

# ECOSYSTEM PLANNING NEWS

NOVEMBER, 2002

A Summary of Comprehensive Conservation Planning on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges in the Roanoke-Tar-Neuse-Cape Fear Ecosystem of North Carolina and Virginia

## NEWS FLASH



Scoping meetings for planning alternatives at Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge were held on April 9 in Halifax and April 11 in Windsor. The draft comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and environmental

impact statement are currently being written.

Preliminary project proposals (PPP) are being developed for land acquisition at Pocosin Lakes and Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuges.

A second round of public forums will be conducted for Mackay Island and Currituck National Wildlife Refuges to get reaction to the alternatives proposed for the plan. The meetings will be held November 18 through 21 from 6PM to 9PM nightly.

Scoping meetings have been held for all eleven National Wildlife Refuges in the ecosystem. The scoping meetings were an opportunity for the public to tell the refuge and planning staff what activities and management they would like to see on the refuges.

All nine North Carolina refuges had their alternative plans reviewed by the Southeast Regional Office and received permission to proceed with the planning process. The Virginia refuges (Great Dismal Swamp and Back Bay) are administered by the Northeast Regional Office.

## PLANNING PROCESS

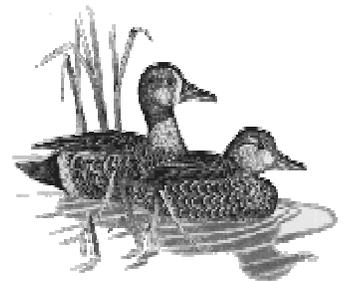
Each plan will take from two to three years to complete. The process begins with the refuge staff summarizing basic resource data about the refuge.

A first set of public forums called scoping meetings is held to solicit public input. Comments from public meetings are addressed in alternative plans whenever feasible. Alternatives are reviewed by the regional office and presented to the public at a second round of meetings.

Reaction to the alternatives is taken into consideration when selecting a preferred alternative and writing a draft plan. The draft plan is reviewed by the ecological services office in Raleigh, and the regional and national offices.

The draft is then presented to the public during a third set of meetings. Copies of the plan are made available at local libraries and electronically. Comments from draft review meetings are considered when revising the draft plan and developing the final plan.

Each public forum is scheduled for three hours: a one-hour open house to view exhibits and talk to refuge staff; a half-hour formal presentation; and a ninety-minute facilitated discussion.



*Our mission is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance, fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit to the American people.*

## REFUGE HIGHLIGHTS

### Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

The Oregon Inlet channel was dredged earlier this fall and the material was placed on a mile and a half of shoreline on Pea Island refuge.

Brian Watts, a professor at the College of William and Mary, completed a survey of black-throated green warblers and other bird species utilizing filter strips at Alligator River refuge.

The Wings Over Water festival was held at Pea Island and Alligator River refuges and other local attractions in October. The refuge staff participated in the Wildfest Family Day held on October 19 in Manteo.

### Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge

The staff has been remodeling the refuge office, shop, and crew quarters to make them more habitable.

The refuge is recruiting for a permanent maintenance worker position.

### Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge Swan Quarter National Wildlife Refuge

Drought conditions created ideal shorebird habitat at Lake Mattamuskeet just in time for late summer shorebird migration! The flap gates on the water control structures are being replaced to improve fish passage and allow for better water flow. Phragmites is being controlled on 300 acres.

The refuge staff has been involved in the U.S. Navy's outlying landing field (OLF) proposed siting and memorandum of agreement (MOA) discussions that may bring large numbers of military aircraft to the vicinity of the refuge.

Congress appropriated funds to begin the restoration of Mattamuskeet Lodge. The regional office staff is preparing designs and specifications. An information kiosk was installed along the entrance road to Mattamuskeet refuge. Bids were opened in early September for the re-placement of Bell Island Pier at Swanquarter refuge.

### Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge

The refuge staff held an open house at its new office at 114 West Water Street in Windsor during the Cashie River Festival. The office is located just west of the Roanoke-Cashie River Center. The Roanoke Sponsas (the refuge Friends Group) staffed an exhibit on King Street during the Cashie River Festival.

The refuge staff is editing a video entitled "You, Wetlands, and the Roanoke River" scheduled for release in 2003.

The refuge biological staff and cooperating agency personnel banded wood ducks, monitored plant regeneration plots, and conducted point counts of songbirds.

Scientists from the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study harvested deer and conducted parasite counts to evaluate herd health.

Scientists from the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey are still working at the refuge developing a protocol to sample invertebrates. They collected samples in April, June, and August.

The refuge is pursuing the acquisition of in-holdings within its approved acquisition boundary. The staff has brought their geographic information system (GIS) on line.

The refuge staff is cooperating with the Fish and Wildlife Service's ecological services and fisheries staffs to review a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission application for re-licensing hydropower dams along the Roanoke.





## Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

Public meetings will be held evenings from 6PM to 9PM, November 18 through 21 in Corolla, Currituck, and Knotts Island, North Carolina and Creeds, Virginia to present alternative management plans for both refuges.

The refuge participated in the Knotts Island Peach Festival in July, the Knotts Island Wildlife Festival in October, and the Fun Safety Education Day in Elizabeth City in September.

The Kitchin Impoundment reconstruction is almost finished, as is the relocation of the refuge entrance road. The dock and boat ramp at Live Oak Point are being repaired. Boy Scouts are cleaning the Marsh Trail in November.

## Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

The first season of the black bear survey was completed on the refuge. The survey is a three-refuge effort to assess the size and range of the bear population.

Two moist soil units on the refuge were treated to kill phragmites (common reed) and sesbania (hemp sesbania).

The Walter B. Jones Center for the Sounds had its grand opening in May. The refuge had an open house during the Scuppernong River Festival with birdhouse and bird feeder construction, fire equipment demonstrations, videos, and displays of animal tracks, pelts, and skulls.

### Personnel Changes

Michael Legare has been hired as the wildlife biologist at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge. Michael was a private consultant to NASA, working on land management at Cape Kennedy.

He had also been an employee at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Michael holds a masters degree in wildlife biology and studied black rails for his graduate research.

Christopher Smith was hired as the law enforcement officer at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge. Christopher had been a park ranger with the Corps of Engineers. He holds a masters degree in parks and recreation and researched hunter ethics in graduate school.

John Wallace, deputy manager at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, transferred to Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

Kathy Whaley was hired as deputy manager at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Kathy was the supervisory park ranger at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama and had been assistant manager at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida.

Kim King-Wrenn, park ranger at Pea Island and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges, transferred to the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico.

Ann Salewski was hired as a park ranger at Pea Island and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges. She was working at Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Massachusetts. She will be planning and conducting education and interpretation activities at Pea Island and Alligator River.

John Stasko, project leader at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, has been promoted to refuge supervisor for the southern area of the Northeast Region.

Suzanne Baird, project leader at Mackay Island and Currituck National Wildlife Refuge, has taken the assistant refuge supervisor position in the Great Lakes Region (Minneapolis, Minnesota).

Arnold Rakes was hired as the project leader for Edenton National Fish Hatchery. He was the data base manager for the fisheries program in the Southeast Regional Office. Arnold also has Washington office experience. He was previously project leader at Chattahoochee National Fish Hatchery in Georgia. Arnold graduated from the University of North Carolina—Wilmington, and used to be the assistant manager at Edenton National Fish Hatchery.

Jerry Holloman is retiring as project leader of Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge on November 30 after 37 years of service.

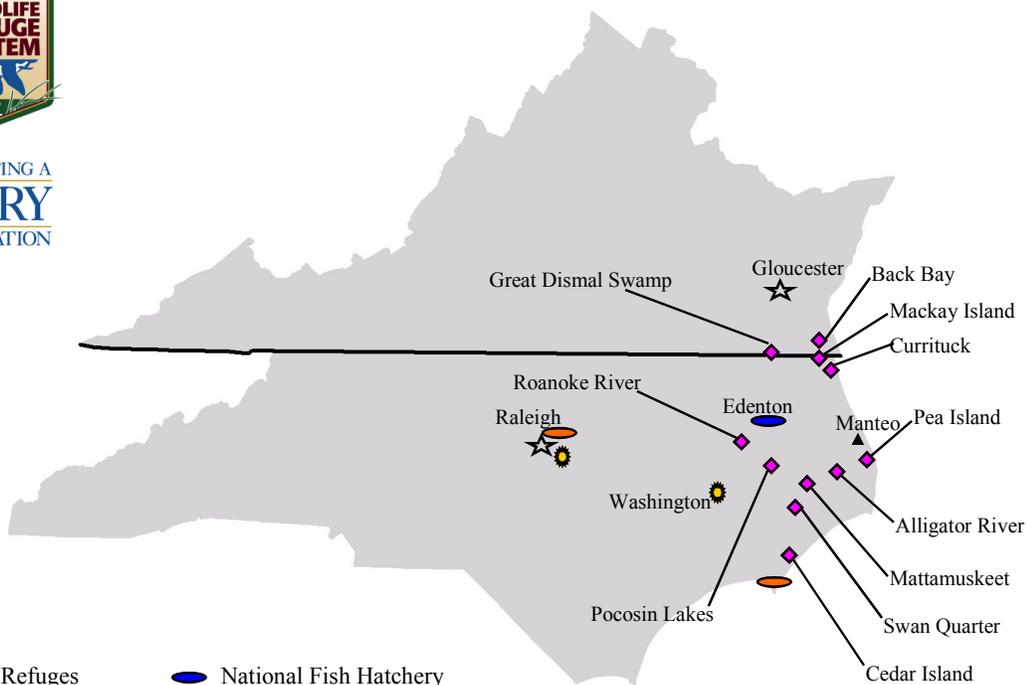
### Ecosystem Planning Staff

Robert Glennon, Resource Conservation Planner  
D A Brown, Habitat Protection Biologist  
Vicki Waters, Office Automation (Secretary)

**U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 RTNCF Ecosystem Planning Office  
 1106 West Queen Street  
 Edenton, NC 27932**



CELEBRATING A  
**CENTURY**  
 of CONSERVATION



◆ National Wildlife Refuges

● National Fish Hatchery

★ Ecological Services

☀ Law Enforcement Offices

▲ Wildlife Habitat Mgt Office

● Fisheries Resource Coordination Offices