



Appendix I

Public meetings and open houses provide a forum for discussing refuge issues with our partners and the general public.

Consultation and Coordination with Others

- Public Involvement Summary
- List of Preparers

Public Involvement Summary

In chapter 2, figure 2-1, we presented the steps in the comprehensive conservation planning process and how it integrates NEPA requirements, including public involvement. This appendix summarizes our coordination and consultation with others in developing this comprehensive conservation plan, including meetings with the public and our conservation partners, mailings, and announcements in the “Federal Register.”

Public scoping. In September and October 2000, more than 200 people attended our series of afternoon open houses and evening public meetings in both Nassau and Suffolk counties. We announced their locations, dates and times in local newspapers, on various websites and in special mailings. Local residents, landowners, and various conservation organizations and agencies provided valuable input on refuge management issues of concern.

September 26, 2000	Mastic Beach, New York
September 27, 2000	Brookhaven, New York
September 28, 2000	East Hampton, New York
October 18, 2000	West Sayville, New York
October 19, 2000	Oyster Bay, New York

Newsletters. We mailed a planning newsletter in September 2000 to our mailing list of about 1,500 people, and distributed it at the refuge headquarters at Wertheim and at all of those open houses and public meetings. That newsletter contained a workbook that included questions to help collect ideas, concerns and suggestions from the public on important issues associated with managing the Long Island refuges. We asked for input on those issues and possible action options, the things people valued most about the refuges, their vision for the future of the refuges, and whether our recreational facilities meet public needs. We received more than 100 workbooks in response.

We distributed a second newsletter in January 2001 that summarized the highlights of those responses and what we had gleaned from our public meetings. A third newsletter in February 2003 included the latest news about the Complex and our planning process. We also asked the public to provide input on draft versions of our vision and goals for the refuges. In January 2006 we distributed to over 3,000 people a fourth newsletter that included an update of the process, in particular noting the large turnover in refuge staff personnel, as well as including a brief description of three draft alternatives and how the draft CCP/EA will be made available for review and comment during the spring. In June 2006 we sent out a postcard-sized mailer announcing the availability of the draft CCP/EA and the dates and locations of our public meetings and open houses.

Related planning. During the planning process, part of our continuing refuge management included addressing important issues as they arose. Refuge staff completed two environmental assessments independently of that process: One addressed the issue of deer hunting at the Wertheim refuge; the other addressed development of a headquarters and visitor center at Wertheim.

Each EA included extensive public involvement, and incorporated our comprehensive conservation planning: how the CCP would integrate the proposed action; and, how implementing it would impact the CCP.

In February 2001, Mamie Parker, then regional director, approved an EA for a visitor center/staff office on a 6-acre site adjacent to Wertheim. That EA analyzes four alternatives. Eighty-four percent of the written responses supported that center. The responses that did not support it primarily were based on perceived affects on property values, safety issues, and apparent misunderstandings about trail access. We held a public hearing about the proposed facility in December 2000.

In 2004, we completed an EA evaluating four management alternatives to address overpopulation of white-tailed deer at Wertheim, including a controlled public hunt, and held public meetings in June 2004. Public hearings attracted about 100 refuge neighbors, conservation and sportsmen's groups and avid hunters. Less than a handful of people opposed a controlled public hunt. The majority favored it.

As part of the CCP process we initiated intra-service consultation with our Ecological Service's program to evaluate potential impacts of our proposed management to threatened or endangered species. An intra-service section 7 biological evaluation form was completed for this final CCP and is included as an appendix.

“Federal Register” Notices. We published our original Notice of Intent (NOI) in the “Federal Register” on May 30, 2000, stating we would develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Complex in conjunction with its CCP. Then, as we evaluated two of the primary issues in their own environmental assessments independently of the CCP process (see above), we determined that an EA rather than an EIS would be more appropriate to accompany this CCP. On March 28, 2005, our second NOI in the “Federal Register” advised the public we were withdrawing the previous notice and, instead of completing a CCP/EIS, would complete a CCP/EA. In preparing this draft CCP/EA, we considered all comments we had received after publishing the first NOI.

Workshops. The rationale of our workshops was to generate a range of possible solutions that would address issues of resource management and public use at the Complex. In February 2001 and January 2002, we held workshops with various biological and public use experts from federal, state, local and non-profit organizations. Those workshops allowed us to work closely with our partners in discussing the vision, goals, objectives, strategies, and consequences at the heart of this plan.

We used the input obtained from our public meetings, newsletters and workshops to prepare a draft CCP/EA, which was released on June 19, 2006 for 30 days of public review and comment. During that period, we held three public meetings.

June 26, 2006	Shirley, New York
June 27, 2006	Oyster Bay, New York
June 28, 2006	Sag Harbor, New York

We analyzed all of the comments on the draft CCP/EA we received during its 30 day public review and applied them when we revised it into our final CCP. Appendix J summarizes those public comments and our responses to them.

Each year, we will evaluate our accomplishments on the refuge in accordance with the preferred action described in this final CCP. We may intensify refuge monitoring without additional NEPA compliance. However, any results of our future monitoring that predict a new, significant impact would require our analysis and public involvement in an additional environmental assessment.

List of Preparers

Core Planning Team

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