

Chapter 5



Public meeting
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Plan Amendment and Revision

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Refuge Staffing

Four of our permanent staff are currently stationed at the Refuge Headquarters in Milbridge, Maine; two other permanent staff are stationed at our Rockport, Maine office. In Figure 5-1, we identify currently filled positions, overall supervisory structure, and the essential positions needed to fully implement the CCP. The new positions identified will increase biological expertise, visitor services, and visibility of the Service on Refuge lands.

Under Goal 8, Objective 8.3, we also promote an increase in the number of volunteers who will play an important role in fulfilling the mission of the Refuge. Our Friends Group and conservation partners are also vital to achieving our goals.

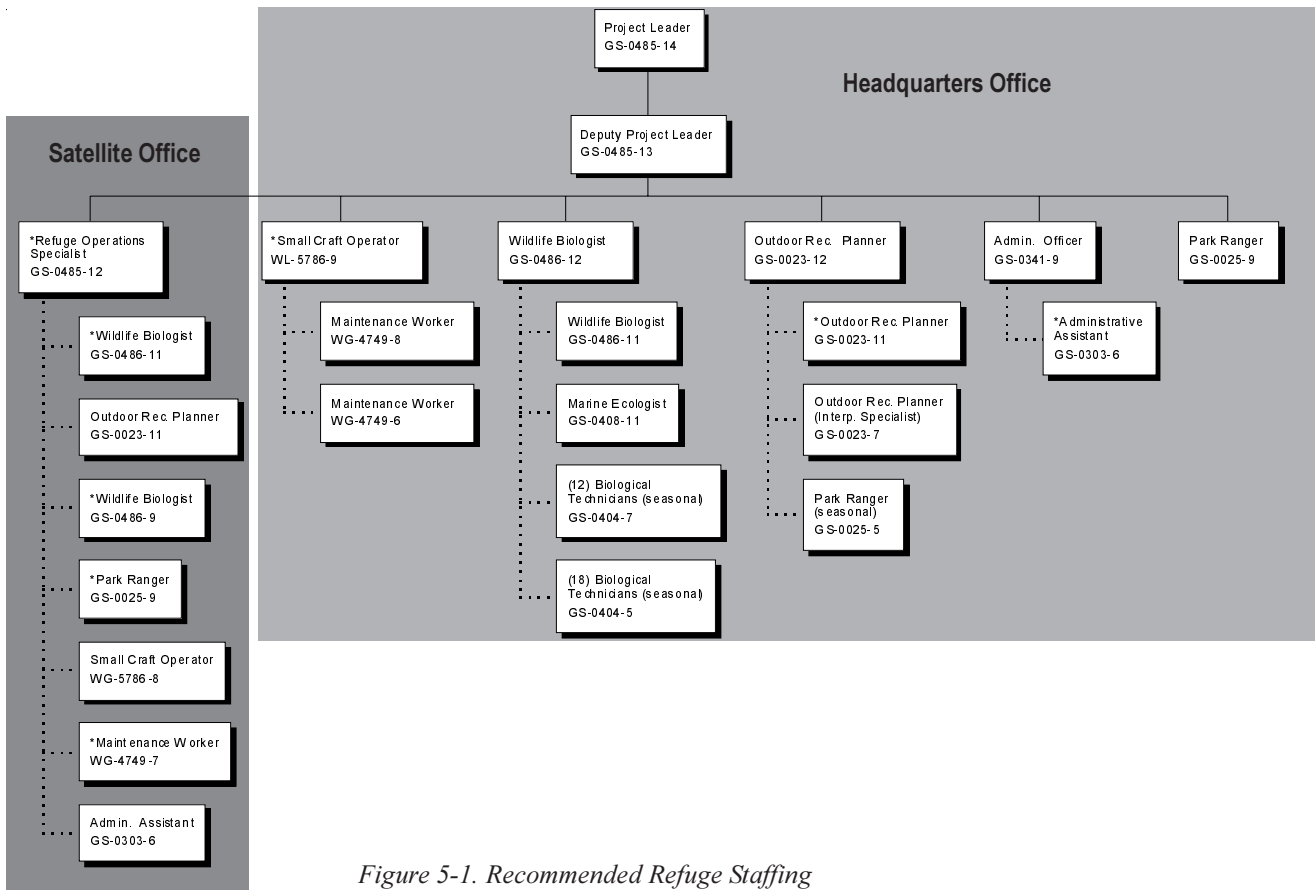


Figure 5-1. Recommended Refuge Staffing

Refuge Funding Needs

Successful implementation of the CCP relies on our ability to secure funding, personnel, infrastructure, and other resources to accomplish the actions identified. Full implementation of the actions and strategies in this CCP will incur an estimated one-time-cost of \$5,870,000 over the 15-year planning horizon. This includes staffing, major construction and restora-

tion projections, and individual resource program expansions. These projects and their recurring costs, such as staff salaries, are listed and prioritized in the Refuge Operations Needs and System (RONS) database (Appendix F). In this appendix, we also identify new projects that we will include in the RONS database with the next annual update. The source of funding for these projects and salaries primarily comes from Refuge Operations (1261) dollars.

Some of the projects may be eligible for funding from the Refuge Roads Program under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), a relatively new source of funding for the Refuge System. Examples include refuge public use roads, parking lots, bridges, restrooms, and trails. These funds can also be used for interpretive enhancements associated with these projects, as long as the costs for the interpretive facilities do not exceed 5% of the project budget. RRP funds can be used as the non-Federal match for FHA funds available through State Departments of Transportation. Refuges can also use appropriated Service funds as the non-Federal match for these funds as well. This matching ability can be used to further compatible city, county, and State transportation and transit funds for projects on or near the Refuge.

Land acquisition is an additional cost, which we project could be approximately \$25,000,000 to acquire all the lands identified in the Land Protection Plan (Appendix A). We expect the Land and Water Conservation Fund will be the principal source of funding for land acquisition. Assuming acquisition of all the islands, posting boundaries, and the equipment and staffing costs associated establishing six new seabird restoration sites, we projected one-time operating costs of \$325,000; estimated annual costs for operations and maintenance on these lands is \$82,500.

The projects in the Service's 2004 Maintenance Management System (MMS) database for the Refuge are additional projected costs (Appendix F). The 2004 MMS database lists \$1,778,000 in maintenance needs for the Refuge. The source of funding for these projects primarily comes from Maintenance Funds (1262) dollars. The Refuge System is transitioning to a new database in 2005. It is called Service Asset Maintenance Management System (SAMMS) and will be continuously updated.

Periodic maintenance and renovation of existing facilities is a critical need to ensure safety and accessibility for Refuge staff and visitors. Besides the historic lighthouses, dwellings, and outbuildings noted above under cultural resources, we will continue to maintain the following structures:

- one cabin on Cross Island, and two on Bois Bubert Island;
- a dwelling on Metinic Island;
- boat ramps and boardwalks on Matinicus Rock, Egg Rock, Petit Manan and Libby islands;
- Two Bush Island light (not designated historic);

- the John Hollingsworth Memorial and Birch Point foot trails on Petit Manan Point Division, parking lots; and,
- the Egg Rock seawall

Some of these facilities, namely the existing trails, will incur additional costs unknown at this time, associated with upgrades to be compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

In addition, there is 1.1 mile of unpaved public road (Route #010) on Petit Manan Point which accesses the two trails. It has recently been maintained so is not currently on the MMS backlog list; however, future maintenance will be necessary within the 15 year planning horizon.

This CCP proposes many new projects for the next 15 years. It details a funding level that is substantially above current budget allocations, and, as such, is primarily beneficial for strategic planning and program prioritization. The CCP does not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.

Existing Refuge Operational Plans ("Step-down" plans)

The Service Manual, Part 602, Chapter 4 (Refuge Planning Policy) lists over 25 step-down management plans that are generally required on refuges. These plans contain specific strategies and implementation schedules for achieving refuge goals and objectives. Some plans require annual revisions, others are on a 5-to-10-year revision schedule. Some require additional NEPA analysis, public involvement, and compatibility determinations before they can be implemented. Our CCP incorporates the completed EAs, management plans, and current step-down plans, and listed below we provide the current status of step-down plans needed for the Refuge. Those that are currently up-to-date are incorporated by reference into this plan.

These step-down plans are current and up-to-date:

- Fire Management Plan and EA, 2002 (includes annual prescribed burn plan update and wildfire prescriptions)
- Safety Program and Operations Plan, 2000
- Continuity of Operations Plan, 1999
- Hunt Plan and EA, 2001
- Land Protection Plan (Appendix A), 2005

We will complete the following step-down plans, which are necessary components of implementing of our CCP (future Service policy may require additional plans):

- Habitat Management Plan; within 1 year of CCP approval (see discussion below)

- Habitat and Species Inventory and Monitoring Plan; within 2 years of CCP approval (see discussion below)
- Visitor Services Plan; within 2 years of CCP approval
- Facilities and Sign Plan; within 2 years of CCP approval
- Law Enforcement Plan; within 3 years of CCP approval
- Cultural Resources Management and Protection Plan; within 5 years of CCP approval
- Wilderness Stewardship Plan; within 2 years of Wilderness Designation

Habitat Management Plan

A Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for the Refuge is the requisite first step to achieving the objectives under Goals 1 through 6. For example, it will establish what specific actions are necessary to enhance, restore, and manage important habitats, and minimize impacts to species assemblages significant to the Refuge. It will also establish the timing for these actions and identify how we will define success. We will write the plan using current resource information, but will update it as needed, based on new information. It is the highest priority step-down plan to accomplish after this CCP.

Habitat and Species Inventory and Monitoring Plan

A Habitat and Species Inventory and Monitoring Plan (HSIMP) for the Refuge will also be a priority to complete. This plan is vital to measuring the success of meeting our objectives. It will outline the methodology we will use to assess whether our original assumptions and proposed management actions are, in fact, supporting our habitat and species objectives. Inventory and monitoring results will provide us with more extensive information on the status of the Refuge's natural resources. It will allow us to make more informed management decisions.

Land Protection Plan

We have developed a Land Protection Plan (Appendix A) in conjunction with this CCP. It identifies new areas approved for Service acquisition from willing sellers. It also identifies lands we have not yet acquired within our former approved Refuge. We believe acquisition of these lands is essential to meeting Refuge purposes and goals. These lands are not only important for their Federal trust resource values, but many would also make more effective boundaries for our management and administrative purposes. All lands acquired would become part of the Petit Manan Refuge.

In addition to Service acquisition, we will continue cooperating with our conservation partners to identify and protect areas of high biodiversity value important to Federal trust resources and other rare or declining species or plant communities. It is important that we work together and complement each other's land protection efforts given the limited funding and resources available.

Compatibility Determinations

Federal law and Service policy provide the direction and planning framework to protect the Refuge System from incompatible or harmful human activities, and to insure that Americans can enjoy Refuge System lands and waters. The Refuge Improvement Act is the key legislation regarding management of public uses and compatibility. The compatibility requirements of the Refuge Improvement Act were adopted in the Service's Final Compatibility Regulations and Final Compatibility Policy published October 18, 2000 (Federal Register, Vol. 65, No. 202, pp 62458-62496).

The regulations require that an affirmative finding be made of an activity's "compatibility" before such activity or use is allowed on a national wildlife refuge. A compatible use is one, "...that will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the Refuge System or the purposes of the refuge" (Refuge Improvement Act). Six priority, wildlife-dependent uses that are to be considered at each refuge are defined by the Act and Regulation. These are: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. These priority uses may be authorized on a refuge when they are compatible (as defined above), and not inconsistent with public safety. Not all uses that are determined compatible may be allowed. The Refuge Manager has the discretion to allow or deny any use based on other considerations such as public safety, policy and available funding. However, all uses that are allowed must be determined compatible. Except for consideration of consistency with State laws and regulations as provided for in subsection (m) of the Act, no other determinations or findings are required to be made by the refuge official under this Act or the Refuge Recreation Act for wildlife-dependent recreation to occur (Refuge Improvement Act).

Appendix C includes new and/or revised compatibility determinations for Refuge activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation of this CCP will occur at two levels. The first level, which we refer to as implementation monitoring, responds to the question, "Did we do what we said we would do, when we said we would do it?"

The second level of monitoring, which we refer to as effectiveness monitoring, responds to the question, "Are actions we proposed effective in achieving the results we had hoped for?" Or, in other words, "Are the actions leading us toward our vision, goals, and objectives?" Effectiveness monitoring evaluates an individual action, a suite of actions, or an entire resource program. This approach is more analytical in evaluating management effects on species, populations, habitats, refuge visitors, ecosystem integrity, or the socio-economic environment. More often, the criteria to monitor and evaluate these management effects will be established in step-down, individual project, or cooperator plans, or through the

research program. The Species and Habitat Inventory and Monitoring Plan will be based on the needs and priorities identified in the Habitat Management Plan.

Additional NEPA Analysis

The National Environmental Policy Act requires a site-specific analysis of impacts for all major Federal actions. These impacts are to be disclosed in either an EA or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Many of the actions and associated impacts proposed in our CCP were described in enough detail in the Draft and Final EIS to comply with NEPA, and would not require additional environmental analysis. Although this is not an all-inclusive list, the following examples fall into this category: seabird restoration on islands, habitat diversity management on the mainland, expanding priority wildlife-dependent public use programs; acquiring land; controlling invasive plants, and managing predators.

A few of the proposed actions may not be described in enough detail to comply with the site-specific analysis requirements of NEPA. One example of a project that will require a separate NEPA compliant document is the construction of a new Refuge Headquarters and Coastal Education Center.

Adaptive Management

We will use a strategy of adaptive management to keep the CCP relevant and current through scientific research and management. We acknowledge that our information on species and ecosystems is incomplete, provisional, and subject to change as our knowledge base improves. The need for adaptive management is all the more compelling today.

“The earth’s ecosystems are being modified in new ways and at faster rates than at any other time in their nearly 4 billion year history. These new and rapid changes present significant challenges to our ability to predict the inherently uncertain responses and behaviors of ecosystems.” (Christensen, et al. 1996)

Objectives and strategies must be adaptable in responding to new information and spatial and temporal changes. We will continually evaluate management actions, both formally and informally, through monitoring and research to reconsider whether their original assumptions and predictions are still valid. In this way, management becomes an active process of learning what really works. It is important that the public understand and appreciate the adaptive nature of natural resource management.

The Refuge Manager is responsible for changing management actions if they do not produce the desired conditions. Significant changes may warrant additional NEPA analysis; minor changes will not, but will be documented in annual monitoring, project evaluation reports, or the Annual Refuge Narrative.

Plan Amendment and Revision

Periodic review of the CCP will be required to ensure that objectives are being met and management actions are being implemented. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be an important part of this process. Monitoring results or new information may indicate the need to change our strategies.

The Service's planning policy (FWS Manual, Part 602, Chapters 1, 3, and 4) states that CCPs should be reviewed at least annually to decide if they require any revisions (Chapter 3, part 3.4 (8)). Revisions will only be necessary if significant new information becomes available, ecological conditions change, major refuge expansions occur, or we identify the need to do so during a program review.

At a minimum, CCPs will be fully revised every 15 years. We will modify the CCP documents and associated management activities as needed, following the procedures outlined in Service policy and NEPA requirements. Minor revisions that meet the criteria for categorical exclusions (550 FW 3.3 C) will only require an Environmental Action Memorandum.

Appendices



Peregrine falcon

Photo courtesy of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

- Appendix A Land Protection Plan
- Appendix B Species and Habitats of Conservation Concern
- Appendix C Compatibility Determinations
- Appendix D Wilderness Inventory and Study
- Appendix E List of Preparers
- Appendix F Refuge Operations Needs System (RONS) and Management Maintenance System (MMS)

