



Michigan

National Wildlife Refuge System Workforce Planning

Background

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System is the only network of federal lands dedicated specifically to wildlife conservation.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is currently undergoing a nationwide workforce planning effort. This effort is being conducted to help ensure the Refuge System is able to complete its high priority mission activities in the face of relatively flat annual budgets and increasing personnel and operational costs.

Michigan

National Wildlife Refuge System staff in Michigan manage seven national wildlife refuges and one wetland management district. These employees manage approximately 113,000 acres of land and host 143,000 visitors annually.

Workforce Planning

In order to keep personnel costs from completely absorbing required refuge operational funds, the Region must reduce refuge staff by 20 percent, a total of 71 positions.

To meet this target, Refuge System staff in Michigan will be reduced by four positions; from 20 in 2004 to 16 in 2009.

Reduction in Management Capability and Visitor Services

Due to this reduction in staff, Michigan's refuges and wetland management district will not be able to maintain their current level of fish and wildlife management activities or provide the same level of public use opportunities.

It is estimated that a 15 to 20 percent reduction in performance measures involving habitat management and visitor services will occur as a result of these reductions.

Personnel Losses

The Region is planning to eliminate these positions through natural attrition, retirement and relocations if needed.

Michigan Personnel Losses

4 positions

20% reduction

1 Manager/Res. Spec.

2 Park Rangers

1 Biologist/Bio. Tech



What This Means on the Ground

Habitat management, visitor services and educational programs across the state will be impacted. Each state, refuge and wetland management district in the Midwest Region is going to feel the effects of these personnel reductions.

Impacts in Michigan

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge: The refuge is a relatively new refuge, the only international wildlife refuge in North America. The public-private partnerships that are being fostered in this refuge received critical acclaim last year at the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. The refuge has a staff of two, but the approved Comprehensive Conservation Plan calls for an increase of staff to fulfill operational and management responsibilities.

The refuge has experienced rapid growth and now contains 4,211 acres of land, and is expected to collect biological information on the refuge, administer visitor services, and conduct habitat management to enhance fish and wildlife use and public enjoyment of these lands. The lack of additional staff is reducing the ability to complete these responsibilities in a timely manner, threatens partnerships and partnership commitments, and has the potential to delay and ultimately miss opportunities that may not ever appear again for conservation benefits.

Shiawassee National Wildlife

Refuge: The refuge has one vacant position and is anticipating that an additional position will be left vacant. The existing vacancy has resulted in a reduction of the management activities associated with the refuge hunting program. Invasive species control was reduced by 50 percent and the refuge may no longer be able to participate in the Youth Conservation Corps program.

Seney National Wildlife

Refuge: The refuge has discontinued its environmental education programs and teacher workshops. Annual public events, such as Snowfest, have been cancelled due to lack of staff to organize and support the event. Refuge staff are no longer able to effectively monitor easements. Routine maintenance of facilities, vehicles and equipment has been reduced.