



Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex
2127 SE Marine Science Drive
Newport, OR 97365

How Can I Contact the Refuge Complex?

Send your comments to us by any of the following options.

Address: Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex
2127 SE Marine Science Drive
Newport, OR 97365

Phone: 541-867-4550 Fax: 541-867-4551

E-mail: Oregoncoastcep@fws.gov

Web site: www.fws.gov/oregoncoast/



Least sandpipers/Roy W. Lowe/USFWS



Bandon Marsh, Nestucca Bay, and Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Planning Update 2, November 2011



Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge/Roy W. Lowe/USFWS

Greetings!

The process for developing the Bandon Marsh, Nestucca Bay, and Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuges' (Refuges) Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Assessment (CCP/EA) is moving forward. In this planning update, we present preliminary versions of three management alternatives (pages 2-6) we developed to guide Refuge management for the next 15 years. The preliminary alternatives were designed to achieve the Refuges' purposes, the National Wildlife Refuge System mission, vision for the Refuges, and to meet policy requirements while addressing issues and ideas raised during public scoping.

Share your ideas with us at our November open house meetings, see page 2 for details.

Public Involvement to Date

Public involvement in our CCP process began in November 2010, when we distributed Planning Update 1 to a wide range of individuals, organizations, and government agencies. In the update, we provided maps and background information on the Refuges' purposes and goals, identified preliminary issues, and invited public participation in the CCP process.

We collected comments from individuals and organizations at three public meetings held in November 2010, and in e-mails and letters. Some comments were about broad or long-range issues, while others suggested very specific

or detailed strategies that could be used to achieve biological or public use objectives. Most of the comments suggested changes or additions to the Refuges' public use programs, for example:

- Adding new areas where wildlife observation and photography could be allowed.
- Establishing waterfowl hunting programs where none exist.
- Expanding interpretation and environmental education programs.
- Partnering with local and state agencies and community groups that share common goals for the Refuges' natural resources.

continued on page 2

In this Update:	Public Open House Meetings.....	2
	Preliminary Alternatives (Comparison Tables).....	2
	Why is Bandon Marsh Refuge Considering an Expanded Boundary?..	7
	How Can I Contact the Refuge Complex?.....	8

Public Involvement continued from page 1

The CCP planning team reviewed and evaluated the potential issues, management concerns, and opportunities the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), our partners, and the public identified. We used this information to define the significant issues to be addressed in the CCP/EA. The preliminary management

alternatives were then developed to address these issues and meet the goals and objectives of each Refuge.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on the preliminary alternatives by December 16, 2011. The planning team will consider your comments during

development of the draft CCP/EA, which will evaluate and compare the management alternatives. We anticipate the draft CCP/EA will be available for public review and comments in early summer 2012. We will consider comments on the draft during the development of the final CCP/EA.

Three Public Open House Meetings

Share your ideas with us at one of the following open house meetings or submit written comments to the Refuge (see page 8 for contacts). Your participation is critical to the success of this effort—we want to hear from you!

Bandon Marsh Refuge
Date: Wednesday, November 9, 2011
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Place: Bandon Community Center
1200 11th Street SW
Bandon, OR 97411

Siletz Bay Refuge
Date: Thursday, November 10, 2011
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Place: Lincoln City Council Chambers
801 SW Highway 101
Lincoln City, OR 97367

Nestucca Bay Refuge
Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2011
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Place: Kiawanda Community Center
34600 Cape Kiwanda Dr.
Pacific City, OR 97135

Preliminary Alternatives

Features Common to All Alternatives

Since a number of actions apply to all three alternatives, they are not listed in these tables. These include the consideration of climate change effects in all management actions; monitoring and control of invasive species; maintenance of existing

structures; coordination with State, Tribal, and other partners to accomplish goals; cultural resources protection; volunteer opportunities; and the continuation of land acquisition from willing sellers within the Refuges' boundaries.

All proposed actions are subject to funding and staffing availability.

Preliminary alternatives comparison tables follow for each refuge. Maps are available on our Web site: www.fws.gov/oregoncoast/CCP.htm.

Bandon Marsh Refuge Preliminary Alternatives Comparison Table

Issue or Topic	Alternative A Current Management (No Change)	Alternative B	Alternative C Preferred Alternative
Habitat Management			
Restoration of Grasslands (former pastures) to Upland Forest	Allow natural succession to restore Sitka spruce/ western hemlock forest.	Restore 29 acres. Manage to accelerate restoration to old growth forest.	Same as Alternative B
Management of Existing Upland Forest	No forest management techniques used, other than invasive species control.	Actively manage 35.8 acres using tree/vegetation thinning and planting as appropriate.	Same as Alternative B
Forested Wetlands	No active management; protect in current condition.	Actively manage 68.7 acres; restore 10.2 acres.	Same as Alternative B
Coastal Stream-Riparian Corridor	Maintain current condition for salmonids.	Restore 8.7 acres. Actively promote diverse hydrological and physical structure.	Same as Alternative B
Salt Marsh and Intertidal Mudflats	Maintain integrity of 754.8 acres of estuarine habitats.	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A

continued on next page

Why is Bandon Marsh Refuge Considering an Expanded Boundary?

Responsibilities to Conserve and Protect Wildlife and Habitats

Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge is included in the National Wildlife Refuge System, which is administered by the Service. The Service is the principal Federal agency charged with conserving, protecting, and enhancing the nation's fish, wildlife, and plants.

The Refuge manages 889 acres of land in fee title ownership within an approved boundary of 1,000 acres, which represents a valuable contribution to the protection of biodiversity in the Coquille River estuary. However, several scientific assessments in the area indicate that much of the region's fish, wildlife, and habitats are in need of further protection, enhancement, and/or restoration. To address this concern, we are proposing to study our options for expanding the Refuge during the CCP process now underway.

We are in the conceptual stage of studying potential boundary expansion. Our study area is located in the lower Coquille River estuary,

between River Miles 0.5 and 10.4, which corresponds with the upstream extent of historic tidal marsh.

The Need for Further Conservation

The fish and wildlife resources within the proposed study area are of local, national, and international importance. The Coquille River system historically supported immense economically and culturally important runs of threatened coho salmon, chinook salmon, chum salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and Pacific lamprey.

The lower Coquille River estuary is also an important stopover area for fall and spring migrant shorebirds and waterfowl. In addition, the Coquille River Valley from Riverton to Myrtle Point, just upstream from the study area, constitutes the largest documented coastal dabbling duck wintering area between San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound.

The Coquille River estuary, however, has suffered the highest percentage loss of tidal marsh habitat in Oregon. Approximately 95% of its tidal marsh habitat and 93% of its

forested/shrub wetlands have been lost, resulting in tremendous impacts to this hydrologic system, its habitats, and the estuarine-dependent fish and wildlife populations that use this area. These habitat losses are largely due to dikes, wetland drainage ditches, and conversion to agricultural uses that began over a century ago.

Refuge boundary expansion would contribute to achieving the Service's mission and the Refuge's purposes, and would help meet several of our preliminary goals by:

- Enabling the restoration of tidal marsh, forested wetlands, and riparian corridors.
- Providing high quality habitat for shorebirds, waterfowl, salmonids, and other fish and wildlife.
- Allowing for expanded wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities on public lands.

Protection and restoration of wetlands, riparian, forest, and dune habitats would also contribute to the recovery of listed species and other species of conservation concern.

Tentative Planning Schedule

Planning Step	Target Date	Status
Planning Update 1 issued.....	November 2010	Completed
Public Meetings.....	November 29, November 30, and December 2, 2010	Completed
Planning Update 2 issued/Preliminary Alternatives for Review.....	November 2011	Completed
Public Open Houses to discuss Preliminary Alternatives..	November 9, 10, and 16, 2011	Current Step
Public Comments on Preliminary Alternatives Due.....	December 16, 2011	Current Step
Public Review/Comment on Draft CCP/EA/Planning Update 3.....	Summer 2012	Next Step
Final CCP and Decision Document.....	Fall 2012	Final Step

Siletz Bay Refuge Preliminary Alternatives Comparison Table

Issue or Topic	Alternative A Current Management (No Change)	Alternative B	Alternative C Preferred Alternative
Habitat Management			
Upland Forest	Allow natural processes to occur in 106.6 acres of forested Refuge lands.	Inventory and actively manage 106.6 acres for late successional forest.	Same as Alternative B
Forested Wetlands and Stream-Riparian	Protect 32.6 acres in current condition.	Actively manage 32.6 acres, using appropriate forest management techniques to enhance habitat quality.	Same as Alternative B
Intertidal Mudflats	Protect and maintain intertidal mudflats.	Continue to protect and maintain; increase coordination with State to monitor and treat aquatic invasive species.	Same as Alternative B
Tidal Marsh	Continue current actions including working with private landowners and partners to restore tidal action to diked lands.	Continue current actions and, if feasible, improve tidal flow to Siletz Keys Unit and restore tidal flow to Alder Island and any additional diked lands acquired.	Same as Alternative B
Monitoring and Research			
Biological Monitoring	Collect limited data on birds, vegetation, water levels, salt marsh attributes.	Expand existing data collection to include fish, amphibians, small mammals, and other biological parameters.	Same as Alternative B
Research and Scientific Assessments	Continue tidal marsh hydrology and climate change research conducted under Special Use Permits.	Continue current research, plus identify priority and long term research needs and cooperate with partners to accomplish goals.	Same as Alternative B
Waterfowl Hunting			
Waterfowl Hunting	Closed to waterfowl hunting.	Allow waterfowl hunting on lands west of Highway 101 and lands north and south of Millport Slough.	Allow waterfowl hunting on lands west of Highway 101 seven days per week. Allow waterfowl hunting on lands south of Millport Slough but restrict to 3 days per week. Develop gravel parking lot and interpretive kiosk.
Wildlife Observation and Photography			
Wildlife Observation and Photography	Closed to wildlife observation and photography.	Allow observation and photography on Alder Island by developing an accessible loop trail. Allow unrestricted walking on lands south of Millport Slough. Develop viewing platform off Highway 101.	Allow observation and photography on Alder Island through development of an accessible loop trail. Allow unrestricted walking on lands west of Highway 101.
Fishing			
Fishing	Fishing is not allowed.	Allow walk-in bank fishing from Alder Island and lands south of Millport Slough.	Allow walk-in bank fishing from Alder Island.
Access for clamming	No public access allowed.	Same as Alternative A	Access to clamming allowed west of Highway 101.
Interpretation			
Interpretation	Continue with interpreter-led, seasonal paddle trips.	Develop an interpretive trail on Alder Island along with a parking lot and a non-motorized boat launch. Continue to offer seasonal paddle trips.	Same as Alternative B
Facilities			
Facilities	Maintain existing facilities. Do not develop a visitor center or office.	Participate in development of a community-based visitor center.	Same as Alternative A

Bandon Marsh Refuge Preliminary Alternatives Comparison Table continued

Issue or Topic	Alternative A Current Management (No Change)	Alternative B	Alternative C Preferred Alternative
Monitoring and Research			
Biological Monitoring	Collect limited data on birds, vegetation, water levels, and salt marsh attributes.	Expand data collection to include fish, amphibians, small mammals, water quality, and other parameters.	Same as Alternative B
Research and Scientific Assessments	Continue tidal marsh restoration and cultural resources research conducted under Special Use Permits.	Continue existing research; identify priority and long-term research needs and cooperate with partners to accomplish goals.	Same as Alternative B
Waterfowl Hunting			
Waterfowl Hunting – Bandon Marsh Unit	Waterfowl hunting allowed outside Bandon city limits 7 days per week.	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A
Waterfowl Hunting – Ni-les'tun Unit	Closed to waterfowl hunting.	Allow waterfowl hunting on part of the unit 7 days per week.	Allow waterfowl hunting on part of the unit certain days per week.
Wildlife Observation and Photography			
Wildlife Observation and Photography – Bandon Marsh Unit	Allow unrestricted walking access 7 days per week. Viewing deck open daily.	Allow observation and photography certain days per week. Viewing deck open daily.	Same as Alternative A
Wildlife Observation and Photography – Ni-les'tun Unit	Viewing deck and marsh trail open daily; the remainder of the unit is closed.	Viewing deck and marsh trail open daily. Allow unrestricted walking in part of unit daily during non-hunting season (Feb. - Sept.). Unit closed to unrestricted walking during waterfowl hunt season (Oct. - Jan.).	Viewing deck and marsh trail open daily. Allow unrestricted walking in part of unit daily during non-hunting season (Feb. - Sept.). Close unit to unrestricted walking during hunting season (Oct. - Jan.). Develop a trail connecting restored forest above office with parking lot.
Fishing			
Fishing and Clamming – Bandon Marsh Unit	Allowed.	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A
Fishing and Clamming – Ni-les'tun Unit	Fahys and Redd Creeks closed to fishing to protect threatened coho salmon. Explore options for providing clamming opportunities.	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A
Interpretation			
Interpretation	Maintain existing interpretive structures and panels on both units.	Maintain existing interpretive structures and panels on both units. Develop interpretive panels on new trail system.	Maintain existing interpretive structures and panels; develop interpretive panels on new trail system. Offer staff- or partner-led interpretive activities.
Environmental Education			
Environmental Education (EE) Programs	Continue existing programs.	Continue existing programs and work with partners to develop curriculum.	Continue existing programs, partners take lead on developing EE center and curriculum.
Facilities			
Facilities	Maintain current buildings, observation decks, and trail.	Place emphasis on partner-oriented facilities and distribution of information. Participate in a community-based visitor information center off the Refuge.	Build a small administrative office and a visitor contact station at current office site. Maintain existing and develop new trails and interpretive panels.
Additional Land Protection			
Expansion of Authorized Refuge Boundary	No expansion of Refuge boundary; continue easement or acquisition of the few remaining private lands within current Refuge boundary from willing sellers when available.	Same as Alternative A	Study options for potential Refuge boundary expansion in the lower Coquille River estuary between River Miles 0.5 and 10.4. Area includes wetlands, shorelands, tidally influenced wetlands, and dunes.

Nestucca Bay Refuge Preliminary Alternatives Comparison Table

Issue or Topic	Alternative A Current Management (No Change)	Alternative B	Alternative C Preferred Alternative
Habitat Management			
Salt Marsh and Intertidal Mudflat	Protect and maintain 201 acres.	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A
Forested Lagg, Coastal Bog, and Freshwater Emergent Wetlands – Neskowin Marsh Unit	Protect and maintain 164.3 acres.	Protect and maintain 164.3 acres with additional monitoring of water quality for off-site contaminants. Conduct hydrological study to assess management options.	Same as Alternative B
Neskowin Marsh Unit – Tsunami Evacuation Route	Keep tsunami evacuation route open with current bridge remaining in place.	Keep tsunami evacuation route open. Make bridge disabled-accessible.	Keep tsunami evacuation route open. Conduct a hydrologic study and modify trail bed and bridge to improve hydrology and accessibility.
Pasture Management	Manage 345.6 acres as pasture through Cooperative Land Management Agreements.	Manage less than 345.6 acres as pasture; restore some pastures to tidal marsh habitat.	Same as Alternative A
Upland Coastal Prairie restoration	Continue conducting limited restoration of native coastal prairie on an opportunistic basis.	Fully restore 24.7 acres of native coastal prairie.	Restore 24.7 acres of native prairie habitat, focusing on supporting the introduction of a “non-essential, experimental” population of threatened Oregon silverspot butterfly (OSB).
Mixed Upland Grasslands	Continue to conduct limited mowing and silage production on 13.7 acres.	Same as Alternative A	Continue mowing and silage production on 13.7 acres until coastal prairie restoration is implemented.
Sitka Spruce/ Western Hemlock Forest	No active management; maintain in current condition.	Actively manage 213.1 acres, using tree/vegetation thinning and planting as appropriate.	Same as Alternative B
Wildlife - Listed Species			
Oregon Silverspot Butterfly	Continue current limited efforts to establish potential habitat for OSB.	Same as Alternative A	Introduce “non-essential, experimental” population of OSB, following coastal prairie restoration and successful establishment of high quality OSB habitat.
Monitoring and Research			
Biological Monitoring	Continue to collect limited data on Canada goose use throughout the Nestucca Valley. Collect data on prairie restoration.	Expand status monitoring to include fish, amphibians, small mammals, Neskowin Marsh hydrology and wildlife, and other biological parameters. Monitor the long-term effectiveness of salt marsh restoration project(s).	Same as Alternative B
Research and Scientific Assessments	Limited research conducted under Special Use Permits.	Identify priority research needs and cooperate with partners to accomplish research goals.	Same as Alternative B, and nominate Neskowin Marsh as a Research Natural Area.
Waterfowl Hunting			
Waterfowl Hunting	Closed to waterfowl hunting.	Allow waterfowl hunting 7 days per week on Brooten Marsh, the mouth of Little Nestucca River, and Little Nestucca Restoration Area.	Allow waterfowl hunting 7 days per week on Brooten Marsh and mouth of Little Nestucca River.
Fishing			
Fishing	Closed to fishing.	Actively pursue opportunities to provide bank fishing access to the Little Nestucca River.	Same as Alternative B
Clamming	Closed to clamming.	Allow clamming in Brooten Marsh Unit.	Same as Alternative B

continued on next page

Nestucca Bay Refuge Preliminary Alternatives Comparison Table continued

Issue or Topic	Alternative A Current Management (No Change)	Alternative B	Alternative C Preferred Alternative
Wildlife Observation and Photography			
Cannery Hill Unit	Trail, deck, and parking lots at Cannery Hill are open.	Trail, deck, and parking lots at Cannery Hill are open. Develop Powerline Trail.	Trail, deck, and parking lots at Cannery Hill are open. Develop Powerline Trail, new loop trail, and goose observation deck at the lower parking lot.
Little Nestucca Restoration Area	Area closed to observation and photography.	Develop old road bed into spur trail to an observation point and allow seasonal (February through September) public access on this trail.	Develop old road bed into spur trail to an observation point and allow year-round public access on this trail. Create gravel parking lots on east and west ends of restoration site.
Brooten Marsh Unit	Closed to wildlife observation and photography.	Allow wildlife observation and photography throughout unit.	Same as Alternative B
Neskowin Marsh Unit	Closed to wildlife observation and photography.	Develop an elevated boardwalk and trail at Neskowin Marsh off Highway 101.	Same as Alternative A
Environmental Education			
Environmental Education (EE) Programs	Continue to offer limited EE program.	Continue to offer limited EE program. Hire full time EE specialist and recruit, train, and utilize volunteers to deliver on-site EE programs.	Develop a year-round EE program with full-time EE specialist. Utilize volunteers to deliver on-site and other partner-driven EE programs.
Interpretation			
Interpretation	Maintain existing facilities and limited interpretive programs on Cannery Hill.	Continue existing interpretive opportunities at Cannery Hill; develop interpretive materials for the Neskowin Marsh boardwalk.	Develop additional interpretive materials in conjunction with new trails at Cannery Hill and the Little Nestucca Restoration Area.
Facilities			
Facilities	Keep existing visitor and maintenance facilities, and replace residence with bunkhouse.	Keep existing visitor and maintenance facilities, and replace residence with bunkhouse. Build a Refuge office with a visitor lobby.	Same as Alternative B



*Visitors to Nestucca Bay Refuge/
Bill Medlen/USFWS*