



Crane Meadows *National Wildlife Refuge*

Planning Information

for the

Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

February 19, 2009

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has begun work on a plan that will guide the management of Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) over the next 15 years. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan, or CCP, will take into account all types of issues that affect the Refuge and it will lay out a framework of goals, objectives, and strategies to direct management actions into the future.

Refuge staff consider many factors in comprehensive conservation planning, including the over-arching mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the purposes for which the Refuge was established, immediate and long-term social and environmental factors, the management vision of Service staff, and issues and concerns raised by stakeholders and the public.

The Service is preparing a CCP for every refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) in compliance with the Congressional mandate in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.

The Crane Meadow NWR CCP will:

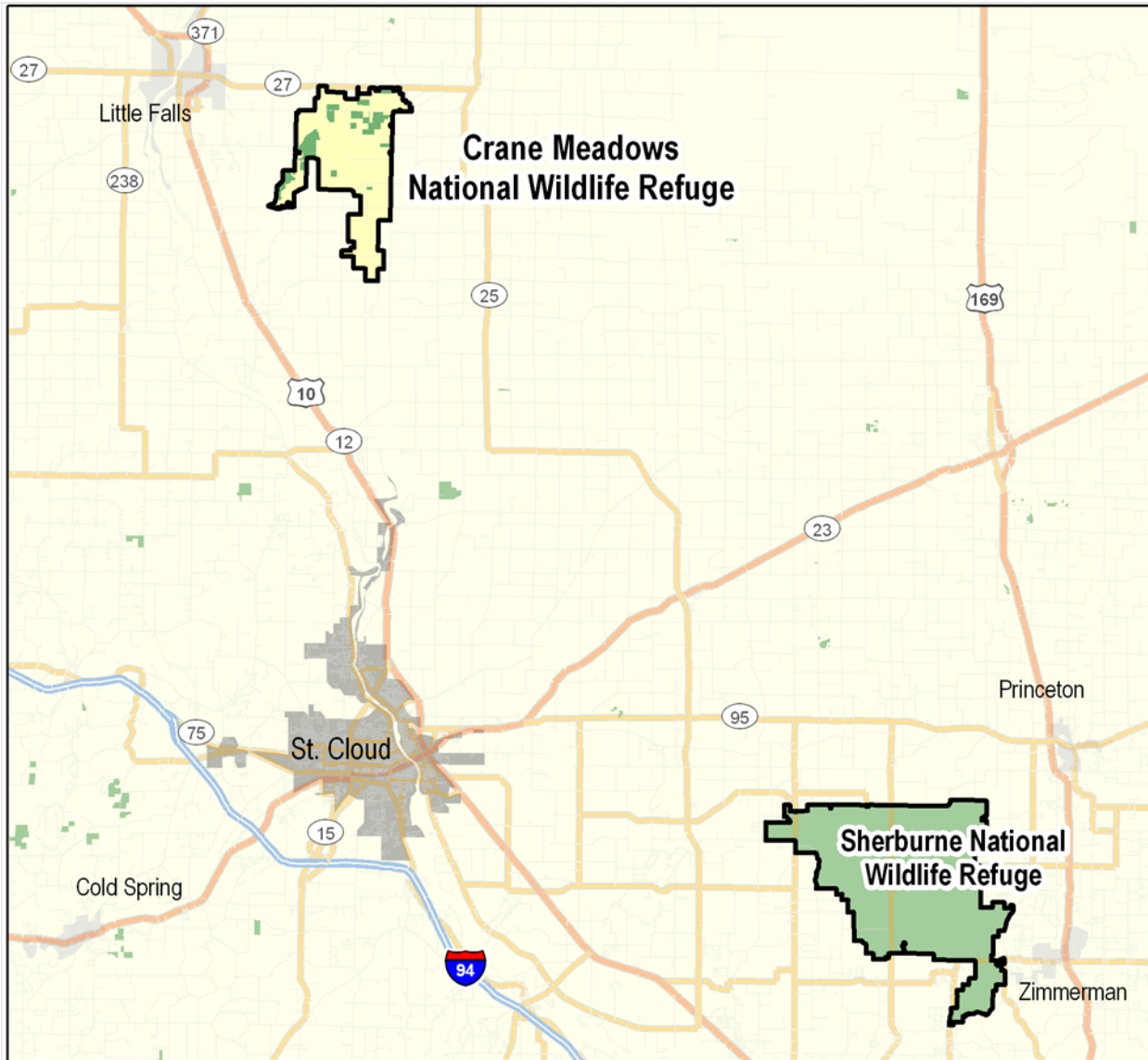


Aerial view of Crane Meadows NWR. Photo credit: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

- Provide a clear statement of the desired future condition of the Refuge.
- Ensure that management of the Refuge is consistent with the purposes of the Refuge and consistent with the policies of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Provide Refuge visitors, neighbors, and partners with a clear understanding of the reasons for management actions.
- Provide for long-term continuity in Refuge management.
- Provide a basis for Fish and Wildlife Service staffing and for operation, maintenance, and capital improvement budget requests.

Contents

Comprehensive Conservation Planning	1
Quick Facts	2
Getting Involved	3
U.S. Department of the Interior	3
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	3
National Wildlife Refuge System	4
Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge System	5
Share Your Thoughts	5
Write a Comment	7



This figure shows the location of Crane Meadows NWR in relation to Sherburne NWR and the cities of Little Falls and St. Cloud. The map shows the approved acquisition boundary and, in green, the land owned by the Service.

Crane Meadows NWR / Quick Facts

Year Established: 1992

Acres: Approximately 1,800 acres

Wildlife You Are Likely to See: Sandhill Cranes

Wildlife You Are Lucky to See: Gray wolf

What You Can Do on the Refuge: Hike the 3.6-mile Platte River Trail, cross-country ski, observe and photograph wildlife.

Special Events: *Habitat Day* on March 14, 2009, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Learn what you can do on your land to benefit

wildlife, and get materials and a little guidance for building a Blue Bird house or a Wood Duck house.

Bird Tour / Platte River Trail Dedication: May 3, 2009 at 7 a.m. Meet at the Platte River Trailhead and follow the newly upgraded trail on a guided bird tour. Trail dedication and brunch follow the tour.

Platte River Cleanup: June 13, 2009, at 8 a.m. Fishing, birding and housekeeping for a segment of the river from north of the Refuge to the Mississippi River outlet, all from a canoe. Meet at the Refuge Shop.

Getting Involved

You can play an important role in the planning process by sharing your thoughts and ideas related to Crane Meadows NWR. Participating in the development of this plan gives you the opportunity to learn more about the Refuge, raise concerns, ask questions, and ensure that we consider topics that are important to you.

Getting involved now, during the “Scoping of Issues” stage, is an opportunity for you to contribute to the heart of Refuge planning – identifying the issues and opportunities that will shape future management alternatives.

Comments on planning and the plan are welcome anytime, however the scoping period and review of the draft CCP are two key points when your ideas can be incorporated in to the CCP.

Please take a moment to review this handout, then use the comment form provided to express your thoughts and ideas. Comments can be submitted in person at the Open House, or by:

Mail: Crane Meadows NWR
19502 Iris Road
Little Falls, MN 56345

Fax: 320-632-5471 (Please note “Crane Meadows – CCP Comment”)

Email: r3planning@fws.gov
(Please note “Crane Meadows – CCP Comment” in the subject line.)

Web Page:

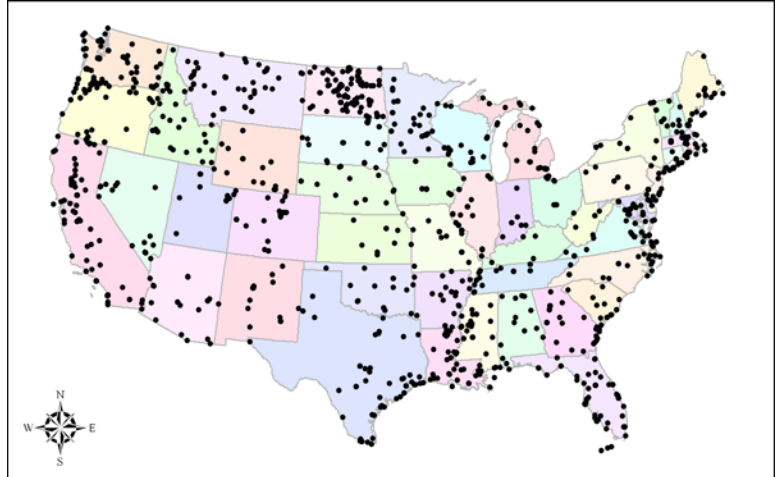
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/CraneMeadows>

U.S. Department of the Interior

Established by Congress in 1849, the Department of the Interior (DOI) is the nation’s principle conservation agency. The overarching purpose of the DOI is to protect America’s treasures for future generations, and the responsibilities of



Canada Geese. Photo credit: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



National wildlife refuges in the United States.

its eight agencies and bureaus encompass responsibilities for the nation’s natural and cultural heritage, Native American relations, energy and mineral resources, land and water resources, fish and wildlife populations, as well as scientific research and recreation opportunities. The DOI manages approximately one-fifth of the land in the United States and supplies roughly 30 percent of the nation’s energy resources.

Agencies and offices that are part of the DOI include:

- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Minerals Management Service
- Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mission: Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the primary government agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Its role is unique among federal agencies in that wildlife and habitat

conservation is the primary priority for the agency. Through its work, the Service also ensures a healthy environment and provides a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities.

With offices and field stations throughout the nation, the Service oversees the operation and management of 548 national wildlife refuges, 70 national fish hatcheries, 65 fish and wildlife conservation offices, and 81 ecological services field stations.

Some of the nation's most important environmental laws are also implemented and enforced by the Service, including:

- Endangered Species Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act
- Lacey Act

Through these laws and other responsibilities, activities, programs, and offices, the Service protects threatened and endangered species, monitors migratory birds, restores important fisheries, enforces federal and international wildlife laws, conserves important habitats, and provides support for fish and wildlife conservation efforts both nationally and internationally.

All work undertaken by the Service is guided by a core set of conservation principles. These principles include:

- Stewardship:* Our ethic is to conserve natural resources for future generations.
- People:* Our employees are our most valued asset.
- Science:* Our work is grounded in thorough, objective science.
- Partnerships:* We emphasize creative, innovative partnerships.
- Professionalism:* We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards, strive for excellence and respect others.



Skunk Lake, Crane Meadows NWR. Photo credit: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Crane Meadows NWR. Photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Legacy: We ensure the future of natural resource conservation by connecting people with nature.

Service: It is our privilege to serve the American people.

National Wildlife Refuge System

Mission: To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) encompasses more than 96 million acres and is comprised of 548 national wildlife refuges, 37 wetland management districts, and 49 coordination areas. The Refuge System was established in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt designated Pelican Island as the first refuge set aside for wildlife needs. Today there is at least one refuge in each of the 50 states, as well as many U.S. territories. These refuges are home to over 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 reptile and amphibian species, and over 200 species of fish. More than just places for wildlife, 40 million visitors each year take advantage of the recreation opportunities provided by refuges. These opportunities include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, interpretation, and other wildlife-dependent activities.

Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Located in Morrison County in central Minnesota (see the map on page 2), Crane Meadows NWR was established in 1992 to preserve a large, natural wetland complex. In response to the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, the Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service created a Regional Wetlands Concept Plan in 1990. This plan identified six important wetlands in the Midwest that were in need of protection, including Crane Meadows due to its size and relatively intact state. The complex includes two large shallow lakes, Rice and Skunk; one small open water basin, Mud Lake; and four watercourses, the Platte River, the Skunk River, Rice Creek and Buckman Creek. Habitats on the Refuge include lowland areas of sedge meadow wetlands, open water wetlands, bottomland forest, and a diversity of aquatic habitats. Upland habitats include tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, and mixed deciduous forests. This area also harbors one of the largest nesting populations of Sandhill Cranes in Minnesota, and is an important stop-over for many species of migratory birds.

Management of Crane Meadows NWR is shared with its neighbor refuge to the southeast, Sherburne NWR (see the figure on page 2). The total acquisition boundary for Crane Meadows NWR includes 13,540 acres, of which approximately 1,800 acres are currently owned and managed by the Service. The acquisition boundary identifies important and sensitive resource areas related to the wetland complex, and establishes where the Service has authority to purchase land. Land acquisition continues to occur within the acquisition boundary through donations and the purchase of property from willing sellers. Private lands within the boundary remain under the control of the owner until such time as he or she decides to sell the property.

More information about the Refuge and its management can be found on its website:
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/cranemeadows/>

Share Your Thoughts

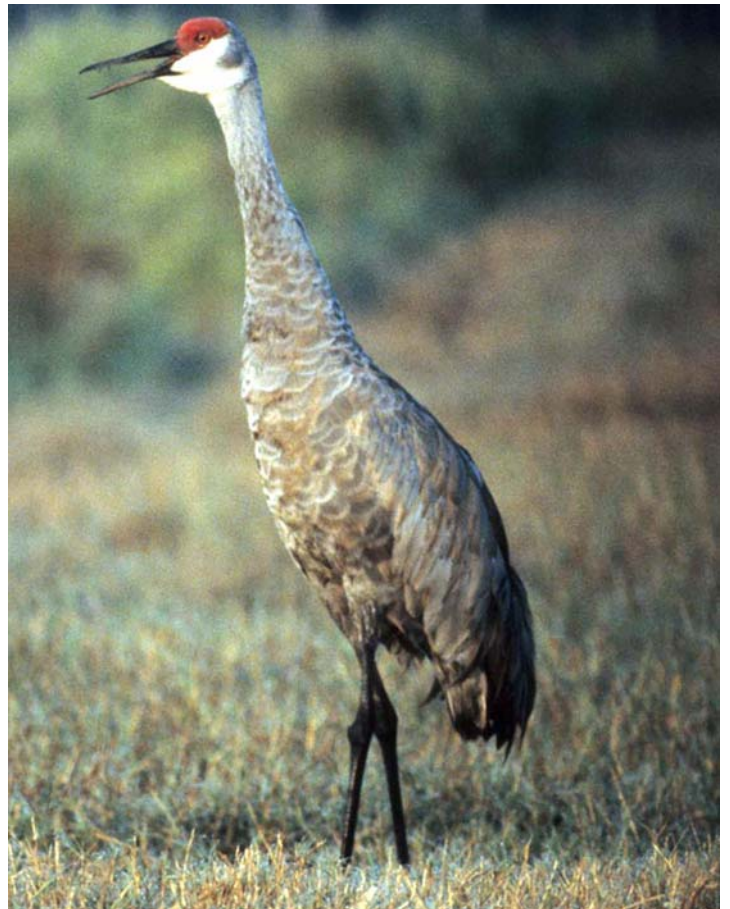
There are a variety of important issues to consider during the planning process. We have provided a short list of questions and topics that we feel are of particular relevance and importance to the Refuge. Your comments are not limited to these topics, they are merely intended to provide food for thought. We appreciate all feedback – positive or negative – regarding the issues and concerns that are important to you.

Questions

- What do you value most about Crane Meadows NWR?
- What do you feel is the greatest challenge facing the Refuge?
- What is the most important thing the Refuge can do in the next 15 years?
- What changes or factors do you see coming that will affect the Refuge?
- As the Refuge Manager, what would you do to improve the Refuge?
- What role do you feel Crane Meadows NWR plays or could play in the community?

Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Topics

- game wildlife management
- fishery management
- trapping
- nongame wildlife management
- threatened and endangered species
- migratory bird conservation



Sandhill Crane. Photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- prairie/grassland management
- forest management
- fire management
- invasive species
- scientific research and monitoring

Recreation and Public Use Topics

- hunting
- fishing
- hiking trails
- wildlife viewing and photography
- environmental education

- interpretive programs
- public facilities
- access to Refuge lands

Other Topics

- wild rice
- aesthetics
- cultural values
- historical resources
- partnerships
- acquisition
- water quality

Thank you for your participation in this planning process!

Comments Are Welcome!

You are welcome to tear this page off and leave it with Refuge staff at the open house or mail it in later. The next step in the planning process will be to develop a list of issues that will be addressed in the CCP. In order to consider your comment, it must be received by March 6, 2009.

(Please note that information and comments submitted become part of the public record for this project. Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of 1975, the Service may be obligated to release the names of people who have submitted comments.)

Comments can be mailed to the Refuge at:

**Crane Meadows NWR
Attn: CCP Comment
19502 Iris Road
Little Falls, MN 56345**

You can also send your comment via **e-mail** to: **r3planning@fws.gov** (Subject: Crane Meadows NWR CCP). Please include your name and address if you would like to be added to our mailing list.

Additional planning information can be found at: **<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/CraneMeadows>**

My Comment:

