

Preliminary Project Proposal (PPP)

A PPP must be prepared for all acquisition proposals for new refuges or additions of over 40 acres to existing refuges, including those proposed for acquisition by purchase, exchange, transfer, donation, mitigation, or a proposed congressional action. Other types of proposals include Cooperative Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, and withdrawal if interests are acquired for inclusion into the National Wildlife Refuge System. Exceptions are waterfowl production areas, Farmer's Home Administration interests transferred to the Service, and instances where Congress gives direction to the Service through an add-on appropriation to acquire specific property or property rights (not to be confused with congressionally authorized projects that come through an act or the regular appropriations process).

- (1) The PPP and LAPS analysis will be the basis for the Director's approval or disapproval to proceed with detailed planning for a proposal. The primary focus of the PPP will be towards the area's total long-term management, biological, and ecological needs rather than opportunities to purchase properties.
- (2) In addition to the location and site map showing relevant natural features, the PPP should address the items listed below. Each item (a - n) should be identified as a subtitle. (See Exhibit 2 - Sample Preliminary Project Proposal.)
 - (a) Introduction--a very brief overview plus anything unique about the proposal or data involved.
 - (b) Location and Size--self-explanatory.
 - (c) Description of Habitat--self-explanatory.
 - (d) Major Wildlife Values--migratory birds, endangered and threatened species, fishery resources.
 - (e) Relationship of Project to Ecosystem's Management Goals and Objectives--Discussion of the proposal's contribution to the protection and restoration of the respective ecosystem in which it falls.
 - (f) Related Resources--names and locations of the closest State, Federal, and private conservation lands.
 - (g) Threats--specific threats such as residential, commercial, agricultural, or oil and gas developments; public use interference; etc.
 - (h) Proposal Objectives and Funding--justification for the proposal and source of funding.

- (i) **Ownerships and Type of Acquisition**--describe nature of project ownership, landowner attitudes, and method to acquire property rights.
- (j) **Initial and Annual Costs**--cost estimates, both immediate (land, development, and relocation) and future (operation, maintenance, and revenue sharing).
- (k) **Water Rights** --Discussions by Regions 1, 2, 6, and 7 on the adequacy and availability of water within the project area to carry out refuge management goals and objectives, an estimation of costs involved, and other pertinent issues. If this discussion is not applicable, the section should still be included and "not applicable" should be written under the heading.
- (l) **Contaminants and Hazardous Wastes**--potential contaminant issues. Report negative as well as positive findings. Known historic uses will help determine the level of contaminant survey required. When known uses on the proposed area include a former sewage treatment site or refuse dump site, a Level I contaminant survey is not sufficient. (See 341 FW 3.)
- (m) **Public Attitude and Involvement**--degree to which the proposal has been explored with the general public and other Federal, State, and local entities, and their reactions.
- (n) **Special Considerations**--review of the project area in relation to military uses; e.g. low-level flight patterns, training areas, etc. Consider if the project contains any wilderness resources that could qualify for wilderness study after acquisition. New acquisitions or the expansions of existing units occasionally qualify for wilderness study or meet the criteria for wilderness suitability. Proposed uses or rights that may not be compatible with the primary purposes of the refuge and with Refuge System goals should be addressed. During the planning process, Regional offices should also coordinate the necessary activities to ensure there is concurrent police jurisdiction with the State when the tracts are acquired.
- (3) The PPP is expected to be a brief executive overview of the relevant factors, generally three to six pages in length but of sufficient detail to provide a complete picture of the important issues. The Director will have to understand the commitments being made and the benefits to be derived. The LAPS analysis, which should be submitted at the same time as the PPP, will have a strong influence on any decision made relative to the future of detailed planning for the project.
- (4) **Director's Approval.** The Regions should forward the PPP to the Washington Office, Division of Realty, for review by appropriate Washington Office staff, evaluation of comments, and a recommendation for approval or disapproval. Based on these considerations, the PPP, and the LAPS ranking, the Director will either approve or disapprove further detailed planning.
- (5) When a significant change in the parameters of a project is necessary, a revised PPP should be submitted as soon as possible prior to proceeding with additional planning. Significance will be determined by the impact the change will have on the natural resources; socioeconomic, political, and cultural issues; public use; etc.