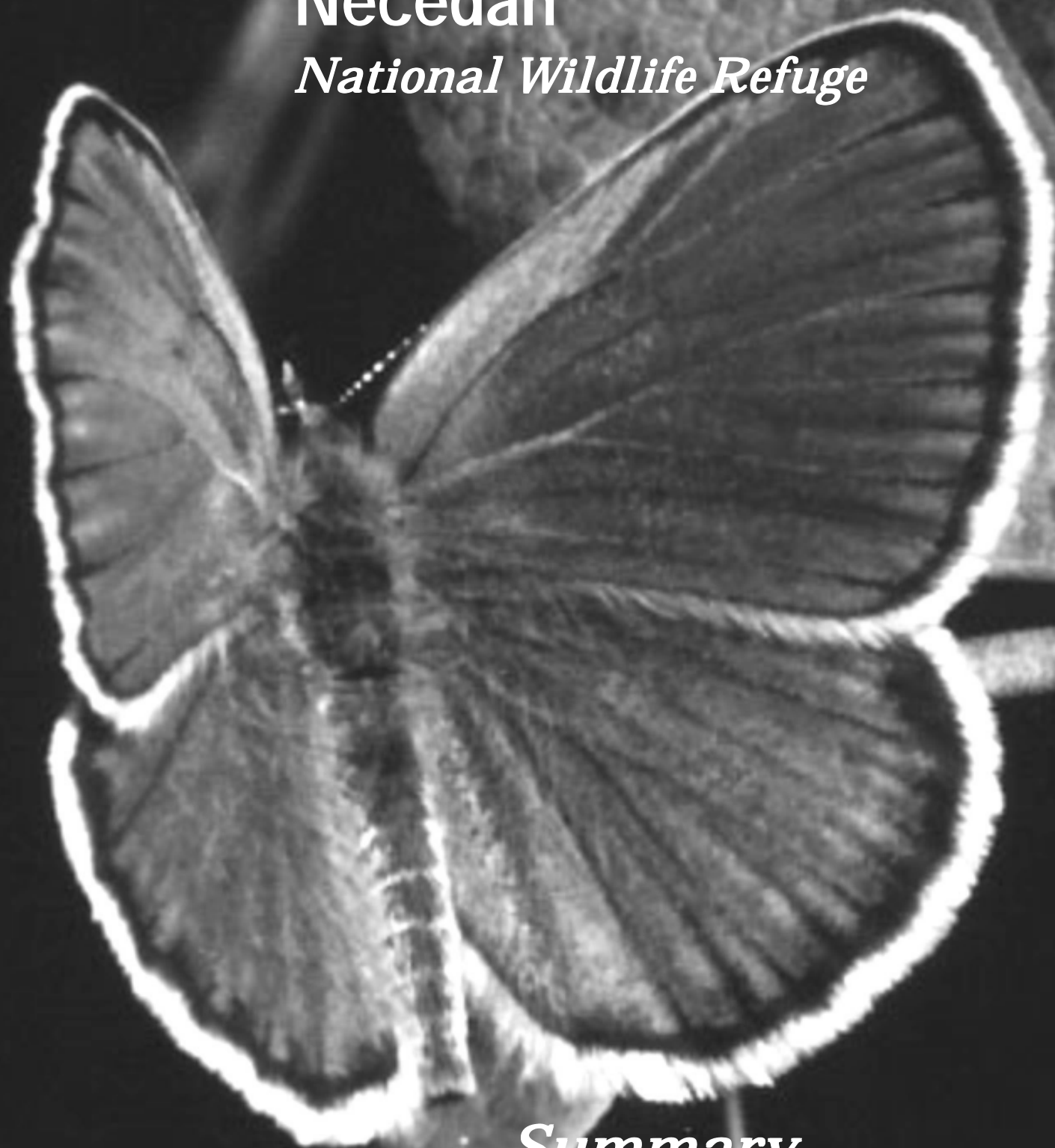


# Necedah

## *National Wildlife Refuge*



### *Summary*

### Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan

*October 2001*

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Vital Statistics</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Who We Are and What We Do</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Refuge Vision, Mission, Core Values and Guiding Principles</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Vision Statement .....	2
Mission Statement .....	3
Core Values and Guiding Principles .....	3
<b>Refuge Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Projects</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Fish and Wildlife Management.....	5
Listed Species .....	5
Waterfowl and Other Migratory Birds .....	6
Habitat Restoration and Management .....	7
Wetland Habitats .....	7
Open Landscape Habitats .....	8
Forest Land .....	8
Resource Protection.....	9
Law Enforcement .....	9
Land Protection .....	9
Archaeological and Cultural Resource Management .....	10
Contaminant Investigations/Cleanup .....	10
Water Rights Management .....	10
Monitoring and Studies .....	10
Surveys and Censuses .....	11
Coordination Activities.....	11
Interagency Coordination .....	11
Tribal Coordination .....	12
Private Lands Activities .....	12
Cooperative/Friends Organizations .....	12
Public Recreation, Education, Interpretation, and Outreach.....	12
Wildlife Observation and Photography .....	12
Hunting .....	12
Fishing .....	13
Education, Interpretation, and Outreach .....	13
Facilities and Services .....	14
Planning And Administration .....	14
Work Force .....	14
<b>Implementation</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Tools.....	15
Step-down Management Plans.....	15
Partnerships .....	16
Refuge Volunteers .....	16
Land Acquisition .....	17
<b>Where You Can Find the CCP</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Tell Us What You Think</b> .....	<b>17</b>

## Introduction

Situated on the bed of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin and the Great Central Wisconsin Swamp, the land in and around Necedah National Wildlife Refuge was once a vast peat bog with low, wooded islands and savannas. Higher sand ridges were filled with mature stands of pine and other species.

Today, the 43,696-acre Necedah National Wildlife Refuge is a mix of pine, oak and aspen forests; wetlands and open water areas; grasslands; and rare savannas. This mixture of habitats supports a rich diversity of fish, wildlife and plant populations. More than 230 species of birds has been identified on the Refuge. More than 100,000 migratory waterfowl and shorebirds use the Refuge annually, and is the largest stopover in the state for migrating sandhill cranes. With the surrounding Necedah Wildlife Management Area, it has the Wisconsin's second largest colony of black terns (a state-listed endangered species).



A number of endangered species make their home on Refuge land. Necedah National Wildlife Refuge has the southernmost timber wolf habitat in the state, and it is also home to the Blanding's turtle, the eastern massasauga rattlesnake and the phlox moth. The largest population of Karner blue butterflies in the world uses the Refuge, and it was recently selected as the reintroduction site for a new population of federally-listed endangered whooping crane.

The Refuge attracts people as well as wildlife. An estimated 150,000 people visit the Refuge every year to hunt, fish, hike, observe and photograph wildlife, and pick berries.

Managing a refuge demands long-range planning that reflects vision, science and people. The Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, or CCP, describes how we will provide for migratory species within our boundaries, support endangered species on the Refuge, work with partners to improve habitats beyond our boundaries, expand opportunities for wildlife viewing and fishing, and develop environmental education and outreach programs to increase appreciation of fish and wildlife.

This summary offers a brief overview of the Refuge and what we hope to accomplish in the next 15 years.

## Vital Statistics

Located approximately 150 miles northwest of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and about 180 miles southeast of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Necedah National Wildlife Refuge was part of a 114,964-acre tract of land the U.S. government acquired in the 1930s in Wood, Monroe and Jackson counties in central Wisconsin. The land was purchased to assist farmers living in the area and to develop area for wildlife.

On March 14, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order authorizing 43,696 acres of this land be set aside as the Necedah Migratory Waterfowl Refuge "a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other

wildlife,” according to Executive Order 8065. Its purpose included “...use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other purpose, for migratory birds,” consistent with the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929.

Just as year after it was established, the Refuge’s official name was changed to Necedah National Wildlife Refuge. The surrounding Necedah Wildlife Management Area includes parts of the Central Wisconsin Conservation Area (including parts of Meadow Valley State Wildlife Area, parts of Wood County Wildlife Area, and parts of Sandhill State Wildlife Area. These lands are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System but are managed cooperatively with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The comprehensive conservation plan targets only the 43,696-acre Necedah National Wildlife Refuge.

## Who We Are and What We Do

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the primary federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Specific responsibilities include enforcing federal wildlife laws, managing migratory bird populations, restoring nationally significant fisheries, administering the Endangered Species Act, and restoring wildlife habitat such as wetlands.



The Service’s role also includes managing the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world’s largest collection of lands specifically managed for fish and wildlife. The System is a network of more than 500 national wildlife refuges encompassing more than 93 million acres of public land and water. The majority of these lands – 82 percent – are in Alaska, with approximately 16 million acres spread across the lower 48 states and several island territories. National wildlife refuges provide habitat for more than 5,000 species of birds, mammals, fish and insects.



Refuges are also unique places for people. When it is compatible with wildlife and habitat needs and the purpose for which the refuge was established, refuges can be used for wildlife-dependent activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and environmental interpretation.

## Refuge Vision, Mission, Core Values and Guiding Principles

### Vision Statement

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge exemplifies a diverse and productive ecological system of woodlands, savannas, and wetlands managed to perpetuate listed species, waterfowl and other migratory birds, and native biological diversity.

Refuge staff are a multi-disciplined team of biologists, technicians, and support staff who are dedicated to providing high quality wildlife-dependent public use opportunities to a diverse and supportive public.

The Refuge is a model in its commitment to create long-term mutually-beneficial relationships with its stakeholders, and has produced consistent growth in the public’s understanding and appreciation of the Refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and Service trust resources.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide scientific and community leadership and support in the restoration, preservation, and management of listed species, waterfowl and other migratory birds, and native biological diversity, while providing, to the extent possible, high quality wildlife-dependent recreational and educational experiences that foster an understanding and appreciation of these resources, and expands the role humankind plays in their stewardship.

## Core Values and Guiding Principles

The Refuge holds the core values of *quality, credibility, reliability, integrity, and responsiveness* as the basis for all Refuge activities. They will be guided by these core values as well as the following guiding principles:

An Ecosystem Approach: The ecosystem approach is a vision of desired future conditions developed in collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders that integrates ecological, economic, and social factors. It is applied within a geographic framework (usually watershed) and founded primarily on ecological factors.

Results through Partnerships: Partnership initiatives require extensive coordination and communication between Federal agencies; state, tribal, and local governments; and stakeholders and customers. Partnerships promote the pooling of resources and expertise to obtain results more quickly and efficiently. Results also tend to be longer lasting because consensus is built over a wide range of stakeholder interests.

Public Involvement: Refuge management will include a clear, credible, and meaningful role for public input from the full spectrum of social and cultural backgrounds, and will receive full consideration in Refuge decision-making. The Refuge serves local, state, and national constituencies, therefore, public input at each of these levels will be solicited and incorporated into the Refuge's decision making process.

Cornerstones of Biology: The Refuge will preserve existing, relatively intact ecosystems first; for they are the cornerstones for providing biota and other natural materials needed for future restoration.

Ecological Integrity: The Refuge will restore ecological integrity, particularly the structure, composition, and natural processes of native biotic communities and physical environments.

Design for Self-Sustainability: The Refuge will design for self-sustainability of natural systems. The best way to ensure long-term viability of habitat is to minimize the need for continuous maintenance.

Work within a Watershed Context: The Refuge will focus within the watershed and/or broader landscape level context and seek to understand its biological potential. A watershed/landscape has the capacity to become only what its physical and biological setting will support. This includes climate, geology, hydrology, and biological characteristics.

Address Degradation: The Refuge will address on-going causes of habitat degradation. Protection, restoration, and management activities will fail if the sources of degradation persist.

Have Clear Goals and Objectives: The Refuge will have clear up-to-date goals, objectives, and strategies, and will include a diverse array of expertise and interests in their development.

Use Passive Restoration: The Refuge will use passive restoration and management when appropriate. Where possible, simulate natural hydrological process using low input, low impact, and sustainable measures which capture the energies of the system to perpetuate the resources in question.

Use Reference Sites: The Refuge will, whenever available, use reference sites when restoring habitat. Reference sites are areas that are comparable in structure and function to the proposed restoration before it was degraded.

Adaptive Management Processes: An adaptive management approach features a structured, iterative process that recognizes that most information used in decision making is incomplete. Adaptive management guides managers in efficiently collecting and using better information, thus enabling appropriate changes in management direction.

## Refuge Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Projects

The goals that follow are general statements of what we want to accomplish in the next 15 years.

The objectives are specific statements of what will be accomplished to help achieve a goal. Objectives describe the who, what, when, where, and why of what is to be accomplished. Strategies specify the activities that will be pursued to realize an objective. The strategies may be refined or amended as specific tasks are completed or new research and information come to light.

This plan includes proposals to work within what has been called the Yellow River Focus Area, a 21,953 acre area along the Yellow River lying east of the Refuge. The Focus Area provides a unique opportunity for the Refuge to assist in the restoration and preservation of rare and declining bottomland forest and adjacent upland habitat for the benefit of migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and public recreation and environmental education. The priority in the Focus Area is to work cooperatively with interested landowners to preserve and restore habitats. In the past two years alone, 121 landowners owning 17,308 acres have received technical assistance from the Service in managing their land. Some landowners may be interested in selling fee or easement interest in their land. In those cases, the Service will consider purchasing an easement or fee interest from willing sellers only and depending upon available funding. Most of the goals and objectives apply only to the Refuge itself, but a few specifically reference the Yellow River Focus Area.



## Fish and Wildlife Management

### Listed Species

*Goal: The Refuge will provide a federal leadership role in the preservation, recovery, and where appropriate, re-introduction of federally listed species (e.g., Karner Blue Butterfly, Whooping Crane, Eastern Timber Wolf, Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, Bald Eagle) throughout central Wisconsin over the life of this CCP.*



**Objective:**

Establish and maintain one large population of Karner Blue Butterflies (KBB) on the Refuge as stated in the Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan.

Strategies that will be used to accomplish this goal include restricting construction activities within KBB habitat; managing timber harvesting activities to avoid or minimize impacts to KBB habitat; and encouraging Refuge visitors to avoid disturbing lupine plants in areas used by the Karner Blue Butterfly.

**Objective:**

Provide technical assistance and staff support to the Whooping Crane Reintroduction program throughout the life of this CCP.

Strategies would include managing selected Refuge pools and associated habitats to support Whooping Crane populations. For example, the Refuge would not use prescribed burning in an area containing a Whooping Crane nest, and human and vehicular traffic would be prohibited near nest sites. Guidelines developed by the Whooping Crane Recovery Team would be followed.

**Objective:**

Maintain resident packs of Eastern Timber Wolves on public lands in central Wisconsin, in accordance with the Eastern Timber Wolf Recovery Plan.

Strategies for achieving this objective would include protecting newly verified wolf dens as well as den and rendezvous sites used within the last 2 years through the "Management Policy for Wolf Den and Rendezvous Sites." Land use activities, including timber harvest, human traffic and vehicular traffic would be restricted in the area of wolf den or rendezvous sites. The Refuge would continue to work with volunteers on tracking wolves on the Refuge and collaborate with the Wisconsin DNR on wolf trapping and radio trapping. Coyote trapping would continue to be prohibited.

**Objective:**

Continue international management efforts for the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, including research, to help preclude the need for federal listing (see open landscape habitat objectives and associated strategies).

Strategies would include following the protective guidelines offered in “The Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake: A Handbook for Land Managers 2000.” The Refuge would continue to work with land owners on Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake management support and surveys.

**Objective:** Protect Bald Eagles nesting on the Refuge from human disturbance throughout the life of this CCP.

Strategies would include monitoring nesting success and enforcing protective buffer zones around Bald Eagle nests. Prescribed burning and water level drawdowns would be restricted within a quarter mile of Bald Eagle nests.

#### Waterfowl and Other Migratory Birds

**Goal:** *The Refuge will actively protect, restore, establish, and manage diverse and productive populations of waterfowl and other migratory birds within the Refuge and the Yellow River Focus Area, with an emphasis on regional and national species of management concern.*

**Objective:** By 2015, increase the breeding pair population of waterfowl on Refuge land to 700 pairs (e.g., Mallard, Teal, and Pintail) through additional grassland habitat management, in accordance with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The Refuge currently supports roughly 400 breeding pairs.

**Objective:** By 2015, increase the breeding pair population of grassland species of concern (e.g., Dickcissel, Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bobolink) on Refuge land through additional grassland habitat management, in accordance with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan, and guidelines developed by Sample and Mossman (1997).

**Objective:** By 2015, increase the breeding pair population of savanna species of concern (e.g., Red-headed Woodpeckers, Field Sparrow, Northern Flicker) on Refuge land through additional savanna habitat management, in accordance with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan, and guidelines developed by Sample and Mossman (1997).

**Objective:** By 2005, eliminate Wood Duck houses on Refuge land, in favor of natural nesting cavities (the Refuge will maintain existing wood duck houses until they become unusable).

**Objective:** By 2005, increase the breeding pair population of Black Terns on Refuge land to 8 nesting pairs through additional wetland management (Region 3 priority species).

**Objective:** By 2005, increase the breeding pair population of Goshawks on Refuge land (Region 3 priority species). In the past, the Refuge has supported 1 nesting pair of Goshawks in select red and white pine plantations.





## Habitat Restoration and Management

*Goal: The Refuge will, in partnership with others, protect, restore, establish, and manage diverse and productive wetland, open landscape, and forest habitats on Refuge land and within the Yellow River Focus Area that benefits listed species, waterfowl and other migratory birds, and native biological diversity.*

### Wetland Habitats

**Objective:** By 2008, maintain on Refuge land 23,500 acres of wetlands (e.g. emergent and wet meadow, forested, lowland shrub, open water), in accordance with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the Refuge's Marsh and Water Management Plan. The Refuge currently has roughly 23,500 acres.

**Objective:** By 2008, maintain on Refuge land 12,500 acres of emergent wetland (e.g., palustrine) and wet meadow habitat (e.g., sedge meadows) to support nesting, resting, and feeding waterfowl (all types), associated bird species of concern (e.g., Black Terns, American Bittern, Henslow's Sparrow, Sedge Wren), and to promote native biological diversity. The Refuge currently has roughly 10,500 acres of emergent wetlands and wet meadows.

**Objective:** By 2009, maintain on Refuge land 5,700 acres of forested wetland habitat to support forest-nesting waterfowl (e.g., Wood Ducks) and associated bird species of concern (e.g., American Woodcock, Veery, Northern Flicker) and to promote native biological diversity. The Refuge currently has roughly 5,700 acres of forested wetland habitat.

**Objective:** By 2009, maintain on Refuge land 3,500 acres of lowland shrub habitat to support associated bird species of concern (e.g. Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Willow Flycatcher) and to promote native biological diversity. The Refuge currently has 5,500 acres of lowland shrubs.

**Objective:** By 2009, maintain on Refuge land 1,800 acres of open water habitat to support nesting, resting, and feeding waterfowl (all types), other associated bird species of concern (e.g., Common Loon) and to promote native biological diversity. The Refuge currently has 1,800 acres of open water.



Strategies for achieving this objective will include restoring two additional palustrine emergent wetland complexes and managing palustrine emergent wetlands for dense annual and perennial vegetation. The Refuge will manage palustrine emergent wetlands and moist soils to provide food for migrating waterfowl. The Refuge will maintain large blocks of forested wetland habitat and will establish and maintain large blocks of lowland shrub habitat.

## Open Landscape Habitats

**Objective:** By 2017, establish and maintain on Refuge land 9,800 acres of open landscape habitat (e.g. grasslands and savannas), in accordance with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan, Refuge Forest Management Plan, and guidelines developed by Sample and Mossman (1997). The Refuge currently has roughly 3,700 acres of open landscapes.

**Objective:** By 2017, establish and maintain on Refuge land 6,200 acres of native grassland habitat (e.g., midgrass and tallgrass prairies characteristic of the central Wisconsin sand plain subsection (Keys et al., 1995) to support nesting waterfowl (e.g., Mallard, Teal, Pintail), other associated bird species of concern (e.g., Dickcissel, Upland Sandpipers, Grasshopper Sparrows, Bobolink), and to promote native biological diversity, in accordance with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and guidelines developed by Sample and Mossman (1997). The Refuge currently has roughly 2,700 acres of grasslands.



**Objective:** By 2017, restore and maintain on Refuge land 3,600 acres of native savanna habitat (e.g., oak savanna) to support Karner Blue Butterflies, associated bird species of concern (e.g., Red-headed Woodpeckers, Field Sparrows, Flicker), and to promote native biological diversity, in accordance with the Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Plan, Refuge Forest Management Plan, and guidelines developed by Sample and Mossman (1997). The Refuge currently has roughly 1,000 acres of savanna.

Strategies for achieving this objective include converting non-native grasslands to native grasslands, as well as establishing small and medium-sized mosaics of native grasslands. The Refuge will emphasize creating blocks of grassland habitat that are structurally open and free of major woody edges. Oak and pine woodlots will be restored, and a mature oak component in savanna restorations units will be maintained.

## Forest Land

**Objective:** By 2017, maintain on Refuge land 10,400 acres of forest land (e.g., coniferous, mixed deciduous/coniferous, broad-leaf deciduous), in accordance with the Refuge's Forest Management Plan. The Refuge currently has roughly 16,500 acres. Timber harvest will only occur in areas designated open landscape, except in pine plantations or for safety, operations, or fuel reduction purposes.

**Objective:** By 2017, maintain on Refuge land 550 acres of coniferous forest habitat to support associated bird species of concern (e.g., Northern Goshawks, ) and to promote native biological diversity. The Refuge currently has roughly 900 acres.

**Objective:** By 2017, maintain on Refuge land 4,500 acres of mixed deciduous and coniferous forest habitat to support associated bird species of concern (e.g., Pine Warblers, Scarlet Tanager, Whip-poor-will, Black-and-white Warbler) and to promote native biological diversity. The Refuge currently has roughly 10,000 acres.

**Objective:** By 2017, maintain on Refuge land 5,350 acres of broad-leaf deciduous forest habitat to support associated bird species of concern (e.g., Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Wood Thrush) and to promote native biological diversity. The Refuge currently has roughly 10,000 acres.

Strategies toward accomplishing this objective will include maintaining the forest habitat required by the species listed in the objective. These habitats include: even-aged stands of red and white pine; mature oak with a white pine component; mature stands of jack pine with an oak component; mesic mixed oak/pine forest with interspersed sedge meadow; and mature stands of oak forest with a diverse, dense understory component.

Accomplishing these habitat objectives will require a host of other tools, including a fire management program that reduces damage associated with wildlife and supports habitat objectives; a step-down plan that addresses pest plants; and a rare plant inventory. The Refuge will work with landowners and provide several viable options for restoring, enhancing, and protecting habitat within the Yellow River Focus Area.

## Resource Protection

*Goal: The Refuge will, in partnership with others, safeguard Refuge resources (e.g., fish and wildlife, cultural and archaeological, water, and visitor experiences) for future generations.*

### Law Enforcement

**Objective:** Increase compliance of Refuge regulations on Refuge land throughout the life of this CCP.

Strategies will include revising Refuge visitor regulations for consistency and increasing the public's knowledge of visitor regulations and the Refuge boundaries.

### Land Protection

**Objective:** By 2017, conserve 3,750 acres of wetland, upland, and riparian habitats within the Yellow River Focus Area through voluntary partnerships.

Strategies for achieving this objective include maintaining working relationships with landowners within the Yellow

River Focus Area. The Refuge will emphasize a collaborative approach to preservation by working with landowners and county government.

**Objective:** By 2011, actively manage 100 percent of all existing Farm Service Agency Conservation Easement land under the jurisdiction of the Refuge.

Strategies toward accomplishing this objective include developing habitat management plans for all conservation easements, and surveying and posting all of the Refuge's conservation easement lands.

#### Archaeological and Cultural Resource Management

**Objective:** By 2017, in accordance with the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, protect 100 percent of the known archaeological and cultural resources on the Refuge.

Strategies for accomplishing this objective include preparing a step-down plan for archaeological resources and contracting with a cultural resources professional to complete a management plan. The Refuge will notify the Regional Historic Preservation Officer early in the planning process for each construction and development action, as well as for requests for archaeological investigations on Refuge land.

#### Contaminant Investigations/Cleanup

**Objective:** Maintain a contaminant status on Refuge land that does not negatively impact fish and wildlife populations, human health, or create liability issues, throughout the life of this CCP.

Strategies include investigating all potential contamination sites on the Refuge within 2 weeks of their discovery and conducting a contaminant investigation on all land considered for acquisition.

#### Water Rights Management

**Objective:** Maintain 1997 baseline water flows throughout the Refuge over the life of this CCP.

Strategies include researching and documenting Refuge water rights and establishing baseline water quality/quantity standards for receiving waters. The Refuge will work with upstream landowners to ensure high quality water sources for Refuge waterways.

#### Monitoring and Studies

*Goal: The Refuge will support, promote, and coordinate high quality scientific research that enhances Refuge management decision making.*

**Objective:** Ensure that research conducted on the Refuge is published in an appropriate scientific journal no later than 2 years after the completion of the field work.

**Objective:** By 2003, establish coordinated research programs to expand our understanding of the Refuge and Yellow River area natural resources.

Strategies for accomplishing this objective include conducting at least two studies of rare sedge meadow habitat and completing a baseline inventory and cover type mapping for the Refuge and the Yellow River Focus Area.

#### Surveys and Censuses

**Objective:** In accordance with the Refuges wildlife inventory step-down plan, the Refuge will continue to conduct/support the following annual surveys throughout the life of this CCP:



- Spring Waterfowl Breeding Pair Surveys
- Fall Waterfowl Surveys
- Waterfowl Banding
- Sandhill Crane Fly-out Surveys
- Mourning Dove Coo Surveys
- Woodcock Surveys
- Songbird Point Counts
- Karner Blue Butterfly Surveys
- Massasauga Rattlesnake Population Surveys
- Wolf Howling Surveys
- Wolf Tracking Surveys
- Midwest Sandhill Crane Counts

#### **Coordination Activities**

*Goal: The Refuge will develop and maintain strong, long-term, mutually-beneficial working relationships with Refuge stakeholders that lead to healthy sustainable fish and wildlife populations on the Refuge and within the Yellow River Focus Area.*

#### Interagency Coordination

**Objective:** Beginning in 2002, hold annual joint management plan reviews with the Wisconsin DNR to facilitate management and coordination of Meadow Valley Wildlife Area, Wood County Wildlife Area, Sandhill Wildlife Area, and scattered parcels in Jackson County.

**Objective:** Enhance communications with the Air National Guard by participating in at least one meeting per year to discuss the routing of low-flying aircraft in relation to wildlife and visitor use impacts.

**Objective:** Work with natural resource management agencies in Juneau, Wood, and Adams counties to enhance Service trust resource management throughout the life of this CCP.

Strategies for accomplishing this objective include regular meetings with county and Wisconsin DNR staff.

#### Tribal Coordination

**Objective:** Ensure open communication and provide technical assistance to local Tribal Nations, as requested, throughout the life of this CCP.

#### Private Lands Activities

**Objective:** Restore a minimum of 15 wetlands per year on private land within the Necedah Private Lands District to provide for a diversity of fish and wildlife values throughout the life of this CCP.

**Objective:** Restore a minimum of 60 acres per year of native grasslands on private land within the Necedah Private Lands District to provide for a diversity of wildlife values throughout the life of this CCP.

#### Cooperative/Friends Organizations

**Objective:** Actively support the “Friends of Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.”, throughout the life this CCP.

Strategies include maintaining a staff liaison to the Friends of Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. and providing office space and use of office equipment to Friends volunteers.

### **Public Recreation, Education, Interpretation, and Outreach**

*Goal: The Refuge will provide the public high quality wildlife-dependent uses of the Refuge (e.g., wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, environmental education and interpretation), to foster the public's understanding and appreciation of the Refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and Service trust resources, and to expand the role the public plays in their stewardship.*

#### Wildlife Observation and Photography

**Objective:** By 2009, increase wildlife observation and wildlife photography use-days on Refuge land by 20 percent (in 1999, roughly 116,000 trips were made to the Refuge for wildlife observation and 20,000 trips for wildlife photography).

Strategies include working in partnership with local, regional, and national tourism groups to promote the Refuge as a “Watchable Wildlife” destination in central Wisconsin.

#### Hunting

**Objective:** Provide the public safe, high-quality hunting opportunities on Refuge land where hunters will have a reasonable chance

of success for waterfowl and other migratory birds, deer, and small game, throughout the life of this CCP.

Strategies include working with the Wisconsin DNR on an annual hunter education program and determining how many days the Refuge will be open to hunters based on hunter satisfaction, safety and the deer population.

#### Fishing

**Objective:** By 2010, increase fishing use-days on Refuge land by 10 percent (in 1999, roughly 3,500 fishing visits were made to the Refuge for the purpose of fishing).

Strategies for accomplishing this objective will include promoting and hosting National Fishing Day events in conjunction with the Wisconsin DNR and other partners; cooperating with Wisconsin DNR fishery biologists on management issues; and developing a fishing pier at Harvey's Pond.

#### Education, Interpretation, and Outreach

**Objective:** By 2010, expand the Refuge's education and interpretation efforts by 20 percent over 1999 estimates (in 1999, the Refuge reached an estimated 300,000 people through its on-site and off-site efforts)(excluding media contacts).

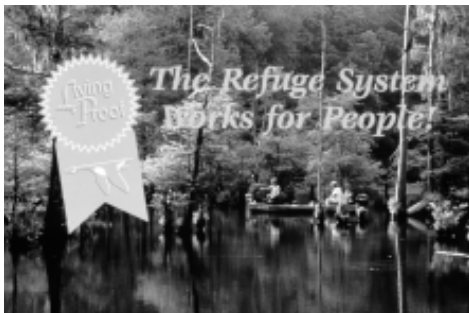
Strategies will include completing the Ellen Allen Outdoor Learning Center, enhancing coordination with local and regional educators, developing a comprehensive guide to interpretation and education for teachers and other community members, and developing an additional 5 miles of interpretive trails on the Refuge.

By 2003, develop and maintain a comprehensive communication strategy for the Refuge (communication step-down plan) focusing on its five target audiences.

Strategies for accomplishing this objective will include enhancing cooperation with local and regional media, developing and regularly updating the Refuge's web site, participating with the Juneau County Economic Development Committee on natural resource related projects.

**Objective:** By 2017, develop and maintain a group of local and regional stakeholders that actively participates in the stewardship of the Refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and Service trust resources.

**Objective:** In conjunction with the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, maintain sponsorship (and funding) for the Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck Stamp contest throughout the life of this CCP.



Strategies will include maintaining a database of teachers and other individuals who have participated in or expressed interest in the Federal Junior Duck Stamp program.

#### Facilities and Services

**Objective:** By 2015, 95 percent of Refuge visitors completing a Refuge “customer service feedback form” will rate their overall Refuge experience as excellent.

One strategy toward achieving this objective will be a cooperative project with other federal, state and local partners to design and build a visitor center. The center will serve as a first point of contact for Refuge visitors and will also provide office space for Refuge staff and classrooms and meeting space for educators.

**Objective:** By 2008, improve the accessibility of Refuge visitor groups with special needs.

Strategies include constructing a universally accessible fishing pier, hunting blind, and hard-surface trail or board-walk, and making Refuge brochures and videos available in other formats, such as braille and close-captioned versions.

#### **Planning And Administration**

*Goal: The Refuge will maintain a safe and healthy environment for employees, volunteers and visitors, and be will proactive in addressing Refuge opportunities and issues.*

**Objective:** By 2004, review and revise all Refuge step-down management plans.

**Objective:** Hold the number of work-related injuries to two per year or less.

Strategies include holding regular safety meetings and supporting a trained safety officer.

**Objective:** Maintain a safe and palatable water supply for Refuge staff and visitors.

**Objective:** By 2002, identify all property stewardship needs and complete the following projects that have already been identified.

#### Work Force

*Goal: The Refuge will maintain a technically skilled and diverse workforce with high morale and job satisfaction sufficient to maintain high levels of stakeholder satisfaction.*

**Objective:** Provide all Refuge staff members with an opportunity to participate in 40 hours of training annually.



- Objective:** Hold weekly staff meetings to facilitate staff communication and coordination of Refuge activities.
- Objective:** Fill all staff vacancies within one year of creation.
- Objective:** Ensure diverse candidates are on every hiring certificate, in compliance with Region 3 diversity directives.  
Strategies include using the Student Temporary Employment Experience Program and the Student Career Experience Program whenever possible, and also maintaining contacts with colleges.
- Objective:** By 2002, hire one additional full-time Private Lands employee (Medium Priority).
- Objective:** By 2005, hire one additional full-time Wage Grade employee (Medium Priority).
- Objective:** By 2002, add one full-time Refuge law enforcement officer.
- Objective:** By 2004, increase Refuge volunteer participation by 20 percent over 1999 levels.
- Objective:** Continue to support work training programs such as the Wisconsin Conservation Corps and the Private Industry Council's youth training program each year throughout the life of this CCP.

## Implementation

### Tools

The Refuge staff currently includes one Refuge manager; two Refuge operations specialists; one biologist; one park ranger; one fire management officer; two biological technicians; one administrative technician; one maintenance mechanic; one equipment operator; and one office automation clerk. The staff also includes a part-time forestry technician and a student trainee.

In order to fully implement the CCP and accomplish the goals, objectives and strategies it describes, the following staff positions are needed: biologist; park ranger (law enforcement); maintenance worker; and part-time office automation clerk.

### Step-down Management Plans

Step-down management plans will be an important component in fully achieving the outcomes stated in the CCP. They will provide detailed guidance on refuge management and will contain the strategies and implementation schedules for meeting CCP goals and objectives.

## Partnerships

Partnerships with Federal, state, and local agencies; private organizations; and individuals will be essential to the successful implementation of this CCP. Refuge staff will seek out partnerships to fulfill the goals and objectives outlined in this plan and create the desired future habitat condition. Natural resource issues extend beyond social and political boundaries. Stakeholders with a variety of interests and backgrounds need to be included in the day-to-day management of the Refuge, and take ownership in its development.

Voluntary participation from private landowners will be an essential part of the Refuge's new focus in the Yellow River area. Nearly all the land in the Yellow River area is in private ownership. In fact, nearly 70 percent of all available fish and wildlife habitat in the United States is in private ownership. With increased demographic trends toward urbanization and suburbanization, there is a tendency for people to lose touch with the land and the goods and services it provides. The Refuge's approach to sustainable management of public and private land will be to actively support a network of lands and waters dedicated to fish, wildlife, and plant conservation. This means that partnerships are not only desirable for accomplishing Refuge objectives, they are necessary.

Also, natural resources do not organize themselves according to political boundaries. Clean air and water, sustainable populations of wildlife and plants, and positive aesthetic and recreational experiences are a community-wide effort involving multiple Federal, state, and local jurisdictions. The Refuge will support other governmental agencies, private organizations and industries, and private landowners in managing natural resources in ways that enhance Service Trust Resources for present and future generations. The Refuge will contribute staff expertise, equipment, and monetary resources, where possible, to individuals and groups requesting assistance with:

- Sustainable timber management
- Game management
- Habitat management
- Conducting rare species inventories
- Water management, including wetland restorations, water level management, and water quality issues
- Real estate transfers and easement information
- Education and outreach

## Refuge Volunteers

The Refuge's volunteer program is vital to the fulfillment of the Refuge's vision. Volunteers assist the Refuge with fish and wildlife management, habitat management, education and outreach, administration, and maintenance - in other words, in nearly every aspect of the Refuge's operation. In 1998, volunteers contributed over 7,000 hours at the Refuge. Some volunteer projects have included:

- Tracking pileated woodpeckers using radio telemetry
- Building new Refuge hiking trails
- Assisting with the Wisconsin Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest
- Burning brush piles for the Refuge's savanna restorations
- Creating a savanna demonstration area in proximity to the Refuge Headquarters

## Land Acquisition

Land acquisition is one method the Refuge will use to facilitate restoration and preservation of the Yellow River Focus Area. With the completion of this CCP and associated environmental assessment, the Refuge will be positioned to purchase conservation easements and fee simple purchases from willing sellers. All land acquisition will occur from willing sellers only. The Refuge will not use eminent domain or condemnation to acquire any land in the Yellow River Focus Area. It should be noted that the Service did not request money for land acquisition for the years 2000 or 2001. It is anticipated that the Service will request land acquisition money for fiscal year 2003. The Environmental Assessment (available in the full CCP) contains additional information about the Yellow River Focus Area.

## **Where You Can Find the CCP**

You can see the complete comprehensive conservation plan in a number of places. If you have access to the Internet, you can see the plan in a portable document format (pdf) at the following address: <http://midwest.fws.gov/planning/necedahtop.htm>

Copies of the plan are also available at libraries throughout the Necedah area, including:

- Mauston Public Library
- New Lisbon Memorial Library
- Wisconsin Rapids Library
- Necedah Memorial Library
- Charles and JoAnn Lester Library
- Tomah Library

Copies of the revised draft CCP are also available at the Refuge.

## **Tell Us What You Think**

Public participation is the cornerstone of comprehensive conservation planning. By letting us know what you think of the revised draft comprehensive conservation plan, you can help the Service develop a plan that accomplishes conservation goals and fulfills the needs of people visiting Necedah National Wildlife Refuge.

A public review period follows the release of the comprehensive conservation plan and this summary. In order for your thoughts to be considered in preparation of the final CCP, we need to receive your comment by November 20, 2001. Comments can be submitted electronically through our Web site: (<http://midwest.fws.gov/planning/necedahtop.htm>) or in writing.

The Refuge's address is:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Necedah National Wildlife Refuge  
W7996 20th Street West  
Necedah, WI 54646