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Chapter 5. Consultation and Coordination

Introduction

This chapter describes how we included others in developing this draft CCP and EA, and how we plan to continue consulting and coordinating with others in the future. It details how we first invited, and will continue to encourage, the partnership of other Federal and State agencies, civic, public, and private conservation and education organizations, and the affected public in our decisions about managing the Refuge Complex.

As we mentioned in chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4, we must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in seeking public input on proposed Federal actions. A 30-day period for public review will follow our release of this draft CCP and EA. We encourage you to give us your responses and ideas about the plan. As before, we will host open houses at locations near the Refuge Complex to gather your opinions and answer your questions about its future management. We will weigh carefully the responses we receive before we write the final CCP.

Planning to Protect Land and Resources

On July 14, 1994, staff from the Refuge Complex and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources co-hosted the first long-range partnership planning meeting: in part, to begin defining the Service role, as a partner with others, in protecting natural resources in the Blackwater River and Nanticoke River watersheds. Attendants at that meeting included representatives from The Nature Conservancy; The Conservation Fund; The Chesapeake Bay Foundation; the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fish, Heritage, and Wildlife Administration; the Maryland Greenways and Resource Planning Office; and, The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy.

On July 25, 1995, we received Washington Office approval to begin detailed planning to protect Federal trust resources within those watersheds, including the Chesapeake Island Refuges, and to establish what we then called the “Nanticoke River Unit” of the Blackwater NWR, now the proposed Nanticoke Division. That approval launched one of the most extensive collaborations among the Service, refuge partners, and the public in Region 5 to identify and protect valuable ecosystem-wide resources. During the following 2 years, we maintained our primary focus on developing and coordinating partnerships among conservation agencies, groups, and public and private entities.

On March 14, 1996, the first meeting of watershed partners convened at Blackwater NWR. Attendants included representatives from The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Program Open Space, The Lower Shore Land Trust, The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, and Region 5 personnel, including the then Geographic Assistant Regional Director for the southern part of Region 5 and the Chief of the Division of Realty. We subsequently held the additional intra- and interagency meetings listed below, which

afforded our watershed partners timely opportunities for providing their meaningful input on a very thorough identification of trust resources in the watershed and the future role of the Service and the Refuge System in protecting them.

- April 16, 1996
- May 22, 1996
- July 17, 1996
- September 18, 1996
- October 23, 1996 (Division of Realty)
- November 13, 1996
- January 15, 1997

That phase of our planning culminated in the partners’ agreeing on our role in protecting sensitive areas, and dovetailed into the launch of our draft CCP and EA planning. Soon, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (NWRISA), signed into law on October 9, 1997, would begin to govern a new phase of that planning.

On November 17 and 18, 1997, Blackwater NWR hosted a meeting on the draft CCP and EA planning process. Refuge staff began to contact other agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals, to offer them opportunities to assist in our ongoing planning.

We announced the start of our CCP development in local papers, informing the public about the new NWRISA, the purpose of a CCP, and the schedule for public meetings in each locality (below); we also advertised our schedule in the Baltimore Sun. At each meeting, we distributed a planning workbook, which we also mailed to more than 3,000 homes and organizations.

In response, we received 180 workbooks containing many thoughtful comments and concerns. As previously mentioned, the resulting issues formed the basis for our design of the management alternatives in chapter 2. We distributed a planning update in the winter of 1999, reminding the public that our planning was still underway, describing the issues of concern, and publishing our vision statement for the Refuge Complex.

Meeting Dates	Attendants or locale	Purpose of the meeting
January 28, 1998	Dorchester County landowners from the Nanticoke focus area	Inform the attendants about our planning, and solicit their input
February 10, 1998	Chambers of Commerce, Dorchester County Commission, and local businessmen	“ ” “ ”
February 19, 1998	Wicomico County landowners	“ ” “ ”
March 11, 1998	Nanticoke Watershed Alliance	“ ” “ ”
March 12, 1998	Federal congressional personnel	Inform the attendants about our planning, and solicit their input
March 17, 1998	Wicomico County Council	“ ” “ ”
Open House Dates	Attendants or locale	Purpose of the open house
April 14, 1998	Lloyds, Maryland	Inform the attendants about our planning, and solicit their input
April 15, 1998	Golden Hill, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
April 16, 1998	East New Market, Maryland	“ ” “ ”

April 18, 1998	Cambridge, Maryland	Inform the attendants about our planning, and solicit their input
April 21, 1998	Easton, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
April 24, 1998	Federalsburg, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
May 11, 1998	Sharptown, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
May 12, 1998	Hebron, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
May 12, 1998	Vienna, Maryland	Inform the attendants about our planning, and solicit their input
May 13, 1998	Salisbury, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
May 15, 1998	Ewell, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
May 16, 1998	Chrisfield, Maryland	“ ” “ ”
May 18, 1998	Seaford, Delaware	“ ” “ ”
May 19, 1998	Mardela Springs, Maryland	Inform the attendants about our planning, and solicit their input

Partnership Opportunities

Refuge Complex programs enjoy tremendous popular support. Program partnerships have developed in many ways, and exist in every arena of refuge management, from obtaining seed for forage crops, to the running of the Visitor Center on Key Wallace Drive by the Friends of Blackwater.

As public interest in protecting these watersheds has grown, additional partnerships among the Service, States, and other agencies have also developed. Our opportunities for ever greater partnerships now encompass an array of community organizations and individuals, some of whom appear below.

Cargill, Inc.	Lower Shore Land Trust
Chesapeake Appreciation, Inc.	Maryland Department of the Environment
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Chicone Ruritan	Maryland Department of Agriculture
Coastal Association of Realtors	Maryland Division of Fisheries
Conservation Fund, The	Maryland Environmental Trust
Delaware Bass Federation	Maryland Forests Association
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Controls	Maryland Greenways and Resource Planning Office
Delaware Division of Water Resources	Maryland Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Program
Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation	Maryland Office of Planning
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife	Maryland Program Open Space
Delaware Natural Heritage Program	Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy
Delaware Office of Planning Grants and Greenways	Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Delmarva Power	Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Committee
Dorchester County Office of Planning & Zoning	National Park Service
Dupont Company	Nature Conservancy, The
Eastern Shore Land Conservancy	Oyster Recovery Partnership
Environmental Protection Agency Bay Program	Salisbury State University Foundation
Friends of the Nanticoke River	Salisbury Zoo
Grand National Waterfowl Association, Inc.	Survival Products
	Wicomico County Farm Bureau

Under the NWRSA, we must review and update our plan at least once every 15 years, or sooner, should our Director deem it necessary. At that time, we will once again announce our planning for its revision, and once again request your participation.

Contact Us!

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Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife
Refuge Complex
2145 Key Wallace Drive
Cambridge, Maryland 21613-9536
410-228-2692 telephone
410-228-3261 facsimile
Visit our website:
<http://blackwater.fws.gov/index.htm>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Planning (NWRSA)
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, Massachusetts 01035-9589
413-253-8636 telephone
413-253-8468 facsimile
Visit our website:
<http://northeast.fws.gov/planning>

Preparers

We look forward to hearing from you!

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- Bill Zinni, Jr., Land Planning Biologist, Division of Planning, Region 5
- Dixie Birch, Refuge Biologist, Refuge Complex
- Gib Chase, Planning Team Leader, Division of Planning, Region 5
- Glenn A. Carowan, Jr., Project Leader, Refuge Complex
- Jennifer Podgurski, Park Ranger or SCEP, Refuge Complex
- Jim Halpin, Deputy Project Leader, Refuge Complex
- John Gill, Refuge Manager, Chesapeake Island Refuges
- John M. Morton, Supervisory Refuge Biologist, Refuge Complex
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