



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

May 2006



Cover Photos: *Grassland management on the refuge, USFWS photo*
Short-eared owl, USFWS photo
Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS photo
Bobolink, Scott A. Vincent©



This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 545 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 65 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency 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 Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service's best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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Submitted by:



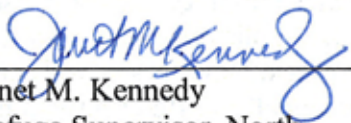
Edward G. Henry
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Wallkill River and Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuges

6/1/06

Date

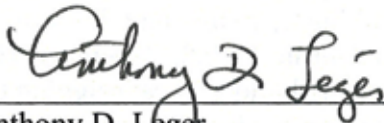
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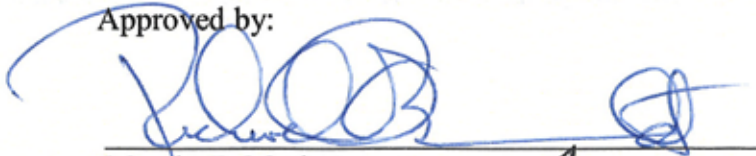


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6/14/06

Date

Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

May 2006

Abstract

Type of action: Administrative

Lead agency: U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

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This Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge (refuge) is the culmination of a planning effort involving state fish and wildlife agency, local partners, refuge neighbors, private landowners, and the local community. The CCP establishes 15-year management goals and objectives for wildlife and habitat, and public use and access. Under this plan, staff from the Wallkill River refuge headquarters office in Sussex, New Jersey, will continue to administer the Shawangunk Grasslands refuge. A small, seasonally staffed visitor contact facility and improved parking area and kiosk will increase opportunities for visitor outreach and improve the visibility of the Service. Other highlights of the CCP include: 1) managing 430 acres of grassland habitat using a diversity of tools and techniques to sustain high quality habitat for wintering raptors and nesting, foraging, and migrating grassland-dependent birds; 2) opening the refuge to fishing in the small pond; 3) initiating an archery hunt for white-tailed deer in the fall; 4) constructing an interpretive trail with observation platforms and photography blinds; 5) redesigning the scope of the original proposed restoration of the runways and taxiways to grassland to account for areas being used effectively by nesting grassland birds, and to look for opportunities to recycle waste materials onsite or nearby; and, 6) restoring the natural hydrology of the area to the extent it does not impede our grasslands habitat work. In addition, the plan identifies a 3,486-acre Shawangunk Grasslands Focus Area, including the refuge and contiguous, ecologically important land, where land use changes could directly affect refuge resources. The CCP does not propose Service acquisition of additional land at this time.



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Refuge Vision Statement

The Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge, located in Ulster County, New York, provides exceptional grassland habitat within the Wallkill River watershed, a major tributary to the Hudson River. We will enhance and sustain this high quality habitat for the full complement of grassland-dependent birds that breed, winter and migrate through, the watershed. Other native grassland-dependent animals and regionally rare plants benefit from our management as well. With easy public access to the refuge's managed grasslands, and because of the open vistas the grasslands afford, it is an ideal setting for wildlife observation, nature photography, and environmental interpretation. All visitors will feel welcomed and encouraged to enjoy and appreciate the contribution of this refuge to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Refuge Headquarters
1547 County Route 565
Sussex, NJ 07461**

May 2006

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Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge
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<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/shawangunk/>

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