



Missouri

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.

Missouri

National Wildlife Refuge System staff in Missouri manage 10 national wildlife refuges. These employees manage approximately 70,000 acres of land and host 239,000 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, the Refuge System staff in Missouri will be reduced by six positions; from 33 in 2004 to 27 in 2009.

Reduction in Management Capability and Visitor Services

Due to this reduction in staff, Missouri's refuges 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.

Missouri Personnel Losses

6 positions

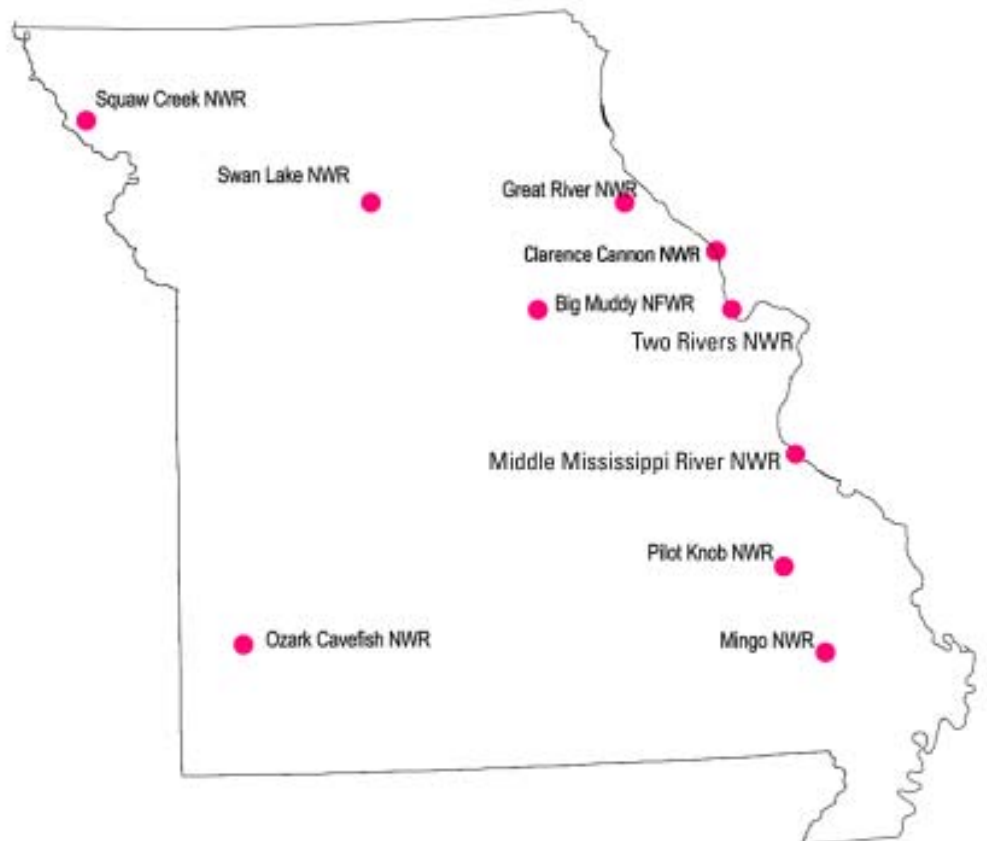
18% reduction

2 Biologists/Bio. Tech.

1 Park Ranger

2 Maintenance Workers

1 Administrative Staff



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 Missouri

Swan Lake National Wildlife

Refuge: The refuge staff is currently short two positions and these vacancies have significantly impacted the refuge's ability to conduct daily operations. Existing staff is unable to conduct necessary habitat and wildlife surveys and long-term monitoring of specific species, such as the massasauga rattlesnake and Indiana bat.

Mingo National Wildlife

Refuge: The refuge is the largest remaining contiguous tract of bottomland hardwood forest left in southeast Missouri. The refuge provides habitat for significant populations of migratory birds as well as numerous unique fish, amphibian and reptile species. The refuge currently has two vacant positions, a heavy equipment operator and a wildlife biologist.

A refuge-wide ditch rehabilitation project involving 35 miles of waterway renovation and numerous water control structure replacements has slowed significantly, reducing the achievement of 500 acres of wetland restorations annually. Other habitat and facility maintenance projects including grading, gravelling and repair of 57 miles of public access roads are behind schedule. Habitat management of Rockhouse Marsh has been setback resulting in a young sapling invasion and a greater maintenance cost in keeping this key waterfowl migration habitat in good condition for bird use.

The refuge recently completed a Comprehensive Conservation Plan calling for a greater emphasis on managing forest and water resources to produce greater wildlife habitat productivity. The refuge has reduced biological surveys by 25 percent, conducting the remaining surveys with a temporary biological technician. The refuge has reduced waterfowl banding efforts that have been historically key partnership efforts with the Missouri Department of Conservation. The refuge is unable to conduct any Partners for Fish and Wildlife projects on private land.