



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Upper Mississippi River *National Wildlife and Fish Refuge* *Comprehensive Conservation Planning*

Quick Facts

Refuge Facts

- Established: 1924
- Acres: 240,220
- Refuge covers 261 miles of Mississippi River floodplain from Wabasha, Minn., to Rock Island, Ill., and is divided into four districts:
 - Winona, MN (Pools 4-6)
 - La Crosse, WI (Pools 7-8)
 - McGregor, IA (Pools 9-11)
 - Savanna, IL (Pools 12-14)
- The refuge includes land in 19 counties across four states (MN, WI, IA, and IL)
- Refuge Manager Don Hultman, 507-452-4232

CCP Facts

- CCP approved on Oct. 24, 2006.
- The CCP will guide management of the refuge for 15 years
- More than 4,500 people attended the 46 CCP meetings and workshops
- A total of 3,230 written comments were received and considered
- Refuge staff are developing step-down plans to implement the CCP

Introduction

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge encompasses 240,000 acres in a more-or-less continuous stretch of 261 miles of Mississippi River floodplain in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois. The Refuge was established by Congress in 1924 to provide a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds, fish, other wildlife, and plants. The Refuge is perhaps the most important corridor of habitat in the central U.S. due to its species diversity and abundance, and is the most visited refuge in the U.S. with 3.7 million annual visitors.

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

On Aug. 24, 2006, the final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Impact Statement were approved by Regional Director Robyn Thorson. The completed documents were compiled into one plan that will guide the administration and management of the Refuge for the next 15 years.

The process of developing the CCP began in 2004 and included significant public participation. In total, the Refuge hosted 46 public meetings and workshops during the planning process attended by 4,500 persons. An inter-agency planning team (state and federal) was active throughout the planning process. We also received 3,230 written comments including comments from the four states involved, the Corps of Engineers, elected officials, and 40 conservation organizations.

CCPs are required by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement



Act of 1997 to ensure that refuges are managed in accordance with their purposes and the mission of the Refuge System.

Next Steps

The refuge staff is currently developing step-down plans to implement the goals identified in the CCP.

A step-down furbearer management plan (trapping) was completed and released for review and a public comment period that ended on July 2. New hunting and fishing regulations are currently available and open for public comment until July 30, 2007.

Additional plans being developed include a law enforcement plan (being developed in coordination with the four states), new general recreation regulations (which includes electric motor and slow, no-wake areas), and a specific plan for waterfowl hunting in the Gibbs Lake area of the refuge.

For the latest information visit: <http://midwest.fws.gov/uppermississippiriver/>