique set of local habitat features.

migration—seasonal movement from one area to another and back.

mission statement—succinct statement of a unit's purpose and reason for being.

mitigation—measures designed to counteract environmental impacts or to make impacts less severe.

monitoring—the process of collecting information to track changes of selected parameters over time.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)—requires all agencies, including the Service, to examine the environmental impacts of their actions, incorporate environmental information, and use public participation in the planning and implementation of all actions. Federal agencies must integrate NEPA with other planning requirements, and prepare appropriate NEPA documents to facilitate better environmental decision making (from 40 CFR 1500).

national wildlife refuge (NWR)—a designated area of land, water, or an interest in land or water within the National Wildlife Refuge System.

National Wildlife Refuge System—various categories of areas administered by the Secretary of the Interior for the conservation of fish and wildlife, including species threatened with extinction; all lands, waters, and interests therein administered by the Secretary as wildlife refuges; areas for the protections and conservation of fish and wildlife that are threatened with extinction; wildlife ranges; game ranges; wildlife management areas; or waterfowl production areas.

National Wildlife Refuge System mission—the mission 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.

native species—species that normally live and thrive in a particular ecosystem.

Neotropical migratory bird—a bird species that breeds north of the U.S.–Mexico border and winters primarily south of this border.

Notice of Intent (NOI)—in the case of a Federal action, such as analyzed in this document, an NOI is a notice that an environmental impact statement will be prepared and considered (40 CFR 1508.22). Published in the Federal Register.

objective—a concise target statement of what will be achieved, how much will be achieved, when and where it will be achieved, and who is responsible for the work. Objectives are derived from goals and provide the basis for determining management strategies. Objectives should be attainable and time-specific and should be stated quantitatively to the extent possible. If objectives cannot be stated quantitatively, they may be stated qualitatively (Draft Service Manual 602 FW 1.5).

physiognomy—external aspect.

planning area—may include lands outside existing planning unit boundaries that are being studied for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System and partnership planning efforts. It may also include watersheds or ecosystems that affect the planning area.

planning team—a team generally consists of a planning team leader; refuge manager, staff, and biologists; staff specialists or other representatives of Service programs, ecosystems, or regional offices; and other governmental agencies as appropriate. Planning teams are interdisciplinary in membership and function. A planning team prepared the comprehensive conservation plan.

planning unit—a single refuge; an ecologically or administratively related complex of refuges; or distinct unit of a refuge.

plant association—a classification of plant communities based on the similarity in dominants of all layers of vascular species in a climax community.

plant community—an assemblage of plant species unique in its composition; occurs in particular locations under particular influences. A reflection or integration of the environmental influences on the site such as soils, temperature, elevation, solar radiation, slope, aspect, and rainfall. Denotes a general kind of climax plant community, e.g., ponderosa pine or bunchgrass.

prescribed fire—the skillful application of fire to natural fuels under conditions such as weather, fuel moisture, and soil moisture that allow confinement of fire to a predetermined area and produces the intensity of heat and rate of spread to accomplish planned benefits to one or more objectives of forest management, wildlife management, or hazard reduction.

preferred alternative—the alternative determined by the decision maker to best achieve the refuge purpose, vision, and goals; contributes to the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; addresses the significant issues; and is consistent with principles of sound fish and wildlife management.

public—individuals, organizations, and groups; officials of Federal, State, and local government agencies; Indian tribes; and foreign nations. It may include anyone outside the core planning team. It includes those who may or may not have indicated an interest in Service issues and those who do or do not realize that Service decisions may affect them.

public domain—lands to which the United States obtained title through such actions as treaty, purchase, and annexation, and for which title has never been conveyed out of United States ownership.

public involvement—a process that offers affected and interested individuals and organizations an opportunity to become informed about, and to express their opinions on, Service actions and policies. In the process, these views are studied thoroughly and thoughtful consideration of public views is given in shaping decisions for refuge management.

public involvement plan—broad long-term guidance for involving the public in the comprehensive planning process.

purpose of the refuge—specified purpose for a national wildlife refuge; found in or derived from the law, proclamation, executive order, agreement, public land order, donation document, or administrative memorandum establishing, authorization, or expanding a refuge, refuge unit, or refuge subunit.

recreation day—calculated as one visitor entering refuge lands for any purpose and for any length of time.

Record of Decision (ROD)—a concise public record of decision prepared by the Federal agency, pursuant to NEPA, that contains a statement of the decision, identification of all alternatives considered, identification of the environmentally preferable alternative, a statement as to whether all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected have been adopted (and if not, why they were not), and a summary of monitoring and enforcement where applicable for any mitigation (40 CFR 1505.2).

refuge goal—see *goal*.

refuge operating needs system (RONS)—a national database that contains the unfunded operational needs of each refuge. Projects included are those required to implement approved plans, and meet goals, objectives, and legal mandates.

refuge use—any activity on a refuge, except administrative or law enforcement activity carried out by or under the direction of an authorized Service employee.

refuge purpose—see *purpose of the refuge*.

refuge revenue sharing—a 1978 Act (Public Law 95-469) authorizes payments to counties in which Service-owned land is located. The amount of the payment is computed based on things such as the appraised value of Service fee land, number of acres of fee land, and net receipts collected by the Service for certain activities permitted on reserve lands (lands withdrawn from the public domain).

rest—free from biological, mechanical, or chemical manipulation; referring to refuge lands.

riparian area—an area or habitat that is transitional from terrestrial to aquatic ecosystems; including streams, lakes, wet areas, and adjacent plant communities and their associated soils that have free water at or near the surface. An area whose components is directly or indirectly attributed to the influence of water; of or relating to a river; specifically applied to ecology, "riparian" describes the land immediately adjoining and directly influenced by streams. For example, riparian vegetation includes any and all plant-life growing on the land adjoining a stream and directly influenced by the stream.

seral stage—any plant community whose plant composition is changing in a predictable way; characterized by a group of species or plant community that will eventually be replaced by a different group of species or plant community, for example, an aspen community changing to a coniferous forest community.

sinuosity—wavy serpentine form of a river channel. Sinuosity of 2.0–2.5 indicates that the river channel direction changes every 2.0–2.5 river widths.

sound professional judgment—a finding, determination, or decision that is consistent with principles of sound fish and wildlife management and administration, available science and resources, and adherence to the requirements of the Refuge Administration Act and other applicable laws.

species of concern—those plant and animal species, while not falling under the definition of special status species, that are of management interest by virtue of being Federal trust species such as migratory birds, important game species including white-tailed deer, furbearers such as American marten, important prey species including red-backed vole, or significant keystone species such as beaver.

special status species—plants or animals that have been identified through either Federal law, state law, or agency policy, as requiring special protection of monitoring. Examples include federally listed endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species; state-listed endangered, threatened, candidate, or monitor species; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service species of management concern; and species identified by the Partners in Flight program as being of extreme or moderately high conservation concern.

step-down management plans—plans that provide the details necessary to implement management strategies identified in the comprehensive conservation plan (Draft Service Manual 602 FW 1.5).

strategy—a specific action, tool, technique, or combination of actions, tools, and techniques used to meet unit objectives (Draft Service Manual 602 FW 1.5).

thalweg—a line following the lowest part of a valley whether under water or not; the line of continuous maximum descent from any point on a land surface or one crossing all contour lines at right angles; subsurface water percolating beneath and in the same direction as a surface stream course.

threatened species (federal)—a plant or animal species listed under the Endangered Species Act that are likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

threatened species (state)—a plant or animal species likely to become endangered in Colorado within the near future if factors contributing to population decline or habitat degradation or loss continue.

tiering—the coverage of general matters in broader environmental impact statements with subsequent narrower statements of environmental analysis, incorporating by reference, the general discussions and concentrating on specific issues (40 CFR 1508.28).

trust species—see *federal trust species*.

understory—any vegetation whose canopy (foliage) is below or closer to the ground than canopies of other plants.

unit objective—see *objective*.

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

vegetation type (habitat type, forest cover type)—a land classification system based on the concept of distinct plant associations.

vision statement—a concise statement of the desired future condition of the planning unit, based primarily upon the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, specific refuge purposes, and other relevant mandates (Draft Service Manual 602 FW 1.5).

watershed—the region draining into a river, river system, or body of water.

wilderness—see *designated wilderness area*.

wilderness study area—land and water identified through inventory as meeting the definition of wilderness and undergoing evaluation for recommendation for inclusion in the Wilderness System. A study area must meet the following criteria: (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of human work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; and (3) has at least 5,000 contiguous roadless acres or is sufficient in size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition (Draft Service Manual 610 FW 1.5).

wildfire—a free-burning fire requiring a suppression response; all fire other than prescribed fire that occurs on wildlands (Service Manual 621 FW 1.7).

wildland fire—every wildland fire is either a wildfire or a prescribed fire (Service Manual 621 FW 1.3).

wildlife corridor—a landscape feature that facilitates the biologically effective transport of animals between larger patches of habitat dedicated to conservation functions. Such corridors may facilitate several kinds of traffic, including frequent foraging movement, seasonal migration, or the once-in-a-lifetime dispersal of juvenile animals. These are transition habitats and need not contain all the habitat elements required for long-term survival or reproduction of its migrants.

wildlife-dependent recreation—use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation. The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 specifies that these are the six, priority, general public uses of the System.

withdrawn—land and interest in land owned by the United States, administered by the Bureau of Land Management, are withdrawn from public domain to be administratively controlled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for management as a unit or part of a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Appendices

Appendix A

Key Legislation and Policies

Many procedural and substantive requirement of federal and applicable state and local laws and regulations affect refuge establishment, management, and development. The following list identifies the key federal laws and policies that were considered during the planning process or that could affect future refuge management.

American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978)—directs agencies to consult with native traditional religious leaders to determine appropriate policy changes necessary to protect and preserve Native American religious cultural rights and practices.

Americans with Disabilities Act (1992)—prohibits discrimination in public accommodations and services.

Antiquities Act (1906)—authorizes the scientific investigation of antiquities on federal land and provides penalties for unauthorized removal of objects taken or collected without a permit.

Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (1974)—directs the preservation of historic and archaeological data in federal construction projects.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979), as amended—protects materials of archaeological interest from unauthorized removal or destruction and requires federal managers to develop plans and schedules to locate archaeological resources.

Architectural Barriers Act (1968)—requires federally owned, leased, or funded buildings and facilities to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Clean Water Act (1977)—requires consultation with the Corps of Engineers (404 permits) for major wetland modifications.

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (1986)—promotes the conservation of migratory waterfowl and directs the offset or prevention of serious loss of wetlands by the acquisition of wetlands and other essential habitat, and for other purposes.

Endangered Species Act (1973)—requires all federal agencies to carry out programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species.

Executive Order 11988 (1977)—directs each federal agency to provide leadership and take action to reduce the risk of flood loss and minimize the impact of floods on human safety, and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by the floodplains.

Executive Order 12996 Management and General Public Use of the National Wildlife Refuge System (1996)—defines the mission, purpose, and priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It also presents four principles to guide management of the System.

Executive Order 13007 Indian Sacred Sites (1996)—directs federal land management agencies to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners, avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites, and where appropriate, maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites.

Executive Order 13287 Preserve America (2003)—establishes policy for the Federal Government to provide leadership in preserving America's heritage by actively advancing the protection, enhancement, and contemporary use of the historic properties owned by the Federal Government, and by promoting intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships for the preservation and use of historic properties.

Federal Noxious Weed Act (1990)—requires the use of integrated management systems to control or contain undesirable plant species, and an interdisciplinary approach with the cooperation of other federal and state agencies.

Fish and Wildlife Act (1956)—establishes a comprehensive national fish and wildlife policy and broadens the authority for acquisition and development of refuges.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (1958)—allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enter into agreements with private landowners for wildlife management purposes.

Migratory Bird Conservation Act (1929)—establishes procedures for acquisition by purchase, rental, or gift of areas approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act (1934)—authorizes the opening of part of a refuge to waterfowl hunting.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918)—designates the protection of migratory birds as a federal responsibility. This Act enables the setting of seasons, and other regulations including the closing of areas, federal or non-federal, to the hunting of migratory birds.

National Environmental Policy Act (1969)—requires the disclosure of the environmental impacts of any major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

National Historic Preservation Act (1966), as amended—establishes as policy that the Federal Government is to provide leadership in the preservation of the nation's prehistoric and historic resources.

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)—defines the National Wildlife Refuge System and authorizes the Secretary to permit any use of a refuge provided such use is compatible with the major purposes for which the refuge was established. The Refuge Improvement Act clearly defines a unifying mission for the System; establishes the legitimacy and appropriateness of the six priority public uses (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation); establishes a formal process for determining compatibility; established the responsibilities of the Secretary of Interior for managing and protecting the System; and requires a comprehensive conservation plan for each refuge by the year 2012. This Act amended portions of the Refuge Recreation Act and National Wildlife System Administration Act of 1966.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990)—requires federal agencies and museums to inventory, determine ownership of, and repatriate cultural items under their control or possession.

Refuge Recreation Act (1962)—allows the use of refuges for recreation when such uses are compatible with the refuge's primary purposes and when sufficient funds are available to manage the uses.

Rehabilitation Act (1973)—requires programmatic accessibility in addition to physical accessibility for all facilities and programs funded by the Federal government to ensure that anybody can participate in any program.

Volunteer and Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998—amends the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to promote volunteer programs and community partnerships for the benefit of national wildlife refuges, and for other purposes.

Appendix B
Compatibility Determination

Compatibility Determination

Refuge Name. Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge. Established September 26, 1967.

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities. Migratory Bird Conservation Act and Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956.

Refuge Purposes. For use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds. For the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in performing its activities and services. Such acceptance may be subject to the terms of any restrictive or affirmative covenant, or condition of servitude.

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission. The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge 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.

Description of Proposed Use—Recreational Hunting

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is open to hunting of mourning dove, snipe, rail, American coot, waterfowl, sage grouse, cottontail and jackrabbit, and pronghorn. Hunting seasons are in accordance with State of Colorado seasons and regulations established for this area. Visitation for these activities is estimated at 500 hunter use days. Species are hunted according to Federal and State laws.

The refuge is divided into three management units: A, B, and C. Unit A consists of 4,536 acres and is closed to all hunting. This area contains the auto tour route and also a large wetland complex, which provides resting areas for migratory birds. Unit B is 8,260 acres and is open for small game, migratory birds, and pronghorn hunting. The remaining 9,415 acres, Unit C, is closed to migratory bird hunting but open to small-game and pronghorn hunting.

Hunting pressure of all species is approximately 450–550 hunter visits annually. During waterfowl, big-game, and small-game seasons, most pressure is concentrated around the opening weekend, with hunter use dropping significantly during the rest of the season.

The comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) will continue with the above uses and add or change the following to improve the hunting experience and better protect refuge resources:

- Develop a hunting step-down management plan that addresses existing species as well as elk and furbearer hunting opportunities depending on refuge habitat objectives and/or population objectives North Park-wide. This plan may result in unit changes and/or separation of types of hunting and/or hunter/non-hunter use.
- Develop parking areas, signage, and permanent gates to minimize resource damage.
- Update hunting signs to reflect changes in the new hunting step-down management plan.

Availability of Resources. Currently, sufficient resources are available to continue the existing recreational hunting. Implementing the new improvements for hunting will be addressed by funding requests in the form of maintenance management system (MMS) and refuge operating needs system (RONS) projects.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. No detrimental impact is anticipated with the hunting program. Recreational hunting will remove individual animals from the wildlife populations, which may help ensure that carrying capacity (especially for big-game species) is not exceeded (possibly impacting refuge habitat objectives). Closed areas will provide some sanctuary for target and non-target species and minimize conflicts between hunters and other visitors. Travel on non-designated roads may be a problem but development of parking areas, signage, and gates should minimize this impact.

Determination. Recreational hunting is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- Only non-toxic shot is permitted on the refuge when hunting with a shotgun. This restriction minimizes the exposure of waterfowl and other wildlife to lead.
- Hunting must be in accordance with Federal and State of Colorado regulations.
- All hunting will be coordinated with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to meet refuge and state goals and objectives.
- Sound hunting practices will be promoted for safety of visitors and hunters and minimal wildlife disturbance.
- Vehicle travel is limited to designated roads and parking areas.
- Hunting programs will be conducted to provide a quality hunting experience as defined in the refuge manual.

Justification. Hunting is a legitimate wildlife-management tool that can be used to manage populations. Small-game hunting is biologically sound on the basis of limited hunter interest and because populations of small-game species fluctuate moderately regardless of whether they are hunted or protected. Migratory-bird hunting uses a small portion of the available resource on the refuge. Hunting on the refuge harvests a small percentage of the renewable resources which is in accordance with wildlife management objectives and principles.

Based on biological impacts anticipated above and in the environmental assessment, it is determined that recreational hunting at Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge will not materially interfere with or detract from the purposes for which this refuge was established or the habitat goals and objectives.

One of the secondary goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to provide opportunities for public hunting when it is found to be compatible and is identified as a priority public use in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.

Description of Proposed Use—Wildlife Observation and Photography, Environmental Education, and Interpretation

The Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge strives to provide opportunities that support wildlife-dependent recreation, education, and outreach to the public. Approximately 8,000 visitors come to the refuge annually for wildlife observation, photography, and interpretation/education. The majority of the use is focused on the auto tour route, interpretive nature trail, and visitor contact stations. The auto tour route is a 6-mile self-guided wildlife tour, while the interpretive nature trail is 0.5-mile walk. There are three information kiosks, two scenic overlooks, and a visitor center.

Interpretation and environmental education opportunities are provided on demand and include talks, tours, and environmental games for school groups, scouts, and special interest groups.

The CCP proposes to continue with the above uses and add the following to improve wildlife viewing, interpretation, and access for visitors:

- Develop new interpretive displays for visitor center that reflect refuge habitat and water management.
- Rebuild the Brocker Overlook including new interpretive signs depicting the history of North Park and the refuge.
- Construct a moose-observation platform.
- Develop new refuge brochures and signs and update old brochures to reflect current management.

- Work with partners to develop specific environmental education programs concerning habitat management, natural history of North Park, and water issues.
- Rehabilitate the Case Barn and provide interpretation of the site.
- Develop new interpretive material involving land management in North Park.
- Continue participation in natural resource events such as "Day in the Woods" and "Water Carnival.
- Complete interpretive nature trail boardwalk.

Availability of Resources. Currently, resources are stretched to continue the existing wildlife-dependent recreation. An outdoor recreation planner is required to meet the refuge's current demands. The additional items to be added from the CCP are tied to funding requests in the form of RONS and MMS projects.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. Some disturbance of wildlife will occur in areas of the refuge frequented by visitors. The main areas used are the auto tour route, visitor contact points, and interpretive nature trail. Primary species disturbed by vehicles and hikers are waterfowl, moose, raptors, prairie dogs, and shorebirds.

Construction of the Owl Ridge Overlook, rebuilding the Brocker Overlook, and development of the Case Barn interpretive site will result in the loss of a small portion of wildlife habitat. It is anticipated that all uses will increase, particularly with new interpretation sites.

With an increase in use, the potential for problems with trash will increase; a slight increase in wildlife disturbance may occur.

Determination. Wildlife observation and photography, environmental education, and interpretation are compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- Vehicles will be restricted to designated refuge roads.
- Enforce refuge regulations.
- Improve signing and update refuge information brochures.
- Monitor use, regulate access, and maintain necessary facilities to prevent habitat degradation.
- Develop a wildlife observation/photography and environmental education/interpretation step-down plan.

Justification. Based on anticipated biological impacts above and in the environmental assessment, it is determined that wildlife observation/photography and environmental education/interpretation on the refuge will not interfere with the refuge habitat goals and objectives or purposes for which it was established. Limited access and monitoring use can help limit any adverse impacts.

One of the secondary goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to provide opportunities for the public to develop an understanding and appreciation for wildlife when it is found compatible. The above uses are identified as priority public uses in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and will help meet the above secondary goal with only minimal conflicts.

Description of Proposed Use—Recreational Fishing

Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is open to recreational fishing in the Illinois River from August 1–May 31 each year. Fishing is in accordance with State of Colorado regulations. Game fish include brown trout and limited numbers of rainbow trout. Visitors participating in this use on the refuge are estimated at 50–100 anglers annually. Two parking and access fishing sites are developed and are available on the refuge with a variety of undeveloped access sites also available.

The CCP proposes to continue with the above uses and add the following to improve fishing opportunities and access for visitors:

- Work with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to create a fishery step-down management plan.
- Improve fishery habitats on private lands through the Service's partners for fish and wildlife program.
- Assist the Colorado Division of Wildlife with fishery law enforcement, management, and projects in North Park, as requested.
- Monitor river gauges on the upstream and downstream ends of the refuge to evaluate flows and effects on the Illinois River fishery resources.
- Evaluate angler impacts on refuge goals and objectives.

Availability of Resources. Currently, sufficient resources are available for existing recreational fishing. With the addition of projects from the CCP, additional resources will be needed. These are addressed as funding requests in the RONS and MMS projects.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. Fishing can cause disturbance to wildlife and the habitat but at the current levels of use on the refuge, disturbance impacts will be minimal. The presence of anglers along the Illinois River may deny waterfowl and other water birds use of that portion of the river. However, the majority of the fishing pressure on the river occurs on the southern half of the refuge, which makes up approximately 10 percent of the riparian and wetland habitats and is closed during 2 months of the summer. The poisoning of migratory birds due to ingestion of lead sinkers may also occur, but less than 10 percent of the anglers use bait in a given year according to creel-census information.

Determination. Recreational fishing is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- The refuge will be closed to fishing from June 1–July 31 each year.
- Fishing must be in accordance with State of Colorado regulations.
- Parking and access areas will be maintained to prevent habitat damage.
- Only the Illinois River will be open to fishing.
- Monitor existing use to ensure that facilities are adequate and disturbance to wildlife continues to be minimal.
- Improve and/or replace existing signage.

Justification. Based on the biological impacts addressed above and in the environmental assessment, it is determined that recreational fishing will not materially interfere with the refuge habitat goals and objectives or purposes for establishment. The fishing closure minimizes disturbance during sensitive nesting seasons for migratory birds.

Description of Proposed Use—Use of Grazing as a Management Tool

The refuge currently uses livestock grazing as the most common management tool to manipulate the riparian, meadow, and upland habitats. Grazing by livestock has been the preferred management tool because the effect on the habitat is controllable and predictable. Livestock grazing is used in a variety of ways including: high-intensity short duration, rest rotation, light annual, and complete rest. In general, the meadows and riparian habitats are not grazed until August 1 to minimize disturbance to nesting birds. The upland habitats are grazed earlier but most grazing does not start before June 1.

Grazing rates range from 0.52–0.71 animal unit months (AUMs) per acre with an average of 8,470 AUMs used annually. Actual rates per field vary significantly depending on the site, with some upland areas being as low as 0.01 AUMs per acre and some meadow fields as high as 2.18 AUMs per acre. The refuge is divided into more than 100 fields by barbed wire and electric fences. Maintenance of the fences is a constant effort with weather, water, animals, and human impacts.

The CCP proposes to continue with the proposed use and add/or change the following to improve habitat management:

- Grazing rates will average 0.4–1.0 AUMs per acre for the riparian and meadow habitats and 0.05–0.15 AUMs per acre for the upland habitat to meet new refuge objectives.
- Initiate a vegetation and wildlife monitoring program to assess habitat response to the grazing management program.
- Complete an upland habitat inventory by 2008 to gain a better understanding of the existing habitat for future grazing management.

Availability of Resources. Current resources are stressed in an effort to monitor habitats to understand if objectives are being met. Another wildlife biologist is needed to meet current and future refuge demands. The additional items to be added from the CCP are tied to funding requests in the form of RONS and MMS projects.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. This use is intended to maintain and enhance the habitat for the benefit of migratory birds and other wildlife. Minimal negative impacts are expected through the use of this tool. Some trampling of areas may occur around watering holes or mineral licks. Overgrazing may occur if problems exist with fences, which would negatively impact the habitat. Grazing will be in a mosaic pattern with some plants grazed harder than others. The presence of livestock may be disturbing to some wildlife species and some of our public users. The benefits of this use as a habitat manipulation tool are felt to outweigh these minimal negative impacts. The endangered North Park phacelia plant does occur in grazed areas of the Case tract. However, plant monitoring data from the past 6 years indicates a stable or slightly expanding population of plants. Therefore, the refuge proposes to continue grazing these areas until more information is available on North Park phacelia life history.

Determination. Using grazing as a habitat management tool is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- Monitor the vegetation and wildlife to assess the effects of grazing.
- Fences will be monitored and maintained.
- Annually evaluate AUMs per acre used in relation to habitat conditions.
- Permittees will be issued a special-use permit each year with AUMs to be used specified and all other regulations listed.
- Continue to monitor North Park phacelia plant populations to ensure grazing program is not negatively impacting plant survival.

Justification. To maintain and enhance the habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, some habitat manipulation needs to occur. Grazing by livestock is one option that can be used to achieve these desired habitat changes. Because grazing by livestock is controllable and predictable, it is a useful management tool.

Description of Proposed Use—Plowing of Snow Fences by the Colorado State Highway Department

The Colorado State Highway Department plows snow on the refuge along Highway 125 to make snow fences. The snow fences are constructed by a dozer or front-end loader just on the inside of the refuge boundary fence along Highway 125. The heavy equipment creates two to four parallel strips of varying heights of snow, approximately 20 feet apart. Snow fences minimize snow drifting across Highway 125 and increase safety for highway travelers.

Availability of Resources. Currently, this use does not use any refuge resources.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. Plowing of snow along the refuge boundary to create snow fences has very little impact on the refuge habitat. These areas are primarily upland habitat. In general, the equipment blade is not lowered to dig into the soil but just skim the surface. Some brush plants may be eliminated in the process but most grasses and forbs are not affected. This leaves strips of land without brush species. The snow fences do provide more water to these areas, with the melting of the built up snow in the spring, possibly promoting the growth of grasses and forbs.

Determination. Plowing snow to create snow fences along Highway 125 is a compatible use.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- Any fence damage done will be repaired by the State Highway Department.
- Soil disturbance is kept to a minimum.

Justification. Plowing snow fences is necessary to help prevent snow from drifting on Highway 125, helping the highway department maintain this road in the winter for the safety of the general public.

Description of Proposed Use—Providing a Water Line from a Refuge Spring to a BLM Grazing Allotment

In 1991, the refuge issued a special-use permit to a private landowner to construct and maintain a water line across the refuge. This water line runs from a spring outlet on the refuge fish hatchery tract to a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) grazing allotment. The permit allows for the use of the spring water to fill a water trough for livestock on the BLM allotment for approximately 30 days during the grazing season. It also allows access to maintain the water line on the refuge. This use has continued to date with the special-use permit being renewed every 2 years. This use corresponds with the goals of the CCP of working with partners to promote sound habitat management.

Availability of Resources. Currently, the spring that feeds this water line flows enough water to fulfill livestock watering and refuge needs.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. Impacts of the water line are minimal; if the line were to break, some erosion could occur along the line in the upland habitat if the leak was not observed right away. Potentially, in an extremely dry year, the spring could dry up if the use continued.

Determination. Use of the water line to take water from the fish hatchery spring is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- A new special-use permit will be issued every 2 years.
- The private landowner is responsible for upkeep of the water line.
- In extremely dry years, the spring will be evaluated for flow production.

Justification. The refuge is working with the BLM to promote land health improvements. The grazing allotment this water line feeds is large, with little water. The position of the water trough helps to promote the movement of the livestock over the whole allotment and to help eliminate over-grazing of certain areas.

Description of Proposed Use—Providing a Right-of-way for a Water Pipeline and Dissipater

In 1986, the refuge issued a right-of-way permit to Walden Reservoir Company to construct a pipeline to divert water from a Michigan River irrigation ditch, through the refuge, to the Illinois River. The underground pipeline and dissipater were installed in the spring of 1990. Water flows from the Michigan River irrigation ditch down off the hill through the pipeline to the dissipater at the base of the hill. This water then flows through a refuge irrigation ditch and pond to the Illinois River, giving the refuge temporary use of the water. Just north of the refuge, the water is picked up out of the Illinois River in a ditch that feeds Walden Reservoir. The Walden Reservoir Company has used this right-of-way intermittently over the years. This use is not specifically addressed in the CCP but does promote a partnership which is beneficial to wildlife and the habitat.

Availability of Resources. Currently, sufficient resources are available to continue this use.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. Water flows from the Michigan River irrigation ditch have the potential to be substantial and may impact the smaller refuge ditch, causing blow-outs or erosion of the ditch bank.

Determination. Use of the right-of-way pipeline and dissipater is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- The refuge continues to have temporary use of the water.

Justification. In permitting this right-of-way, the refuge benefits from the temporary use of the water flowing across the area. This water can supplement the existing refuge irrigation water in the spring, if flowing. The water also helps keep Home Pond water fresh with the constant flow, especially when the flows are in the fall, a time the refuge usually does not have water in its irrigation ditches. A more regional benefit is that of supplementing Walden Reservoir water. This large reservoir is an irrigation storage reservoir but it provides habitat (nesting, brood-rearing, foraging, and molting) for a large number of waterfowl and water birds. Keeping some water in this large reservoir is very important for these birds.

Description of Proposed Use—Construction of a Multi-use Trail on the Refuge Boundary

The CCP proposes the construction and use of a multi-use trail along Highway 14 just inside the refuge boundary. This area is along the northeast edge of the refuge. The trail would be a 3-mile, 8-foot-wide gravel trail. It would be designed to minimize disturbance to wildlife and the environment. This trail would be a partnership with Jackson County, Town of Walden, and the Colorado Scenic Byways. Use would be limited to non-motorized vehicles, walking, and horses. The trail would be fenced to eliminate potential for further excursions onto the refuge.

Availability of Resources. Currently, no refuge resources are available for the construction and use of the multi-use trail. Funding requests for this use are in the RONS projects. Other funding would come from partnerships with interested parties.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. Construction of the trail would cause some short-term disturbance to wildlife in the area. The multi-use trail will result in a small amount of habitat loss. This multi-use trail may cause disturbance to wildlife and increase litter problems. Expected level of use should not interfere with refuge purposes, goals, and objectives. Monitoring of the activity and its impacts will help maintain the use at an acceptable level.

Determination. Creation and maintenance of a multi-use trail along Highway 14 is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- Area is restricted to non-motorized use only.
- Area will be signed for compliance of use and refuge regulations.
- Monitoring will be done to assess the impact of the use on wildlife and the environment.
- A fence will be constructed between the trail and refuge to limit further disturbance.
- Cultural resource clearance would be confirmed before construction.
- Trail is located on the refuge boundary to facilitate wildlife viewing, but minimize disturbance to wildlife on the refuge.

Justification. This multi-use trail does not appear to create any special problems and biking is associated with wildlife viewing and photography. The trail will also promote partnerships.

Description of Proposed Use—Shooting Range

The refuge currently maintains a shooting range just northeast of the headquarters. The range is used by refuge, county, and Colorado Division of Wildlife officers to re-qualify with firearms several times during the year to maintain their law enforcement status. The estimated use is 25 officers re-qualifying twice during a year. The range is uniquely configured to accommodate pistol, rifle, and shotgun courses required by refuge law enforcement policy. The CCP supports the continued use of this range. The area encompasses approximately 2 acres of cleared upland with posts and target fastening boards.

Availability of Resources. Currently, sufficient resources are available to continue with this use.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use. This shooting range results in a small amount of habitat loss in an upland site. Wildlife may be disturbed during firearms re-qualification but use is limited to several times a year. Litter of brass is a potential problem. Use of refuge equipment and materials to maintain the shooting range will be an annual need. Lead contamination of the soil immediately behind the eight target-fastening boards may be of concern.

Determination. Continued use of shooting range is compatible.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility

- Users of the site will be required to pick up all brass and any litter.
- Monitor the area for heavy wildlife use before deciding to re-qualifying that day to minimize disturbance especially in the winter.
- The public will not be allowed to use the range, as the BLM provides a public range near Walden, Colorado.
- Lead deposition is currently monitored by the Service's safety office. Because the lead collection berm is small, the lead is underground, and usage is low, we feel the exposure to wildlife is limited.

Justification. The shooting range is needed to facilitate the firearms re-qualification of refuge and Colorado Division of Wildlife law enforcement officers.

Signatures:

Ann Timberman — 6/17/04
Ann Timberman — Date
Project Leader

Concurrence:

David Wiseman — 7/9/04
David Wiseman — Date
Refuge Supervisor, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska

Richard A. Coleman — 7/12/04
Richard A. Coleman, Ph.D. — Date
Assistant Regional Director
National Wildlife Refuge System

Appendix C
Planning Team

This comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) is the result of the extensive, collaborative, and enthusiastic efforts by members of the planning team for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge's CCP. Many others contributed insight and support (see appendix F).The draft CCP and environmental assessment were written by refuge staff and the refuge planner, with input from other team members.

Team Member	*Position*	*Work Unit*
Randy Bilbeisi	maintenance worker	Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Walden, CO
Lynne Caughlan	economist	U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division (USGS–BRD), Fort Collins, CO
Chuck Cesar	wildlife biologist	Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Walden, CO
Sean Fields	biologist, geographic information system (GIS) specialist	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Division of Planning, Lakewood, CO
Patricia Fiedler	hydrologist	USFWS, Water Resources Division, Lakewood, CO
Terri Follet	administrative support assistant	Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Walden, CO
Bernardo Garza	fish and wildlife biologist, planning team leader	USFWS, Division of Refuge Planning, Lakewood, CO
David Hamilton	biologist	USGS–BRD, Fort Collins, CO
Paul Hellmund	professor of landscape architecture	Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO
Pam Johnson	wildlife biologist	Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Walden, CO
Greg Langer	project leader 1999–2003	Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Walden, CO
Mark Lanier	refuge operations specialist	Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Walden, CO
Murray Laubhan	biologist	USGS–BRD, Jamestown, ND
Rachel Laubhan	biologist	USFWS, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Jamestown, ND
Rhoda Lewis	regional archaeologist	USFWS, Lakewood, CO
Deb Parker	writer-editor	USFWS, Division of Planning, Lakewood, CO
Barbara Shupe	*former* writer-editor, 1997–2003	USFWS, Division of Planning, Lakewood, CO
Todd Stefanic	*former* biological science technician	Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Walden, CO
Ann Timberman	project leader	Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Walden, CO
Melvie Uhland	outdoor recreation planner	USFWS, Division of Educational and Visitor Services, Lakewood, CO
J. Wenum	district wildlife manager	Colorado Division of Wildlife, Gunnison, CO

Appendix D

Environmental Compliance

Environmental Action Statement

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 6
Denver, Colorado

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record.

I have determined that the action of implementing the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan is found not to have significant environmental effects, as determined by the attached Finding of No Significant Impact and the environmental assessment as found with the draft comprehensive conservation plan.

for Ralph O. Morgenweck
Regional Director
Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Denver, Colorado

9/16/04
Date

Richard A. Coleman, Ph.D.
Assistant Regional Director, National Wildlife Refuge System
Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Denver, Colorado

9/16/04
Date

Dave Wiseman
Refuge Program Supervisor
Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Denver, Colorado

9/16/04
Date

Ann Timberman
Project Leader
Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge
Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Walden, Colorado

9-15-04
Date

Finding of No Significant Impact

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 6
Denver, Colorado

Fulfill the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Based on the analysis of the environmental assessment (EA) prepared in conjunction with the draft comprehensive conservation plan (CCP), and the application of the "reasonable and prudent alternatives" (RPA) prepared by the Colorado ecological services office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I find that the proposed action of implementing the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge CCP will not have a significant impact on the human environment.

Four alternatives (including the "no action" alternative) were considered in the draft CCP/EA document for this refuge. The decision to adopt the proposed action (alternative D) was made because it is more responsive to the purposes for which the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge was established and is preferable to the "no action" alternative in light of physical, biological, economic, and social factors.

—This alternative will benefit foraging raptors, migrating and nesting waterfowl, marsh birds, Neotropical migrants, fishes, federally listed plant species, amphibians, insects and reptiles.

—Riparian vegetation will be restored and protected, yielding improvements in water quality, vegetative composition and diversity, and stream channel conditions. Wetlands will continue to be supplemented with water for local streams. Wet meadows will be irrigated and managed for vegetative composition and diversity through the use of grazing, rest, and fire regimes to enhance their value for migratory birds and other wildlife.

—Upland habitats will be studied to determine the best management practices conducive to improved habitat conditions and productivity.

—Listed plant species habitats will continue to be monitored and protected to prevent adverse affects.

—Existing partnerships and research opportunities that benefit trust resources at the refuge and throughout the North Park sub-ecosystem will continue and new ones will be actively pursued.

—Wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities will continue and will be enhanced whenever possible, in conjunction with the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

—Cultural resources will continue to be protected and, whenever possible, interpreted.

The decision to apply the RPA to the implementation of the CCP for the refuge was made because the intra-Service consultation, in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, detected actions likely to adversely affect the continued existence of federally listed fish and bird species in the Platte River basin.

To avoid a jeopardy situation as a consequence of implementing the CCP, the Service will continue to participate in and abide by the recommendations prepared by the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program as its RPA.

Given all the conservation measures associated with this CCP for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, I find that the proposed action will not have a significant impact on the human environment in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Service's Administrative Manual 30 AM 3.9B(2)(d). I conclude that an environmental impact statement is not necessary. My rationale for this finding is as follows:

1. The proposed action, with the RPA, is not likely to affect any federally listed species;

2. The proposed action will protect cultural resources;

3. The proposed action will not adversely affect wetlands; and,

4. The proposed action will not significantly impact the socioeconomic values to the community.

Linda A. Kelsey
for

Ralph O. Morgenweck, Regional Director
Region 6, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Denver, Colorado

Date 9/16/04

Appendix E

Section 7 Biological Evaluation

INTRA-SERVICE SECTION 7 BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION FORM

Originating Persons: Ann Timberman
José Bernardo Garza

Telephone Numbers: (970) 723-8202 x 3
(303) 236-4377

Date: May 17, 2004

I. Region: 6

II. Service Activity (Program): Refuges & Wildlife, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge

III. Pertinent Species and Habitat:

A. Federally Listed Species and/or their critical habitat within or downstream from action area:

Preble's meadow jumping mouse, *Zapus hudsonius preblei* (federally listed: endangered)

bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (federally listed as threatened; proposed delisting)

North Park phacelia, *Phacelia formosula* (federally listed as endangered)

Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, *Spiranthes diluvialis* (federally listed as threatened)

Western prairie fringed orchid, *Platanthera praeclara* (federally listed as threatened)

Colorado butterfly plant, *Gaura neomexicana* var. *coloradensis*, (fed. listed threatened)

whooping crane, *Grus americana* (federally listed as endangered except where XN)

piping plover, *Charadrius melodus* (federally listed as threatened, except where XN)

least tern (interior population), *Sterna antillarum* (federally listed as endangered)

pallid sturgeon, *Scaphirhynchus albus* (federally listed as endangered)

Topeka shiner, *Notropis topeka (=tristis)*, (federally listed as endangered)

American burying beetle, *Nicrophorus americanus* (federally listed as endangered)

Eskimo curlew, *Numenius borealis* (federally listed as endangered)

Mexican spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis lucida*, (federally listed as threatened)

black-footed ferret, *Mustela nigripes* (federally listed as endangered)

Wyoming toad, *Bufo baxteri (= hemiophrys)*, (federally listed as endangered)

There is no federally designated critical habitat on the action area (Arapaho NWR)

Species Listed and/or of Special Concern for the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW):

river otter, *Lutra canadensis* (State listed as endangered)

American peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus* (State species of concern)

western burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia* (State species of concern)

ferruginous hawk, *Buteo regalis* (State species of concern)

northern sage-grouse, *Centrocercus urophasianus* (State species of concern)

long billed curlew, *Numenius americanus* (State species of concern)

white pelican, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* (State species of concern)

northern leopard frog, *Rana pipiens* (State species of concern)

wood frog, *Rana sylvatica* (State species of concern)

Western boreal toad, *Bufo boreas boreas*, (State species of concern)

B. Proposed species and/or proposed critical habitat within the action area:

mountain plover, *Charadrius montanus* (proposed for listing as a threatened species)

C. Candidate species within or downstream from the action area :

western boreal toad, *Bufo boreas boreas*

white-tailed prairie dog, *Cynomys leucurus*

D. Include species/habitat occurrence on a map: see attachment

IV Geographic area or station name and action:

Station: Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge
Action: Issuance and Implementation of Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Arapaho NWR

V Location (map attached):

E. Ecoregion Number and Name: Arapaho NWR is located within the Service's Region 6, Mountain-Prairie Region, and specifically in the Platte / Kansas Rivers Ecosystem

F. County and State: Jackson County, Colorado

G. Section, township, and range: Arapaho NWR includes parts or all of:

Sections 33-34, Township 9 North, Range 79 West; Sections 3-10, 15-22, 28-33 Township 8 North, Range 79 West; Sections 4-9, 15, 17-20, 28-29 Township 7 North, Range 79 West; Sections 11-15, 24 Township 8 North, Range 80 West; Sections 1, 3, 10-12, 14-15 Township 7 North, Range 80 West; Sections 33 and 34 Township 7 North, Range 81 West.

F. Distance and direction to nearest town:

The Refuge's northernmost boundary lies less than a mile from the southern border of Walden (Colorado). The approved acquisition boundary for Arapaho NWR encompasses lands that run south of Walden for nearly 12 miles and are bisected by State Highway 125. The Refuge's headquarters are located approximately 8 miles south of Walden.

G. Habitats and Occurrence of Federally listed and Species of Special Concern for the CDOW:

Preble's meadow j. mouse	This species does not occur at the site of the Refuge but rather in riparian habitats along tributary streams to the South Platte River basin in the Front Range of Colorado and along tributary streams of the North Platte River in SE Wyoming.
Bald eagle:	This raptor is a rare user of Refuge habitats with 3-4 individuals sighted per year. No nesting has been documented on the Refuge, and use appears to be limited to loafing and foraging.
North Park phacelia:	This plant species is known only to exist in Jackson County, Colorado. The majority of the plant population resides on a BLM Natural Resource Area located north and west of Walden. The refuge supports 2 populations, Muskrat Dike Hill, and Muskrat Overlook Hill. The population monitoring efforts in 2002 found 2,708 flowering plants with 210 rosettes and 2,683 flowering plants with 420 rosettes respectively at these sites. This small phacelia appears to like disturbed eroding sandstone outcrops of Coalmont Formation with WSW facing hillsides.
Ute ladies'-tresses orchid	This orchid occurs near major streams or along abandoned meanders, where ample subsurface water percolates through the stream gravels underlying lush meadows. This plant does not occur at the site of the Refuge but rather downstream from the Refuge in Wyoming and along the South Platte River and its tributaries along Colorado's Front Range.
Western prairie f. orchid	This orchid does not occur at the site of the Refuge but rather downstream from the Refuge in grasslands near the Platte River in Nebraska.

Colorado butterfly plant	This species occupies moist prairie meadows, in the transition zone between wet stream bottom and rich floodplain areas. This plant does not occur at the site of the Refuge but rather on small tributaries of the North Platte River basin in Wyoming.
Whooping crane	This species does not occur at the site of the Refuge but makes use of the Platte River banks in central Nebraska for feeding and loafing during migrations.
Piping plover	This species does not occur at the site of the Refuge but rather downstream from the Refuge along the Platte River banks in central Nebraska.
Least tern (interior pop.)	This species does not occur at the site of the Refuge but rather downstream from the Refuge along the Platte River banks in central Nebraska.
Pallid sturgeon	This species does not occur at the site of the Refuge but rather downstream from the Refuge along the Platte River in extreme eastern Nebraska, northeast of the city of Lincoln.
Topeka shiner	This fish doesn't occur at the Refuge but rather along small tributaries of the Platte River in central and eastern Nebraska.
American burying beetle	This insect does not occur at the Refuge but rather on grassland habitats in Nebraska along the Platte River and its tributaries.
Eskimo curlew	This migrant bird is only known from sightings in Alaska, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas; Canada, Central and South America. Its status in Nebraska remains unknown with no sightings in many years.
Mexican spotted owl	This species occurs in old-growth forests in Colorado. Its range in Colorado includes Jackson County, where the Refuge sits. However the Refuge does not encompass the habitats needed by this species.

Black-footed ferret	This species prefers to dwell among and feed on prairie dogs. While there are prairie dog colonies in the Refuge this mammal has not been found in the Refuge.
Wyoming toad	The only known populations of this amphibian in the wild occur on small lakes and ponds around Mortenson Lake in SE Wyoming.
Mountain plover:	This species prefers sparsely populated short-grass habitats such as those associated with prairie dog colonies. While there are prairie dog colonies in the Refuge this plover species has not been seen in the Refuge.
River otter:	Rare species on the refuge with approximately 1 sighting per year. Illinois River is the primary habitat used by otters. No documented dens, or young have been found within the Refuge. The Refuge has limited knowledge of their habitat use.
American peregrine falcon:	This species is an rare user of Refuge habitats, with 2 - 4 individuals sighted per year. No nesting has been documented on the Refuge, and use is limited to soaring and foraging.
Western burrowing owl:	This species is a rare user of Refuge habitats, with 1 or 2 individuals being sighted annually, typically in the spring or fall. No burrowing owl use was documented in 2003. Occasional nesters on the Refuge, one successful brood in the last 4 years. White tail prairie dogs inhabit the refuge and provide western burrowing owls nest cavities.
Ferruginous hawk:	This raptor rarely uses the Refuge habitats, with 2-4 individuals sighted per year. No nesting has been documented on the Refuge, and use appears to be limited to soaring and foraging.
Northern sage-grouse:	The Refuge offers significant habitat for populations of this species. The refuge supports one lek site, nesting, brood rearing and some winter habitat. Refuge irrigated meadows appear to provide quality brood rearing habitat. The refuge's upland sage brush community can provide good cover for birds. Hunting is permitted within State specified seasons and bag limits. North Park Sage grouse numbers were in decline until the year 2000, but the population has

experienced growth in the last 3 years.

Long billed curlew:	This species is an extremely rare user of refuge habitats, with 1 individual sighted in the last 3 years and no nesting documented on the refuge. Use seems to be limited to foraging in meadows.
White pelican:	Common spring, summer and fall user of refuge waters. No nesting on refuge, however a nesting areas exists on McFarlane reservoir south-west of the refuge. Typically seen foraging on the Illinois River, and on larger ponds with fishery component.
Northern leopard frog:	Occasionally seen along certain refuge ponds and along the Illinois River. No monitoring on documentation of population density exists for the Refuge.
Wood frog:	One individual discovered in the mid 1990's along the Illinois River channel. No other know specimens. No monitoring on documentation of population density exists for the Refuge.
Western boreal toad:	Boreal toads potentially could exist in the Refuge's ponds along the Illinois River; it is unknown whether those toads are of the western boreal toad subspecies.

VI Description of proposed action

The proposed action is: development and implementation of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan to guide the management of Arapaho NWR for the next 15 years. Implementation of this Plan comprises implementation of all actions and activities to achieve the stated goals contained in the Plan that will ultimately lead to the fulfilment of the purposes for which Congress established Arapaho NWR and assist in the fulfilment of the goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

VII Determination of effects:

A. Explanation of effects of the action on species and critical habitats in items III. A, B & C

Preble's meadow j. mouse	Implementation of the CCP will have no detrimental effects on populations of this mammal in Colorado or Wyoming since known populations of this mouse occur in small tributaries to the Platte River Basin that are not impacted by water flows entering the North Platte River basin from the

	Michigan River watershed.
Bald eagle:	Implementing the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on this raptor. In fact, the continued preservation and management of these lands for the benefit of wildlife species should enhance foraging sites for eagle use.
North Park phacelia:	Implementing the CCP should have no detrimental effects on this rare plant. Population monitoring for the past 7 years has shown a steady increase in flower and rosette density. The CCP proposes to investigate the life history of the plant, and learn more about positive management options. One management option considered was fencing the sites. However, the effects of the current cattle grazing rotation (either positive or negative) are not fully understood. Therefore, no fence is currently proposed for the sites. Given current upward trend in the population, we believe plant research is the best alternative.
Mexican spotted owl:	Implementation of the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on populations of this owl that might occur in Jackson County since there are no know sightings of this species on the Refuge. The Refuge does not encompass any of the necessary habitats required by this species. It is also expected that no action called for by the CCP will have detrimental effects on populations of this owl outside of the Refuge boundaries.
Ute ladies'-tresses orchid	Implementation of the CCP will have no detrimental effects on populations of this plant in Colorado or Wyoming since known populations of this plant occur in small tributaries to the Platte River Basin that are not impacted by water flows entering the North Platte River basin from the Michigan River watershed.
Western prairie f. orchid	Implementation of the CCP includes drawing water owned by the Refuge (see Water Rights in the CCP) from the Illinois River, a tributary of the North Platte River flowing through and bisecting nearly in half the Refuge. The drawn stream water constitutes a water depletion from the river basin. The Service believes that the viability of this species' habitats depend on Platte River flows in Nebraska. Any depletions to these flows along habitats known to harbor this species adversely affect the continued existence of this species. However, because of the way in which Water Law parcels water in Colorado, the Refuge believes

	that if the Refuge doesn't make use of its share of water from the Illinois River, junior water users will take and use the water available in the river. Thus, whether the Refuge uses the water or not, the water is taken out of the Illinois River. Furthermore, the Refuge is already participating in the Platte River recovery program with an annual payment to the National Fish and Wildlife foundation to be used for habitat acquisition and restoration on the central Platte River.
Colorado butterfly plant	Implementation of the CCP will have no detrimental effects on populations of this plant in Wyoming since known populations of this plant occur in small tributaries to the Platte River Basin that are not impacted by water flows entering the North Platte River basin from the Michigan River watershed.
Whooping crane	Implementation of the CCP includes drawing water owned by the Refuge (see Water Rights in the CCP) from the Illinois River, a tributary of the North Platte River flowing through and bisecting nearly in half the Refuge. The drawn stream water constitutes a water depletion from the river basin. The Service believes that the viability of this species' habitats depend on Platte River flows in Nebraska. Any depletions to these flows along habitats known to harbor this species adversely affect the continued existence of this species. However, because of the way in which Water Law parcels water in Colorado, the Refuge believes that if the Refuge doesn't make use of its share of water from the Illinois River, junior water users will take and use the water available in the river. Thus, whether the Refuge uses the water or not, the water is taken out of the Illinois River. Furthermore, the Refuge is already participating in the Platte River recovery program with an annual payment to the National Fish and Wildlife foundation to be used for habitat acquisition and restoration on the central Platte River.
Piping plover	Implementation of the CCP includes drawing water owned by the Refuge (see Water Rights in the CCP) from the Illinois River, a tributary of the North Platte River flowing through and bisecting nearly in half the Refuge. The drawn stream water constitutes a water depletion from the river basin. The Service believes that the viability of this species' habitats depend on Platte River flows in Nebraska.

	Any depletions to these flows along habitats known to harbor this species adversely affect the continued existence of this species. However, because of the way in which Water Law parcels water in Colorado, the Refuge believes that if the Refuge doesn't make use of its share of water from the Illinois River, junior water users will take and use the water available in the river. Thus, whether the Refuge uses the water or not, the water is taken out of the Illinois River. Furthermore, the Refuge is already participating in the Platte River recovery program with an annual payment to the National Fish and Wildlife foundation to be used for habitat acquisition and restoration on the central Platte River.
Least tern (interior pop.)	Implementation of the CCP includes drawing water owned by the Refuge (see Water Rights in the CCP) from the Illinois River, a tributary of the North Platte River flowing through and bisecting nearly in half the Refuge. The drawn stream water constitutes a water depletion from the river basin. The Service believes that the viability of this species' habitats depend on Platte River flows in Nebraska. Any depletions to these flows along habitats known to harbor this species adversely affect the continued existence of this species. However, because of the way in which Water Law parcels water in Colorado, the Refuge believes that if the Refuge doesn't make use of its share of water from the Illinois River, junior water users will take and use the water available in the river. Thus, whether the Refuge uses the water or not, the water is taken out of the Illinois River. Furthermore, the Refuge is already participating in the Platte River recovery program with an annual payment to the National Fish and Wildlife foundation to be used for habitat acquisition and restoration on the central Platte River.
Pallid sturgeon	Implementation of the CCP includes drawing water owned by the Refuge (see Water Rights in the CCP) from the Illinois River, a tributary of the North Platte River flowing through and bisecting nearly in half the Refuge. The drawn stream water constitutes a water depletion from the river basin. The Service believes that the viability of this species' habitats depend on Platte River flows in Nebraska. Any depletions to these flows along habitats known to

harbor this species adversely affect the continued existence of this species. However, because of the way in which Water Law parcels water in Colorado, the Refuge believes that if the Refuge doesn't make use of its share of water from the Illinois River, junior water users will take and use the water available in the river. Thus, whether the Refuge uses the water or not, the water is taken out of the Illinois River. Furthermore, the Refuge is already participating in the Platte River recovery program with an annual payment to the National Fish and Wildlife foundation to be used for habitat acquisition and restoration on the central Platte River.

Topeka shiner	Implementation of the CCP will have no detrimental effects on populations of this fish in Nebraska since known populations of this fish occur in small tributaries to the Platte River Basin that are not impacted by water flows entering the North Platte River basin from the Michigan River watershed.
Mountain plover	This species has not been found in the refuge. Nevertheless, implementation of the CCP should have no detrimental effects, but rather enhance the upland and meadow habitats of the refuge habitats that some day could support this species.

There is no federally designated critical habitat on the action area (Arapaho NWR) and the CCP does not find a need to propose designating critical habitat within the Refuge at this time.

American peregrine falcon:	Implementation of the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on this raptor. In fact, the continued preservation and management of these lands for the benefit of wildlife species should enhance foraging sites for falcon use.
Western burrowing owl:	Implementation of the CCP should have no detrimental effects on this migratory bird. A refuge no hunting policy on white- tailed prairie dogs will help ensure continued suitable nesting areas for burrowing owls. This species use of the refuge will continue to be monitored on an annual basis.
Ferruginous hawk:	Implementation of the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on this raptor. In fact, the continued preservation and management of these lands for the benefit of wildlife species should enhance foraging sites for hawk use.

Northern sage-grouse:	Implementation of the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on this grouse species. In fact, several management objectives in the plan specifically protect and enhance sage grouse habitat. The plan should enhance populations of this bird through the development of a quality upland habitat monitoring program, and efforts to increase grass and forb abundance in sage brush stands.
Long billed curlew:	Implementation of the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on this migratory bird. In fact, several management objectives in the CCP specifically protect and enhance shorebird habitat. Nesting has not been documented on the refuge, or within the county. However, Colorado has vast areas of apparently suitable habitat unoccupied by curlews. The plan should not discourage curlews from utilizing the refuge.
White pelican:	Implementation of the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on this bird. In fact, the continued preservation and management of these waters should enhance available foraging sites for pelicans.
River otter:	Implementing the CCP should have no detrimental effects on this mammal. One focus of the refuge plan is to enhance the structure and function of the Illinois River channel. Therefore, otters should indirectly benefit from refuge management efforts.
Northern leopard frog:	Implementing the CCP is not thought to have detrimental effects on this amphibian. One focus of the refuge plan is to enhance the structure and function of the Illinois River channel. Therefore, frogs should indirectly benefit from refuge management efforts.
Wood frog:	The implementation of the CCP should have no detrimental effects on this amphibian. One focus of the refuge plan is to enhance the structure and function of the Illinois River channel. Therefore, frogs should indirectly benefit from refuge management efforts.
Western boreal toad:	The implementation of the CCP should have no detrimental effects on this amphibian. One focus of the refuge plan is to enhance the structure and function of the Illinois River channel. Therefore, toads should indirectly benefit from refuge management efforts.

A. Explanation of actions to be implemented to reduce adverse effects:

The June 21, 1999 Biological Opinion for the intra-Service Section 7 consultation regarding Refuge water use was amended on October 24, 2003. (See also November 6, 2003 Biological Opinion for ten new wetlands at Arapaho, i.e. new depletions) The Opinion addressed the effect of a revised estimate of the historic depletion to the Platte River basin of 9,463 acre feet annually resulting from refuge operations. Consistent with the Tri-State Cooperative Agreement to develop a Platte River recovery program, a reasonable and prudent alterative was included that called for an interim annual payment of $13,368.04 to the National Fish and Wildlife foundation to be used for habitat acquisition and restoration on the central Platte River. First payment to the foundation was completed in July of 1999. As called for under the Cooperative agreement, the Service will continue to make annual payments until a recovery program is implemented or efforts to implement such a program are abandoned. See attachments: Reinitiation of Intra-Service Section 7 Consultation, Oct 24 2003; Biological Opinion for ten new wetlands... Nov. 6 2003; Revisions to Calculations of Historic Depletions to Platte River Flows at Arapaho NWR, Feb. 21, 2002 and Intra-service Section 7 Consultation for Arapaho NWR Water Management Operations... June 21, 1999.

VIII Effect determination and response requested: [* = optional]

A. Listed species/designated critical habitat:

Determination	Response requested
no effect/no adverse modification (species: NONE)	_____ *Concurrence
may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect species/adversely modify critical habitat (species: bald eagle, North Park phacelia)	✓ Concurrence
may affect and is likely to adversely affect the continued existence of species and adversely modify or destroy their critical habitat (Western prairie orchid, whooping crane, least tern, piping plover, pallid sturgeon)	✓ Formal Consultation

B. Proposed species/proposed critical habitat: none at this time

Determination	Response requested
no effect (Species: NONE)	✓ *Concurrence

may affect and is likely to adversely affect the continued existence of species and adversely modify or destroy their critical habitat (species: NONE) _____ Formal Consultation

C. Candidate Species:

Determination	Response requested
no effect	✓ *Concurrence
may affect and is likely to adversely affect the continued existence of species and adversely modify or destroy their critical habitat (species: NONE)	_____ Formal Consultation

Ann Timberman
Ann Timberman, Project Leader,
Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Complex

5/17/04
Date

IX Reviewing ESO Evaluation:

A. Concurrence X Nonconcurrence_____

B. Formal Consultation required: ___

C. Conference required: ___

D. Informal conference required: ___

E. Remarks:

Susan C Linner
Susan Linner
Colorado Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

5/27/04
Date

Appendix F

Consultation and Coordination

The refuge manager of Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge was assigned primary responsibility for planning in the summer of 2000.

The refuge, with the help of a consultant, prepared a stakeholder involvement plan to ensure all interested parties and stakeholders could have opportunities to express their concerns and raise issues that would be addressed in the comprehensive conservation plan (CCP).

The refuge invited the public, tribes, other agencies, government officials, organizations, and universities to become involved in the planning process. The following table and narratives further describe the consultation and coordination conducted during the CCP development.

The refuge staff and planning team wish to thank all who provided comments, issues, and concerns—the commenters' efforts and information greatly enhanced this CCP.

Date	*Action*	*Outcome*
June 2000	Publication of Notice of Intent (to prepare the CCP) in the Federal Register	Public notification of the upcoming preparation of the CCP
September 2000–May 2001	Biological workshops with agencies	Development of draft focus areas, habitat goals, and habitat objectives
January 2001	Congressional tour of the refuge	Discussions about the CCP
January 2001	County commissioner tour of the refuge	Discussions about the CCP
February 2001	News releases about public meetings sent to the Jackson County Star and Coloradoan (Fort Collins) newspapers	Public notification of opportunities for involvement in the CCP process
February 2001	Public scoping meetings in Walden and Fort Collins, CO	Issues summary
April 2001	Public scoping	Issues summary
April 2001	CCP presentation to the Fort Collins Chapter of the Audubon Society	Increased chapter member understanding of the CCP planning process
June 2001	Landscape issues meeting with agencies and Colorado State University	Issue identification
June 2001	Riparian area workshop with agencies	Field visit of riparian areas
September 2003	Release of draft CCP and environmental assessment (EA) for public review	Receipt of public comments about the draft CCP and EA
September 2003	Public meeting in Walden, CO	Increased public understanding of the draft CCP and EA

Agency and Local Government Coordination

Several meetings and workshops were conducted with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), whose lands adjoin the refuge. This coordination was to ensure that proposed management activities not only benefit the refuge's habitats and wildlife, but complement efforts by these agencies. In addition, agency input has been sought in crucial habitat and wildlife management decisions.

The talents and knowledge provided by the diverse group of contributors below dramatically improved the vision and completeness of this plan.

These individuals of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) and other agencies and organizations were of enormous help through their review and input on the drafts of this CCP.

The refuge manager invited the Jackson County Commissioners to a tour of the refuge on January 22, 2001.

The manager provided the commissioners with briefing packets and gave them an overview of the CCP process and purpose. This meeting also served to obtain comments from the attending commissioners and answer their questions on the refuge and the CCP process.

Contributor	*Position*	*Agency*
David Anderson	*former* cooperative fish and wildlife unit leader	USGS–BRD
John Arkins	biologist	BLM
Greg Auble	biologist	USGS–BRD
Crystal Bechaver	biological technician	USFWS, Region 6
Steve Berendzen	refuge supervisor	USFWS, Region 6
John Blankenship	*former* assistant regional director	USFWS, Region 6
Ayeisha Brinson	economist (intern)	USGS–BRD
Christina Clements	graduate student	Colorado State University
Ron Cole	*former* refuge supervisor	USFWS, Region 6
Rick Coleman	assistant regional director, NWRS	USFWS, Region 6
Jim Coyle	biologist	USGS–BRD
Beth Dickerson	biologist	USFWS, Rocky Mountain Arsenal
Josh Dilley	district wildlife manager	CDOW
John Esperance	branch chief, land protection planning	USFWS, Region 6
Sheri Fetherman	chief, educational and visitor services	USFWS, Region 6
Jaymee Fojtik	*former* GIS specialist	USFWS, Region 6
Jim Gammonley	biologist	CDOW
Liza Graham	biologist	CDOW
Galen Green	fire ecologist	USFWS, Region 6
David Hamilton	biologist	USGS–BRD
Dave Harr	range manager	BLM
Dale Henry	*former* refuge supervisor	USFWS, Region 6
Jerry Jack	range scientist	BLM
Rick Kahn	wildlife manager	CDOW
Ken Kehmeier	fishery biologist	CDOW
Linda Kelly	branch chief, refuge planning	USFWS, Region 6
Ken Kerr	fire management officer	USFWS, Region 6
Wayne King	biologist, NWRS	USFWS, Region 6
Richard Knight	professor of wildlife biology	Colorado State University
Carl Korschgen	GIS specialist	USGS–BRD
Lee Lamb	researcher	USGS–BRD
Lisa Langer	volunteer	USFWS, Region 6
Rachel Laubhan	biologist	USGS–BRD

Contributor	*Position*	*Agency*
Miriam Mazel	realty operations manager	USFWS, Region 6
Bridget McCann	*former* refuge planner	USFWS, Region 6
Ken McDermond	*former* assistant regional director, NWRS	USFWS, Region 6
Adam Misztal	*former* refuge planner	USFWS, Region 6
Ralph D. Morgenweck	regional director	USFWS, Region 6
Eugene Patten	*retired* refuge manager	USFWS
Brad Petch	wildlife biologist	CDOW
Phadrea Ponds	economist	USGS–BRD
Steve Porter	wildlife biologist	CDOW
Ray Rauch	*retired* refuge manager	USFWS
Jason Rohwender	wildlife biologist	USFWS, Ecological Services
Rick Schroeder	biologist	USGS–BRD
Mike Scott	wildlife biologist	USGS–BRD
Larry Shanks	*former* refuge supervisor	USFWS, Region 6
Ron Shupe	deputy assistant regional director, NWRS	USFWS, Region 6
Kirk Snyder	district wildlife manager	CDOW
Michael Spratt	division chief, refuge planning	USFWS, Region 6
Pete Torma	wildlife biologist	BLM
Rod VanVelson	fishery biologist	CDOW
Carl Waller	wildlife biologist	BLM
Ken Waller	wildlife biologist	BLM
Al White	soil conservationist	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Harvey Wittmier	division chief, realty	USFWS, Region 6

Public Involvement

Public meetings were held in the City of Walden (adjacent to the refuge) and Fort Collins (in the front range of Colorado) in February 2001 to try to reach out to as many stakeholders as possible. Public meetings were held on February 15, 2001, in Walden and February 16, 2001, in Fort Collins.

During these meetings, refuge personnel gave a succinct audio-visual presentation of the history and resources of the refuge. They described the need for the CCP and the process for environmental analysis. A question and answer session was held, and the public was asked for comments and issues. The issues raised during the public meetings were inscribed on easel paper. Attendees were invited to submit further issues or questions to the refuge in writing. Questionnaires and CCP summary handouts were distributed during these events.

Public comments were received and used throughout the planning process. Issues and concerns in the draft CCP and EA were identified through discussions with planning team members and key contacts, and through the public scoping process. Comments were received orally at meetings, via e-mail, and in writing. Comments were received before, during, and after scoping and during the comment period phases of the CCP process.

Public Comments

The refuge staff recognizes and appreciates all input received from the public. Comments received during the public review period for the draft CCP and EA have been compiled and summarized, followed by responses from the Service. These issues, concerns, and comments were provided by individuals, agencies, local governments, and organizations concerned about the natural resources of the refuge.

Comment 1—The draft CCP and EA need to adequately describe baseline conditions.

Response: The office fire of 1997, as noted in the comment, was indeed tragic in that past data that may have been invaluable for determining baseline data for this plan was lost. While it is true that "the refuge has had six years to gather this data" since the fire, the refuge has not obtained the needed data due to a variety of circumstances. Given this lack of information, there will be an emphasis on gathering baseline data early in the operation of the

plan, which will be used to assess and re-assess plan objectives.

Comment 2—More information is needed about the issue related to white-tailed prairie dogs.

Several comments were made regarding white-tailed prairie dogs.

Response: While the refuge can and will work with oil companies to minimize impacts from exploration on refuge lands, this activity cannot be prohibited on lands where mineral rights are held by others.

Response: Hunting of prairie dogs is not currently permitted, and there have been no discussions to allow this use. This will be clarified in the final CCP.

Response: Although impacts to prairie dogs of management actions were not directly addressed in the draft CCP, a short narrative will be added to the final CCP. Issuance of the final CCP will not be postponed until a finding is made on the listing petition. If that finding is positive for listing, the refuge will address white-tailed prairie dogs with all management decisions, as required under the Endangered Species Act. The management needs statement supplied is a valuable tool in the CCP process and was appreciated.

Response: The intent of the research goal is that research should benefit the biological knowledge of the refuge and North Park. Thus, most research proposed for biological learning of prairie dogs would probably be allowed. The refuge has the option to not allow research that is deemed incompatible with refuge purposes of establishment or inappropriate for refuge needs.

Comment 3—Sage grouse hunting should not be allowed on the refuge.

Response: The National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act lists hunting as a priority public use on refuges when deemed compatible. Refuge staff were active participants in the formulation of the North Park Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Plan, accepted December 2001. The plan recommends conservation actions dependent on the 3-year average of males on leks. For populations greater than 850 males, the hunting recommendation is a 7-day season with a bag limit of two birds and possession limit of four birds. Populations have exceeded this number since 1998, while allowing the aforementioned season structure (a longer season was allowed in 1998 and 1999). The refuge will continue to be a contributing member of the local sage grouse working group and will address grouse hunting issues as outlined by the CDOW and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policies.

Comment 4—Carnivore restoration could benefit elk management.

Response: If the refuge were a closed ecosystem, assessment of returning carnivores would be appropriate. Since the impact of returning large carnivores would have significant implications to private lands, as well as to several state and federal agencies, this discussion would be beyond the scope and intent of a refuge CCP.

Comment 5—The Service must not support non-native fisheries that contribute to the imperilment of native species.

A comment suggested native trout are negatively impacted by the non-native brown and rainbow trout in the North Platte drainage. The statement is made that refuge efforts should be spent on recovery of "imperiled native fish."

Response: There are no trout native to the North Platte River. Similarly, there is no available evidence that any of the fish native to the Illinois River is imperiled. Fish stocking on the refuge by the State of Colorado has occurred in the past, but on a very intermittent basis. Consequently, the statement on page 46 of the CCP regarding periodic stocking on the refuge will be removed. The Improvement Act lists fishing as a priority public use of refuges that will be encouraged if compatible with purposes of refuge establishment. By managing to maintain healthy streams, fishing opportunities and proper habitat for native fish should be maintained.

Comment 6—More information is needed about refuge work relating to the North Park phacelia.

Response: Assertions were made that the refuge has had decades to work on the phacelia. Although the phacelia was listed as endangered in 1982 and had a recovery plan completed in 1986, it was not discovered on the refuge until 1995. The 308-acre field where the two known phacelia populations are located have been grazed three times since 1995 at a rate no higher than 0.19 animal unit months (AUMs) per acre.

Response: Concern was noted that the CCP states that a phacelia management plan will be completed by 2010. This does not preclude completion before that date. If a life history study can be funded, management plans would likely soon follow. A thorough study of the life history and needs of the plant (RONS project #98002, appendix K) needs to be conducted prior to making decisions on how to manage it. Livestock grazing may be an impact to phacelia. However, this phacelia is found in disturbed sites, populations have maintained viability with the current grazing regime since discovery, and the plant has survived 100 plus years of livestock grazing in the area. It is prudent to find out if the effects of grazing are positive or negative on the plant before making management decisions on grazing.

Comment 7—Livestock grazing impacts should be evaluated more carefully.

Response: This is a true statement and, as described on page 21 of the draft CCP, the refuge intends to evaluate and adapt the grazing program to ensure this tool is being used properly to achieve the habitat objectives defined in the CCP.

Comment 8—Either bring back bison or allow natural processes to be the only management on upland habitats for migratory birds.

Several comments suggested a hands-off management style, or one that incorporated bison, might be a more environmentally sound approach.

Response: Early in the planning process, a hands-off management style was presented as a possible management strategy. However, refuge staff determined this approach would not allow goals and objectives to be met, nor would it fulfill the purposes for which Congress established the refuge. Grazing is a tool used by wildlife managers to invigorate and maintain healthy grass stands necessary for migratory bird nesting. In North Park, cattle are applied as a tool generally in mid- to late summer for grassland management. No cattle are wintered on the refuge. Bison could fill a role similar to cattle; however, bison are not currently available in North Park. In addition, fences would require modification to accommodate the use of bison. Returning the refuge to a natural or an earlier successional stage was also determined to not be feasible. Humans have altered the flood plain through irrigation and haying practices. The cost of restoration is prohibitive and moves away from the purposes for which the refuge was established.

Comment 9—Dog walking and riding bicycles on roads open to vehicle travel needs to be considered.

Response: The decision was made to change the language of the strategy addressing these other uses of the refuge to reflect that walking leased dogs and riding bicycles may be allowed on designated roads and trails as deemed appropriate by management.

Comment 10—Some roads may be open to hunting but possibly not to other uses.

Response: These issues will be addressed in the hunting, travel management, and public use step-down management plans.

Comment 11—Use of all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles should not be allowed on the refuge.

Response: Operations of these vehicles by the public are not permitted as they are incompatible with purposes of establishment for the refuge.

Comment 12—High elk numbers could severely impact other wildlife populations on the refuge.

Response: Refuge staff are working with CDOW to address the issue.

Comment 13—Some changes are needed for public access on the refuge.

Response: These issues will be addressed by completion of step-down management plans for public use and travel management.

Comment 14—Alternatives B and D appear to be the same.

Response: Most of the proposed action (alternative D) did come from Alternative B.

Comment 15—How will staff time be shared among the other refuges in the complex if proposed staff increases occur?

Response: The amount of time employees would spend at a particular station will depend on work priorities for a given year, and will be a management decision when and if these positions are filled.

Appendix G
Mailing List

Federal Officials

U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Washington, D.C.
Fort Collins, CO, office—Keith Johnson
U.S. Senator Wayne Allard, Washington, D.C.
Englewood, CO, office—Kristine A. Pollard
U.S. Representative Scott McInnis, Washington, D.C.
Glenwood Springs, CO, office—William Endriss

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Land Management, Kremmling, CO—Chuck Cesar
Environmental Protection Agency, Denver, CO
Natural Resource Conservation Service, Jackson County, Walden, CO
USDA Forest Service, Walden, CO—Chuck Oliver
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Air Quality Branch, CO
Alamosa-Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge complex, CO
Albuquerque, NM
Anchorage, AK
Arlington, VA
Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge, ND
Atlanta, GA
Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge, CO
Denver, CO
Ecological Services Field Office, CO
Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, UT
Fort Snelling, MN
Hadley, MA
Juneau, AK
Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge, MT
Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge, MT
Portland, OR
Sacramento, CA
Shepherdstown, WV
Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, SD
Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge, WY
Sherwood, OR
U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, Fort Collins, CO—David Hamilton, Murray Lauhban, Rick Schroeder

Tribal Officials

Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Arapaho Tribe Business Committee
Pawnee Tribe

State Officials

Colorado Governor Bill Owens
Colorado State Representative Al White
Colorado State Senator Jack Taylor

State Agencies

Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Colorado Division of Wildlife
Meeker, CO—Brad Petch
Walden, CO—Josh Dilley, Kirk Snyder, J. Wenum
Fort Collins, CO—Jim Gammonley, Rick Kahn, Steve Porter
Steamboat Springs, CO—Liza Graham, Jim Hicks, Sue Werner
Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO
Colorado State Forest, Jackson County, Walden, CO
Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Denver, CO
Colorado State Parks and Recreation, Walden, CO
Colorado Water Commissioner, Walden, CO
Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, IL

Local Governments

Jackson County
Administrator
Commissioners
Extension Office
Sheriff's Office
Soil Conservation District
Weed Coordinator
Mayor Kyle Fliniau

Newspapers

Jackson County Star, Walden, CO
Steamboat Pilot, Steamboat Springs, CO
The Coloradoan, Fort Collins, CO

Schools, Universities, and Libraries

Colorado State University, Fort Collins and Walden, CO
Jackson County Library, Walden, CO
Mesa State College
North Park School District, Walden, CO
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL—Professor Friesema
University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY

Individuals

53 persons

Organizations

Animal Protection Institute, Sacramento, CA
Colorado Cooperative Fish and Wildlife, Fort Collins, CO
Colorado Ducks Unlimited
Defenders of Wildlife, Washington, D.C.
Fund for Animals, Silver Spring, MD
KRA Corporation, Fish and Wildlife Reference Section, Bethesda, MD
National Audubon Society, Washington, D.C.
National Trappers Association, New Martinsville, WV
National Wildlife Refuge Association, Colorado Springs, CO—Brent Giezentanner
North Park Cattlewomen's Association, Walden, CO
North Park Chamber of Commerce, Walden, CO
North Park Fair Board Association, Walden, CO
North Park Habitat Partnership Program, Walden, CO
North Park Stockgrowers Association, Cowdrey, CO
North Park Water Conservancy District, Walden, CO
Owl Mountain Partnership, Walden, CO
Sage Grouse Working Group, Walden, CO
The Nature Conservancy, Boulder, CO
The Wilderness Society, Washington, D.C.
The Wildlife Society, Central Mountain and Plains Section, Fort Collins, CO
Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C.

Appendix H

Habitat Rationale

Riparian Habitat

The riparian habitat (4,374 acres) on Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge is composed of the channel, floodplain, and transitional upland fringe along portions of the Illinois River and Spring Creek. Historically, the refuge staff has considered the floodplain and transitional fringe collectively as irrigated meadow. However, we have chosen to use channel, floodplain, and transitional fringe in this document because these components more appropriately represent the collective functions and processes of riparian habitats, and such a designation allows management potential of the entire area to be more thoroughly evaluated.

Although the channel is well-defined as the portion of the riparian zone with flowing surface water (The Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group 1998), delineation of the floodplain and the transitional upland fringe is more difficult because characteristics used to separate these two components are temporally dynamic. The floodplain is a highly variable area on one or both sides of the stream channel that is inundated by floodwaters at some interval. Two methods describe the floodplain: hydrological and topographical. The hydrological floodplain is the land adjacent to the base flow channel residing below bankfull elevation that is inundated about 2 years out of 3 (The Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group 1998). In contrast, the topographical floodplain is the land adjacent to the channel (including the hydrologic floodplain) up to an elevation reached by a flood peak of a given frequency (e.g., 100-year floodplain) (The Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group 1998). In some cases, these two metrics can result in the same delineation of the floodplain.

The transitional upland fringe is the zone between the floodplain and the surrounding upland landscape. This zone can incorporate numerous landscape features and vegetation communities (e.g., forests and prairies). However, all transitional upland fringes have one common attribute: they are distinguishable from uplands by their greater connection to the floodplain and stream (The Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group 1998). Objective 4 contains further discussion of Illinois River form and function.

Assumptions that were used during the decision-making process included (1) channel incision has occurred (See objective 4); (2) the width of the floodplain has been reduced [conservative estimate of 137 meters on each side of channel]; and (3) width of transitional upland fringe has increased [137 meters from channel to base of hillslope]. Obviously, these assumptions form the basis for fundamental decisions that have been made; thus, they pervade the entire decision-making framework. Although acceptable at the current time, such assumptions should be validated in the near future. This is particularly critical when considering management options within riparian systems because hydroperiod is a primary function that determines vegetation composition and productivity (Cooper 1986). In some cases, such as restoration of the willow community, validation of these assumptions must occur prior to initiating management activities. Otherwise, the probability of success will be reduced greatly, staff time will be wasted, and funding will not be used efficiently. Information necessary to make decisions regarding future management of the riparian system will likely include magnitude and duration of peak and low flows, bankfull discharge, stage vs. discharge relationships, and seasonal groundwater changes. More detail on the information and equipment necessary to validate assumptions occurs later in this section.

Goal

Provide a riparian community representative of the historic flora and fauna in a high valley of the southern Rocky Mountains to provide habitat for migratory birds, large mammals, and river-dependent species.

Explanation

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems (Mitsch and Gosselink 1993). In the western United States, this is particularly true with respect to riparian systems (Johnson et al. 1977). In general, riparian habitats often support a higher diversity of plant species, higher density, and more variable structure than associated uplands (American Fisheries Society 1980). Current information indicates that riparian habitat along the Illinois River supports a diverse assemblage of rushes, sedges, grasses, and numerous species of willows (refuge files). Although birch (*Betula spp.*) and alder (*Alnus spp.*) are common along the Michigan River, another tributary of the North Platte River in North Park, these species currently are not present along the Illinois River, and they

were not mentioned in the historical documents located. Historically, the distribution of vegetation communities was highly variable because dynamic river fluctuations, herbivory, and local climatic changes resulted in a constantly changing plant mosaic.

The ability of riparian systems to support a diverse assemblage of vertebrates is also well-documented (Pashley et al. 2000). In fact, riparian habitats are disproportionately more important for support of wildlife than any other type of ecological habitat (Cooper 1986). For example, floodplain vegetation provides habitats for more species of birds than other vegetation associations in western North America (Stanley and Knopf 2000), and in northern Colorado, 82 percent of breeding bird species use riparian vegetation (Knopf 1985). Collectively, the components (channel, floodplain, transitional upland fringe) comprising this system provide habitat for fishes, large and small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, wetland-dependent birds (waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds), and a large diversity of passerines including Neotropical migrants and grassland birds. Species of primary management interest on the refuge include migratory birds (Neotropical migrants, grassland birds, waterfowl, shorebirds), whereas large mammals and channel dependent vertebrates (river otter, fishes) are a secondary focus.

The potential for the refuge to manage for historic flora remains high because seedbanks and budbanks are resilient (Fredrickson and Taylor 1982; Leck 1989). Rather, the greatest challenge will be the ability to manage hydroperiods and herbivory in a manner necessary to: (1) stimulate establishment and ensure survival of some plant species (e.g., willows); (2) mimic the structural variability required by different vertebrates; and (3) provide vegetation communities in a spatial configuration required by certain area-sensitive vertebrates. The ability to successfully manage for this diverse array of plant communities will ultimately determine the populations of vertebrates that will inhabit the riparian corridor. Although the refuge staff believes that the majority of fauna that historically occurred within the corridor will be supported by the following objectives, populations of some species will likely be lower than historic levels due to constraints on area available and management potential.

Objective

Restore (50–100 acres) of dense (40- to 100-percent) willow in patches greater than 0.2 hectares and 20 meters wide in the central third of the Illinois River (from the north end of the island to the confluence with Spring Creek) to connect existing willow patches and maintain 535 acres of dense willow in patches in the lower third of the Illinois River to benefit nesting Neotropical migrant songbirds (yellow warbler, willow flycatcher) and resident moose and beaver.

Rationale

Woody vegetation is a common component on the Illinois River floodplain. Although cottonwood (*Populus spp.*) is native to this region and some individual trees currently exist on the refuge, this species occurs primarily at historic home sites and the staff does not consider reestablishment a priority. Rather, willow (*Salix spp.*) is the primary genera composing the woody component along the river. Based on available information, as many as eight willow species are known to occur on the refuge, including sandbar willow (*S. exigua*), Geyer's willow (*S. geyeriana*), Wolf's willow (*S. wolfii*), diamondleaf willow (*S. planifolia*), Bebb willow (*S. bebbiana*), mountain willow (*S. monticola*), whiplash willow (*S. caudata*), and blueberry willow (*S. pseudocordata*) (refuge records; Canon and Knopf 1984). Additional shrub species that represent minor components include interior rose (*Rosa woodsii*) and golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) (Stanley and Knopf 2000).

Several reasons exist for restoring and maintaining the willow community. First, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (NWRSIA) of 1997 requires the refuge system to preserve unique or historic habitats if it is compatible with the purpose of the refuge (16 U.S.C. 668d). Estimates of riparian habitat loss in the United States range from 70–90 percent (Council on Environmental Quality 1978, Swift 1984); thus, protection of this habitat type is critical (Cooper 1986). At the current time, the extent and width of the woody component of the riparian community on the refuge is completely absent along several reaches in the northern 33 percent of the refuge. Second, riparian plant communities (including willow) play an important role in the maintenance of water quality and aquatic habitat, support distinct vegetation communities, and afford high-quality terrestrial wildlife habitat (Thomas et al. 1979; Windell et al. 1986; Naiman et al. 1993; Stocek 1994). Finally, the purpose for refuge establishment was to provide habitat for migratory species (16 U.S.C. 715d). Among this large assemblage are species (referred to as Neotropical migrants) that migrate between South and North America.

Neotropical migratory species account for 45 percent of 58 area-sensitive bird species in riparian habitats (Freemark et al. 1995). Further, many members of this species group currently are declining throughout much of their range (DeGraaf and Rappole 1995) and some species (e.g., southwestern willow flycatcher) are listed as threatened or endangered (U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service 1995). Approximately 50 percent of the Neotropical migrants reported as declining are dependent on woody vegetation for foraging and nesting (DeGraaf and Rappole 1995). In arid climates such as Colorado, riparian habitats represent obligate or preferred nesting sites and support higher densities and diversities of migrating and nesting birds (Carothers and Johnson 1975; Stevens et al. 1977; Knopf 1985).

The refuge currently supports some Neotropical migrants that nest in woody vegetation. Research conducted on the refuge indicate that yellow warblers, American robins, song sparrows, savannah sparrows, red-winged blackbirds, brown-headed cowbirds, willow flycatchers, Lincoln's sparrows, and white-crowned sparrows represent greater than 90 percent of the breeding individuals within the local avifauna (Knopf et al. 1988). However, abundance of some species is low and certain species known to occur in North Park have not been observed on the refuge (Knopf, unpublished data, refuge files). Although the causes for the lack of occurrence are unknown, a potential reason may be area size and isolation of willows. Past research on the requirements of breeding bird communities suggests that area, in combination with isolation of woodland, is one of the most important considerations in maintaining natural diversity of breeding bird populations (Robbins 1979; Whitcomb et al. 1981; Askins et al. 1987; Blake and Karr 1987; Lynch 1987).

In general, species richness increases with the area or width of riparian forests (Stauffer and Best 1980; Dobkin and Wilcox 1986; Keller et al. 1993; Freemark et al. 1995). Further, the abundance of migrants typically is higher in the interior of riparian habitats (Szaro and Jakle 1985). However, the types of species and amount of use are often influenced by geographic orientation and the type of adjacent habitats. For example, species abundance can differ depending on slope (Dobkin and Wilcox 1986) and surrounding habitat types (Carothers et al. 1974), and nest density can differ depending on orientation of habitat relative to migration pathways (Gutzwiller and Anderson 1992).

Thus, the refuge staff has decided to restore additional areas of willow along the central portion of the Illinois River and maintain or improve the willow community along the southern extent of the refuge. A primary reason for restoring willows along the central portion of the refuge is that research conducted in many areas of North America has suggested that habitat configuration (size, shape, and geographical orientation) influences the relative importance of riparian habitats (Freemark et al. 1995); either by affecting presence or abundance (Askins and Philbrick 1987; Villard et al. 1995) and movements (Sutcliffe and Thomas 1996) of species. In this context, increasing the extent of willow to the north would reduce the distance between willow communities on the Illinois and Michigan River and potentially provide benefits to a wider range of passerines by providing breeding habitat, travel corridors to larger patches of woody habitat, and migratory stopover habitat (Winker et al. 1992; Haas 1995; Thurmond et al. 1995; Machtans et al. 1996; Kilgo et al. 1998; Hagar 1999).

The parameters used to determine the amount and structural characteristics of willow were based on available information. However, much of this research was conducted in riparian areas outside of Colorado; thus, applicability to riparian habitats on the refuge may not be direct because a given species, patterns in habitat use can vary from one geographic area to another (Hutto 1992), within and among years (Karr and Freemark 1985), and diurnally (Stacier 1992). However, a lack of perfect or even moderate knowledge cannot be an impediment to conservation action (Pashley et al. 2000).

The exact dimensions (width, length) of the woody riparian community necessary to benefit the most birds have received much discussion (Darveau et al. 1993; Spackman and Hughes 1995). Several studies have indicated that widths greater than 100 meters are required to support an unaltered bird assemblage (Keller et al. 1993; Hodges and Krementz 1996; Kilgo et al. 1998; but see Gates and Gysel 1978 for potential of areas to function as ecological traps). For example, riparian widths of 40–50 meters supported densities less than 50 percent of that observed in interior balsam fir forests (Whitaker and Montevecchi 1999). However, they did indicate that widths greater than 20 meters would provide benefits to a relatively diverse bird assemblage. Similar results have been reported in other regions of the United States. Higher bird densities but fewer species were documented in narrow (16–20 meter) versus wide (40–60 meter) riparian zones in Georgia (Thurmond et al. 1995), Quebec (Darveau et al. 1995), Rocky Mountains (Kinley and Newhouse 1997), and Oregon (Hagar 1999). Based on this information, the refuge staff will attempt to establish willows in a minimum of 20-meter-wide zones along the Illinois River. However, the extent to which this objective can be accomplished is currently unknown because the width of the current floodplain must first be defined.

Length, in addition to width, must also be considered in determining the optimum shape of riparian zones because proximity to edge influences use by many Neotropical migratory species (Whitcomb et al. 1981). We searched published information on breeding habitat requirements of Neotropical migratory birds occurring in Jackson County, Colorado to estimate the minimum area required. Of the species for which information was

located, veery was the species with the largest area requirement (20 hectares in Maryland; Robbins et al. 1989). Based on an average width of 20 meters, the riparian zone would have to exceed 500 meters in length to support breeding veery. Riparian areas with these dimensions would provide potential breeding habitat for other Neotropical species, including but not limited to house wren, warbling vireo, orange-crowned warblers, northern waterthrush, yellow-billed cuckoo, yellow warbler, willow flycatcher, hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch, and western wood pewee (Galli et al. 1976, Robbins et al. 1989, Hagar 1999; table A). However, based on the estimated area requirement (225 hectares) of red-shouldered hawk, these areas will not support breeding raptors (Robbins et al. 1989). Although willow restoration at this scale may be ideal, the ability to accomplish an objective of this magnitude is unknown because critical information on the functions of the river. Therefore, the refuge will restore 50–100 acres of dense willows, in smaller patch sizes of 0.5 acres for the 15-year plan, which will provide habitat for many edge and interior edge Neotropical species (table A).

In addition to area, structure is also an important component determining the types and abundance of species using wooded riparian habitats (Fleming and Giuliano 1998, Dieni and Anderson 1999). Bird species numbers typically increase with the density and distribution of foliage among vertical strata (Martin 1988). This is not surprising since birds are known to actively select habitat on the basis of such proximate factors as landscape features, terrain, substrate, vegetative structure, or arrangement of vegetation (Wiens 1969). In general, a more heterogeneous habitat allows co-occurrence of more species (May 1986) because species-specific habitat requirements are met (Karr 1982) and because species may be spatially segregated (Martin 1986). In addition, some studies using artificial nests have found an inverse relation between predation rates and vegetation complexity in nesting habitat (Bowman and Harris 1980, Ratti and Reese 1988). Therefore, the refuge has established guidelines to promote multiple shrub layers by managing for variable heights ranging from 1–10 meters within the woody riparian zone.

Of all structural components that potentially influence habitat use by woodland passerines, most studies have identified nesting and foraging substrate as the two most important. If these components are classified according to general groups (i.e., foraging=ground, low foliage, high foliage; nesting=cavity, ground, low foliage, high foliage), comparisons indicate that a high percentage of variation in species numbers and species richness among areas are explained by viewing structure at this level of complexity (Martin 1988). For example, the number of species observed often is correlated with increasing foliage diversity (height, density). Although this relationship is often explained as a function of increasing foraging niche space or food abundance (MacArthur and MacArthur 1961; Willson 1974; Martin 1984), information also exists that observed relationships result from correlation with suitable nest sites (Oniki 1985; Martin 1988). Regardless, such a relationship indicates that greater structural diversity will support a greater number of species. Although the upper limits of vertical diversity along the Illinois River is somewhat constrained because the woody component is almost exclusively shrubs (willow), management can be directed toward increasing horizontal diversity and vertical diversity less than 10 meters. However, objectives for habitat management must be relatively broad because riparian systems are dynamic and many habitat management practices (e.g., fire, hydrology) cannot be controlled at the finite levels necessary to affect a minute change in conditions (e.g., 40- to 45-percent canopy closure).

The refuge established structural requirements of the woody riparian community based on the breeding requirements of birds because: (1) breeding requirements are more narrow than migratory requirements; and (2) birds distribute among different layers of vegetation (Anderson and Shugart 1974; Willson 1974; Martin 1984). Some information on the specific habitat requirements of species occurring in North Park was available, but most information was of a general nature that provided undefined descriptions (e.g., dense/sparse, tall/short). We constructed a table A using this type of information for individual bird species for the purpose of identifying broad structural components that would be managed within the woody riparian component. We then used available quantifiable information available for several species to define these broad terms.

Research conducted on the refuge indicates that yellow warblers select nest sites characterized by the horizontal arrangement of willow, including average distance to nearest willow (0.16 meter), average distance to farthest willow (0.4 meter), and the average distance to the nearest willow in each of 4 quadrants (0.16 meter) (Knopf and Sedgwick 1992). This information suggests yellow warblers require clumps of uniform-sized bushes characterized by moderate canopy closure. In a similar study conducted on willow flycatchers, nest sites were characterized by smaller distances between willow (0.8 ± 0.2 meter [mean $\pm$ standard error]) and greater willow the nest tree and 4 nearest trees in each quadrant; larger willow patches and smaller gaps (0.4 ± 0.5 meter) in 0.07-hectare circular plots around nest sites, and greater willow coverage (49.3 ± 2.3 percent) and less non-

Table A. General breeding habitat requirements of selected woodland birds in North Park, Colorado

Species	*Breed*[a]		*Nest*[e]		*Forage*[f]		*General Habitat Characteristics*[k]
	Type	*Minimum patch (ha)*	*Type*	*Height (m)*	*Type*	*Height (m)*	
American Redstart	I	118.0	F	4-12	A,F	3-6	open, moist, deciduous woods with good undergrowth of shrubs/young trees
Blackbird, Red-winged	E	24.0	F	<3	F	<3	
Bluebird, Mountain	E		C				prefer forest edges and open habitats
Chickadee			C		F	>3 - >15	aspen/cottonwood preferred
Black-capped	IE	4.7					
Mountain			C		F	>3 - >15	
Common Yellowthroat	IE	2.3	F	<3;<0.5	F,G	<3;<5.5	prefer cattail or low streamside thickets; require open water
Cowbird, Brown-headed	E	2.3					
Cuckoo, Yellow-billed	IE	2.3	F	<3; 0.5-6			old growth with dense understory
Dove, Mourning	E	2.3					
Flicker, Northern	IE	1.8	C		G		
Flycatcher							
Dusky			F	<3			dense shrubby understory
Hammond's				3-31	F	6-12	mature conifer with little ground cover; limited understory; some occur in shrubs
Olive-sided	E[b]		F	4.5-21	A		conifers with snags and clearings; early post-fire communities; nearby water
Willow	E			1.2	F	0.6-18[h]	2–3 layers of shrubs preferred; presence of water; dense shrub patches with openings for nesting; nest in areas with trees 3–15 m with or without distinct overstory and very dense <2 m; forage in areas <10 m wide; shrub patches with canopy cover 40–100% and foliage density 50–70% in nesting shrub layer[h]
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted	IE	24.0					
Horned lark			G		G		shortgrass with considerable bare ground and grasses <3 cm; widely spaced shrubs <25 cm tall
Jay, Stellar's			F	>3	F	>3	
Kingfisher, Belted			G		W		requires clear, slow-moving water; nest within 800 m of water; perching/nest sites limiting
Nuthatch							
White-breasted	I	4.7	C		B		prefer conifers/aspen over riparian
Red-breasted	I[b]		C		B		
Robin, American	E	1.8	F	>3	G		
Solitaire, Townsend's			G		F,G	<3	forage in open areas of understory

Table A. General breeding habitat requirements of selected woodland birds in North Park, Colorado

Species	Breed[a]		Nest[e]		Forage[f]		General Habitat Characteristics[k]
	Type	Minimum patch (ha)	Type	Height (m)	Type	Height (m)	
Sparrow							
Field	E	28.0					
Fox			G		G		dense/shrubby understory associated with water
Lincoln's[b]	E		G		G		boggy areas w/willows/sedges/aspen; wet ground for foraging; nest in dense sedges; associated with warblers (yellow, Wilson's), sparrows (song, fox, white-crowned), and dusky flycatcher
Savannah		>10[g]					avoid areas with extensive tree cover; prefer intermediate vegetation height and density, sparse or low (<3 m) shrubs; forb:grass (25:75)
White-crowned	E[b]		G		G		requires grasslands, bare ground for foraging, and dense shrubs for nesting; associated with Wilson's warbler and sparrows (fox, Lincoln's)
Swallow, violet-green			C		A		
Thrush							
Hermit			F	1-3	F,G	<2	prefer conifer/hardwood; leaf litter for foraging; drier than Swainson's thrush
Swainson's			F	1-1.5	A		similar to veery but less dense understory and larger willows growing in larger patches; associated with sparrows(fox, song, Lincoln's, white-crowned), warblers (yellow, Wilson's), and flycatchers (dusky, willow)
Towhee, Green-tailed			F,G	<3	G		dry brushy areas with open spaces between shrubs
Veery[b]	I	28.0	G	G; <1.5			thick/dense understory
Vireo, Warbling		7.0[d]	F	>3	F	>3-16	widely spaced trees with little undergrowth and open canopy
Warbler							
MacGillivray's			F	<3	F	<3	large shrubs; similar to orange-crowned warblers
Orange-crowned			F,G		F	>3; ALL	dense willows; associated with Virginia's and MacGillivray's warblers
Virginia's			G				dense understory
Wilson's							dense willows
Yellow	E	0.05-0.45[j]	F	0-15[h]	A,F	0-16[i]	require tall singing posts and open space; breeding primarily in willows 1–2 m; shrub densities 60–80% optimal; avoid widely spaced shrubs and forests with closed canopies[i]
Yellow-rumped			F	1.2-15	F,G		prefer conifer/aspen

Table A. General breeding habitat requirements of selected woodland birds in North Park, Colorado

Species	Breed[a]		Nest[e]		Forage[f]		General Habitat Characteristics[k]
	Type	Minimum patch (ha)	Type	Height (m)	Type	Height (m)	
Waterthrush, Northern							thick/dense willows
Woodpecker							
Downy	IE	16.2	C	1.2-12			small, young trees with low canopy
Hairy	I	1.8	C	1.5-18	B		mature forests with dense canopy; snags
Wood Pewee, Western			F	2-24		6-23	nests in shrubs (low density); requires trees with exposed branches
Wren, House	E	2.3	C		F	<3	prefer aspen/cottonwood

[a]*From Blake and Karr (1987). Patches sampled ranged from 1.8–600 ha. Habitat classification (I=interior; IE=interior and edge) based on literature (Kendeigh 1982, Bohlen 1978, Whitcomb et al. 1981) and authors' experience in Illinois.*

[b]*From Whitaker and Montevecchi (1999).*

[c]*Robbins et al. (1989) report 20 ha as minimum.*

[d]*Maximum territory size according to Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (1998).*

[e]*From Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (1998) and Martin (1988); C=cavity, F=foliage, G=ground.*[f]*From Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (1998) and Martin (1988); A=air, B=bark, F=foliage, G=ground, W=water.*

[g]*From Illinois (Herkert et al. 1993).*

[h]*From Sogge et al. (1997).*

[i]*From Morse (1966), Hutto (1981), Schroeder (1982), Knopf and Sedgwick (1992), Stevenson and Anderson (1994), Briskie (1995), Dunn and Garrett (1997), Lowther et al. (1999).*

[j]*Territory size, which is not equivalent to minimum patch size; from Fryendall (1967) and Lowther et al. (1999).*

[k]*From Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (1998) unless otherwise noted.*

willow coverage (50.7 ± 12.4 percent) in 0.32-hectare circular plots surrounding the nest site (Sedgwick and Knopf 1992).

In the Wind River Range of Wyoming, the abundance of western wood-pewees and warbling vireos was greater in unburned aspen forests because of greater canopy cover (46.9 percent) and canopy depth (4.6 meter) compared to burned aspen forests (18.3 percent canopy cover; 4.1-meter canopy depth) (Dieni and Anderson 1999). In addition, orange-crowned warblers and dusky flycatchers were observed more in areas of unburned sites; presumably because of greater shrub cover (19.6 percent in unburned sites and 8.6 percent in burned sites). However, overall species richness did not differ between unburned and burned sites suggesting these species are tolerant of relatively wide ranges of habitat structure.

A comparison of forest/field edges and forest/shrub edges in Pennsylvania suggest that the abundance of song sparrows, chipping sparrows, common yellowthroats, and brown-headed cowbirds were greater, and rose-breasted grosbeaks were lower, in forest/shrub edges (Fleming and Giuliano 1998). Comparison of structural features densities (not interpretable) within an area defined by indicated that shrub canopy cover (76.3 percent between 0-2 meters) and vertical cover (68.8 percent) were greater and sapling height (5.0 meters maximum) was lower in forest/shrub edges compared to forest/field edges (57.4-percent shrub cover; 17.4-percent vertical cover, 14.7-meter shrub height). In western Oregon, the abundance of orange-crowned warblers, MacGillivray's warblers, white-crowned sparrows, house wrens, northern flickers, and Stellar's jays were greatest in logged sites, whereas Hammond's flycatcher abundance was greatest in unlogged sites (Hagar 1999). Of the habitat variables quantified in this study, the number of live stems, stems greater than or equal to 50 centimeters dbh, and snags greater than 30 centimeters dbh were lower (P less than 0.05) in logged (90.1 ± 18.6 live stems, 14.6 ± 3.4 stems greater than 50 centimeters, and 11.2 ± 1.8 snags) compared to unlogged sites (139.3 ± 15.5 live stems, 51.2 ± 10.7 stems greater than 50 centimeters, 18.3 ± 3.2 snags), suggesting that species abundances are related to structural characteristics effected by tree density (e.g., canopy closure, canopy depth) and cavity availability.

Achieving the conditions stated in this objective should ensure some suitable habitat for the range of Neotropical bird species that occur in North Park, including species that require dense, shrubby habitats and those species that require more open, widely-spaced woody cover. Regardless of area requirements, however, the ability of the refuge to provide breeding habitat for the complete assemblage of birds potentially occurring on the refuge will not be possible. For example, many

species considered (table A) require cavities for nesting, but potential cavity sites are limited on the refuge because willow is the dominant woody vegetation. Therefore, accomplishing this objective will not provide habitat for the entire assemblage of birds known to occur in this habitat type. However, it may provide potential breeding habitat for several Neotropical species that currently do not breed on the refuge.

Although based on breeding requirements of Neotropical birds, numerous other species will also benefit from increasing the willow community on the refuge. For example, the target dimensions of woody riparian habitat will also provide migratory habitat for numerous passerines, forage and cover for large mammals (e.g., moose, elk, mule deer) (Allen et al. 1987; Snyder 1991), and migratory and breeding habitat for several species of waterfowl (e.g., mallard, gadwall, and teal) (Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas 1998). Further, riparian buffers along small headwater streams (e.g., Illinois River) may be instrumental in maintaining populations of amphibians associated with riparian habitat in closed-canopy forests (Vesely 1997).

Strategies

Numerous strategies have been used to successfully reintroduce willows, including establishment from seed, planting slims or bare-root stock, and excavation and movement of existing willows (Svejcar et al. 1991; Friedman et al. 1995; Houle and Babeux 1998; Pezeshki et al. 1998). The viability and costs of each method varies depending on local environmental conditions and availability of a plant source. Information necessary to decide on the best strategy of restoration includes data on dates of seed fall, area that can be expected to receive seed, area that experiences surface flooding, groundwater fluctuations (including peaks, seasonal fluctuations, etc.) at different elevations within the floodplain and transitional fringe, current vegetation conditions, and water management capabilities (surface and groundwater).

In general, germination of willow seed requires bare, moist substrates that are free of shade (Johnson et al. 1976; Bradley and Smith 1986; Rood and Mahoney 1990; Scott et al. 1993). Appropriate conditions can be created using several combinations of strategies, including fire, herbicides, scraping sod, and water management (Friedman et al. 1995). During the initial establishment phase, however, soil moisture conditions are critical to ensure survival (Pezeshki et al. 1998). Seedlings of most cottonwood and willow species are intolerant of low moisture (McLeod and McPherson 1973; Krasny et al. 1988).

Numerous studies have indicated that rainfall alone is insufficient to support seed germination and seedling establishment on alluvial sands on sites that are not susceptible to mechanical damage by flooding and rain (Moss 1938; Engstrom 1948; Segelquist et al. 1993). Therefore, even if slims and bare-root stock are used, success will be dependent largely on the ability to control groundwater fluctuations, particularly rate, duration, and depth of groundwater decline (Segelquist et al. 1993).

Results of some studies indicate that a gradually declining water table promotes root growth to a greater depth than a static water table (Fenner et al. 1984; Segelquist et al. 1993). Thus, minor groundwater fluctuations can be advantageous, but extreme fluctuations will tend to result in mortality. For cottonwood (*P. deltoides*), available information suggests that rates of decline exceeding 2 centimeters per day (Segelquist et al. 1993) and 4 centimeters per day (Mahoney and Rood 1991) result in significant mortality. Results of these studies provide useful information for estimating the level of groundwater control necessary. However, if established from seed, willow may be more sensitive to groundwater fluctuations the first month following germination; willow seeds obtain moisture from a smaller volume of sediment (Friedman et al. 1995).

Another consideration that must be accounted for is the possibility of mortality following establishment. Although willow seedlings are capable of withstanding floods for two growing season (Walters et al. 1980), they also are susceptible to mortality through scouring during subsequent high flows (Everitt 1968; Segelquist et al. 1993; Friedman 1993). Such events are common within the channel and on the floodplain during certain portions of the year. Once established, various other factors (e.g., herbivory, fire) can potentially cause significant mortality. Although strategies (e.g., sleeves, exclosures, and fire breaks) exist for reducing the impact of these mortality factors, the best solution(s) will likely vary depending on site conditions and location. Therefore, the refuge staff will evaluate options and make decisions on a site-by-site basis.

Objective

Provide 3,630–3,845 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native plants (rushes, sedges, grasses, forbs) characterized by 10-30 centimeters VOR, 0-10 centimeters duff layer and minimal (less than 5 percent) bare ground and less than 40-percent (canopy closure) willow to benefit nesting waterfowl (pintail, shoveler, gadwall, green-winged teal) and sage grouse broods.

Objective

Provide 210–700 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native species (grasses, sedges, forbs, and rushes) characterized by greater than 30 centimeters VOR, 10-20 centimeters duff layer and minimal (less than 5 percent) bare ground, and less than 40-percent (canopy closure) willow from mid-April through August to benefit nesting waterfowl (mallard, gadwall, pintail, scaup), songbirds (savannah sparrow, meadowlark), and foraging shorebirds if flooded (snipe, phalarope, white-faced ibis, sora, curlew, willet).

Rationale

Herbaceous vegetation is a component of riparian systems nationwide. The dominant herbaceous species within the Illinois River corridor are primarily perennial species classified as obligate or facultative wetland plants that are tolerant of temporary surface flooding and seasonally high groundwater tables. These species, including rushes, sedges, grasses, and forbs are adapted to the short growing season (less than 40 days), low annual precipitation (less than 10 inches), and high annual evapo-transpiration rates characteristic of North Park. The species composition has been modified by the introduction of additional grasses, but invasive, nonnative species currently occupy less than 5 percent of the land base and current floristics do not appear to be reducing the value of the area to wildlife (refuge files).

The primary species of management concern in the grassland-dominated portion of the riparian zone are nesting waterfowl and grassland-dependent passerines. Both groups represent trust resources for the refuge. The enabling legislation for the refuge specifically identifies waterfowl production as a purpose of the refuge. Grassland birds, although not specifically mentioned, are migratory and currently declining in many areas of North America (Herkert 1995). The most abundant duck species nesting on the refuge are blue-winged teal, gadwall, scaup, wigeon, mallard, and pintail (refuge files). Based on refuge banding records, monitoring avian productivity and survivorship (MAPS) station data (refuge files), Partners in Flight (PIF) scores (Pashley et al. 2000), and regional species of concern (refuge files), grassland birds of management interest are savannah sparrow, western meadowlark, vesper sparrow, bobolink, upland sandpiper, and Wilson's phalarope.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that grassland size is an important factor determining avian use of grasslands for both foraging and nesting (Wiens 1969; Herkert 1991; Madden 1996; Greenwood et al. 1995; Clark 1977; Herkert et al. 1993; Vickery et al. 1994). Therefore, as with the willow community, size and dimension of the area must be considered. Some species typically do not nest in small grassland fragments (Samson 1980; Herkert 1994; Vickery et al. 1994) or near grassland edges (Johnson and Temple 1986; Delisle 1995; Helzer 1996) because nest depredation and parasitism are often higher (Johnson and Temple 1986; Johnson and Temple 1990; Burger et al. 1994). A literature review of species known to nest in this region suggests that most are found on grasslands greater than 5 hectares, but nest densities of these species are much higher if the grassland is greater than 30-50 hectares (Helzer 1996; Herkert 1994; Johnson and Temple 1990; Martin and Gavin 1995). Currently, the size of grass-dominated habitats is not limiting, but the size of areas conforming to each of the objectives is currently unknown. The refuge staff will evaluate current conditions based on the parameters in each objective and ensure that blocks of sufficient size are provided in each category.

In addition, species that use floodplain grasslands have varying requirements with regards to foods and structural requirements for nesting and brood-rearing. The refuge established requirements for vegetation structure based primarily on the breeding requirements of grassland nesting ducks and ground-nesting grassland birds. Most of the information used to establish requirements for these species was from studies in other geographic areas and some of the studies used undefined terms (e.g., dense, tall, thick) rather than numeric values. However, it was the best information available and future monitoring will help determine the extent to which the information is applicable to the refuge. Table B summarizes the information used to identify grassland requirements.

The most important structural characteristics are vegetation height and density, residual cover (duff), and shrub density. Differences in grass cover required by breeding birds can be separated into two broad groups based on nesting requirements. Species, including mallard, scaup, and gadwall require taller, denser cover to conceal nests (Holm 1984; Livezey 1981; Lokemoen et al. 1984; Austin et al. 1998; LeSchack et al. 1997), whereas other species, such as pintail, teal, western meadowlark, Savannah and vesper sparrows, bobolink, and upland sandpiper prefer shorter, less dense cover (Madden 1996; Skinner et al. 1984; Lanyon 1994; Wheelwright and Rising 1993; Livezey 1981; Austin and Miller 1995; Kantrud and Higgins 1992). The cover requirements for both groups are provided by a combination of new growth and residual vegetation often referred to as duff or litter.

Most waterfowl and gallinaceous birds depend on residual vegetation for initial nesting attempts and duff is an extremely important factor in nest site selection by dabbling ducks and ground-nesting

Table B. General Breeding Habitat Requirements of Selected Grassland Birds in North Park, Colorado

Species	*Nest Type*	*Territory (ha)*	*Patch (ha)*	*Grass (%)*	*Forbs (%)*	*Shrubs (%)*	*Duff (cm)*	*VOR (cm)*	*General Habitat Characteristics*
western meadow-lark	G	2-13[b]	>5[c]; mod. sensitive[c], depredation less on >130[aa]	32-52[m] high[b]	35[a] high[b] 24-41[m]	10-22[m] little or no[b]	0-3[a] low-mod.[b] 2.9-5.3[m]	1.2-2.0[m]	nest in dense vegetation with thick litter cover[s,t]
Savannah sparrow	G	.05-1.25[d]	sensitive[d], may occur <5[g], >10 in Ill.[c], >40 for 50% occurrence[l]	0-20[n] 21-42[m]	2-7[n], 27[a], little[d], 25:75 forbs: grass[i], 16-30[m]	very sparse[e] shrubless[f] 15-40[m]	0-4 territory[a], 1-6 nest[a], well-developed[d] 2.5-5.7[m]	1.4-2.4[m]	open country with short vegetation, moist grassy meadow[s,u]
vesper sparrow				0-7[n]	30[a] 0-10[n]		0-3[a]		sparsely or patchily distributed shrubs with good grass cover[u]
bobolink	G	.45-2.0[r]	>50 for 50% occurrence[l], much higher densities >30 than <10[r]	32-48[m]	28[a] 18-31[m]	12-30[m]	0-4 territory[a] 1-6 nest[a] 1.1-5.3[m]		grassy meadows with nearby forbs and high litter cover[s]
mallard	G			48-50 and 43-49 cm tall[p]				14.7[o] >20[q]	
scaup	G							16[o]	tall vegetation cover in native prairie, meadow, or sparse shrub[w]
blue-winged teal	G			22-24 and 37-39 cm tall[p]				15.1[o]	dense, tall cover[s]
northern pintail	G			sparse				11.7[o]	open sites with low vegetation, residual cover of short grasses[x]
gadwall	G			48-60 cm tall[p], 25 and >30 cm tall[y]				17.3[o] >20[q]	dense grasses, forbs, or shrubs[y]
common snipe	G	2-12[z]		low, sparse[k]					low grass/sedge or fairly dense low woody growth with open terrain nearby[s]

Table B. General Breeding Habitat Requirements of Selected Grassland Birds in North Park, Colorado

Species	*Nest Type*	*Territory (ha)*	*Patch (ha)*	*Grass (%)*	*Forbs (%)*	*Shrubs (%)*	*Duff (cm)*	*VOR (cm)*	*General Habitat Characteristics*
upland sandpiper	G			0-15 and <30 cm tall[n]	0-8[n]				thick, mid-height grasslands[s]
Wilson's phalarope	G			sparse to mod. dense[j]				<20[j]	moist sedge/rush meadows with low vegetation and adjacent open water[s]

[a]*Wiens (1969)*
[b]*Dechant et al. (1999)*
[c]*Helzer (1996)*
[d]*Swanson (1998)*
[e]*Wheelwright and Rising (1993)*
[f]*Arnold and Higgins (1986)*
[g]*Potter (1972)*
[h]*Herkert (1991)*
[i]*Herkert et al. (1993)*
[j]*Kantrud and Higgins (1992)*
[k]*Arnold (1994)*
[l]*Herkert (1994)*
[m]*Madden (1996)*
[n]*Skinner et al. (1984)*
[o]*Holm (1984)*
[p]*Livezey (1981)*
[q]*Lokemoen et al. (1984)*
[r]*Martin and Gavin (1995)*
[s]*Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (1998)*
[t]*Lanyon (1994)*
[u]*Schaid et al. (1983)*
[v]*Mueller (1999)*
[w]*Austin et al. (1998)*
[x]*Austin and Miller (1995)*
[y]*LeSchack et al. (1997)*
[z]*Williamson (1960)*
[aa]*Johnson and Temple (1990)*

grassland birds (Wiens 1969; Clark 1977; Kirsch et al. 1978; Leopold 1933). Ground-nesting grassland birds and dabbling ducks preferring shorter, less dense cover (e.g., northern pintail and teal) are typically found where duff layers are less than 10 centimeters (Swanson 1998; Wiens 1969; Madden 1996). In contrast, dabbling ducks nesting in the San Luis Valley of Colorado use denser cover characterized by duff layers that exceed 10 centimeters (Laubhan and Gammonley, unpublished data).

The effects of these characteristics on avian grassland use are most obvious in grasslands subject to different management practices. For example, a study at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (Clark 1977) showed that duck nest densities were highest where grazing and mowing were prohibited the previous season, intermediate where partial mowing but no grazing were allowed, and lowest where grazing and mowing were unrestricted the previous season. Higher residual cover on the ungrazed and unmowed units was the single best parameter explaining the higher nest densities (Clark 1977). Other duck nesting studies have shown similar results (Reeves 1954; Salyer 1962; Martz 1967; Oetting and Cassell 1971). Structural changes have more varied consequences for non-game birds. For example, studies in Alberta and Saskatchewan found that some species preferred the structural conditions in ungrazed and unmowed grasslands (Savannah sparrow, Baird's sparrow, Sprague's pipit), other species preferred grazed or mowed grasslands (horned lark, McCown's longspur, chestnut collared longspur), while some species were unaffected by grazing or mowing (western meadowlark, clay-colored sparrow) (Owens and Myres 1973; Maher 1973; Karuziak et al. 1977).

In addition, some species of management interest are dependent on the presence of forbs in grasslands either as a nesting site for females or as song perches for males. Based on the requirements of western meadowlark, Savannah sparrow, vesper sparrow, and bobolink, the literature indicates that a minimum composition of 10-percent forbs is required (Wiens 1969; Skinner et al. 1984; Madden 1996; Dechant et al. 1999). Although currently unknown, the refuge will determine the forb composition of grassland-dominated habitats through monitoring and use various strategies to either maintain or improve the forb community.

Based on a review of the literature, the species of management interest are tolerant of scattered woody vegetation. In fact, some nesting dabbling ducks (e.g., mallard, green-winged teal, and gadwall) will build nests at the base of shrubs (Austin et al. 1998; Kingery 1998; LeSchack et al. 1997). Ground-nesting grassland birds are somewhat less tolerant of woody vegetation but many are found in grasslands with 10- to 40-percent shrub cover (Madden 1996, Schaid et al. 1983). Although scattered willows are likely to become established within the grasslands, no attempt will be made to reduce willows until canopy closure exceeds 40 percent because many species are tolerant of such conditions.

The refuge used the above information to establish the two grassland objectives. Management to achieve these objectives will occur in the portion of the floodplain that will not be restored to willows. The relative proportion of habitat in each objective is not equal; however, objective 3 (10-30 centimeters VOR) is being weighted more heavily. This decision was based largely on the capability to manage the riparian corridor for both habitat

types. Past modifications limit the ability of the refuge to manage some areas for dense cover. For example, the highest elevations that is thought to be only minimally impacted by groundwater, and is known to be difficult to irrigate, are best suited for objective 3, and whereas the areas nearest the river are likely to be easier to obtain conditions stated in objective 2.

Strategies

Because extensive areas of grasslands currently exist within the riparian habitat, management will be directed primarily toward maintaining existing areas. This will be accomplished by numerous methods, including but not limited to water management, prescribed fire, grazing management, and haying. These management practices affect vegetation height, density, grass:forb ratio, and duff layer and thus avian use of grasslands (Clark 1977; Mundinger 1976; Oetting and Cassel 1971; Salyer 1962; Enright 1971; Kaiser 1976; Kirsch and Higgins 1976; Owens 1971; Owens and Myres 1973; Maher 1973; Dambach 1944; Madden 1996). Initially grasslands will be monitored to assess current structural conditions, forb distribution, and nonnative distribution. In areas of low (less than 10 percent) forb composition, attempts will be made to increase this component by seeding in combination with the above listed activities. Areas that contain greater than 10 percent nonnative species (i.e., less than 90 percent natives) will be identified and attempts made to reduce the composition of these plants using herbicides, biological control, water level management, or other management practices that have proven useful in other areas.

Objective

Given the altered river flow regime, provide a properly functioning river channel characterized by a well defined thalweg, outside river edges that are deeper than inside edges, a river sinuosity of 2.0–2.5, pool spacing every 7–9 channel widths, active point bar formation, and gradients in riffles that are higher than in pools to benefit willow establishment for Neotropical migrants, and indirectly provide suitable habitat for native and non-native fishes.

Rosgen (1996) developed a stream classification system that provided guidelines for identification of stream channel types. This stream classification system utilizes the following criteria: channel gradient, sinuosity, width/ratio, dominate particle size of bed and bank material, channel entrenchment, channel confinement, landform features and stream bank stability. Utilizing this stream classification system, the Illinois River on the refuge is classified as a C-channel. The preferred, and most stable channel, is an E-channel (narrower and deeper). Rosgen (1996) describes an E-channel as low gradient, meandering riffle/pool morphology stream with low width to depth ratio and little deposition occurring. E-channels are considered to be the most stable channel types and will encourage willow development; they provide the best habitat for trout. These are very efficient and stable streams found in broad valley/meadows over alluvial materials and characterized by well vegetated banks. Minimizing disturbance to streambanks will facilitate E-channel development.

A thalweg is the deepest point on a stream channel cross section, and typically the deepest point on the valley floor. Functioning streams exhibit well defined thalwegs that move side to side as a stream meanders. Sinuosity is the ratio of the valley slope to the stream slope. E-channels exhibit sinuosity of greater than 1.2, but 2.0–2.5 is preferred. Pool spacing for E-channels is generally every four to seven channel widths. Point bar formation is another characteristic of streams that transport water and sediment efficiently. Stream gradients are defined as the rise/run along the longitudinal profile of the stream. Functioning streams exhibit higher gradients over riffle areas (Rosgen 1996).

Rationale

This objective recognizes the altered Illinois River condition. The refuge will strive to produce a naturally functioning channel, given flow and irrigation shortcomings. Understanding the location and functional processes of the floodplain and transitional fringe are crucial to improving management on the refuge because these processes determine the potential composition and structure of vegetation and, therefore, the associated wildlife benefits (Pashley et al. 2000).

In addition, a greater understanding of these processes will allow the refuge staff to identify potential management strategies that have a high probability of success. However, delineation of the floodplain and transitional upland fringe along the Illinois River that traverses the refuge is difficult.

First, the hydrology of the river in North Park has been altered greatly; thus, it is not possible to assume that historic indicators (e.g., location of landforms) can be used to define these components. This statement is based on the fact that an extensive irrigation and water storage system has been developed within the riparian system. However, the impacts of these developments are difficult to quantify because the historic gauge station on the refuge has been removed.

Second, even if existing gauges were still in place, many of the original alterations leading to water diversions occurred prior to the establishment of USGS gauge stations. This is supported by conversations with the state water engineer

and local ranchers who have stated that water management has not changed appreciably in the last 100 years and 50 years, respectively. The refuge attempted to confirm these statements by comparing USGS data from 1935–1939 and 1995–1999 that was collected at Rand, Colorado (http://nwis-colo.cr.usgs.gov and http://co.water.usgs.gov/nwis/). Several diversions (e.g., McFarland Reservoir, landowner ditches) occur between the gauge and the refuge boundary; thus, the usefulness of this information for purposes of refuge management is poor. Regardless, the data confirms that the hydrology of the river, at least at this location, has not changed appreciably during the past 40 years based on comparisons of peak discharge, flow duration curves and seven day minimum flows.

In general, the Illinois River at Rand is characterized by: (1) peak flows (500–600 cfs) in spring that are of short duration; (2) 90 percent of flows do not exceed 5 cfs; and (3) minimum daily flows are about 2 cfs. Further, a spatial comparison of the river channel on the refuge indicates the river has not undergone appreciable lateral migration during this period.

Although it is not possible to mathematically derive the location and extent of the floodplain and transitional fringe because both current and pre-development information is unavailable, the refuge staff has evaluated the riparian system within the limits of their ability and have concluded the channel is in a state of change even though management has remained relatively static during the past few decades. This conclusion is supported by several subjective assessments. First, an October 2000 evaluation of several river reaches using the Rosgen method (Rosgen 1996) suggests the river is functional-at-risk. Specific factors identified during the evaluation included evidence of channel incision, reduction in fine sediment load, and occasional mass failure of banks (i.e., sloughing). Further, indications of the direction of change can be assessed by placing these observations in the context of the channel equilibrium equation (Lane 1955).

$Q_s \bullet D_{50} \propto Q_w \bullet S$, where…

Q_s = sediment discharge, D_{50} is sediment particle size, Q_w is streamflow, and S = stream slope

Channel equilibrium occurs when all four of the above variables are in balance. If one variable changes, one or more of the other variables must increase or decrease proportionally (The Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group 1998). In the case of the Illinois River on the refuge, channel incision suggests stream slope may be increasing, whereas the small amount of fine sediment suggests that sedimentation size or discharge may have been reduced compared to historical. This latter observation is supported by: (1) dominance of large substrates (e.g., cobble) in the river channel; (2) increased sedimentation in palustrine basins that have been developed within the riparian corridor; and (3) lack of significant point-bar formation within the channel.

Irrigation practices may remove the peak water flows, alter sediment loads, and change the duration of water events critical to stream function. Collectively, this information suggests that the equilibrium equation is currently unbalanced. During a December 2000 workshop, these factors were considered in relation to a channel evolution diagram that depicts the current stage of disequilibrium and theoretically may help predict future changes in habitat or stream morphology (The Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group 1998). Based on the diagram produced by Simon (1989), the staff classified the channel as either degrading or degrading-and-widening. Characteristics associated with this classification include large scallops and bank retreat, reduction or flattening in bank angles, a flow line that is low relative to the top of the bank, and a prediction that a new floodplain will be developed (Simon 1989).

Despite the fact that the refuge currently lacks detailed information necessary to quantify current and predict future channel changes, available information suggests that the elevation of the channel is lower than historic conditions. Because the intensity and frequency of flooding is important in determining community structure and system functions (Odum 1978), this directional change affects not only the channel, but also the floodplain and associated fringe (Baxter 1977; Lillehammer and Saltveit 1984). For example, lower channel elevation, coupled with lower peak flows, reduces the frequency, duration, and extent of overbank flooding. Consequently, the current width of the floodplain, as defined by hydrologic parameters, is narrower than the historic floodplain. Although the current extent of the floodplain has not been quantified, staff observations during the past 15 years indicate that the maximum extent surface water extends onto the floodplain is about 137 meters(150 yards). Consequently, the transitional upland fringe has encroached toward the channel during the past four decades.

More information must be obtained on the current hydrology of the riparian zone prior to initiating restoration efforts. Data on bankfull discharge, seasonal and peak flows, and stage vs. discharge relationships must be developed. This will require establishing gauge stations to monitor river flows, placement of peizometers (or other equipment) perpendicular to the channel at various locations to monitor groundwater fluctuations, and obtaining

elevation data at several points along the channel. In combination, this information will allow areas with highest potential for restoration to be selected, identify the best method of restoration (e.g., seeds, slims), and allow development of the most appropriate water management strategies at different sites within the riparian zone.

Efforts to restore the Illinois River channel will most likely improve the refuge fishery resource. Fish are primarily found only in the Illinois River and other aquatic sites, including Potter Creek, Spring Creek and refuge ponds, represent poor fishery habitat. Water depth and winter survival is the limiting factor in most of these systems. Winterkill is a common problem with many of the lakes on the refuge and throughout North Park. Fish species found in the other aquatic sites include longness dace, creek chub, white sucker, long-nosed sucker, fathead minnow, and johnny darter (Kehmeier 2001).

The Illinois River is a transition stream, beginning as a trout stream in the headwaters and transitioning to a native species stream by the time it meets the Michigan River. This transition appears to occur as the river crosses the refuge. The lower flows experienced at the north end of the refuge may be responsible for the trout giving way to the more tolerate native species. Trout are not native to North Park streams. Sampling in 1998 found that upstream from the refuge, the fishery is dominated by brook and brown trout at or near carrying capacity of 114 kilograms per hectare of biomass. Sampling near the Allard bridge found a high diversity of habitats, and the highest species count (six native species and one nonnative). Brown trout are reproducing and demonstrate recruitment in the Illinois River. Rainbow trout were not sampled in 1998; however, they may exist because of previous Colorado Division of Wildlife stocking efforts. Sampling downstream of the Ward Ditch No. 1 found mostly native species mentioned above.

Instream structure is limited to willow root balls, aquatic vegetation (*Elodia*, *Potamogeton*, and filamentous algae) and small woody debris. Beaver dams, common on the upstream end of the system, help the system become more dynamic and provide excellent angling opportunities. Continued stream bank protection is critical to sustaining the fishery resource. Degraded stream banks exhibit shallow water spread over a wide stream channel. Deep water pools are critical to sustain healthy fish populations. Fishery habitat efforts must focus restoring natural structure and function to the Illinois River and will result in better fishery habitat. A fishery management step-down management plan will be prepared by 2005.

General Consideration of Areas Specified

The area of each habitat component (defined by objectives) will vary over time depending on annual and seasonal conditions (e.g., river flow, precipitation).

In addition, it is likely that some areas originally meeting the conditions of one objective will develop conditions that meet another objective. For example, grasslands with less cover (objective 3) may develop more cover (objective 2). Such changes (succession) are natural and have many benefits (e.g., nutrient cycling, soil stabilization) other than providing wildlife habitat. Therefore, the refuge has established broad tolerances in the area (hectare) of each habitat that will be provided. This is based on the concept that disturbance-driven spatial and temporal variability is a vital attribute of nearly all ecological systems (Landres et al. 1999).

Further, managing within the constraints of site variability and history is easier, requires fewer external subsidies, and is more cost effective than attempting to achieve management goals that are outside the bounds of the system (Allen and Hoekstra 1992). Conditions that collectively fall within the established ranges will be sufficient to provide some habitat for species of interest in most, if not all, years.

Wetland

To facilitate discussion and future management planning, the refuge staff defined wetland habitat as all natural and created ponds and lakes up to the high water mark, excluding the surrounding meadows and riparian corridor. This habitat, henceforth referred to as basins or wetlands, composes 824 acres based on National Wetland Inventory (NWI) land coverage for the refuge. Three wetland complexes were identified for management purposes, mainly based on location: Case, Illinois River, and Soap Creek. Meadow habitat is defined as the grasslands/old hay meadows on all areas of the refuge except those along the riparian corridor (which are considered part of the riparian habitat) and consist of 2,683 acres.

Of the wetlands on the refuge, about 10 percent are natural freshwater basins and about 90 percent are created freshwater basins. Meadows characteristically occur adjacent to wetland basins in lowland sites and in the more upland areas that are irrigated. The Illinois River, Spring Creek, Soap Creek, and Potter Creek flow through the refuge and are the major source of water to basins and meadows through natural subsurface and surface flows and via a complex ditch irrigation system.

Origination of the ditches occurs both on- and off-refuge with the Illinois River as the major water source. Other surface and groundwater resources also affect the timing, duration, frequency, and depth of flooding among sites.

Goals

Wetland Goal

Provide and manage natural and constructed permanent and semipermanent wetlands (in three wetland complexes) to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and associated wetland-dependent wildlife.

Meadow Goal

Provide and manage irrigated, grass-dominated meadows historically developed for hay production, to support sage grouse broods, waterfowl nesting, and meadow-dependent migratory birds.

Justification

Water resources are limited in the west and a variety of wetland types (e.g., permanently flooded wetlands, seasonally flooded meadow) are needed to provide the required life resources of migratory birds and other wildlife. Wetland systems are characterized by their flooding patterns (e.g., timing, frequency, duration, depth) (Mitsch and Gosselink 1993) that directly and indirectly determine plant productivity and wildlife use. Wetland complexes (proximate wetlands with different hydrologic regimes) often favor the availability of resources for wetland-dependent wildlife in dry and wet years.

Wetland and meadow on the refuge have been altered by various artificial disturbances. Because North Park is a cold mountain desert, we assume that historically, aside from the river, most of the water sources likely were temporal and/or seasonal. Early (circa 1900) settlers of Colorado created grassland meadows and dry-land crops in river bottomlands and adjacent sagebrush habitat where soils were suitable and irrigation was possible (Rogers 1964).

With the intent of maximizing cattle production, previous landowners presumably used seeps, springs, natural contours, and areas with high water tables to create much of the meadows and perhaps a few of the artificial basins. These areas were used as watering holes, productive range sites, and irrigated hay meadows. Reports indicate that irrigated hay meadows were common in Jackson County before refuge establishment (Rogers 1964).

Historical records show that at least five selected wells on the refuge were drilled around 1956 by private landowners mostly for domestic and stock use (Voegeli 1965). Three major reservoirs (Case 1, 2, and 3), germ and the fish hatchery ponds were created prior to refuge establishment. However, the majority of semipermanent/permanent basins were created by the refuge.

Largely due to past ranching practices and the construction of various water control structures (including ditches), the extent of sagebrush habitat has declined and the structure and composition of many of the sagebrush and wetland systems have changed. Because the historic conditions of these sites are largely unknown, a complete and accurate description of the structural and functional modifications that have occurred is not possible. Nonetheless, the complex of roads and ditches on the refuge has invariably altered historic hydrologic regimes by impounding more water for longer periods in some areas and less water for shorter periods in other areas.

Differences among wetlands and meadows vary largely due to: (1) refuge infrastructure (e.g., roads and ditches that affect water flow, control structures); (2) management (e.g., flooding, burning, grazing, no action); (3) position in the landscape (e.g., degree of slope in and around basin or meadow, size of depression, aspect/solar exposure, horizontal and vertical proximity to the river and water table, juxtaposition of habitat types); and (4) soil characteristics (water-holding capacity, organic/mineral content). Collectively, these characteristics of basins and meadows affect water quality and the availability of moisture and nutrients that influence plant composition and productivity (Mitsch and Gosselink 1993). Different types, abundances, and distributions of plants create varied habitat conditions that, in turn, support a diversity of wildlife.

Plants in and around wetlands characteristically are distributed in zones largely based on differences in soil and moisture (Castelli et al. 2000). Plants in wetland habitat on include species that are adapted to semipermanent/permanent flooding regimes (standing water), a short growing season (33 days), high daily and annual temperature fluctuations (25–40°F, -49–96°F, respectively), and cold mean annual temperatures (36.5°:F) (climate data from various sources in Kuhn et al. 1983). Species in wetland habitat are dominated by perennials, including submergents (e.g., sago pondweed, widgeongrass), tall emergents (e.g., cattail and bulrush), and short emergents (a mix of grasses, rushes, sedges, and forbs). The short emergent sites occurring within the high water mark likely are a result of fluctuating water levels among dry and wet years and, therefore, are limited in size and relatively short-lived when high water levels persist. These short emergent areas within wetland habitat are a continuum into meadow habitat (e.g., Windell et

al. 1986). Thus, while the boundary defining the margins of wetland and meadow sites remains the same (i.e., defined by the high water mark), the habitat conditions within each habitat type may vary within seasons and among years. Nonetheless, periodic disturbances (e.g., flooding/drying) are necessary to continually provide diverse habitat conditions and to maintain system productivity.

The ability for the refuge to provide (1) wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and associated wildlife; and (2) meadow habitat for sage grouse broods, waterfowl nesting, and meadow-dependent migratory birds has been achieved in past and recent years (refuge files). Regardless, adaptive management practices will be implemented to improve the quality and quantity of those resources and to increase management efficiency (cost vs. benefit). In this process, changes on- and off-refuge that potentially influence management are considered.

The relative importance of a particular habitat or wildlife species often changes or new information (e.g., species-habitat relationships or management strategies) influences management approach. For example, sage grouse has become a species of concern in North Park, and we are evaluating how we can best support the species throughout the annual cycle (nesting, brooding, and wintering).

Wetland and Meadow Objectives

Rationale

Because the habitat characteristics (e.g., vegetation composition and structure) on the refuge are not currently quantified, we used the known habitat requirements of a select group of wildlife species to facilitate the process of writing habitat-based objectives. Required resources of the selected species effectively represent the range of potential habitat conditions that naturally may have occurred in wetland and meadow. As stated in the goal, wetland habitat on the refuge will be managed for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and associated wetland-dependent wildlife. Thus, particular attention was paid to wetland-dependent species and species of refuge concern and consideration was given to multiple bird conservation plans/lists (e.g., State and Federal threatened and endangered species, Partners in Flight, Bird Conservation Regions). Further, species habitat requirements typically vary among life cycle events (e.g., migrating, nesting, and brood-rearing) and, therefore, the chronologies of these species events were identified with respect to refuge use periods to maximize resource availability (see chronology charts, figures A–G). Because the life requisites of plants and wildlife vary temporally and among species, different types of conditions (e.g., height, density, composition, water depth) must be provided within each of the habitat types (i.e., upland, riparian, wetland, meadow) at particular times in the year (e.g., nesting, migration). Each objective describes a range of habitat conditions that is within the management capabilities of the refuge. Collectively, these objectives support a high diversity of wildlife species.

Wetlands

The refuge will try to manipulate wetlands to fulfill the habitat needs of the diverse wetland-dependent wildlife. Much of the information on wetland species-habitat relationships results from studies conducted outside the intermountain region. While the existing information describes potentially important relationships, we must consider the source of information (e.g., what, where, when, why, and how data collected) when actual and theoretical outcomes do not coincide.

Wetland habitat selection by water birds is largely dependent on species and scale (Brown and Dinsmore 1986; Gibbs et al. 1991; Orians and Wittenberger 1991). Studies have demonstrated that wetland use by breeding birds that are wide-ranging (e.g., black tern, northern pintail) is greatly influenced by landscape level features (e.g., landscape heterogeneity, wetland isolation/density, surrounding habitat types and conditions), while use by other birds (e.g., Virginia rail, pied-billed grebe) largely is affected by habitat characteristics within the area of the nest wetland (e.g., local vegetation conditions; Brown and Dinsmore 1986; Naugle et al. 1999; Naugle et al. 2001). Farmer and Parent (1997) indicated that the foraging efficiency of migrating shorebirds increases when the distance between small wetlands decreases, forming a complex.

At the wetland scale, habitat characteristics that variably affect wetland use by water birds largely include wetland size and type, distance to shore, amount and distribution of shoreline vegetation, distance to nearest open water, distance to nearest vegetated edge, surface water area, and the interspersion of cover and open water areas. Weller and Spatcher (1965) recorded differences in the abundance and distribution of many bird species in relation to changes in habitat condition of the marsh and at nest sites.

While bird species numbers and diversity were highest when the cover:water ratio reached 50:50 (hemi-marsh), the interspersion of cover and open water areas seemed even more important. For example, grebes and waterfowl preferred areas with waterways through the emergent vegetation that connected various pools. Studies also show that hemi-marsh conditions do not satisfy the requirements of all species and preferences of

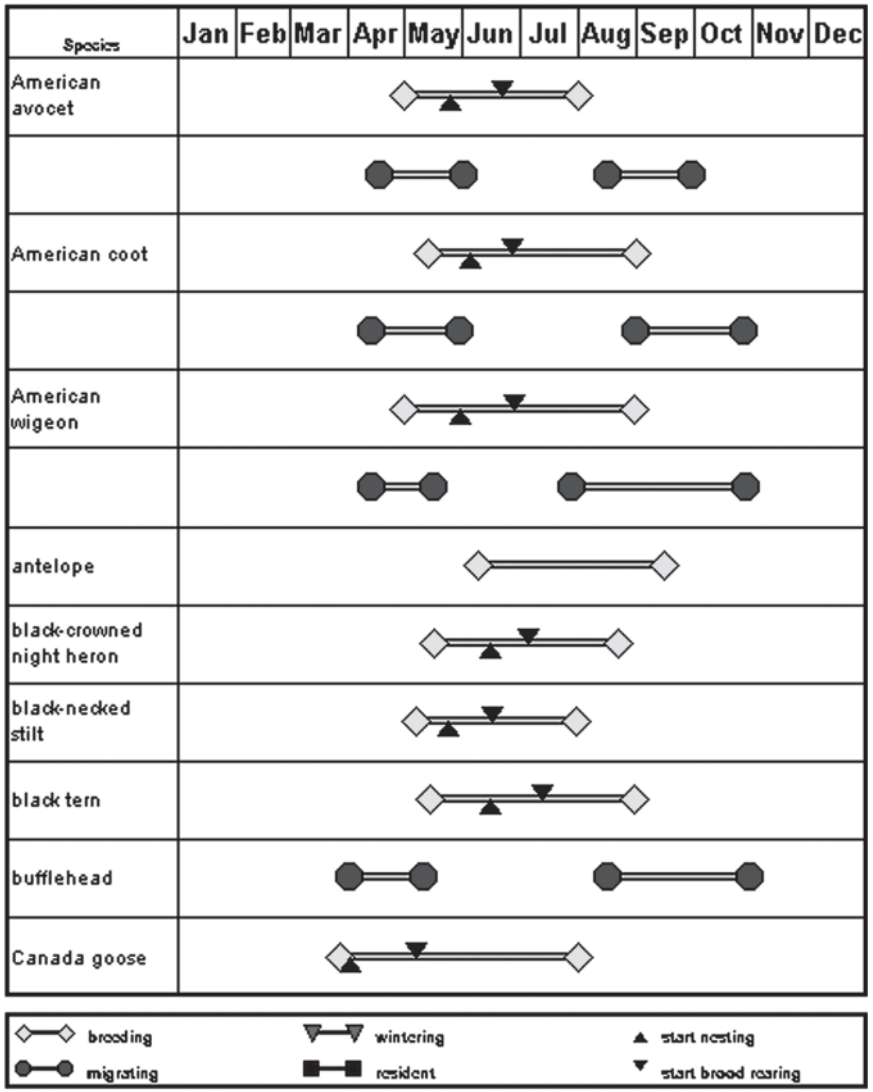

Figure A. Habitat use chronology, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

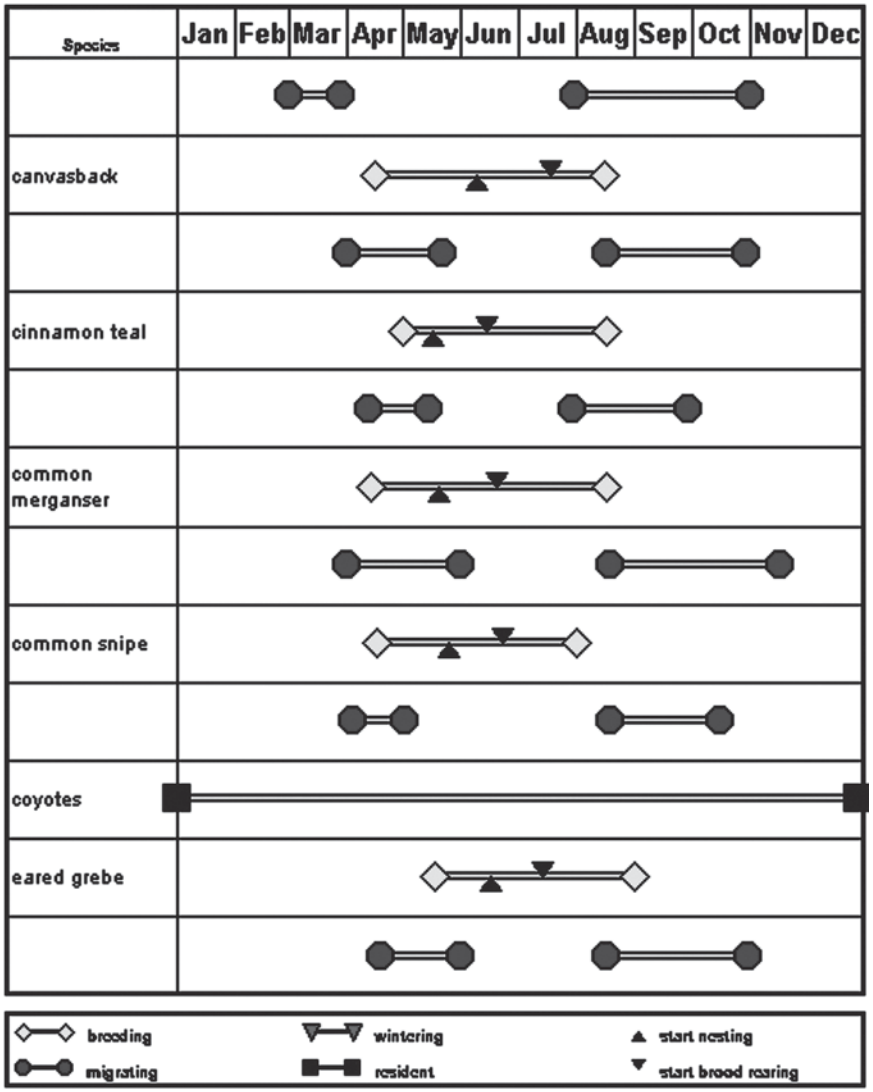

Figure B. Habitat use chronology, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

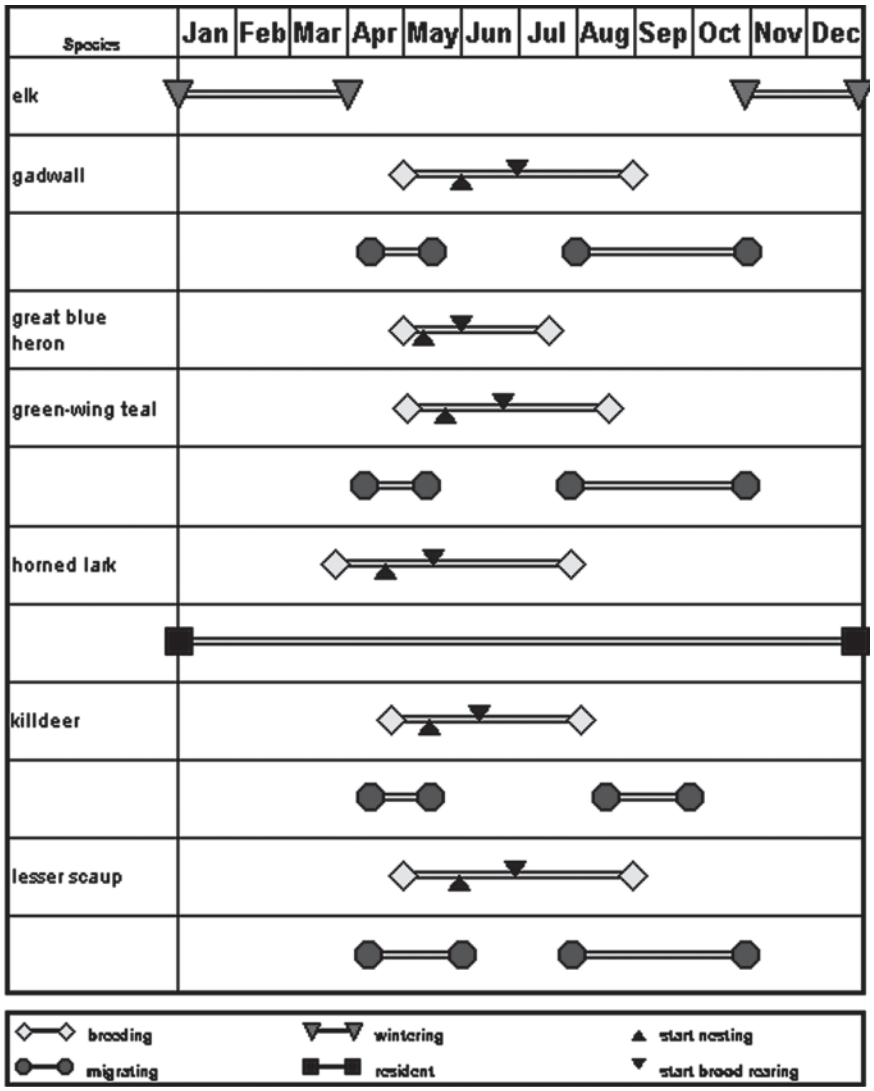

Figure C. Habitat use chronology, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

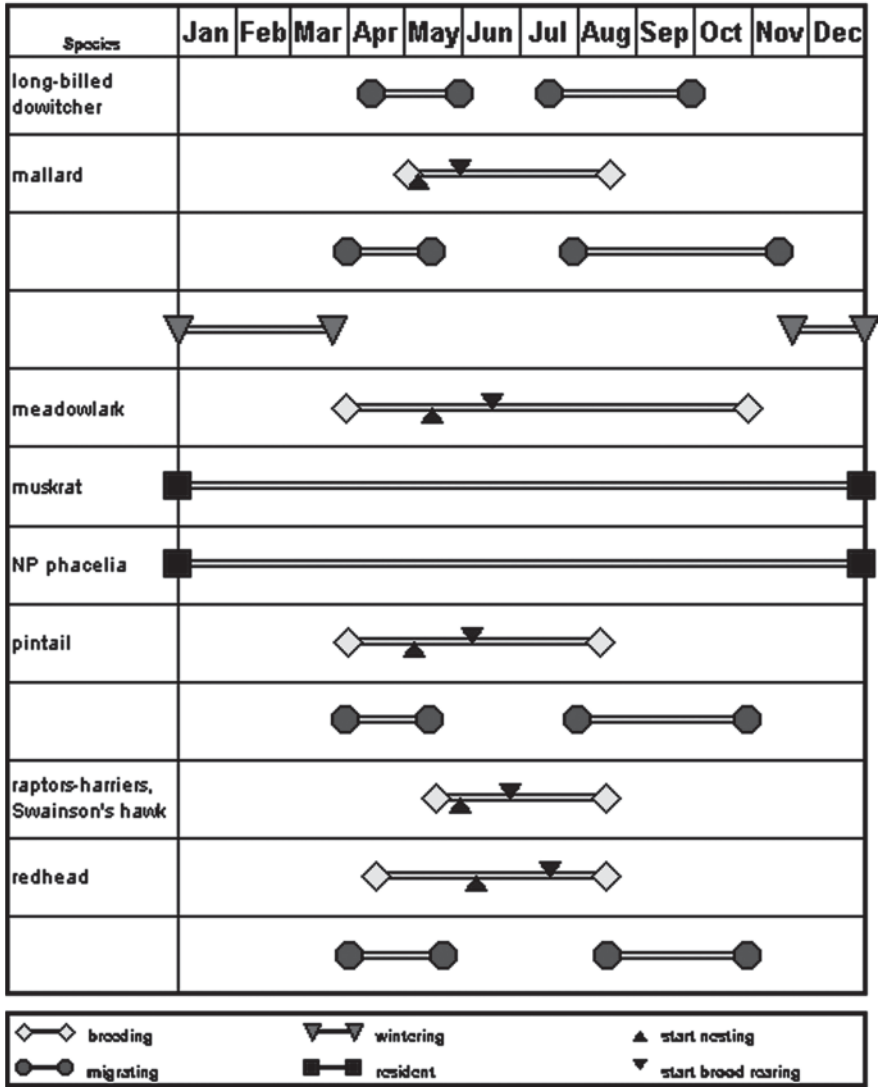

Figure D. Habitat use chronology, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

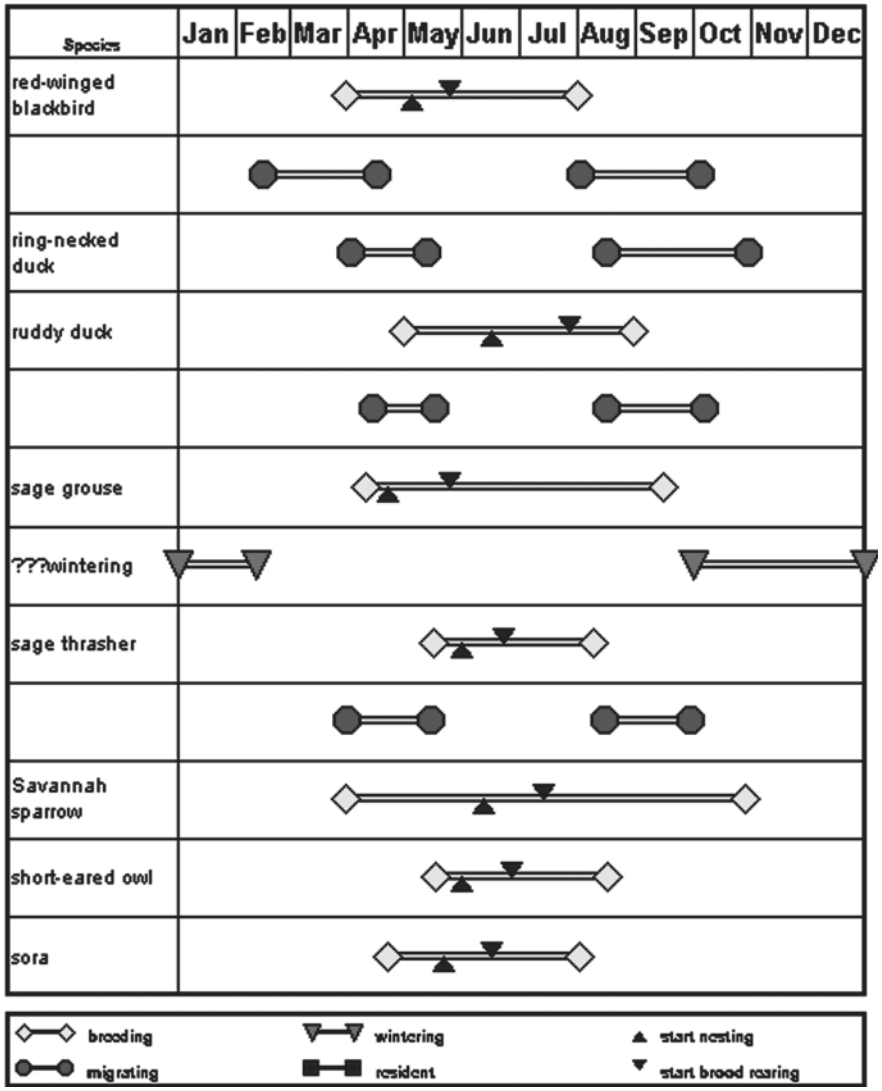

Figure E. Habitat use chronology, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

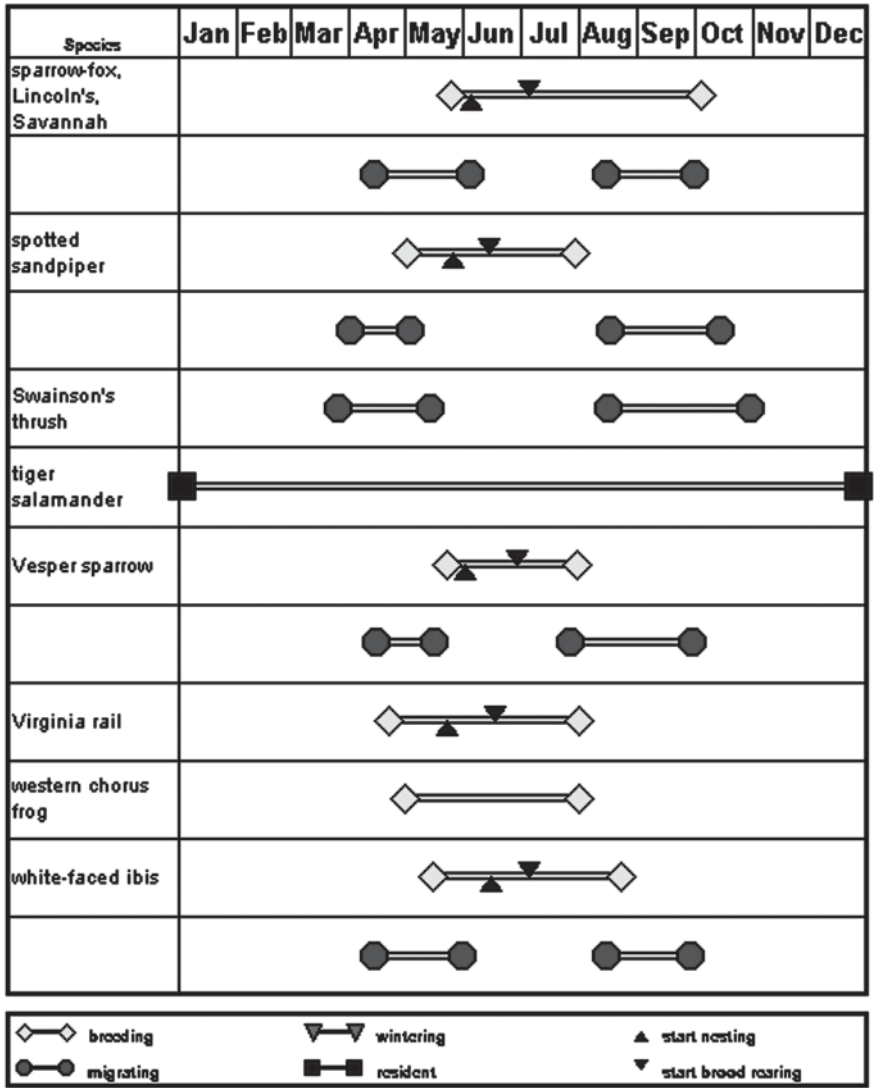

Figure F. Habitat use chronology, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

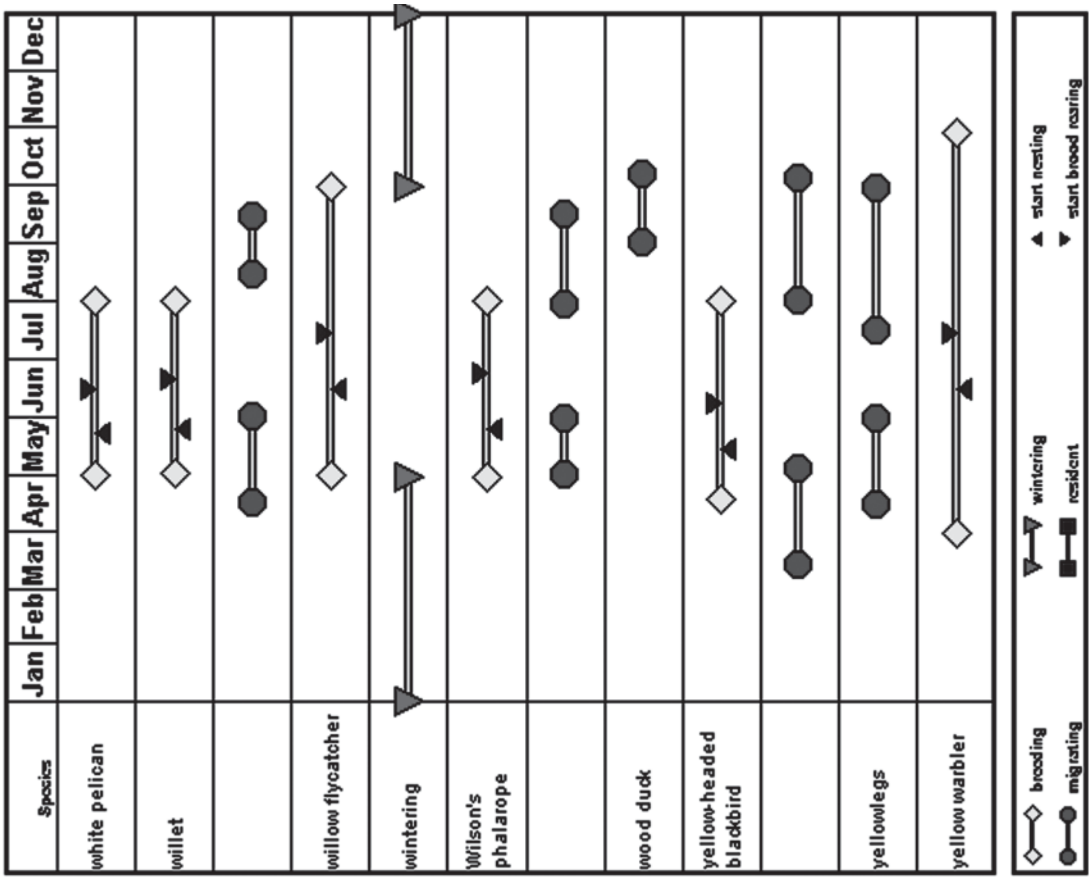

Figure G. Habitat use chronology, Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

cover:water interspersion for a given species may vary temporally (Weller and Spatcher 1965; Murkin et al. 1997).

In another study, habitat preferences of the horned, eared, and pied-billed grebes largely differed according to basin size and the amount and distribution of shoreline vegetation. Horned grebes selected smaller ponds than eared and pied-billed grebes, whereas pied-billed grebes used ponds with relatively more shoreline vegetation relative to the other grebe species. In part, these differences were attributed to behavioral characteristics. Typically, horned and pied-billed grebes nested in isolation and needed visual separation, while eared grebes nested colonially and needed more space for nesting.

The importance of distance parameters in habitat selection is less clear likely due to how it differentially relates to bird behavior (e.g., solitary vs. colonial nesters, secretive vs. social species, territoriality) and other habitat variables (e.g., wetland size (Boe 1993), proximity to other habitat types).

The significance of microhabitat characteristics in determining bird use within a wetland, such as structure (plant height and density), plant composition, litter, and area, was discussed in the riparian habitat section. Those same concepts similarly apply to other habitat types, including wetland habitat. In addition, water depth at nesting and foraging sites are distinctive features of wetland habitat that greatly affect bird use. Relationships between water depth and water bird use are discussed under the objectives below.

Objective

Maintain 10 acres of, and attempt to establish in one other wetland basin, tall (greater than 60 centimeters VOR) emergent vegetation in water depths greater than 4 centimeters over a 5-year period to provide nesting habitat for over-water nesting birds (black-crowned night-heron, white-faced ibis, waterfowl, marsh wrens, coots, and blackbirds).

Value

The most conspicuous attribute of this habitat condition is the tall, dense vegetation that provides the necessary nesting cover for large-bodied wading birds (e.g., black-crowned night-heron, white-faced ibis) and more secretive water birds (e.g., rails). No other habitat objective shares this feature. The vegetation density largely is a function of the litter or duff layer (the amount of new and residual plant growth), commonly used by water birds as nesting substrate. As well, flooded emergent litter is important for macroinvertebrate production in the spring (Nelson et al. 1990), prior to the emergence of submergent vegetation (Nelson and Kadlec 1984). Invertebrate matter is a primary source of protein for many wetland and terrestrial birds (Fredrickson and Reid 1986). Waterfowl especially rely on invertebrate matter as a component of their diet during the breeding (Bartonek and Hickey 1969; Krapu and Reinecke 1992; Baldassarre and Bolen 1994) and brood-rearing seasons (Sudgen 1973; Cox et al. 1998).

Achievability

The current coverage of tall emergent vegetation (primarily cattail [*Typha spp.*]) is extremely limited. Our attempt to maintain the estimated 10 acres that currently exists is largely experimental as we learn more about our ability to manage for the desired habitat condition described in the objective. We believe it is possible because it exists in similar high elevation parks in Colorado, specifically South Park and the San Luis Valley. Our present concern is that some of our wetland basins have margin slopes that do not favor plant germination. In addition, some of our basins possibly have enough sedimentation accumulation and turbidity to adversely effect germination of some plant species. Most of the sedimentation comes through the ditches that enter the ponds. Wang et al. (1994) found that sediment loads of 0.2–0.4 centimeters decreased cattail seed germination by 60–90 percent. Further, coarse-textured sediments had more adverse effects on seedling density compared to fine-textured sediments (Dittmar and Neely 1999).

If sedimentation has occurred, the source (e.g., bank erosion, inflow from adjacent uplands or ditches), extent (e.g., current sediment load, seed burial, turbidity), and rate of sedimentation (e.g., retention/re-suspension of potential of bottom materials, past and current rates of inflow, wind action, shoreline slope) should be examined. This information in addition to our ability to manage water levels may indicate which sites have the highest management potential for cattail establishment.

Strategies

To encourage germination and establishment of cattail, experimental wetland basins that show the highest potential for cattail establishment would need to be selected. Selection criteria may include water control capabilities, rates of evaporation (e.g., how fast less than 1 inch of water becomes a mudflat and how soon mudflat dries out completely), amount and distribution of existing cattail in each basin, and shoreline conditions (slope). Our ability to expose mudflats when temperatures are optimal for cattail germination (25–35°C) would have to be evaluated for relatively dry, average, and wet years.

For established cattail stands, effective management requires periodic disturbance.

Disturbance characteristics (e.g., flooding depth, frequency, duration) and timing in relation to the annual cycle of cattail growth will largely determine cattail response (Beule 1979; Apfelbaum 1985; Sojda and Solberg 1993).

An understanding of the environmental conditions that favor and discourage cattail germination and growth likely will improve our ability to manage for the desired habitat condition described in the objective. Cattail reproduces by seed and vegetatively via rhizomes.

Germination of cattail occurs in shallow water depths (e.g., less than 0.5 inch of water, Sojda and Solberg 1993) and on mudflats (van der Valk and Davis 1978; Sojda and Solberg 1993) under a wide range of temperatures (Sojda and Solberg 1993). Results of greenhouse experiments indicated that cattail germination required flooding (Bedish 1967). Cattail germination seemed best in water 1 inch deep when light and temperatures were optimal (Bedish 1967; Weller 1975). Under field conditions, most studies show germination of cattail occurs after mudflats have been exposed (Beule 1979). Subsequent shallow flooding may promote seedling establishment (discussed below). Fully saturated or flooded soils produce anaerobic conditions near the soil surface (e.g., less than 2 centimeters, Mortimer 1971 in Bonnewell et al. 1983). Cattail seed germination was reported highest on the soil surface, but occurred less than 1 centimeter below the surface of sandy soil (Galinato and van der Valk 1986).

Studies show reduced O_2 concentrations promote cattail germination (Hutchinson 1975 in Bonnewell et al. 1983). Bonnewell et al. (1983) found that germination of submerged cattail seeds was maximized in O_2 concentrations of 2.3–4.3 milligrams per liter. In the same study, seeds flooded for less than 24 hours had higher germination then those flooded for 7 days.

Seed germination of cattail was significantly reduced by 1,000 milligrams per liter of NaCl (Galinato and van der Valk 1986). A salinity of 10 ppt was responsible for the decreasing cattail cover that was flooded for most of a growing season (Sojda and Solberg 1993). Thus, especially in arid environments, it is important to pay close attention to increasing soil and/or water salinities as water levels decrease.

Though results vary, optimum soil-surface temperatures for cattail germination generally range 25–35°C (Bonnewell et al. 1983; Sojda and Solberg 1993). Bonnewell et al. (1983) found no germination occurred at 10°C and was very low at 15°C. Long light exposure is another cattail germination requirement and an environmental characteristic of open mudflats (Bonnewell et al. 1983).

Following germination, cattail establishment may occur fastest in 1-inch water depth, though it is able to grow well in saturated soils and in water 6 inches deep (Bedish 1967). Once mature plants are established, cattail may tolerate a range of water depths (generally less than 20 inches). However, extended periods of deep (greater than 26 inches) flooding have stressed cattail plants and may terminate growth (Apfelbaum 1985; Sojda and Solberg 1993). In Wisconsin, cattail endured water depths of 3 feet (91 centimeters) for less than two full growing seasons before a die-back was observed (Beule 1979).

In the process of managing to favor cattail germination, other benefits are gained depending on the timing of a drawdown or flooding event. For example, food resources may be made available as a result of a drawdown during spring or fall migration. A drawdown may also stimulate submerged aquatic vegetation beds.

Objective

Provide 10 percent of the wetland acres over a 5-year average in short (less than 10 centimeters), sparse (less than 10 centimeters VOR) emergent vegetation in water depths less than 4 centimeters from April to August to provide foraging habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl, as well as nesting and brood-rearing habitat for shorebirds.

Shallowly flooded, short, sparse emergent vegetation are typical foraging sites for many water bird species (Fredrickson and Reid 1986; Helmers 1992; Laubhan and Gammonley 2000). This habitat condition is notably important for various shorebird and waterfowl species that occur on the refuge during spring and fall migration and throughout the breeding season (April to August). Further, while similar habitat exists off-refuge in North Park, we feel the number of sites that satisfy all the conditions (e.g., less than 4 centimeters water depth) described in this objective is limited. In part, this habitat condition may be limited because of differences in land management objectives of on- and off-refuge sites.

Relatively open stands of vegetation allow shorebirds to utilize visual and/or tactile strategies to acquire food resources that occur in sites with dry/moist ground and/or in flooded sites with water depths of less than 10 centimeters (Helmers 1992). While morphological attributes (tarsus and culmen length; Baker 1979), foraging preferences, and nesting behavior (semi-colonial, solitary) differ among shorebird guilds (Helmers 1992), habitat conditions (water depth less than 4 centimeters) described in this objective primarily allow relatively small bodied shorebirds of the Interior Region (e.g., plover, curlew, turnstone, small and medium sandpipers, yellowlegs) to exploit the necessary invertebrate resources typically

found in newly flooded areas. The medium- to large-bodied shorebirds (godwit, avocet, stilts, phalarope) also may use these areas for foraging and nesting, but more characteristically forage for invertebrates resources in water depths greater than 4 centimeters and less than 20 centimeters (Helmers 1992).

Objective

Provide 20 percent of the wetland acres over a 5-year average of emergent vegetation greater than 25 centimeters tall with visual obstruction reading greater than 80-percent of vegetation height in water depths 4–18 centimeters to provide escape cover and foraging habitat for dabbling duck broods and molting ducks, and foraging habitat for water birds.

Unlike the habitat conditions described in the other wetland objectives, these conditions provide both shallow water and moderately dense cover that is especially important for water birds with relatively low mobility (e.g., molting ducks, broods). The relatively shallow water increases the availability of food resources and the moderate cover permits movement and concurrently decreases the risk of predation.

Brood-rearing habitat is a limited resource in North Park in dry years partly because of the arid climate and agricultural activities that demand water resources earlier in the growing season. While agricultural activities have created reservoirs for irrigation that provide some brood habitat, they do not always satisfy all the conditions described in the objective and may differ from habitat provided on-refuge in terms of quality.

Value

The availability of different habitat conditions may benefit a greater diversity of wildlife species and/or support species for longer periods in their annual life cycle.

Achievability

The above two habitat objectives are created when water levels in wetland basins are artificially and/or naturally drawn down (e.g., to encourage germination and growth of emergent vegetation or to stimulate submerged aquatic vegetation growth). At present the refuge tries to provide some shoreline habitat for spring migrating shorebirds resulting from drawdowns. In fall, water levels naturally drop in many of the ponds and spring flooding also creates much shallow water.

The refuge is unique in North Park in managing for shorebirds. Slow, staged drawdowns can work well, but cannot refill basins in most years. Nevertheless, those habitat conditions likely are similar to historic dynamics of many of the natural basins. Drawdown will also help submergent aquatic vegetation beds.

Strategies

Strategies used to achieve habitat described in objective 2 involve both drawdowns and back flooding of different areas to create the habitat described. For objective 3, drawdowns will provide the desired conditions in subsequent years.

Objective

Provide 10–20 percent of the wetland acres, within each wetland complex, over a 5-year average with 70-percent coverage of submergent species (*Potamogeton*, *Ruppia*) in wetlands of greater than 18 centimeters water depth provide invertebrates and seed sources for foraging water birds, especially waterfowl broods, and escape cover for diving ducks.

Value

Submergent vegetation provides complex structure for macroinvertebrate production when it becomes established in early summer (Krull 1970, Voigts 1976, Nelson and Kadlec 1984). Sago pondweed and widgeongrass are two major submergent plant types that occur on the refuge. Both submergents are reputable productive waterfowl food resources (drupelets, tubers, stems/leaves, and invertebrates; Kantrud 1990, 1991). Waterfowl broods rely heavily on the availability of both invertebrate and plant foods (Sudgen 1973). In addition, these submergents are used by many wetland-associated wildlife species (Kantrud 1990, 1991) for nesting, foraging, and escape habitat.

Achievability

Some submergent vegetation already exists on the refuge, but its occurrence has not been a result of actively managing for its production. These habitat conditions have regional importance due to the limited availability of quality open water habitat (e.g., extent of submergent vegetation with water depth greater than 18 centimeters proximate to nesting habitat) in North Park during the brood-rearing season. By managing for these habitat conditions within each complex, we will maximize the availability and accessibility of resources that these habitat conditions provide.

Strategies

A monitoring plan will be developed to show when significant changes from *Potamageton* and widgeongrass to other submergent types occur, signifying the need for a drawdown. In order to favor widgeongrass production, Hietzman (1978 in Kantrud 1991) recommended drawdowns to consolidate and oxidize sediments when silt deposition and decomposing vegetation on the substrate was deeper than about 4 centimeters. Otherwise, widgeongrass might become poorly rooted and susceptible to damage by wave action.

Partial early spring and fall drawdowns and complete summer drawdowns with reflooding in the fall have also been used to stimulate widgeongrass growth (Kantrud 1991). Widgeongrass shoot survival may increase if produced earlier in the growing season and if able to reproduce. Also, floating fragments may eventually grow roots, sink, and attach to the bottom substrate. Water level manipulations have also been used to encourage sago production, but success has varied. Where sediments are high in organic material, complete drawdowns may be used to release nutrients that may stimulate sago production when the wetland is reflooded. Partial drawdowns (e.g., to 0.3 meters water depth by August in the aspen parkland region of Canada) have increased sago and other pondweed production as well (Kantrud 1991).

Accomplishing this objective requires management that encourages the production of macrophytes, specifically sago pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus L.; sago*) and widgeongrass (*Ruppia maritima L.*). Unless otherwise cited, all information on the germination and growth requirements of sago and widgeongrass was derived from Kantrud (1990, 1991), respectively.

Sago has a circumpolar distribution and has exhibited both annual and perennial life cycles due to its ability to adapt to a wide range of environmental conditions. Sago absorbs nutrients from the water column and, therefore, may be rooted (greater than 0.5 meters in sandy soils and less than 0.5 meter in finer textured soils) in sediments with low oxygen levels. Sago vegetative growth begins when water temperatures are 10°C (late March–late June), but may not reach the water surface for weeks (May–mid-July). Low light conditions increase the rate of growth.

Sago may reproduce from fruit (drupelets), but more often reproduces vegetatively via root or stem structures termed winter buds, tubers, or turions. The number of turions often far exceeds that of drupelets and some sago plants only use this form of reproduction, especially in permanently flooded wetlands. Germination and turion growth is maximized when temperatures are 15–26°C. Minimum temperatures reported for turion germination in the field are 5.5°C and temperatures of greater than 30°C may inhibit germination. Germination of drupelets and development of overwintering turions may occur as early as late March. New drupelets form about 3 weeks after flowering. Drupelets exposed for greater than 1 year on dry substrate and then moistened may germinate in greater than 4 days. Turions develop at the tips of branches that grow from rhizomes (beneath the surface of the substrate) and at the tips of leafy shoots (above the surface of the substrate). It is unclear whether turions are produced throughout the growing season or after peak plant biomass. Peak turion development occurs in late summer or early fall. Turions may remain viable from one to several years, longer when conditions are flooded compared to exposed. It has been reported that when sediment moisture was less than 23 percent for 2 weeks, most overwintering turions did not germinate due to desiccation. Vegetation senecas sometime between late August and October.

Several environmental factors regulate sago growth. As with most macrophytes, production and depth distribution of sago is largely determined by water transparency or turbidity. Turbidity is an environmental condition resulting from complex interactions involving characteristics (e.g., texture, slope, aspect) of the bottom substrate, wave action (prevailing wind speed and direction in relation to basin size) or water movement (e.g., bottom-feeding fish activity), and water chemistry. A secchi transparency of greater than 60 centimeters seems to favor sago growth and low production has been reported where secchi depths were less than 30 centimeters. Field studies indicate that sago growth does not occur in waters with pH less than 6.3 and greater than 10.7. A study that sampled 116 sites where sago occurred in central North America found a mean pH of 8.5. Optimum biomass occurs at 2–15 grams per liter TDS and lower values within this range favor reproductive material (propagules). Sago often occurs in waters high in CO_3 or HCO_3 ion (greater than 18 milligrams per liter). Sago may be out-competed by *Ruppia* in SO4-dominated waters with salinities greater than 26 grams per liter and by other macrophytes in HCO3-dominated waters with salinities less than 0.7 grams per liter (Stewart and Kantrud 1972 in Kantrud 1990). Relative to sago, widgeongrass is a more salt tolerant macrophyte and *Utricularia vulgaris* is less salt tolerant. As water levels fluctuate and environmental conditions (e.g., water chemistry) are modified, changes in composition of submergent plant species will occur naturally.

Like sago, widgeongrass is adapted to a wide range of environmental conditions. It also exhibits annual life cycle traits in extreme environmental conditions (e.g., drought, high salinities) and perennial traits in more stable environments where productivity usually is highest. Almost all below ground biomass is within 10 centimeters below the surface of the bottom substrate and close to 90 percent is within 5 centimeters. Rhizomes occur within a few mm and most drupelets within 5 centimeters of the surface of the bottom substrate. The shallow root system makes turbulent waters a limiting factor. Widgeongrass is able to grow in well-oxygenated and reduced sediments if able to obtain enough oxygen from photosynthesis.

Numerous flowers are produced about 5–6 weeks after widgeongrass begins growth. Drupelets

and rhizomes on overwintering plants develop about 2 weeks after the start of flowering. Annual widgeongrass requires water temperatures of 10–33°C to complete its life cycle. Temperatures for drupelet germination and seedling development occur at 10–20°C and 15–25°C, respectively. Peak growth typically occurs sometime in July or August in temperate regions. In north temperate wetlands, temperatures of greater than 30°C may adversely affect widgeongrass growth.

Measurements of water transparency have indicated the importance of light as a growth requirement of widgeongrass. In Canada, widgeongrass dominated in waters with a Secchi disk reading of 3.0 meters (Gallup 1978 in Kantrud 1991) and, in another study, biomass decreased with Secchi disk reading less than 1 meter (Bailey and Titman 1984 in Kantrud 1991). However, other environmental factors may have contributed to the reported increases and decreases in widgeongrass growth.

Below-ground biomass has been reported most productive in well-oxygenated, coarse-textured sediments. Optimum growth of widgeongrass in the laboratory and the field occurred in 0.4-meter and 0.6-meter water depths, respectively. The most productive growth of widgeongrass in finer substrates (clay and silt) occurred in water depths of greater than 0.61 meter compared to up to 4.0 meters in sandy substrates. Germination of drupelets will occur in shallow water depths (5–10 centimeters), but plants produced may have low drupelet production. Germination of drupelets is reduced or may not occur if buried greater than 10 centimeters, exposed on moist soil, in sediments with greater than 1- to 2-percent soluble salts, or in waters with NaCl concentrations of 15 grams per liter. However, drupelets are highly drought-resistant, may recover from high salinities when inundated in freshwater for about 2 weeks, and may remain viable for less than 3 years. Water chemistry (e.g., salinity, alkalinity) parameters for widgeongrass occurrence seem to vary greatly among study locations (e.g., regions, lab vs. field) and among plant life stage (e.g., germination, growth, reproduction). Generally, it tolerates higher salinities than other submersed macrophytes and does not do well in fresh, soft, or acidic water. In the prairie pothole region, Stewart and Kantrud (1972 in Kantrud 1991) reported the greatest abundance of widgeongrass occurring in waters with salinities 0.35 to greater than 100 grams per liter. While other studies in prairie wetlands found widgeongrass commonly occurring in waters with salinities ranging from 15 to greater than 45 grams per liter (Millar 1976 in Kantrud 1991) and abundantly fruiting where salinities were 36 grams per liter (Metcalf 1931 in Kantrud 1991). Widgeongrass generally occurs in natural waters with alkalinities of about pH 6.0–10.0.

Other key factors to consider in macrophyte production are the amount of algae and phytoplankton growth. Extensive algae cover may limit light, temperature, and oxygen (from photosynthesis) necessary for macrophyte growth. Phytoplankton achieves high growth rates when nutrient availability is high (e.g., from water inflows) and, like epiphytic algae, may affect photosynthesis of widgeongrass.

Meadow

The refuge will maintain and enhance existing meadow habitats to provide grass-forb communities, composed primarily of native plants, to benefit migratory birds and other wildlife species.

Rationale

The meadow objectives are written similarly to riparian objectives 2 and 3 and the rationale for those riparian objectives applies to these meadow objectives. Therefore, in this section, we will only note how the meadow and riparian habitat areas differ and how those differences may influence wildlife use. Major differences include the proximity to different habitat types (e.g., the river in the lowland), the riparian habitat is subject to flooding from the river channel, and plant composition (e.g., willow in riparian zone and not in upland irrigated meadows).

Objective

Provide 20–50 acres over a 5-year average of grass-forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native plants (rushes, sedges, grasses, forbs) characterized by less than 20 centimeters height, less than 10 centimeters VOR, with dry to moist soils (no standing water), adjacent to (within 50 meters) or intermingled with sagebrush (10- to 25-percent sage canopy cover), from early June–July, to benefit sage grouse and snipe broods.

Value

North Park has developed a sage grouse working plan for the declining sage grouse population in the Jackson County. We suspect that the current amount of interspersed grasses and forbs in the sagebrush may not support a sufficient abundance of arthropods and invertebrates for foraging sage grouse broods. Meadows have the moisture and nutrients that encourage plant growth. The decomposing plant matter promotes invertebrate production. We believe that if we provide some meadow habitat devoid of surface water during the brood-rearing season, these food resources would be accessible to sage grouse broods. Meadow areas that are proximate to the sagebrush may increase sage grouse survival because they would not have to travel as far for different resource requirements.

Achievability

Management of these habitat conditions in the meadow is somewhat experimental to see if we are able to create sage grouse brood habitat (some in riparian zone too).

Objective

Provide 630–790 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native plants (grasses, sedges, forbs, and rushes) characterized by greater than 30 centimeters VOR, 10–20 centimeters duff layer and minimal (less than 5 percent) bare ground to benefit nesting waterfowl (mallard, gadwall, pintails, scaup), songbirds (savannah sparrow, meadowlark), and foraging shorebirds if flooded (snipe, phalarope, white-faced ibis, curlew, willet, and sora).

Achievability

We currently are able to keep maybe 40 percent of the meadows flooded through end of July in most years. Only about 20–30 percent of the meadows defined as dense in the riparian objectives can be kept flooded to 2–3 inches through July most years (largely due to channel alterations). Therefore, we must try to enhance the irrigation systems to providing more of this type of habitat in upland meadow areas.

Objective

Provide 1,650–1,850 acres, over a 5-year average, of a grass:forb (75:25) plant community composed primarily of native species (grasses, sedges, forbs, and rushes) characterized by 10–30 centimeters VOR, 0–10 duff layer and minimal (less than 5 percent) bare ground from mid-April to the end of July to benefit nesting waterfowl (gadwall, shoveler, pintail and green-winged teal) and sage grouse broods.

No substantial differences exist in the meadow and riparian habitats in regards to this objective.

Upland Habitat

The upland habitat consists of 14,285 acres of a shrub-steppe plant community dominated by sagebrush, drought tolerant perennial bunchgrasses and forbs. Uplands are the dominant refuge habitat type and includes all lands not accounted for in the wetland, meadow and riparian descriptions.

Many upland habitats exhibit a mosaic pattern around meadows sites on the refuge. These sites are generally managed in conjunction with associated meadows, including using the same grazing regime. The focus of past refuge management efforts have been to create quality wetland habitats, therefore general upland plant community information is limited.

History

Historically, the shrub-steppe community encompassed 9.4 million acres in the intermountain west. Early explorer accounts of sagebrush densities are varied and conflicting. Vale (1975) reviewed 29 historic explorer documents and concluded that presettlement (prior to 1843) conditions included a range type dominated by sagebrush, and that grasses became scarcer as you traveled west. Alternately, Stewart (1941) concluded that historical documents emphasized an abundance of grass under pristine conditions. Historical records are too incomplete to tell us what comprised the pristine vegetation of the Artemisia ecosystem (Young et al. 1984).

Geologist F.V. Hayden entered North Park in 1868 and described the site as “an excellent grazing region” and reported seeing “myriads of antelope” that were “quietly feeding.” Naturalist George Bird Grinnell entered the Park in 1879 near the Pinkham ranch and writes “the country at this point had been burned over, and was black and extremely desolate in appearance; I learned from the owner of the ranch that the burn had been made to clear off the sagebrush which takes up so much room that might be occupied by grass” (in) (Hampton 1971).

The historical plant composition of the North Park basin may never be determined; however, it is likely relatively similar to today’s conditions. The shrub-steppe community is dominated by sagebrush, and a small percentage of grasses and forbs. Relative abundance of the plant components has been altered by range management practices (fire, grazing, mowing, and chemicals) over the last 125 years.

Vegetation types

Dominant Sage

The intermountain west contains 11 sagebrush species and 13 sagebrush sub-species. Big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and its five subspecies is the most common and widely distributed (McArthur 1992). The three most common big sagebrush species are basin big sagebrush (*A. tridentata tridentata*) also potentially the largest and most floriferous; mountain big sagebrush (*A. tridentata vaseyana*); and Wyoming big sagebrush (*A. tridentata wyomingensis*) the smallest and least floriferous (McArthur and Welch 1982).

Most sagebrush species distribution is controlled by moisture-elevation gradients, seasonal moisture and soil properties (McArthur 1992). Generally, *A. tridentata tridentata* occupies deep soils, with minimal profile development in low to moderate precipitation and moderate-elevations. *A. tridentata*

wyomingensis prefers to occupy moderate depth, low-to-moderate precipitation and lower elevations. *A. tridentata vaseyana* dominates areas where moisture improves and high elevations.

Big sagebrush traits include good digestibility, high winter crude protein and provide high winter phosphorus and carotene (Welch 1983; Welch and McArthur 1990). Herbaceous growth in sagebrush occurs only when the appropriate warm temperatures and available soil moisture occurs in the late spring and early summer (West 1996). Summer precipitation is usually not sufficient to allow plant growth; fall moisture patterns are too sparse to allow plant regrowth.

The three primary sage species located on the refuge include basin big sagebrush, mountain big sagebrush and Wyoming big sagebrush; however, small stands of silver sagebrush (*A. cana*), alkali sagebrush (*A. longiloba*), fringed sage (*A. frigida*), black sage (*A. nova*), and others may exist. The refuge lacks basic plant inventory and distribution data to fully assess and manage upland habitats. Therefore, the refuge proposes to complete an uplands plant survey prior to the year 2008 that will facilitate future management.

Young (et al. 1976) describes the introduction and concentrations of large herbivores in the late 1800s on Artimisian grasslands as having dramatic results. The result was that for most Artimisian grasslands, native perennial grasses were greatly reduced (Young 1994).

In the intermountain west, the dominate understory grasses and grasslike species of the sagebrush communities is usually perennial bunchgrass. The major perennial grass and grasslike species include: bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), Thurber's needlegrass (*Stipa thurberiana*), needle-and-thread (*Stipa comata*), California brome (*Bromus carinatus*), *Elymus cinereus*, Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), and elk sedge (*Carex geyeri*) (Young et al. 1984). Common forbs include silverleaf lupine, sulfer flower, hooded phlox and Douglas phlox.

Soils and Range Sites

Dry Mountain Loam Range Site

This site comprises 25.7 acres of the refuge. The most extensive range type in North Park, it consists of moderate-deep to deep well drained soils. The potential plant community includes 15-percent stream bank wheatgrass, 10-percent sheep fescue, 10-percent muttongrass, 8-percent pine needlegrass, 5-percent Letterman needlegrass, 3-percent Sandberg bluegrass, and 5-percent junegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass. Big sagebrush makes up 15 percent of the community.

The forb community consists of lupine, pussytoes, aster, fleabane, yarrow, bluebells, buckwheat, phlox, fringed sage, snakeweed and other forbs. Total annual production of all vegetation is 600 pounds per acre (USDA NRCS). Heavy grazing by herbivores causes more undesirable grasses such as bluebunch wheatgrass, sheep fescue, pine needlegrass, and other plants such as big sagebrush and less palatable forbs to increase.

Valley Bench Site

This site comprises 3,065.9 acres of the refuge. This site is extensive, typically found on uplands and benches, and can be deep to shallow, well drained sites. The potential plant community consists of 20-percent streambank wheatgrass, 15-percent mutton grass, 10-percent junegrass, 9-percent Indian ricegrass, 5-percent pine needlegrass, and 5-percent other grasses. Big sagebrush makes up 15 percent of this community, Douglas rabbitbrush makes up 3 percent. Forbs consist of 5-percent phlox, 3-percent pussytoes, and 5-percent lupine, gray horsebrush and other forbs. Heavy grazing by herbivores causes pine needlegrass, junegrass and muttongrass to decrease and big sagebrush, Douglas rabbitbrush and forbs to increase. Total annual production ranges from 400–900 pounds per acre.

Mountain Meadow Range Site

This site comprises 1,416.5 acres of the refuge. It is a highly productive site along natural streams consisting of deep, poorly drained soils. The site is characterized by 20-percent thurber fescue, 12-percent tufted hairgrass, 10-percent slender wheatgrass and 5-percent sedges. Baltic rush may also be found.

Forbs are abundant and include 3-percent iris, 3-percent herbaceous cinquefoil, 2-percent yarrow, 15-percent wild celery, cow parsnip, clovers, American bistort, aster, arnica, groundsels, waterhemlock, false-hellebore, monkshood, marsh marigold, sedum, fireweed, shooting star, primrose, green gentian, elephant-head, and others. The community also contains 5-percent silver sage, 10-percent willow, and 5-percent other shrubs. This site can produce 2,000–4,000 pounds of forage per acre.

Salt Flats Range Site

This site comprises 3,290.7 acres of the refuge. This site consists of deep, well drained soils that are affected by sodium salts. The potential plant community is 25-percent western wheatgrass, 20-percent saltgrass, 5-percent Indian ricegrass, 5-percent alkali bluegrass, 5-percent alkali grass, and 5-percent other grasses. Forbs are not abundant on this site and make up 10 percent of the plant composition. The site is also 10-percent greasewood, 5-percent winterfat, 5-percent mat saltbrush, and 5-percent other shrubs. Excessive grazing causes

Indian rice grass, winterfat, and alkali bluegrass to decrease and western wheatgrass, alkali grass, saltgrass and greasewood increase. The site produces 500–900 pounds per acre depending on annual precipitation.

Alkaline Slopes Range Site

This site comprises 2,078.1 acres of the refuge. This site contains well drained soils that are 20–40 inches deep over shale. The potential plant community is 15-percent wheatgrass, 10-percent saltgrasss, 10-percent Indian rice grass, 10-percent squirreltail, 5-percent pine needlegrass, 5-percent bluegrasses, and 10-percent other grasses. Phlox, buckwheat and other forbs make up 5 percent of the community. The community is also 15-percent big sagebrush, 10-percent greasewood, and 5-percent winterfat, masaltbrush, fringed sage and other shrubs. Excessive grazing causes Indian rice grass, bluebunch wheatgrass and pine needlegrass to decrease, and rhizomatous wheatgrasses, Sandberg bluegrass, big sagebrush and greasewood to increase. Total annual production for these sites is 300–700 pounds per acre depending on moisture.

Spatial Considerations

Dominance of grasses or sagebrush in upland systems may be attributed to differences in management (Cooper 1953; Savory and Butterfield 1999). Overgrazing can cause a loss and vigor and density of native grasses which permit *Artemisia tridentata* to dominate a site (Wright and Wright 1948). Evidence is also clear that proper management of grazing can permit grasses to reduce sagebrush to a subordinate role in the community (Cooper 1953).

Big sagebrush is the most widespread and common shrub of the Western United Sates (Rice 1974). Numerous studies have presented evidence that *Artemisia sp.* have allelopathic effects against neighboring species. The success and distribution of *A. tridentata* may partly depend on its production of allelopathic substances which inhibit the germination and growth of potential competitors (Weaver and Klarich 1977). Groves and Anderson (1980) demonstrated inhibition of crested wheatgrass and giant wildrye germination using crushed *A. tridentata* leaves.

Structural Considerations

Annual precipitation levels clearly cause changes in habitat physiognomy in sagebrush steppe plant communities. Structural changes are not just associated with changes in shrub species, but instead are strongly correlated with forb and litter coverage, coverage diversity and total vegetation cover. Bird species showed no abundance changes of either individual species or local or regional assemblages due to changes in habitat physiognomy. Perhaps local changes in sage cover are not significant enough to change avian use. (Rotenberry and Wiens 1980). Rotenberry and Wiens (1991) also conclude that bird populations in shrub steppe vary largely independent of each other. Structural components of the uplands can also be changed with treatment. Several studies have investigated how treatment of sagebrush may affect structure (Cooper 1953; Savory and Butterfield 1999). Clearly management can change plant community structure toward desired conditions.

Primary Factors Influencing Distribution and Structural Conditions

Soils

We utilized Jackson County, Colorado soil type maps as depicted by U.S. Department of Agriculture, and generated number of acres of each soil type within the refuge. Five soils that list sagebrush being "common" included Boettcher-Bundyman association, Bosler sandy loam, Dobrow loam, Morset loam, and Spicerton sandy loam for a total of 9,877.04 refuge acres. Generally, these soils are considered moderate to deep and typically are used for grazing or pasture. These soils are found on slopes less than 15 percent, and generally have slow to moderate permeability.

Physical Characteristics

Soil depth, soil texture, aspect, and soluble salts and slope all determine vegetation densities in the shrub-steppe. Following precipitation, water flows downslope and establishes a moisture gradient with respect to slope position. The slope crests are the most xeric and the slope base being the most mesic. Slope effects vegetation density, generally at the base of the knolls is denser, with the midslope vegetation being moderately dense and the vegetation of the knoll crest being the least dense (Brotherson 1999). Sturges (1977) found mountain big sagebrush, for example, growing at midslope and bottom slope sites and suggested that these sites were more mesic and, therefore, were better suited for mountain big sagebrush. In general, soil depth increases downslope, as does the number of plant species. Total cover of both annuals and forbs decreased downslope, while shrubs cover was most important at the slope base (Brotherson 1999).

Salinities

Artemisia species generally will not tolerate soil salinities higher than 18 mmhos/centimeters^3 (Gates et al. 1956). Generally, as soil salinity increases, sagebrush becomes less dominate, and greasewood species become more abundant.

Soil Textures

Soil textures form the slope crest, show lower clay content, and higher sands and exposed rock. As water moves downslope, it takes the smaller textured particles and dissolved nutrients along with it. Soil organic matter, pH, bare ground, litter cover, total dissolved salts and concentrations of sodium and potassium all increase downslope (Brotherson 1999).

Aspect

The direction that a slope hillside faces influences soil temperature, air temperature, soil moisture, solar radiation and, therefore, plant community characteristics. Overall, south and west facing slopes are warmer than north and east facing slopes. Air temperature on south facing slopes averages 0.9°C warmer than north-facing slopes. The morning sun finds moist soils and plants, and a large part of the solar radiation received is lost to evaporation. However, afternoon sun shines on relatively dry soils and plants; therefore, the received energy is applied to increasing soil temperature. Soil moisture is 1.7–2.2 percent higher on north-facing slopes (Ayyad and Dix 1964) than south facing. Soil temperature on the upper and middle positions of a hillside is warmer than lower sites. South-facing hillsides have 5- to 6-degree difference in soil temperature between upper and lower sites.

Climate

Climate conditions of North Park are characterized by low relative humidity, abundant sunshine, large daily and seasonal temperature variations, and increasing precipitation with elevations (Fletcher 1981). North Park's remoteness from moisture sources and high elevation results in low humidity and a semi-arid climate (Kuhn et al. 1983). Mean annual precipitation ranges from about 10–16 inches in the basins, and up to 40 inches in the surrounding mountains. The basin receives the majority of precipitation during the summer months (May–September). Snowfall is the most significant precipitation and accumulates in the mountains in depths of 5–10 feet. Melting snow pack provides 65–85 percent of annual stream flow. Summer precipitation is generally produced by convective thunderstorms, but because moisture is lacking, the rainfall from these storms is generally less than 1 inch (Kuhn et al. 1983).

Daily temperature variations at Walden (8,120 feet elevation) are reported to be 25° Fahrenheit during winter and 40° Fahrenheit during midsummer and fall. Recorded temperature extremes are 96° and minus 49° with a mean annual temperature of 36.5°. Walden averages 43 frost-free days per year due primarily to high elevation. Winter winds are frequent and typically from the west or southwest. The May–September average evaporation potential estimated for North Park is about 35 inches (McKee et al. 1981).

Disturbance: Fire/Grazing

Big sagebrush communities had fire cycles that varied between 60–110 years before European settlement (Whisenant 1990). Grasses and forbs have an advantage over sagebrush when sites are burned. Most Artemisia species do not resprout after fire, but have to reestablish from seed. The introduction of cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) led to more frequent fires, and combined with unrestricted grazing, native vegetation becomes easily replaced with exotic annual plants (West 1996). Much of the sagebrush steppe has been burned at least once in the last three decades and is now dominated by introduced annuals like cheat grass and medusahead. This replacement is undesirable in all aspects (West 1996).

Grazing in sagebrush-steppe systems tends to increase sagebrush density, decrease sagebrush cover, reduce litter accumulation, decrease soil moisture, reduce grass and forb abundance, and increase the potential for non-native invasion. Large grazers and grasses have co-evolved. Without moderate grazing and/or fire, plant litter builds thatch that withholds nutrients and physically limits vegetative regrowth and seedling establishment (McNaughton et al. 1982).

Some grazing and burning are necessary to allow optimal light penetration and nutrient cycling. Maximum grassland plant community diversity is usually attained under moderate grazing (West 1993). The dense stands of excess sagebrush prevent the herbaceous species from recovering. Such brush-choked stands are usually chosen by both livestock and wildlife managers for manipulation to diversify vegetation structure (West 1996). A reduction in sagebrush also enhances water yields (Sturges 1977).

Goodrich (et al. 1999) estimated ground cover at sagebrush steppe sites protected from livestock averaged 55 percent. Sites grazed annually in the spring averaged 30-percent ground cover. The greatest difference in ground cover was the amount of litter or plant residue deposited on the ground. Litter cover was about two times greater in areas protected from livestock grazing. High ground cover can be maintained under moderate intensity, rest or deferred rotation grazing. Holechek and others (1998) concluded that various studies of gazing impacts on rangeland soils and watershed status are highly consistent in showing that vegetation residue is the primary factor determining degree of soil erosion and water infiltration into the soil. As residue is depleted by heavy grazing, soil erosion increases, water

infiltration decreases and water overland flow increases.

Where ground cover is less than 50 percent over more than 10 percent of a grazing unit, a need for change in management is strongly indicated. Exclusion of either or both wild ungulates and moderate intensity cattle grazing has not resulted in overall higher resource values than where both were present (Goodrich et al. 1999). Close grazing reduces soil moisture, decreases infiltration, the energy of falling raindrops is not dispersed by vegetation, and the soil surface is compacted and sealed by raindrop splash. In Ashley National Forest, eastern Utah, a comparison of summer-long grazing and three rest-rotation systems that revealed no difference in residual cover (Johnson 1987).

Timing of grazing or fire treatments and rest significantly effects outcome. A study in Browns Park, Colorado and Daggett County, Utah found crown cover for Wyoming big sagebrush after 30 years of ungulate exclusion was 22 percent, 11 percent after 9 years of exclusion, and 17 percent after 13 years. Absence of cattle grazing, coupled with high levels of wild ungulate use reduced Wyoming big sagebrush cover to less than 5 percent (Goodrich et al. 1999). Twenty-two percent crown cover appears to be the maximum crown cover Wyoming big sagebrush will support. At this level, the frequency of needle-and-thread grass was significantly less, and production and vigor appears to be reduced.

Refuge Objectives

Development of refuge objectives involved selecting sage-obligate species, identifying species habitat requirements, detailing period of refuge use, and finally developing measurable habitat based objectives that specify desirable range conditions. Unfortunately, little is known about refuge upland habitats. The refuge's first priority is to conduct vegetative assessments of upland habitats and incorporate the information into map databases. Past management efforts have focused on developing suitable waterfowl nesting and brood-rearing sites in meadow habitats. Much of the upland plant community information that had been acquired was lost to an office fire in April of 1997. Therefore, uplands management is conservative, identifying only 4,000 acres with specific and measurable objectives. The remaining upland acreage will be utilized for sagebrush research. Specific and measurable objectives will be determined on the remaining acreage after the vegetative assessments are completed, and research on desirable range conditions is conducted.

Species Selection

The Intermountain West Regional Shorebird Conservation Plan recognizes that throughout the Great Basin, uplands associated with wetlands and riparian areas provide critical nesting areas for shorebirds, especially long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*) and willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*). The Partners in Flight (Colorado State Plan) identifies northern sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), sage sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*), vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*), and sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) as species of concern (priority greater than 20). The refuge is uniquely situated to support several goals and objectives identified in these plans. Working with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and with existing data on uplands use by songbirds and shorebirds, the refuge developed the following objectives. Northern sage grouse are a species of concern for the State of Colorado. Elk and pronghorn are common on upland habitats and were considered during objectives development.

Uplands Objective

Provide 2,000 acres over a 5-year average of uplands composed of shrubs (greater than 70-percent sage) greater than 25 centimeters height and 20- to 30-percent canopy cover, greater than 20-percent grass cover, and greater than 10-percent forbs (native species preferred) to benefit sage grouse, vesper sparrow, elk, and pronghorn.

Habitat Requirements of Species: Sage Grouse

Sage grouse are closely associated with sagebrush ecosystems of western North America. Sage grouse are well adapted to a variety of sagebrush heights including tall sage, low sagebrush, forb-rich mosaics, riparian meadows, steppes with native grasses and forbs, and scrub willow. (Schroeder et al, 1999). Nests are placed in thick cover, generally dominated by big sagebrush. Vegetative diverse habitats (horizontally and vertically) provide the best habitats. Broods are found in rich mosaics of habitat including sagebrush, riparian meadows, greasewood bottoms. The common feature of brood areas is they are rich in forbs and insects. Females with broods prefer 19- to 31-percent sagebrush cover with 9- to 19-percent cover of forbs (Drut et al 1994). Broods respond to dry conditions by concentrating in areas with succulent vegetation. Nesting predation is lowest in dense (41 percent) canopy cover with heavy grass (19-percent) canopy cover (Gregg et al. 1994) and at least 17-percent sagebrush cover.

Winter range includes sagebrush with 6- to 43-percent canopy cover but prefer at least 15-percent

canopy cover (Johnson and Braun 1999). Diet consists of leaves, buds, stems, flowers, insect and grit. Grouse tend to feed on the ground in open habitats during morning and mid-afternoon (Hupp and Braun 1989). Hupp and Braun (1989) noted that sage grouse feeding activity was influenced by snow depth and mountain big sagebrush exposure above the snow.

Feeding activity of sage grouse occurred in drainages and on slopes with south or west aspects. Additionally, big sagebrush plants in drainages tend to be taller, and northeast slopes and flat sagebrush sites were shorter in height. Sagebrush is essential for sage grouse and dominates the diet during late autumn, winter and early spring (Girard 1937).

Habitat Requirements of Species: Vesper Sparrow

Vesper sparrows are distributed from the Northwest Territories, across to Alberta, south to central California, Nebraska, Illinois, Virginia, and Maine (breeding bird survey data). Vesper sparrows prefer dry, open areas with short, sparse and patchy vegetation including sagebrush plant communities (Roberts 1932). Vesper sparrows prefer upland habitats and are most abundant in shrub steppe environments (Kantrud 1981).

In Wyoming, the availability of sagebrush for nest cover and song perches was important. Vesper sparrows occurred in areas dominated by sagebrush, and were absent from areas with only grass or cactus (Fautin 1975). Abundance of vesper sparrows is also positively correlated with forb cover. Perches may be any structure or vegetation higher than nest height, such as sagebrush (Berger 1968). Average vesper sparrow territory size in Montana was 1.65 hectares (Reed 1986). Vesper sparrows are a fairly common host to brown-headed cowbird nest predation, and will frequently raise cowbird young (Friedmann 1963).

Vesper sparrows arrive on the breeding grounds March to late May, and depart in mid-August to late November (Johnsgard 1980). In Wyoming, vesper sparrows were among the most common breeding species in the grass/sagebrush areas. Generally, a lack of sagebrush (perch sites) accounts for low density of vesper sparrows. Nesting occurs on the ground beneath relatively short (14–34.3 centimeters in height) big sagebrush using grass to conceal the nests. Western wheatgrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, green needlegrass, and junegrass were commonly used food items (Best 1972). Vesper sparrows are also known to occur near white-tailed prairie dog colonies (Clark et al. 1982).

Habitat Requirements of Species: Elk

Herbivory (elk, moose, and cattle) impacts to riparian, upland and meadow habitats are not known. Willow regeneration along the Illinois River is slow, and small willow shoots are frequently grazed to 2–5 centimeters in height. Elk damage to riparian areas is well documented in the scientific literature (Zeigenfuss et al. 2002).

Currently, approximately 150 elk utilize the refuge during the spring, summer and fall. During winter months (November–March), elk numbers vary considerably but average 1,000–1,400. Elk distribution is varied; however, most use occurs in the willow riparian community along the Illinois River and on the Case Flats. Elk numbers and elk damage are not necessarily a linear relationship. Snow depth, temperature, duration of feeding, and a host of other factors may determine wintering elk impacts. Elk wintering on the refuge may minimize game damage on adjacent private lands.

Wintering elk (*Cervis elaphus*) diets include approximately 63- to 100-percent (average is 84 percent) grasses, 9-percent shrubs, and 8-percent forbs (Kufeld 1973). Spring grass use in eight Montana elk food habitat studies averaged 87-percent grass. During summer months, forbs became more important, averaging 64 percent, 30-percent grasses, and 6-percent shrubs. Forbs can grow to 100 percent of the summer diet. Fall elk diets revert primarily back to grasses (73 percent) (Geer 1959; Geer 1960; Kirsch 1963; Mackie 1970; Morris and Schwartz 1957). Nutritionally, forbs were highly valuable for Montana elk, especially *Agoseris glauca* and *Geranium viscosimum*. *Luipinus spp.* and *Aster spp.* were also highly valuable forbs. Grasses and grass like plants included *Agropyron spicatum*, *Carex spp*, *Carex geyeri*, *Festuca idahioenisis*, *Festuca scabrella*, and *Poa sp*. Highly valuable shrub species (based on a large number of references) were *Amelanchier alnifolia*, *Ceanothus sanguineus*, *Ceanothus velutinus*, *Populus tremuloides*, *Prunus virginiana*, *Pushia tridentata*, *Quercus gambellii* and *Salix spp.* (Kufeld 1972).

Habitat Requirements of Species: Pronghorn

Sixty-eight percent of pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) in North America occur in grassland habitats (Yoakum 1978) and 56 percent occur on wheatgrass (*Agropyron*) dominated prairies (Sundstrom et al. 1973). Pronghorn use is widely distributed across the refuge. During all seasons, 25–250 pronghorn utilize the refuge and are generally concentrated in upland habitats. Winter habitat use in south-central Wyoming indicates that high pronghorn densities occurred in habitat complexes containing an average of 0.5 big sagebrush plants/square meter that were greater than 29 centimeters tall (Ryder and Irwin 1987). Use of sagebrush-dominated habitats was 45 percent.

Wintering pronghorn tended to use northwest ridges and benches and those containing black greasewood mixed with big sagebrush in stands averaging 0.4 plants/square meter in draws and lowland flats. Pronghorn responded to deep snow (greater than 25 centimeters) by moving to windswept terrain or draw bottoms where taller sagebrush is available. In Montana, silver sagebrush is the dominate food item in pronghorn diets. Presence of silver sage is a characteristic of optimum pronghorn habitats (Wood 1989). Fall and winter diets consist primarily of sagebrush. Pronghorn normally avoid areas with broken topography and vegetation greater than 76 centimeters tall (Sundstrom et al. 1973).

Uplands Objective

Provide 2,000 acres over a 5-year average of uplands composed of shrubs (greater than 70-percent sage) greater than 40 centimeters height and greater than 30-percent canopy cover, less than 20-percent grass cover, and greater than 5-percent forbs (native species preferred) to benefit Brewer's sparrow, sage thrasher, and pronghorn.

Habitat Requirements of Species: Brewer's Sparrow

Brewer's sparrow forage primarily on arthropods in sagebrush shrubs with an average canopy height less than 1.5 meters (Rotenberry et al. 1999); little foraging occurs in nearby rabbitbush (Rotenberry and Wiens 1998) or on open ground between shrubs (Wiens et al 1987). Compared to surrounding shrubs, these sparrows forage in larger and more vigorous shrubs (Rotenberry et al. 1999). In a study across the breeding range, vigor (percent live stems) of a shrub patch was the best vegetative descriptor of Brewer's sparrow habitat (Knopf et al. 1990).

Compared to surrounding habitat, Brewer's sparrow nests tend to be located in significantly taller, denser shrubs (primarily big sagebrush) with reduced bare ground and herbaceous cover (Peterson and Best 1985). In Idaho, nest shrubs averaged 69 centimeters (range 42–104 centimeters) versus an average of 43 centimeters for surrounding shrubs. Brewer's sparrows prefer shrubs that are entirely or mostly alive (Rotenberry and Wiens 1989).

Habitat Requirements of Species: Sage Thrasher

Sage thrasher is considered a sage-obligate species but noted in black greasewood habitats (Braun et al. 1976). Sage thrasher numbers are positively correlated with the amount of sagebrush cover, positively correlated with sagebrush height (30–60 centimeters), and negatively correlated with grass cover (Rotenberry and Wiens 1980). Foraging characteristics indicated a strong preference for ground insects such as ants (Formiciae) and ground beetles (Carabidae) (Stephens 1985). Sage thrashers are opportunistic feeders and may take grasshoppers (acridomorpha), crickets, ants, various true bugs and may take larger seeds (Knowlton and Harmston 1943).

Individual nesting sites indicate a preference for taller shrubs with wider crowns. When adequate canopy coverage exists, sage thrasher abundance is positively correlated with a perennial grass understory. Canopy coverage in 175 nest sites in Idaho ranged from 11 to 44 percent (Rich 1980).

Uplands Objective

Establish research plots to evaluate herbivory impacts to sage height and grass/forb abundance to benefit nesting and wintering sage grouse, songbirds (vesper sparrow, sage thrasher, Brewer's sparrow), and pronghorn.

The lack of knowledge on upland habitats (plant species, distribution, condition, height, density) prevents the development of habitats specific goals and objectives. The remaining 10,225 acres of upland habitats will be surveyed by 2008. The staff will focus on evaluating impacts of current management and herbivory on upland habitats, and will develop habitat based goals and objectives by 2017.

Strategies

Conduct plant composition surveys of refuge uplands by 2008. The refuge staff will develop research plots (exclosures) to evaluate herbivory impacts to sage height and grass/forb abundance to benefit nesting and wintering sage grouse, songbirds (vesper sparrow, sage thrasher, Brewer's sparrow), and pronghorn. Working with partners, the refuge will develop management strategies for all 14,000 acres of sagebrush uplands.

Investigate methods to increase sagebrush abundance or quality. Attempt to modify forb component using Dixie harrow, fire, fertilizers, seeding and/or herbicides as tools. Native grasses and forbs are preferred; however, limited nonnative species would be considered to enhance the refuges ability to achieve objectives. The Service policy is to promote natives; additionally, natives tend to sustain ecological integrity of the system (wildlife, plants, system function). The disadvantage is higher costs, lower success rates, and viability of the stand. Non-natives are less expensive, generally show higher success rates, are readily available, and many have high wildlife value. The downside to non-natives includes risk of spread, poor ecological integrity, competition with native species, and other unknown consequences. Revegetation and sagebrush enhancement preference will be given to

soil types that typically support quality sagebrush stands.

Uplands Objective

Monitor North Park phacelia populations currently known to exist on the refuge. Initiate research to understand the plants life history and develop a management plan to ensure its continued existence.

North Park phacelia is an endangered plant that exists in at least three general areas of Jackson County. One area occurs on the Case tract of the refuge and includes two primary plant strongholds. Since 1997, refuge staff have monitored plant numbers on these two sites. Enumeration of rosettes have averaged 741 (range 221–1,692) and flowering plants average 1,783 (range 104–5,391). The plants inhabit wind swept, gravel dominated hillsides with little or no competing vegetation. Currently, the plant is not excluded from grazing, and no specific plant management is occurring. The plant does not appear to be increasing or decreasing in abundance on the refuge. Therefore, the refuge proposes to investigate the life history, life requirements and management options of North Park phacelia. Additionally, the ongoing monitoring of rosettes and flowering plants will continue annually. A step-down management plan will be created by 2010 that details future management actions. Strategies will include a research component that emphasizes full recovery of the plant species.

Appendix I
Water Rights

Summary of water rights held by Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Source Name	*Rate or Storage*[1]	*Administrative Number*	*Court Number*	*Appropriation Date*
Antelope Ditch No. 1	5.47 cfs	30280.21305	WO487	05/01/1908
Antelope Well	0.029 cfs	30280.21305	WO487	05/01/1908
Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Domestic Well	0.10 cfs	47481.33602	80CW220	12/31/1941
Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge Stock Well	0.10 cfs	47481.33602	80CW219	12/31/1941
Boyce Brothers Ditch No. 1	9.25 cfs	16360	275 (263)	10/16/1894
Boyce Brothers Ditch No. 1	20.5 cfs	30280.18748	700	05/01/1901
Case Reservoir No. 1	124.3 ac-ft	30280.21391	11	07/26/1908
Case Reservoir No. 2	105.8 ac-ft	30280.21392	12	07/27/1908
Case Reservoir No. 3	9.1 ac-ft	30280.22852	14	07/26/1912
Case Reservoir No. 3	57.4 ac-ft	48577.23852	83CW228	07/26/1912
Dryer Ditch	5.2 cfs	13635	81	05/01/1887
Dryer Ditch	3.6 cfs	16215	270 (258)	05/24/1894
Dryer Ditch	2.4 cfs	17806	296 (281)	10/01/1898
Everhard Baldwin Ditch	10 cfs (5 cfs)	13642	86 (80)	05/08/1887
Everhard Baldwin Ditch	8 cfs	14762	229	06/01/1890
Everhard Baldwin Ditch	5 cfs	21366.20240	349	06/01/1905
Fox Pond	108 ac-ft	51499.47999	91CW113	06/01/1981
Hill-Crouter Ditch	6 cfs	14148	161	09/25/1888
Home No. 1 and Upland Ditch	4 cfs (2.0 cfs)	12179	11 (10)	05/06/1883
Home No. 1 and Upland Ditch	2 cfs	14370	180 (161)	05/05/1889
Home No. 1 and Upland Ditch	2 cfs	14805	232 (207)	07/14/1890
Howard Ditch	75 cfs (37.5)	22188	364	10/01/1910
Howard Ditch	70cfs (35 cfs)[2]	49102	84CW156	06/08/1984
Hubbard Ditch No. 1	1 cfs	13686	100 (93)	06/21/1887
Hubbard Ditch No. 1	3 cfs	13849	110 (101)	12/01/1887
Hubbard Ditch No. 1	2 cfs	14417	196 (176)	06/21/1889
Hubbard Ditch No. 1	6 cfs	23016.18840	375	08/01/1901
Hubbard Ditch No. 2	3 cfs	14337	167 (151)	04/02/1889
Hubbard Ditch No. 2	3 cfs	14731	217 (196)	05/01/1890
Hubbard Ditch No. 2	8 cfs	15891	264 (253)	07/04/1893
Hubbard Ditch No. 2	15 cfs	17420	286 (273)	09/10/1897
Hubbard Ditch No. 2	16 cfs	21366.19909	346.5	07/05/1904
Hubbard Ditch No. 2	27 cfs	21391	357	07/26/1908
Hubbard Ditch No. 2	31 cfs`	23016.22035	378.2	05/01/1910
Hubbard Ditch No. 4	2 cfs	23016.21383	None	07/18/1908
Ish and Baldwin Ditch	1.6 cfs (0.8 cfs)	16942	382 (270)	05/20/1896
MacFarlane Ext. Ditch	40 cfs (20 cfs)	22455	368	06/25/1911
MacFarlane Reservoir	6507 ac-ft (3253.5 ac-ft)	22207	2	10/20/1910
MacFarlane Reservoir	6833 ac-ft*	49102	84CW156	06/08/1984

Summary of water rights held by Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

Source Name	*Rate or Storage*[1]	*Administrative Number*	*Court Number*	*Appropriation Date*
Midland Ditch	15 cfs (5 cfs)	18506	306 (286)	09/01/1900
Midland Ditch	6 cfs	21366.21305	355	05/01/1908
Midland Ditch	20.5 cfs (5 cfs)	24007	398	09/24/1915
Muskrat Pond	390 ac-ft	48577.47798	83CW4	11/12/1980
North Park Ditch No. 6	9 cfs	13635	80 (78)	05/01/1887
North Park Ditch No. 6	6 cfs	21366.19478	344	05/01/1903
Okalahoma Ditch No. 1	41 cfs	14350	170	04/15/1889
Oklahoma Ditch No. 1	10 cfs	15151	243 (215)	06/25/1891
Oklahoma Ditch No. 1	10 cfs	21366.19478	344	05/1/1903
Oklahoma Ditch No. 2	9 cfs	16362	276 (264)	10/18/1894
Oklahoma Ditch No. 2	4 cfs	21366.19478	344	05/01/1903
Potter Ditch No. 2	5 cfs	20270	329	07/01/1905
Riddle Ditch	11 cfs (3 cfs)	21366.21280	353	04/06/1908
Spring Creek Pond	92.4 ac-ft	51499.47542	91CW114	03/01/1980
State Walden Pipeline	0.75 cfs	30280.27559	726	06/15/1925
State Walden Reservoir	37.9 ac-ft	30280.27559	18	06/15/1925
Ward Ditch No. 1	3 cfs	14015	122 (113)	05/15/1888
Ward Ditch No. 1	3 cfs	14417	195 (175)	06/21/1889
Ward Ditch No. 1	13 cfs	17496	287 (274)	11/25/1897
Ward Ditch No. 2	0.5 cfs	14403	190 (170)	06/07/1889
Ward Ditch No. 3	2.25 cfs	18394	302	05/12/1900

[1]*cfs=cubic feet per second; ac-ft=acre feet; rate or storage in ( ) is for the refuge only.*
[2]*This right is mostly unperfected of "conditional."*

Appendix J
Species List

Animal and plant species of the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge are listed below.

Birds

This taxonomic list of birds at the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge follows the order of American Ornithological Union's Checklist of North American Birds, 7th ed. (1998).

At least 203 bird species occur on the refuge (January 2002):

—82 species breed
—13 species are accidental or vagrant
—2 species are on the federally threatened list

Grebes

pied-billed grebe	*Podilymbus podiceps*
eared grebe	*Podiceps nigricollis*
western grebe	*Aechmophorus occidentalis*

Pelicans

American white pelican	*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

Cormorants

double-crested cormorant	*Phalacrocorax auritus*

Bitterns, Herons, and Egrets

American bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*
great blue heron	*Ardea herodias*
snowy egret	*Egretta thula*
cattle egret	*Bubulcus ibis*
green heron	*Butorides virescens*
black-crowned night-heron	*Nycticorax nycticorax*
yellow-crowned night-heron	*Nyctanassa violaceus*

Ibises and Spoonbills

white-faced ibis	*Plegadis chihi*

New World Vultures

turkey vulture	*Cathartes aura*

Swans, Geese, and Ducks

snow goose	*Chen caerulescens*
Canada goose	*Branta canadensis*
trumpeter swan	*Cygnus buccinator*
tundra swan	*Cygnus columbianus*
wood duck	*Aix sponsa*
gadwall	*Anas strepera*
American wigeon	*Anas americana*
mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*
blue-winged teal	*Anas discors*
cinnamon teal	*Anas cyanoptera*
northern shoveler	*Anas clypeata*
northern pintail	*Anas acuta*
green-winged teal	*Anas crecca*
canvasback	*Aythya valisineria*
redhead	*Aythya americana*
ring-necked duck	*Aythya collaris*
lesser scaup	*Aythya affinis*
bufflehead	*Bucephala albeola*
common goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*
hooded merganser	*Lophodytes cucullatus*
common merganser	*Mergus merganser*
ruddy duck	*Oxyura jamaicensis*

Osprey, Hawks, and Eagles

osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*
bald eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
northern harrier	*Circus cyaneus*
sharp-shinned hawk	*Accipiter striatus*
Cooper's hawk	*Accipiter cooperii*
northern goshawk	*Accipiter gentilis*
Swainson's hawk	*Buteo swainsoni*
red-tailed hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*
ferruginous hawk	*Buteo regalis*
rough-legged hawk	*Buteo lagopus*
golden eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*

Falcons

American kestrel	*Falco sparverius*
merlin	*Falco columbarius*
peregrine falcon	*Falco peregrinus*
prairie falcon	*Falco mexicanus*

Gallinaceous Birds

sage grouse	*Centrocercus urophasianus*

Rails

Virginia rail	*Rallus limicola*
sora	*Porzana carolina*
American coot	*Fulica americana*

Cranes

sandhill crane	*Grus canadensis*

Plovers

black-bellied plover	*Pluvialis squatarola*
killdeer	*Charadrius vociferus*

Stilts and Avocets

black-necked stilt	*Himantopus mexicanus*
American avocet	*Recurvirostra americana*

Sandpipers and Phalaropes

greater yellowlegs	*Tringa melanoleuca*
lesser yellowlegs	*Tringa flavipes*
solitary sandpiper	*Tringa solitaria*
willet	*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*
spotted sandpiper	*Actitis macularia*
upland sandpiper	*Bartramia longicauda*
long-billed curlew	*Numenius americanus*

marbled godwit	*Limosa fedoa*
western sandpiper	*Calidris mauri*
least sandpiper	*Calidris minutilla*
Baird's sandpiper	*Calidris bairdii*
long-billed dowitcher	*Limnodromus scolopaceus*
common snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*
Wilson's phalarope	*Phalaropus tricolor*
red-necked phalarope	*Phalaropus lobatus*
Gulls and Terns	
Franklin's gull	*Larus pipixcan*
Bonaparte's gull	*Larus philadelphia*
ring-billed gull	*Larus delawarensis*
California gull	*Larus californicus*
Forster's tern	*Sterna forsteri*
black tern	*Chlidonias niger*
Doves	
mourning dove	*Zenaida macroura*
Cuckoos	
yellow-billed cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*
Barn Owls	
barn owl	*Tyto alba*
Typical Owls	
great horned owl	*Bubo virginianus*
burrowing owl	*Athene cunicularia*
long-eared owl	*Asio otus*
short-eared owl	*Asio flammeus*
northern saw-whet owl	*Aegolius acadicus*
Nightjars	
common nighthawk	*Chordeiles minor*
Hummingbirds	
calliope hummingbird	*Stellula calliope*
broad-tailed hummingbird	*Selasphorus platycercus*
rufous hummingbird	*Selasphorus rufus*
Kingfishers	
belted kingfisher	*Ceryle alcyon*
Woodpeckers	
Lewis' woodpecker	*Melanerpes lewis*
yellow-bellied sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus varius*
red-naped sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*
downy woodpecker	*Picoides pubescens*
hairy woodpecker	*Picoides villosus*
northern flicker	*Colaptes auratus*
Tyrant Flycatchers	
olive-sided flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*
western wood-pewee	*Contopus sordidulus*
willow flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii*
Hammond's flycatcher	*Empidonax hammondii*
dusky flycatcher	*Empidonax oberholseri*
Cordilleran flycatcher	*Empidonax occidentalis*
Say's phoebe	*Sayornis saya*
western kingbird	*Tyrannus verticalis*
eastern kingbird	*Tyrannus tyrannus*
Shrikes	
loggerhead shrike	*Lanius ludovicianus*
northern shrike	*Lanius excubitor*
Vireos	
warbling vireo	*Vireo gilvus*
Crows, Jays, and Magpies	
Steller's jay	*Cyanocitta stelleri*
pinyon jay	*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*
Clark's nutcracker	*Nucifraga columbiana*
black-billed magpie	*Pica pica*
American crow	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*
common raven	*Corvus corax*
Larks	
horned lark	*Eremophila alpestris*
Swallows	
tree swallow	*Tachycineta bicolor*
violet-green swallow	*Tachycineta thalassina*
northern rough-winged swallow	*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
bank swallow	*Riparia riparia*
cliff swallow	*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*
barn swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
Chickadees	
black-capped chickadee	*Poecile atricapillus*
mountain chickadee	*Poecile gambeli*
Nuthatches	
red-breasted nuthatch	*Sitta canadensis*
Wrens	
rock wren	*Salpinctes obsoletus*
house wren	*Troglodytes aedon*
sedge wren	*Cistothorus platensis*
marsh wren	*Cistothorus palustris*
Dippers	
American dipper	*Cinclus mexicanus*
Kinglets	
ruby-crowned kinglet	*Regulus calendula*
Thrushes	
eastern bluebird	*Sialia sialis*
western bluebird	*Sialia mexicana*
mountain bluebird	*Sialia currucoides*
veery	*Catharus fuscescens*
Swainson's thrush	*Catharus ustulatus*
hermit thrush	*Catharus guttatus*
American robin	*Turdus migratorius*
Mimic Thrushes	
gray catbird	*Dumetella carolinensis*
northern mockingbird	*Mimus polyglottos*
sage thrasher	*Oreoscoptes montanus*
brown thrasher	*Toxostoma rufum*

Starlings	
European starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*
Pipits	
American (water) pipit	*Anthus rubescens*
Waxwings	
Bohemian waxwing	*Bombycilla garrulus*
cedar waxwing	*Bombycilla cedrorum*
Wood Warblers	
orange-crowned warbler	*Vermivora celata*
Nashville warbler	*Vermivora ruficapilla*
Virginia's warbler	*Vermivora virginiae*
yellow warbler	*Dendroica petechia*
chestnut-sided warbler	*Dendroica pensylvanica*
magnolia warbler	*Dendroica magnolia*
yellow-rumped warbler	*Dendroica coronata*
MacGillivray's warbler	*Oporornis tolmiei*
common yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas*
Wilson's warbler	*Wilsonia pusilla*
Tanagers	
western tanager	*Piranga ludoviciana*
Sparrows and Towhees	
green-tailed towhee	*Pipilo chlorurus*
spotted towhee	*Pipilo maculatus*
eastern towhee	*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*
American tree sparrow	*Spizella arborea*
chipping sparrow	*Spizella passerina*
Brewer's sparrow	*Spizella breweri*
vesper sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus*
lark sparrow	*Chondestes grammacus*
sage sparrow	*Amphispiza belli*
lark bunting	*Calamospiza melanocorys*
savannah sparrow	*Passerculus sandwichensis*
fox sparrow	*Passerelia iliaca*
song sparrow	*Melospiza melodia*
Lincoln's sparrow	*Melospiza lincolnii*
Harris' sparrow	*Zonotrichia querula*
white-crowned sparrow	*Zonotrichia leucophrys*
dark-eyed junco	*Junco hyemalis*
McCown's longspur	*Calcarius mccownii*
Lapland longspur	*Calcarius lapponicus*
chestnut-collared longspur	*Calcarius ornatus*
snow bunting	*Plectrophenax nivalis*
Grosbeaks and Allies	
rose-breasted grosbeak	*Pheucticus ludovicianus*
black-headed grosbeak	*Pheucticus melanocephalus*
blue grosbeak	*Guiraca caerulea*
Lazuli bunting	*Passerina amoena*
indigo bunting	*Passerina cyanea*
dickcissel	*Spiza americana*
Blackbirds and Orioles	
bobolink	*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*
red-winged blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*
western meadowlark	*Surnella neglecta*
yellow-headed blackbird	*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*
Brewer's blackbird	*Euphagus cyanocephalus*
common grackle	*Quiscalus quiscula*
brown-headed cowbird	*Molothrus ater*
Bullock's oriole	*Icterus bullockii*
Finches	
gray-crowned rosy-finch	*Leucosticte tephrocotis*
black rosy-finch	*Leucosticte atrata*
brown-capped rosy-finch	*Leucosticte australis*
house finch	*Carpodacus mexicanus*
pine siskin	*Carduelis pinus*
lesser goldfinch	*Carduelis psaltria*
American goldfinch	*Carduelis tristis*
evening grosbeak	*Coccothraustes vespertinus*
Old World Sparrows	
house sparrow	*Passer domesticus* (introduced)

Mammals

Thirty-three mammal species occur on the refuge (January 2002).

Shrews	
masked shrew	*Sorex cinereus*
Hares and Rabbits	
Nuttall's cottontail	*Sylvilagus nuttallii*
white-tailed jackrabbit	*Lepus townsendii*
Squirrels	
least chipmunk	*Eutamias minimus*
yellow-bellied marmot	*Marmota flaviventris*
Wyoming ground squirrel	*Spermophilus elegans*
thirteen-lined ground squirrel	*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*
golden-mantled ground squirrel	*Spermophilus lateralis*
white-tailed prairie dog	*Cynomys leucurus*
Beaver	
beaver	*Castor canadensis*
Mice and Voles	
deer mouse	*Permoyscus maniculatus*
northern grasshopper mouse	*Onychomys leucogaster*
montane vole	*Microtus montanus*
muskrat	*Ondatra zibethicus*
Old World Mice	
house mouse	*Mus musculus*
Jumping Mice	
western jumping mouse	*Zapus princeps*
Porcupine	
porcupine	*Erethizon dorsatum*

Dogs and Foxes

coyote	*Canis latrans*
red fox	*Vulpes vulpes*

Bears

black bear	*Ursus americanus*

Raccoons

raccoon	*Procyon lotor*

Weasels and Skunks

ermine	*Mustela erminea*
long-tailed weasel	*Mustela frenata*
mink	*Mustela vison*
river otter	*Lutra Canadensis*
badger	*Taxidea taxus*
striped skunk	*Mephitis mephitis*

Cats

mountain lion	*Puma concolor*
bobcat	*Felis rufus*

Deer

Rocky Mountain elk	*Cervus elaphus*
mule deer	*Odocoileus hemionus*
white-tailed deer	*Odocoileus virginianus*
moose	*Alces alces*

Pronghorn

pronghorn	*Antilocapra americana*

Fish

Nine fish species occur on the refuge (January 2002).

Trout

rainbow trout	*Salmo gairdneri*
brown trout	*Salmo trutta*
brook trout	*Salvelinus fontinalis*

Dace, Minnows, Chub, and Darters

northern redbelly dace	*Phoxinus eos*
fathead minnow	*Pimephales promelas*
creek chub	*Semotilus atromaculatus*
Johnny darter	*Etheostoma nigrum*

Suckers

long-nosed sucker	*Catostomus catostomus*
white sucker	*Catostomus commeisoni*

Amphibians and Reptiles

Six amphibian and reptile species occur on the refuge (January 2002).

Amphibians

barred tiger salamander	*Ambystoma tigrinum mavortium*
western toad	*Bufo boreas*
wood frog	*Rana sylvatica*
northern leopard frog	*Rana pipiens*
striped chorus frog	*Pseudacris nigrita maculatat*

Reptiles

wandering garter snake	*Thamnophis elegans vagrans*

Plants

At least 390 plant species occur on the refuge; 1 is on the federally endangered species list (January 2002).

Parsley Family (Apiaceae = Umbelliferae)

sweet cicely	*Osmorhiza longistylis*
Douglas water hemlock	*Cicuta douglasii*
poison-hemlock	*Conium maculatum*
western hemlock	*Cicuta maculata angustifolia*
lovage, licorice-root	*Ligusticum porteri*
hemlock parsley	*Conioselinum scopulorum*
cow parsnip	*Heracleum lanatum*

Fern Family (Aspleniaceae)

alpine ladyfern	*Athyrium distentifolium*

Aster Family (Asteraceae)

aster	*Aster campestris*
golden aster	*Chrysopsis horrida*
hairy golden aster	*Chrysopsis villosa*
leafy aster	*Aster foliaceus*
marsh aster	*Aster hesperius*
arrowleaf balsamroot	*Balsamorhiza sagittata*
heart-leaf arnica	*Arnica cordifolia*
leafy or meadow arnica	*Arnica chamissonis*
Coulter's daisy	*Erigeron coulteri*
daisy	*Erigeron elatior*
daisy fleabane	*Erigeron ochroleucus scribneri*
spear-leaf fleabane	*Erigeron lonchophyllus*
subalpine daisy	*Erigeron peregrinus*
common dandelion	*Taraxacum officinale*
mountain dandelion	*Agoseris glauca glauca*
common pearly-everlasting	*Anaphalis margaritacea*
dune goldenrod	*Solidago simplex*
Canada goldenrod	*Solidago canadensis*
Missouri goldenrod	*Solidago missouriensis*
goldenweed	*Haplopappus clematis*
goldenweed	*Haplopappus lanceolatus*
arrowleaf groundsel	*Senecio triangularis*
groundsel	*Senecio mutabilis*
groundsel	*Senecio soldanella*
groundsel	*Senecio sphaerocephalus*
few-leaved groundsel, alpine meadow butterweed	*Senecio cymbalarioides*
thickleaf groundsel, butterweed, ragwort	*Senecio crassultus*
water groundsel, alkali marsh butterweed	*Senecio hydrophilus*
long-leaved hawksbeard	*Crepis acuminata*
dandelion hawksbeard	*Crepis runcinata*
gray horsebrush	*Tetradymia canescens*
mule's ears	*Wyethia amplexicaulis*
nothocalais	*Nothocalais nigrescens*
pineapple-weed	*Matricaria matricaroides*

field pussytoes	*Antennaria neglecta*
Nuttail's pussytoes	*Antennaria parvifolia*
rosy pussytoes	*Antennaria microphylla*
tall pussytoes	*Antennaria anaphaloides*
gray rabbitbrush	*Chrysothamnus nauseosus albicaulis*
rubber rabbitbrush	*Chrysothamnus nauseosus nauseosus*
alkali sage	*Artemisia arbuscula longiloba*
big sage	*Artemisia tridentata tridentata*
black sage	*Artemisia nova*
fringed sage	*Artemisia frigida*
low sage	*Artemisia arbuscula arbuscula*
mountain big sage	*Artemisia tridentata vaseyana*
mountain silver sage	*Artemisia cana viscidula*
plains sage	*Artemisia longifolia*
prairie sage	*Artemisia ludoviciana*
sage	*Artemisia tridentata rothrockii*
silver sage	*Artemisia cana cana*
western salsify	*Tragopogon dubius*
broom snakeweed	*Gutierrezia sarothrae*
orange sneezeweed	*Helenium hoopesii*
false sunflower	*Helianthus rigidus*
thistle	*Cirsium canescens*
thistle	*Cirsium drummondii*
thistle	*Cirsium scopulorum*
thistle	*Cirsium tioganum*
Canada thistle	*Cirsium arvense*
Flodman's thistle	*Cirsium flodmanii*
star-thistle	*Centaureae cyanus*
wavy-leaved thistle	*Cirsium undulatum*
western yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*

Barberry Family (Berberidaceae)

Oregon grape	*Mahonia repens*

Birch Family (Betulaceae)

mountain alder	*Alnus incana*
bog birch	*Betula glandulosa*

Borage Family (Boraginaceae)

houndstongue	*Cynoglossum officinale*
bluebells	*Mertensia humilis*
bluebells	*Mertensia lanceolata*
cilate bluebells	*Mertensia ciliata*
small bluebells	*Mertensia longiflora*
forget-me-not, stickseed	*Hackelia leptophylla*
minors candle	*Cryptantha caespitosa*
stoneseed	*Lithospermum incisum*

Mustard Family (Brassicaceae = Cruciferae)

American wintercress	*Barbarea orthoceras*
bitter cress	*Cardamine breweri*
large mountain bittercress	*Cardamine cordifolia cordifolia*
rock cress	*Arabis drummondi*
yellowcress	*Rorripa obtusa*
smallseed false flax	*Camelina microcarpa*
tansy mustard	*Descurainia pinnata*
common peppergrass	*Lepidium densiflorum*
shepherd's purse	*Capsella bursa-pastoris*
slender thelypody	*Thelypodium sagittatum*
spreading wallflower	*Erysimum repandum*

Cactus Family (Cactaceae)

pincushion cactus	*Coryphantha vivipara*
prickly pear cactus, brittle cactus	*Opuntia fragilis*
prickly pear cactus	*Opuntia polyacantha polyacantha*

Bluebell Family (Campanulaceae)

Arctic harebell, bellflower	*Campanula uniflora*
bellflower, lady's thimble	*Campanula rotundifolia*

Caper Family (Capparaceae)

Rocky Mountain beeplant	*Cleome serrulata*

Honeysuckle Family (Caprifoliaceae)

buckbrush	*Symphoricarpos albus*
elderberry	*Sambucus racemosa*
bearberry honeysuckle	*Lonicera involucrata*
snowberry	*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*
twinflower	*Linnaea borealis longiflora*

Pink Family (Caryophyllaceae)

catchfly	*Lychnis drummondii*
ballheaded sandwort	*Arenaria congesta*
slender sandwort	*Arenaria stricta*
longleaved starwort	*Stellaria longifolia*
longstalked starwort	*Stellaria longipes*
Whitlow wort	*Paronychia sessiliflora*

Staff-tree Family (Celastraceae)

mountain lover	*Pachistima myrsinites*

Goosefoot Family (Chenopodiaceae)

summer cyperus	*Kochia americana*
slimleaf goosefoot	*Chenopodium lepdtophyllum*
white goosefoot, pigweed	*Chenopodium album*
greasewood	*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*
mat saltbush	*Atriplex gardneri*
winterfat	*Ceratoides lanata*

Orpine Family (Crassulaceae)

rose crown	*Sedum rhodanthum*
stonecrop	*Sedum lanceolatum*
stonecrop	*Sedum stenopetalum*
rose crown, stonecrop	*Sedum rhodanthum*

Cedar Family (Cupressaceae)

common juniper	*Juniperus communis depressa*

Sedge Family (Cyperaceae)

many spiked cottongrass	*Eriophorum polystachion*
bulrush	*Scirpus pallidus*

bulrush, clubrush	*Scirpus microcarpus*
common spike rush	*Eleocharis palustris*
small spike rush	*Eleocharis parvula*
beaked sedge	*Carex rostrata*
capitate sedge	*Carex capitata*
Dunhead sedge	*Carex phaeocephala*
elk sedge	*Carex geyeri*
Hayden's sedge	*Carex ebenea*
narrow-leaved sedge	*Carex eleocharis*
Nebraska sedge	*Carex nebrascensis*
needleleaf sedge	*Carex filifolia*
Parry sedge	*Carex parryana*
sedge	*Carex kellogi*
shortbeaked sedge	*Carex simulata*
slenderbeaked sedge	*Carex athrostackya*
wooly sedge	*Carex lanuginosa*

Oleaster Family (Elaegnaceae)

russet buffaloberry	*Shepherdia canadensis*

Horsetail Family (Equisetaceae)

common horsetail	*Equisetum arvense*
horsetail	*Equisetum laevigatum*
northern scouring rush	*Equisetum variegatum nelsoni*

Heath Family (Ericaceae)

bearberry	*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
dwarf bilberry	*Vaccinium caespitosum*
low bilberry	*Vaccinium myrtillus*
grouse whortleberry	*Vaccinium scoparium*

Pea Family (Fabaceae=Leguminosae)

Alsike clover	*Trifolium hybridium*
long-stalked clover	*Trifolium longipes*
sweet clover	*Melilotus officinalis*
white, dutch clover	*Trifolium repens*
silky crazyweed	*Oxytropis sericea sericea*
plains loco	*Oxytropis campestris*
tall locoweed	*Oxytropis lamberii*
big leaf lupine	*Lupinus polyphyllus humicola*
prairie lupine	*Lupinus lepidus utahensis*
silvery lupine	*Lupinus argenteus argenteus*
milkvetch, locoweed	*Astragalus parryi*
park milkvetch	*Astragalus leptaleus*
thistle milkvetch	*Astragalus kentrophyta*
silver-leaved milkvetch	*Astragalus argophyllus*
wooly-pod milkvetch	*Astragalus purshii*
plains orophaca	*Astragalus gilyiflorus*
yellow pea	*Thermopsis rhombifolia*
American vetch	*Vicia americana americana*

Gentian Family (Gentianaceae)

gentian	*Gentiana forwoodii*
gentian	*Gentiana parryi*
pleated or prairie gentian	*Gentiana affinis*
moss gentian	*Gentiana fremontii*
northern gentian	*Gentianella amarella*
smaller fringed gentian	*Gentiana thermalis*
swertia	*Swertia perennis*

Geranium Family (Geraniaceae)

Richardson's geranium	*Geranium richardsonii*

Gooseberry Family (Grossulariaceae)

swamp gooseberry	*Ribes lacustre*
whitestem gooseberry	*Ribes inerme*

Waterleaf Family (Hydrophyllaceae)

North Park phacelia	*Phacelia formosula*

St. Johnswort Family (Hypericaceae)

St. Johnswort	*Hypericum perforatum*

Iris Family (Iridaceae)

blue-eyed grass	*Sisyrinchium idahoense occidentale*
blue-eyed grass	*Sisyrinchium montanum*
Rocky Mountain iris	*Iris missouriensis*

Rush Family (Juncaceae)

baltic rush	*Juncus balticus*
dagger-leaf rush	*Juncus ensifolius*
field woodrush	*Luzula campestris*
long-styled rush	*Juncus lonistylis*
smallflowered woodrush	*Luzula parviflora*
tuberous rush	*Juncus nodosus*

Arrowgrass Family (Juncaginaceae)

seaside arrowgrass	*Triglochin maritimum*
marsh arrowgrass	*Triglochin palustre*

Mint Family (Lamiaceae)

field mint	*Mentha arvensis*
common hemp nettle	*Galeopsis tetrahit*
marsh or willoweed skullcap	*Scutellaria galericulata*

Lily Family (Liliaceae)

chives	*Allium schoenoprasum*
cucumber root, clasping-leaved twisted stalk	*Streptopus amplexifolius*
panicled deathcams	*Zigadenus paniculatus*
fritillary	*Fritillaria atropurpurea*
California false-hellebore	*Veratrum californicum*
sego lily	*Calochortus nuttallii*
red lily	*Lilium umbellatum*
onion	*Allium geyeri*
starry solomon plume	*Smilacena stellata*

Mallow Family (Malvaceae)

mallow	*Malva crispa*
checkermallow, false mallow	*Sidalcea candida*
scarlet globemallow	*Sphaeralcea coccinea*

Evening Primrose Family (Onagraceae)

fireweed, blooming sally	*Epilobium angustifolium*
common willow herb	*Epitobium glandulosum tenue*

willow herb	*Epilobium glaberrimum fastigiatum*
racemed ground smoke	*Gayophytum racemosum*

Orchid Family (Orchidaceae)

leafy white orchid	*Habenaria dilatata*
giant, western rattlesnake plantain	*Goodyera oblongifolia*

Pine Family (Pinaceae)

Douglas-fir	*Pseudotsuga menziesii*
subalpine fir	*Abies lasiocarpa*
white fir	*Abies concolor*
limber pine	*Pinus flexilis*
lodgepole pine	*Pinus contorta latifolia*
blue spruce	*Picea pungens*
Engelmann spruce	*Picea engelmannii*

Plantain Family (Plantaginaceae)

nippleseed plantain	*Plantago major*

Grass Family (Poaceae=Gramineae)

Nuttall alkaligrass	*Puccinellia airoides*
foxtail barley	*Hordeum jubatum*
meadow barley	*Hordeum brachyantherum*
Thurber bentgrass	*Agrostis thurburiana*
winter bentgrass	*Agrostis scabra*
alkali bluegrass	*Poa juncifolia*
big bluegrass	*Poa ampla*
bog bluegrass	*Poa leptocoma*
Canada bluegrass	*Poa compressa*
Canby bluegrass	*Poa canbyi*
Cusick bluegrass	*Poa cusickii*
Kentucky bluegrass	*Poa pratensis*
Nevada bluegrass	*Poa nevadensis*
Sandberg bluegrass	*Poa secunda*
Wheeler bluegrass	*Poa nervosa*
cheatgrass, downy brome	*Bromus tectorum*
fringed brome	*Bromus ciliatus*
mountain brome	*Bromus marginatus*
nodding brome	*Bromus anomalus*
smooth brome	*Bromus inermis*
Arizona fescue	*Festuca arizonica*
Idaho fescue	*Festuca idahoensis*
sheep fescue	*Festuca ovina*
Thurber fescue	*Festuca thurberi*
fowl grass	*Poa palustris*
meadow foxtail	*Alopecurus pratensis*
blue grama	*Bouteloua gracilis*
hairy grama	*Bouteloua hirsuta*
tufted hairgrass	*Deschampsia cespitosa cespitosa*
junegrass	*Koeleria pyramidata*
mannagrass	*Glyceria borealis*
mat muhly	*Muhlenbergia richardsonis*
minute muhly	*Muhlenbergia minutissima*
mountain muhly	*Muhlenbergia montana*
mutton grass	*Poa fendleriana*
needle and thread	*Stipa comata*
Columbia needlegrass	*Stipa columbiana*
green needlegrass	*Stipa viridula*
Letterman's needlegrass	*Stipa lettermanii*
pine needlegrass	*Stripa pinetorum*
Parry oatgrass	*Danthonia patryi*
oniongrass	*Melica bulbosa*
purple oniongrass	*Melica spectabilis*
orchardgrass	*Dactylis glomerata*
redtop	*Agrostis alba*
common reed	*Phragmites australis*
reed canarygrass	*Phalaris arundinacea*
bluejoint reedgrass	*Calamagrostis canadensis*
narrow spiked reedgrass	*Calamagrostis inexpansa inexpansa*
plains reedgrass	*Calamagrostis montanensis*
Indian ricegrass	*Oryzopsis hymenoides*
blue wild rye	*Elymus glaucus*
saltgrass	*Distichlis stricta*
prairie sandreed	*Calamovilfa longifolia*
scratchgrass	*Muhlenbergia asperifolia*
sleepy grass	*Stipa robusta*
sloughgrass	*Beckmannia syzgachne*
bottlebrush squirrel tail	*Sitanion hystrix*
timothy	*Phleum pretense*
spike trisetum downy oatgrass	*Trisetum spicatum*
sweetgrass	*Hierochloe odorata*
Baker's wheatgrass	*Agropyron bakeri*
bearded wheatgrass	*Agropyron subsecundum*
bluebunch wheatgrass	*Agropyron spicatum*
crested wheatgrass	*Agropyron cristatum cristatume*
elongate wheatgrass	*Agropyron elongatum*
intermediate wheatgrass	*Agropyron intermedium*
slender wheatgrass	*Agropyron trachycaulum*
streambank wheatgrass	*Agropyron riparium*
thickspiked wheatgrass	*Agropyron dasystachyum*
western wheatgrass	*Agropyron smithii*
brookgrass, water whorlwort	*Catabrosa aquatica*

Phlox Family (Polemoniaceae)

narrow-leaf collomia	*Collomia linearis*
scarlet gilia	*Gilia agregata*
Hood's phlox	*Phlox hoodii*
long leaf phlox	*Phlox longifolia*
phlox	*Phlox multiflora*
prickly-leaved phlox	*Phlox aculeata*
skunk or sticky polemonium	*Polemonium viscosum*

Buckwheat Family (Polygonaceae)

American bistort	*Polygonum bistortoides*
sulphur buckwheat	*Eriogonum umbellatum dichrocephalum*
wild buckwheat	*Eriogonum jamesii flavescens*
curly dock	*Rumex crispus*
heartweed, spotted ladysthumb	*Polygonum persicaria*
Douglas' knotweed	*Polygonum douglasii*

Purslane Family (Portulacaceae)

least, dwarf, alpine lewisia	*Lewisia pygmeae*
spring beauty	*Claytonia lanceolata lanceolata*

Primrose Family (Primulaceae)

fairy candleabra, rock jasmine	*Androsace septentrionalis*
few flowered or dark throat shooting star	*Dodecatheon pulchellum*

Wintergreen Family (Pyrolaceae)

alpine pyrola	*Pyrola asarifolia*

Buttercup Family (Ranunculaceae)

cliff anemone	*Anemone globosa*
baneberry	*Actaea rubra*
buttercup	*Ranunculus alismifolius*
Macoun's buttercup	*Ranunculus macounii*
sagebrush buttercup	*Ranunculus glaberrimus ellipticus*
sharp buttercup	*Ranunculus acriformis acriformis*
columbine	*Aquilegia coerulea*
globeflower	*Trollius laxus*
larkspur	*Delphinium barbeyi*
little larkspur	*Delphinium bicolor*
slim or dwarf larkspur	*Delphinium depauperatum*
tall larkspur	*Delphinium occidentale*
marsh marigold	*Caltha leptosepala*
veiny meadowrue	*Thalictrum venulsoum*
monkshood	*Aconitum columbianum*
pasqueflower	*Anemone patens multifida*

Buckthorn Family (Rhamnaceae)

buckbrush	*Ceanothus velutinus*

Rose Family (Rosaceae)

largeleaved avens	*Geum macrophyllum*
bitterbrush	*Purshia tridentata*
blackberry	*Rubus idaeus peramoenus*
chokecherry	*Prunus virginiana*
biennial cinquefoil	*Potentilla biennis*
cinquefoil	*Potentilla diversifolia*
cinquefoil	*Potentilla gracilis elmeri*
cinquefoil	*Potentilla pucherrima*
early cinquefoil	*Potentilla concinna*
prairie cinquefoil	*Potentilla pensylvanica*
shrubby cinquefoil, yellow rose	*Potentilla fruticosa*
prairie smoke	*Geum triflorum*
woods rose	*Rosa woodsii*
common silverweed	*Potentilla anserina*
serviceberry	*Amelanchier alnifolia*
strawberry	*Fragaria virginiana*

Madder Family (Rubiaceae)

northern bedstraw	*Galium boreale*
small bedstraw	*Galium trifidum*

Willow Family (Salicaceae)

quaking aspen	*Populus tremuloides*
narrowleaf cottonwood	*Populus angustifolia*
Booth's willow	*Salix boothii*
coyote willow	*Salix exigua melanopsis*
Drummond's willow	*Salix drummondiana*
Geyer's willow	*Salix geyeriana*
mountain willow	*Salix monticola*
planeleaf willow	*Salix planifolia planifolia*
planeleaf willow	*Salix planifolia monica*
Scouler's willow	*Salix scouleriana*
whiplash willow	*Salix lasiandra caudata*
Wolf's willow	*Salix wolfii*

Sandalwood Family (Santalaceae)

bastard toadflax	*Comandra umbellata pallida*

Saxifrage Family (Saxifragaceae)

alumroot	*Heuchera bracteata*
alumroot	*Heuchera hallii*
alumroot	*Heuchera parvifolia*
slender fringecup, woodlandstar	*Lithophragma tenellum*
brook saxifrage	*Saxifraga arguta*

Figwort Family (Scrophulariaceae)

beardtongue	*Penstemon alpinus*
beardtongue	*Penstemon cyathophorus*
beardtongue	*Penstemon glaber*
beardtongue	*Penstemon saxosorum*
American brooklime	*Veronica americana*
yellow owl clover	*Orthocarpus luteus*
elephant's head	*Pedicularis groenlandica*
bracted lousewort	*Pedicularis bracteosa*
leafy lousewort	*Pedicularis racemosa albe*
lousewort	*Pedicularis crenulata*
lousewort	*Pedicularis scopulorum*
yellow monkey-flower	*Mimulus guttatus*
desert paintbrush	*Castilleja chromosa*
Indian paintbrush	*Castilleja angustifolium chromosa*
Indian paintbrush	*Castilleja angustifolium puberula*
yellow paintbrush	*Castilleja flava*
yellow paintbrush	*Castilleja puberula*
slender penstemom	*Penstemon gracilis*
small-flowered penstemon	*Penstemon procerus*
Whipple's penstemon	*Penstemon whippleanus*
speedwell	*Veronica arvensis*
yellow toadflax	*Linaria vulgaris*

Spike Moss Family (Selaginellaceae)

spike moss	*Selaginella densa*

Cattail Family (Typhaceae)

common cattail	*Typha latifolia*

Nettle Family (Urticaceae)

stinging nettle	*Urtica dioiea*

Valerian Family (Valerianaceae)

valerian	*Valeriana occidentalis*

Violet Family (Violaceae)

violet	*Viola canadensis*
violet	*Viola nuttallii*

Appendix K
Refuge Operating Needs

Refuge operating needs system (RONS) projects for Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

RONS Number	*Project Description*	*First-Year Need ($1,000s)*	*Recurring Annual Need ($1,000s)*	*FTE**
03001	Conduct a riparian study	195	10	—
97011	Implement the CCP and associated step-down plans	128	70	1.0
00002	Improve irrigation and fence maintenance	100	50	0.5
98002	Conduct a life history study of the endangered North Park phacelia	38	—	—
97017	Platte River Water Conservation, and improve refuge water use efficiency	98	—	—
98001	Improve refuge and ecosystem management capabilities	128	70	1.0
03002	Improve refuge GIS use and capabilities	128	70	1.0
97002	Interagency coordination	22	22	
03003	Improve administrative functions with increased staff and responsibilities as identified in the CCP	70	40	1.0
03004	Construct a multi-use trail from Walden to the Brocker overlook	150	—	—
03006	Survey the Illinois River and develop a channel restoration plan	150	—	—
03007	Create five parking areas for hunters	60	—	—
03008	Construct a moose- or elk-viewing platform	30	—	—
97006	Maintain refuge riparian areas, wetlands, and associated habitat	110	60	1.0
03009	Install a six-stall garage at the office	125	—	—
03010	Construct a pole barn for refuge equipment storage	100	—	—
98003	Improve refuge environmental education and interpretation programs	128	70	1.0
01003	Provide annual funding for Platte River Depletion payments	14	14	—
97005	Develop wells on Hampton property	81	—	—
97009	Prescribed fire for wildlife habitat management	28	—	—
	Total	*$1,908*	*$476*	*6.5*

**FTE=full-time equivalent employee.*

Appendix L

Maintenance Management Projects

Maintenance management system (MMS) projects for the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

MMS Number	*Project Description*	*Cost ($1,000s)*
95011	Re-gravel auto tour route	798
99002	Replace deteriorated boundary fence (8 miles along Highway 125)	79
95007	Replace deteriorated river head gates	84
95010	Replace public use and education signs	40
02006	Rehabilitate Allard back road and Fisherman's parking lot road	1,419
96002	Replace interior fence on Case tract	45
01016	Replace 1993 Chevrolet 4x4 pickup	35
90010	Replace 1980 Case tracked crawler/bulldozer	241
01006	Replace 1984 International dump truck	101
03001	Rehabilitate Allard kiosk and overlook	50
00007	Replace quarters #4 and two outbuildings with a bunkhouse	250
00004	Rehabilitate the historic barn on the Case tract	266
	Total	*$3,870*

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