U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

September 2013

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mission Statement
The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission Statement
The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is 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.

-National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997

Comprehensive conservation plans provide long-term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service's best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.

BUFFALO LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

and

Environmental Assessment

Prepared by:

Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 179
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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

Dear Reader:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to provide you with a copy of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in the State of Texas. This plan identifies the role that the refuge will play in support of the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Wildlife Refuge System. It provides long-term guidance to the refuge's management programs and activities.

The plan was developed by an interdisciplinary planning team which evaluated three management alternatives and chose Alternative B as the proposed action. The Service believes this management action is a positive step in conserving and managing the refuge's fish and wildlife resources.

The Service would like to thank you for participating in the planning process. Comments you submitted helped us prepare a better plan for the future of the refuge.

Additional copies of this plan may be obtained by contacting the Buffalo Lake NWR, P.O. Box 179, Umbarger, TX 79091. The plan is also available on the Service's Internet website as follows: http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/Plan/planindex.html

Thank you for your continued support and interest in our fish and wildlife conservation efforts.

Sincerely,

_____ _____

Dr. Benjamin N. Tuggle, Regional Director Date
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

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COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN APPROVAL
For
Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Umbarger, TX

The attached Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge has been prepared by Regional Office and Refuge staff. The contents and format are found to be in compliance with Service Policy on the preparation of Comprehensive Conservation Plans, and is hereby submitted for approval.

Submitted by:

_____ _____
Joseph R. Luján, Natural Resource Planner Date
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

_____ _____
Lynn Nymeyer, Refuge Manager Date
Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Concurrence by:

_____ _____
Kelly McDowell, Refuge Supervisor, TX/OK Date
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

_____ _____
Aaron Archibeque, Regional Chief, NWR System, Date
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

Approved by:

_____ _____
Dr. Benjamin N. Tuggle, Regional Director Date
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2

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West Texas Sunset. USFWS

Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge Vision Statement

Buffalo Lake NWR will continue to provide quality habitats for migratory birds and resident wildlife, and will enhance opportunities for people to enjoy compatible wildlife oriented recreation. The refuge's unique features include a 175 acre tract of exceptional short grass prairie that has been designated as a Registered Natural Landmark. Much of the refuge grasslands are pristine examples of what the surrounding area was like in the past. These areas will be enhanced, protected and expanded for future generations.

The refuge will continue to be characterized by historic pre-agriculture grassland conditions through the implementation of effective land management programs which restore native species diversity and protect the natural biological communities. Through persistent exotic species control, restoration efforts and biological monitoring, the Refuge will serve as an anchor for biodiversity, model for habitat restoration and enhancement, and advance climate change practices throughout west Texas.

The Service will pursue all opportunities to acquire or develop water sources and will have a protected water supply to provide for migratory birds. The refuge's wildlife resources will be further enhanced and protected through stronger partnerships with other agencies, organizations and landowners to assist with avian disease outbreaks, crop depredation, habitat restoration, and Central Flyway waterfowl population issues.

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