



Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

ALLIGIATOR RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

October 2001

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Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

ESTABLISHING AUTHORITIES. . .

- **Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 provided the basic authority for the establishment and acquisition of the original 118,000 acres on the refuge. The Nature Conservancy brokered the donation of the original 118,000 acres by the Prudential Insurance Company**
- **The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934 and Wetlands Acquisition Act of 1964 provided funds for acquisition and establishment of the remainder of the refuge**



Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

Acquisition History

- **The original 118,000 acres of Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge were donated by The Prudential Insurance Company to the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1984. 6,000 of the original 118,000 on the west side of Alligator River were transferred to Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in 1991.**
- **Since 1984, 40,195 acres were added to Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge to bring the current total to 152,195 acres**



Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

Purposes . . .

Manage to protect and enhance the area's unique wetland habitats and their associated species

The Fish and Wildlife Act provided authority:

“... for the development, enhancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources...”

“... for the benefit of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, in performing its activities and services. Such acceptance may be subject to the terms of any restrictive or affirmative covenant, or condition of servitude...”



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WILDLIFE SPECIES OF MANAGEMENT CONCERN

Migratory land birds of national or regional concern

Red-cockaded woodpecker

Black-throated green warbler

Waterfowl

Marsh birds

Wading birds

Red wolf

Black bear

Anadromous fish

American alligator

State-listed reptiles and amphibians





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HABITAT DIVERSITY . . .

- 152,195 acres of pocosins and other habitats**
- freshwater pools, lakes, and ponds (1,152 acres)**
- brackish marsh (25,204 acres)**
- managed wetlands (1,800 acres)**
- cropland (3,000 acres)**
- cypress-gum forest (1,300 acres)**
- Atlantic white cedar forest (8,468 acres)**
- mixed pine hardwood forest (11,380 acres)**
- non-alluvial hardwood forest (12,236 acres)**
- pond pine shrub pocosin (38,533 acres)**
- pond pine cane pocosin (30,400 acres)**
- high shrub pocosin (6,350 acres)**
- low shrub pocosin (12,292 acres)**





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HABITAT MANAGEMENT . . .

Fire management

- to protect against wildfire
- to enhance wildlife habitat

Forest management

- reforestation
- habitat improvement
- Atlantic white cedar restoration
- Southern pine beetle control

Mechanical and chemical control of noxious weeds





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HABITAT MANAGEMENT . . .

Water management

- for waterfowl
- for natural hydrology

Moist soil management

- for waterfowl
- for marshbirds and other wildlife

Cooperative farming

- for diversifying wildlife foods





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PEOPLE . . .

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Wildlife observation
- Wildlife photography
- Environmental education
- Environmental interpretation

Plus...facilities such as paddling trails, wildlife trails, wildlife drives, and kiosks





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

- **Natural Heritage Areas**
 - entire refuge land area
- **Outstanding Resource Waters**
 - Milltail Creek, Whipping Creek
Swan Creek, Alligator River
- **Anadromous Fish Spawning Areas**
 - Long Shoal River, East Lake,
South Lake
- **Special use permits**
- **Highway, utility, and facility easements**
- **Pest plant and pest animal control**





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LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES . . .

- **Hunting Blinds/Stands**
- **Dumping/Littering**
- **Feeding/Baiting Wildlife**
- **Poaching**
- **Tree Cutting**
- **Trespass**
- **Unauthorized Vehicle Traffic**
- **Vandalism**
- **Target Practice**

(Law enforcement conducted as collateral duty by Alligator River personnel. No full-time LE officers at 150,000 acre+ Alligator River NWR.)



Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

ALLIGIATOR RIVER NWR COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN



Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

The Process to date . . .

•Preplanning

November 2000

•Biological Reviews

**December 1999 –
December 2000**

**•Public Involvement
(see handouts)**

February 2001

•Issues, Vision, Goals

March 2001

**Alternative/Objective
Development**

March-June 2001

REFUGE VISION



GOALS



OBJECTIVES

Strategies

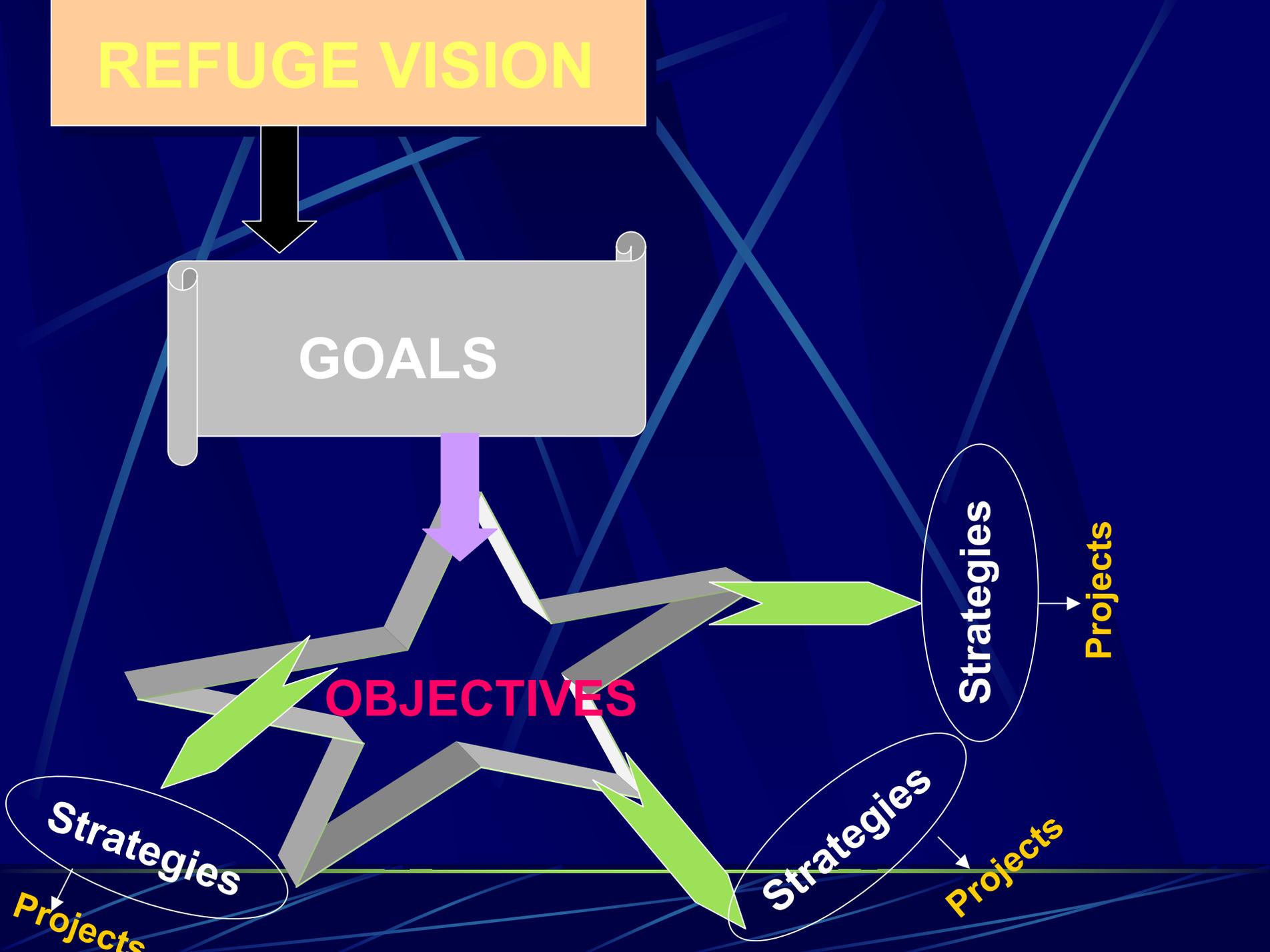
Projects

Strategies

Projects

Strategies

Projects



Vision Statement

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge's unique wetland habitats will become more critical for many wildlife, fish, and plants as eastern North Carolina is developed. Refuge habitats will be managed, enhanced, and restored for optimal diversity of wildlife, fish, and plants. Healthy and viable populations of threatened and endangered species, and other wildlife, fish, and plants will be managed and conserved.

People will visit this refuge in greater numbers to witness its subtle beauty and to seize the opportunity to explore. Refuge staff and volunteers will assume a greater role in educating the visiting public to ensure that biological integrity is maintained and that people have a safe, pleasant and educational experience. Visitors will be encouraged to participate in compatible, wildlife-dependent recreational activities.

The proposed Visitor Center will serve as a gateway, not only for adventure into Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, but also to encourage the many visitors to the Outer Banks to venture inland to other local national wildlife refuges. There will be a growing responsibility to reach out to local and national communities about the refuge's importance as a valuable piece of the puzzle that connects all wildlife habitats together.

Working with others, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge staff and volunteers will adaptively manage the refuge's natural resources and create in this wild place a legacy of fish, wildlife and plants for everyone's spiritual well-being and for future visitors to experience, enjoy and cherish.

GOALS

Wildlife, Fish and Plant Populations

Inventory, protect and manage to maintain healthy and viable populations of threatened and endangered species (red wolf, red-cockaded woodpecker, and others), other priority wildlife (black bear and others), fish, and plant species.

Habitat Management

Inventory and manage to provide diverse, high-quality mid-Atlantic coastal plain forested wetlands, marshes, aquatic habitats, and areas intensively managed for wildlife.

Public Use/Outreach

Provide safe, high quality opportunities for people to learn about and enjoy wildlife resources and habitats of the refuge and of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Resource Protection

Limit the adverse impacts of development to refuge resources and allow natural processes to dominate on candidate wilderness areas.

Administration

Acquire adequate funding and staff to accomplish the other refuge goals.

WILDLIFE ISSUES FROM SCOPING MEETINGS

- **Consider wildlife first**
- **Continue wildlife surveys and monitoring**
- **Control bear populations**
- **Describe life histories of species occurring on the refuge**
- **Discuss plant and wildlife species occurring on the refuge and focus on federally listed species and state-listed and sensitive species that may be of management concern**
- **Develop beaver management guidance**
- **Evaluate food chain impacts of fire ants on other species**
- **Evaluate water management impacts to fish and wildlife on each refuge**
- **Increase study and protection of reptiles, amphibians, plants and invertebrates (inventory)**
- **Study deer population carrying capacities and determine whether hunting needs to be increased**

HABITAT ISSUES FROM SCOPING MEETINGS

- **Develop erosion and sediment control plans and best management practices for canal and road maintenance activities**
- **Discuss fire management in wilderness**
- **Evaluate impacts of daylighting practices on adjacent canal hydrology**
- **Evaluate the status of American elm on refuge between Milltail and Navy Shell Road**

PUBLIC USE ISSUES FROM SCOPING MEETINGS

- **Add horseback riding as a priority public use**
- **Allow ORVs (ATVs, ATCs) on selected refuge areas**
- **Conduct comprehensive review of the road system across the refuge to balance the public use with ecological requirements**
- **Consider more refuge access**
- **Continue to allow dog hunting on the refuge**
- **Continue to allow horseback riding on the refuge**
- **Coordinate public uses to avoid user conflicts**
- **Develop a facility on mainland Dare County that is part of a cooperative multi-agency effort to educate the public and conduct research on the value and function of the types of wetlands**
- **Develop a program for dog hunting**
- **Discuss any future limitations on dog hunting thoroughly with public**
- **Expand areas available for dog hunting (Milltail Creek to Poplar Ridge)**
- **Increase programs for horseback riders**
- **Initiate working group meetings for dog hunters**
- **Make open areas practical for hunting**
- **Make sure hunting areas correspond to road closures, for accessibility**
- **Rotate hunting areas or distribute more evenly across landscape**
- **Work with dog hunters to maintain or improve relationships**

RESOURCE PROTECTION ISSUES FROM SCOPING MEETINGS

- **Consider and evaluate the long-term costs and methods for acquiring land to create corridors**
- **Control invasive species**
- **Coordinate public uses with the Bombing Range (especially roads)**
- **Determine whether easements could include transfer of rights (i.e. dog hunting) between refuge and landowner property**
- **Determine whether fee-simple is more advantageous than easement purchase**
- **Discuss what law enforcement means for the refuge in the plans**
- **Evaluate distribution of noxious weeds and exotic species**
- **Increase funding for law enforcement**
- **Increase law enforcement staff**
- **Make sure the land protection measure fits the wildlife requirements**
- **Use combination of all land protection measures as they apply to each landowner**

WILDERNESS ISSUES FROM SCOPING MEETINGS

- **Avoid putting wilderness where popular commercial fish landings and deer hunting occur**
- **Avoid putting wilderness areas too close to populated areas**
- **Consider areas with ditches that could be restored**
- **Consider eastern wilderness act**
- **Consider smaller areas than 5,000 acres**
- **Discuss fire management in wilderness (in terms of safety, values to protect and staffing level requirements)**
- **Evaluate the impacts of wilderness designation on adjacent refuge uses**
- **Evaluate and discuss the impacts to wildlife in general**
- **Evaluate the impacts of jet noise on wilderness**
- **Review drainage easements for wilderness**



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3 Management Alternatives Derived from Public Involvement and Strategic Planning . . .

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



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ALTERNATIVE 1: No Action – Status Quo (10.76 FTE Non-Fire and 8.05 FTE Fire)

Wildlife management program focused on waterfowl and endangered species.

Black bear monitored.

Habitat program focused on habitat protection, fire management, and moist soil area management.

Public use program diverse.

Minimal public use facilities.

No full time law enforcement officer; collateral duty officers only.

GSA office space cramped, fragmented, and without public parking.



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ALTERNATIVE 2: Moderate Program Increases (16.41 FTE Non-Fire and 8.05 FTE Fire)

Wildlife management program focused on waterfowl and endangered species.

Black bear monitored.

Wildlife program documents presence or absence of all species.

Habitat program focused on protection, fire management, monitoring of all habitat, and moist soil area management.

Public use program diverse.

Increase and improve public facilities on refuge; new visitor center in Manteo.

Law enforcement by full time officer and collateral duty officers.

New Service-owned office with ample public parking.



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ALTERNATIVE 3: Optimum Program Increases (39.21 FTE Non-Fire and 16.65 FTE Fire)

Wildlife management program focused on waterfowl and endangered species.

Black bear monitoring and management.

Wildlife program surveys and monitors all species.

Habitat program focused on protection, monitoring, and management of all habitats.

Habitat conversion: 1200 acres of cropland to moist soil areas.

Public use program diverse; increase outreach effort.

Increase and improve public use facilities on refuge, new visitor center in Manteo.

Law enforcement by permanent and seasonal full time officers and reduced collateral duty officers.

New Service-owned office with ample public parking.

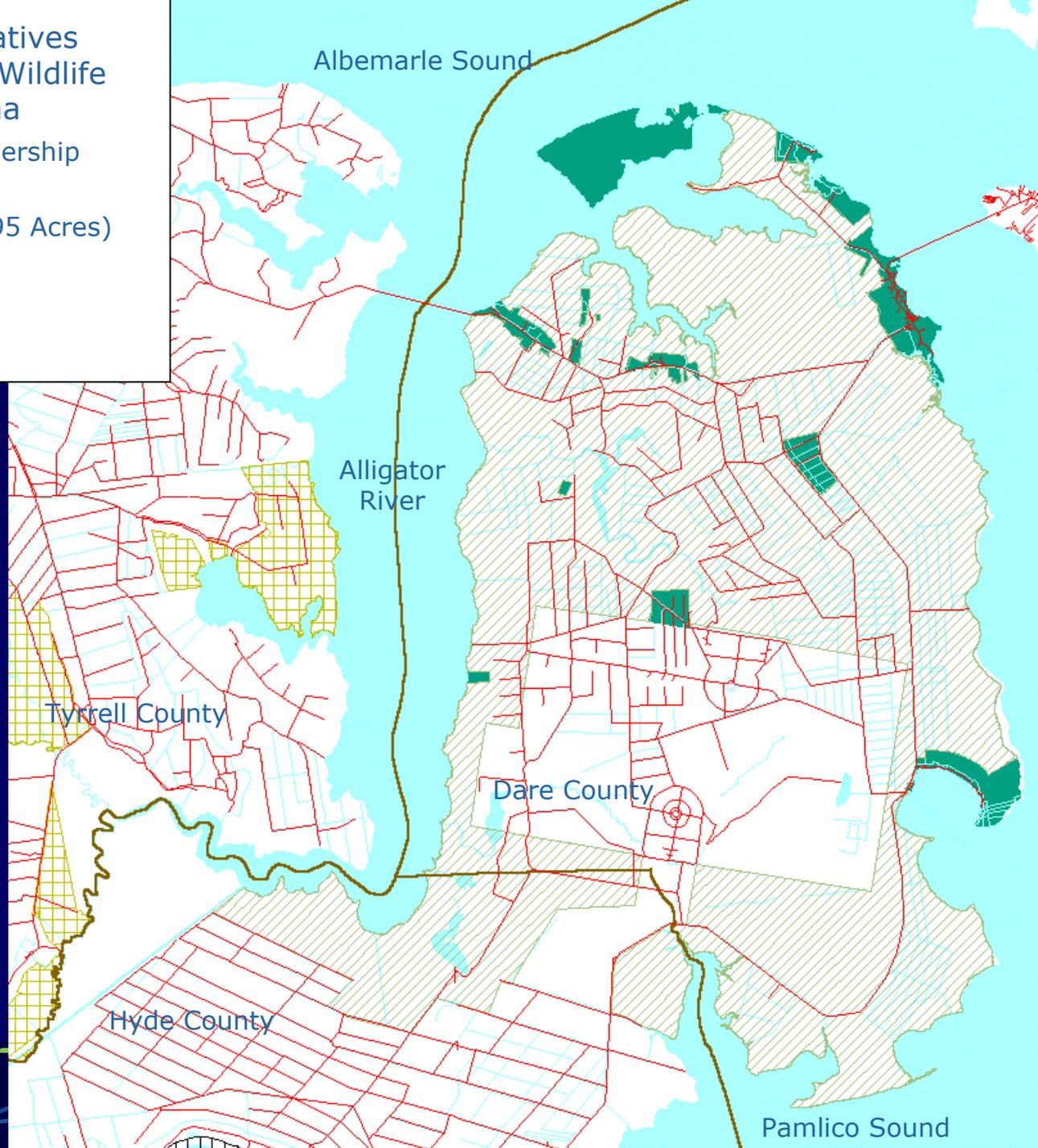
Land Conservation Alternatives For Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina

Alternative 1: Maintain Current Ownership
And Conserve In-Holdings

 Current Ownership (152,195 Acres)

 In-Holdings (1,200 Acres)

Total 153,395 Acres



Land Conservation Alternatives For Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina

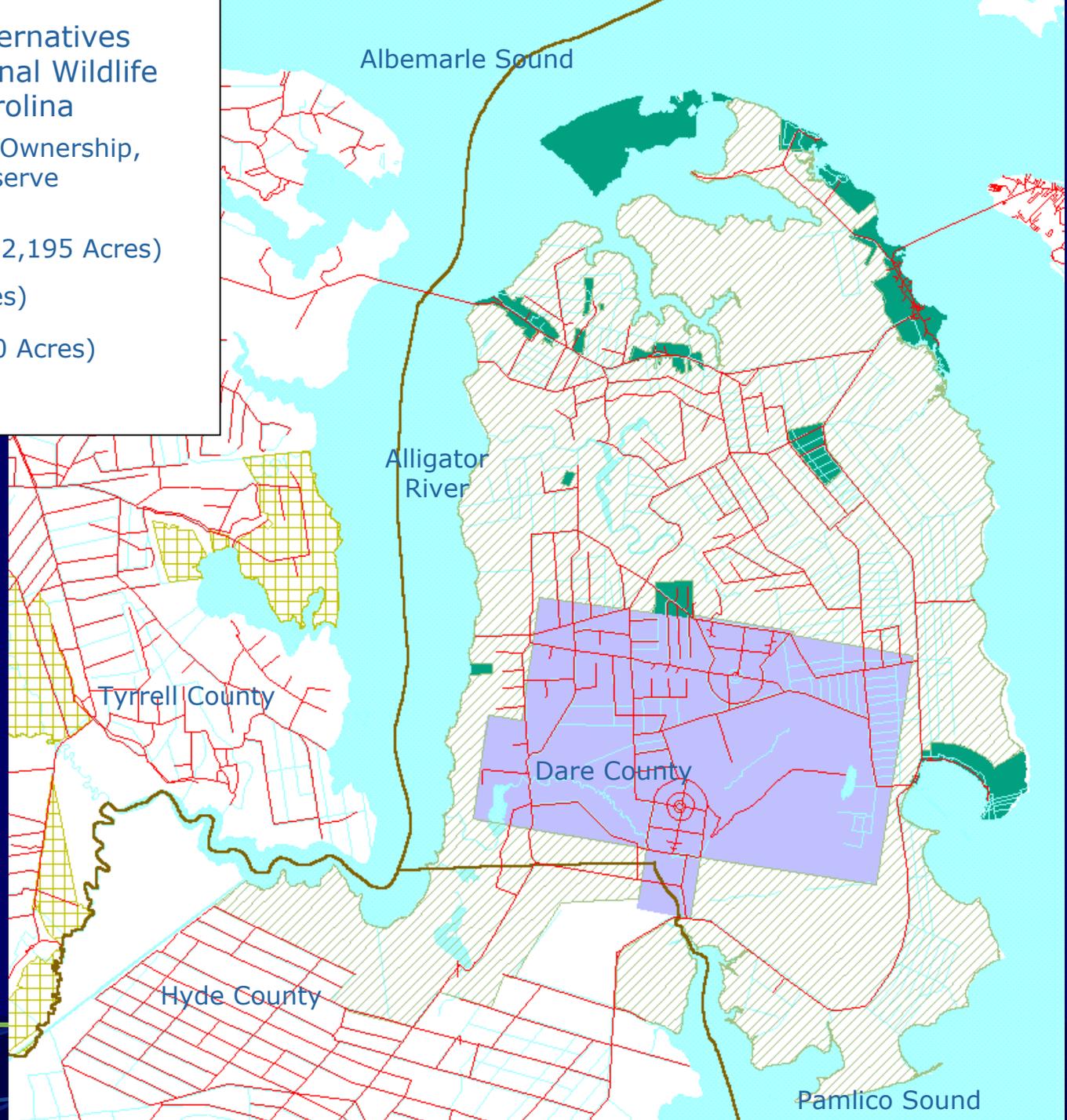
Alternative 2: Maintain Current Ownership,
Conserve In-Holdings, and Conserve
Bombing Range

 Current Ownership (152,195 Acres)

 In-Holdings (1,200 Acres)

 Bombing Range (46,000 Acres)

Total 199,395 Acres



Land Conservation Alternatives For Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina

Alternative 3: Maintain Current Ownership,
Conserve In-Holdings, Conserve Bombing
Range, and Conserve Private Lands

 Current Ownership (152,195 Acres)

 In-Holdings (1,200 Acres)

 Bombing Range (46,000 Acres)

 Private Lands (21,000 Acres)

Total 220,395 Acres

