



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

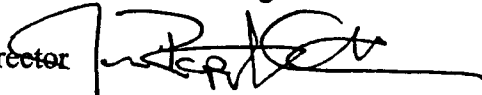
ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR,
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/RE00-00090

AUG 11 2000

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors, Regions 1-7

From: Director 

Subject: Changes to the Land Acquisition Planning Procedures
(Effective Date: date of this memorandum)

This memorandum replaces all previous land acquisition policies and procedures.

The following general policy changes will be implemented effective immediately. Only the Director can approve the establishment of a new unit, or the significant expansion of an existing unit, of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Thus, all documents proposing the expansion of the Refuge System will require the Director's approval. This includes Preliminary Project Proposals, final documents required for the expansion or establishment of new units, and Comprehensive Conservation Plans with a land acquisition component. **Note: Current exemptions regarding expansions under the 10 percent or 40 acres (whichever is greater) still apply.**

Process:

- Each Region will use its own internal procedures to develop a Preliminary Project Investigation. This document may serve as a rough draft before preparing a PPP. The PPI will not be forwarded to the Washington Office.
- PPPs will be submitted to the Washington Office for the Director's approval to conduct detailed planning. PPPs will be brief in nature and should include pertinent information that allows the Director to make an informed decision (sample included as attachment 1). It is understood that at this preliminary planning stage, all of the information may not be available to concretely identify a project boundary, thus general focus areas may be appropriate. Comprehensive Conservation Plans with a land acquisition component must have an approved PPP prior to the public release of the DRAFT CCP.
- After receiving Director's approval of the PPP, the Region will conduct detailed planning. The detailed planning will include all of the required components (see attachment 2). All projects submitted for the Director's final approval must have discrete and identifiable

boundaries. The Director will review the proposed land acquisition components and will appropriately handle the Final Decision Document. This may include approving, disapproving, or returning to the Region for more information. This process will also cover CCPs that have a land acquisition component. Only the land acquisition component of the CCP will be reviewed and subsequently handled by the Director.

- After approving the Decision Document, the Director will publish a notice in the Federal Register announcing the new, or expanded, unit as being authorized. New projects may be included in LAPS and funding can be pursued at this stage. New units are considered established after the acquisition of an interest in land.

These changes will be incorporated into the Service Manual. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Eric Alvarez, Chief, Branch of Acquisition Management, at 703-358-1713.