



# **Currituck National Wildlife Refuge**

## **CURRITUCK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

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# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## ESTABLISHING AUTHORITIES. . .

- **Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 provided basic authority for establishment and acquisition of the refuge. Migratory Bird Conservation Commission established the refuge on August 2, 1983**
- **In 1985, two tracts totalling 1,770 acres were acquired by fee simple purchase and 226 acres by conservation easement. Since 1985, 2,438 additional acres have been acquired by fee simple purchase and 3,705 by conservation easements. The 4,207 acres purchased as fee simple have been administered by Mackay Island NWR since July 1990. A total of 3,931 acres have been acquired as conservation easements.**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## PURPOSES . . .

- **...to preserve and protect a portion of North Carolina's Outer Banks...**
- **...to provide habitat for wintering migratory waterfowl, endangered species, other migratory birds and native wildlife...**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## WILDLIFE SPECIES OF MANAGEMENT CONCERN

### Migratory land birds of concern

Greater snow goose

Canada goose

Tundra swan

American black duck

Widgeon

Mallard

Pintail

Teal

Ruddy duck

Ringneck duck

Bald eagle

Peregrine falcon

Osprey

Great horned owl

Red-tailed hawk

Shorebirds

Piping plover

Marsh birds

Wading birds

Anadromous fish

Sea turtles



### Invasive Species:

Feral pigs

Feral horses



# **Currituck National Wildlife Refuge**

## **PLANT SPECIES OF MANAGEMENT CONCERN**

**Sea beach amaranth**

**Invasive Species:**

**Common reed**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## HABITAT DIVERSITY ...

- brackish marsh (2,057 acres)**
- maritime shrub (889 acres)**
- maritime swamp forest (728 acres)**
- dune grass (277 acres)**
- impoundments (143 acres)**
- administrative roads (5 acres)**
- conservation easement (3,931 acres)**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## HABITAT MANAGEMENT ...

### Impoundment management

- water management
- mowing
- Discing
- fencing

### Fire management

- to protect against wildfire
- to enhance wildlife habitat

### Roller chopping

### Mechanical and chemical control of noxious weeds





# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## PEOPLE . . .

- **Waterfowl Hunting**
- **Wildlife Observation**
- **Photography**

## Public Use Concerns . . .

**Unexploded ordnance  
(bombs)**





# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## RESOURCE PROTECTION

(including land acquisition and monitoring of permitted activities) . . .

- **Natural Heritage Areas**
- **Outstanding Resource Waters**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES . . .

**Dumping/littering**  
**Poaching**  
**Feeding/baiting wildlife**  
**Trespass**  
**Tree cutting/wood gathering**  
**Unexploded ordnance**

**Vehicle access**  
**Trespass**  
**Target practice**  
**Vandalism**  
**Hunting blinds**

**(One full-time law enforcement officer  
stationed at Mackay Island NWR)**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

# **CURRITUCK NWR COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## The Process to date . . .

- **Preplanning** **December 2000**
- **Biological Reviews** **August 2000**
- **Public Involvement  
(see handouts)** **June 2001**
- **Issues, Vision, Goals** **August 2001**
- **Alternative/Objective  
Development** **September 2001**

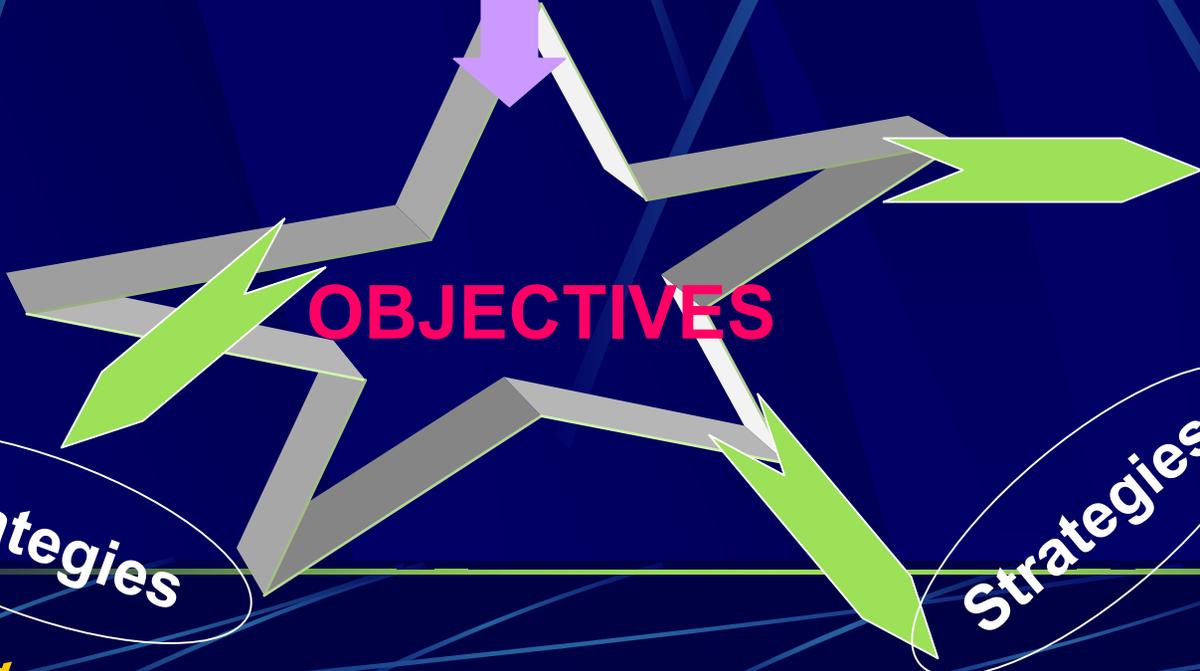
**REFUGE VISION**



**GOALS**



**OBJECTIVES**



**Strategies**

**Projects**

**Strategies**

**Projects**

**Strategies**

**Projects**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## Vision Statement

**The Currituck National Wildlife Refuge will provide habitat for migratory birds and endangered species as an integral part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The refuge will restore, enhance, and maintain the natural processes and diversity of the unique habitats of the mid-Atlantic barrier island ecosystem. The refuge will also provide opportunities for wildlife dependent recreation. The refuge will develop and maintain partnerships with other agencies and organizations to accomplish the refuge goals and objectives.**

# **GOALS**

**Fish and Wildlife Populations: Preserve, protect, and maintain healthy and viable populations of migratory birds, wildlife, fish, and plants including federal and state endangered species and trust species.**

**Habitat: Restore, enhance, and maintain the natural processes and diversity of the beach, dune, inter-dunal, maritime forest, and marsh habitats to insure optimum ecological productivity and protect the water quality of Currituck Sound.**

**Public Use: Provide the public with safe, high quality wildlife dependent recreational and educational opportunities that focus on the wildlife and habitats of the refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.**

**Resource Protection: Protect refuge resources by limiting the adverse impacts of human activities and development.**

**Administration: Acquire and manage adequate funding, human resources, facilities, equipment, and infrastructure to accomplish the other refuge goals.**

# **WILDLIFE ISSUES**

- Continue surveys currently being conducted**
- Continue to make survey data public**
- Coordinate wildlife activities and notify other agencies who has responsibility for what areas**
- Hire a biologist**
- Hire more staff**
- Maintain water quality for fish**
- Management plans should have goals and objectives for fish and wildlife**
- Secure funding and hire adequate staff to do surveys**

# **HABITAT ISSUES**

- **Consider SAV restoration in cooperation with other agencies**
- **Establish population of feral pigs**
- **Evaluate loss of bass habitat to salt water intrusion in Currituck Sound**
- **Expand NCWRC joint venture activity**
- **Hire more staff**
- **Incorporate feral horses into the plan**
- **Increase water quality monitoring**
- **Involve Wild Horse Fund interested in management of horses on refuge**
- **Maintain flexibility in management (adaptive management)**
- **Maintain intensive management of moist soil areas**
- **Maintain prescribed fire program**
- **Monitor to investigate the impact of Lynnhaven River connection to Currituck Sound through Canal#2 (salinity)**
- **Perform water quality monitoring in ocean and sound waters**
- **Provide archery hunting opportunity for feral pigs**
- **Storms and overwash from storms factors in water quality and SAV production**
- **Track invasion of invasive species, e.g., giant salvinia, develop plan to manage them, and respond rapidly**
- **Turbidity big factor in water condition**
- **Use herbicides as necessary especially on phragmites**

## **PUBLIC USE ISSUES**

- **Advertise refuge programs more**
- **Consider boat tours**
- **Consider impact of restrooms on refuge and parking lot use**
- **Consider the effect of refuge plans on False Cape State Park**
- **Continue cooperation with NCWRC on hunting**
- **Cooperate in Whalehead Interpretative Center**
- **Develop and maintain newsletter**
- **Don't pave a road through Currituck NWR**
- **Encourage cooperation with private, nonprofit organizations to manage cultural resources**
- **Establish deer hunt at Currituck**
- **Establish Friends Group for Currituck**
- **Hire more staff**
- **Hire staff to implement public use program**
- **Incorporate Kuralt Trail into Currituck NWR**
- **Increase opportunities for wildlife observation**
- **Limit use to prevent overuse**
- **Maintain waterfowl hunting program and expand as much as possible**
- **Oppose bridge through refuge. – Currituck NWR**
- **Organize tour by agency staff on Currituck NWR**
- **Organize volunteers to monitor sea turtles, N.E.S.T (group proposing lighting standards)**
- **Provide walking trails**
- **Use Monkey Island for environmental education facility**
- **Use refuge for education programs for children in cooperation with other agencies**

## **RESOURCE PROTECTION ISSUES**

- **Acquire more land**
- **Expand NCWRC joint venture activity**
- **Favor cooperative agreements**
- **Hire staff to handle land acquisition**
- **Opposed to acquisition**
- **Incorporate wilderness management in Currituck NWR plan**

# **LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

- **Add another officer**
- **Establish rest areas for waterfowl**
- **Hire law enforcement staff**
- **Hire more law enforcement staff**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## **3 Alternatives Derived from Public Involvement and Strategic Planning . . .**

- 1. Existing conditions (status quo)**
- 2. Moderate program increases**
- 3. Optimum program increases**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**

**(6 FTE Non-Fire and 1.5 FTE Fire shared with Mackay Island NWR)**

- **Biological program focused moist soil area management and prescribed burning in the brackish marsh**
- **Initial organized public use program focused on duck hunting**
- **Public use facilities absent**
- **Law enforcement from full time officer and collateral duty officers at Mackay Island NWR**
- **No full time staff presence**
- **Buildings on the refuge limited to ATV storage**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## **Alternative 2 (Moderate Program Increases) (13 FTE Non-Fire and 1.5 FTE Fire shared with Mackay Island NWR)**

- **Biological program diversified to all species and inventory of all habitats**
- **Public use program diversified to address all priority public uses and fully utilize facilities**
- **Law enforcement from full time officer and collateral duty officers at Mackay Island NWR**
- **Hire an assistant manager and biological technician dedicated to Currituck NWR**
- **Construct field office, visitor contact station, and an equipment barn**



# Currituck National Wildlife Refuge

## **Alternative 3 (Optimum Program Increases) (16 FTE Non-Fire, and 3.5 FTE Fire shared with Mackay Island NWR)**

- **Biological program diversified to all species and management of all habitats**
- **Prescribed burning program directed by a prescribed burning specialist**
- **Public use program diversified to address all priority public uses and fully utilize facilities, enhanced to provide environmental education opportunities**
- **Law enforcement from full time officer at Currituck NWR and collateral duty officers at Mackay Island NWR**
- **Hire an assistant manager, environmental educator, law enforcement officer, and biological technician dedicated to Currituck NWR**
- **Construct field office, visitor contact station, and an equipment barn**

# Land Conservation objectives For Currituck National Wildlife Refuge are the same across all alternatives.

- Current Ownership (4,207 Acres)
  - Under Contract (363 Acres)
  - Managed Easements (3,931 Acres)
  - Recommended in 1994 (479 Acres)
  - In-Holdings (9,035 Acres)
- Total 18,015 Acres

