



San Joaquin River

Planning Update #1

March 1999 **NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

Greetings!

This is the first in a series of Planning Updates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to keep you informed of our progress as we develop a comprehensive conservation plan for the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge.

This planning update is being sent to you to provide you with a brief background of the refuge, the planning and public involvement process that will help us make decisions about the refuge, and to let you know how you can become involved in our current planning process.

We will be sending these planning updates periodically to local landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and others who express interest.

Future planning updates will include summaries of issues identified through public outreach, explanations of steps in the planning process, announcements of upcoming workshops and open houses, and updates on the status of the planning process.

Open House

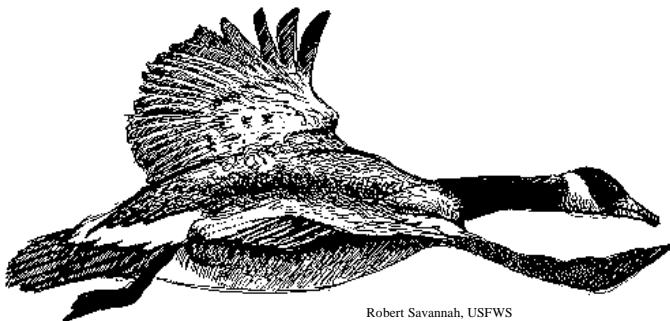
We would like to meet you and get acquainted. To do that, we have scheduled an open house for Wednesday, March 17, 1999, at the Stanislaus County Agricultural

wheelchair accessible. We will be there from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

From 6:45 to 7:00, we will make a brief presentation regarding the refuge planning process. Following the presentation we will be available to talk to you, learn what suggestions and concerns you have about the refuge, and what you think the issues are that need to be considered during the planning process. We realize that any changes made in the management of the refuge could affect you.

Please join us, have some refreshments and share your thoughts about the refuge. We welcome all suggestions, questions and comments.

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Center, three miles south of the intersection of highways 132 and 99 at 3800 Cornucopia Way. The facility is

Background of the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge

The San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge is located west of Modesto, California, within the historic floodplain of the confluences of the San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne Rivers. Refuge lands consist of oak-cottonwood-willow riparian forest, pastures, agricultural fields, and wetlands.

The refuge was established in 1987 because of the importance of the area as habitat for the endangered Aleutian Canada goose. This area is the traditional wintering area for virtually the entire population of this migratory bird.

The refuge also protects the habitat of other federally listed endangered species, such as the winter-run chinook salmon, and provides habitat for migratory birds and conserves other native plants and animals.

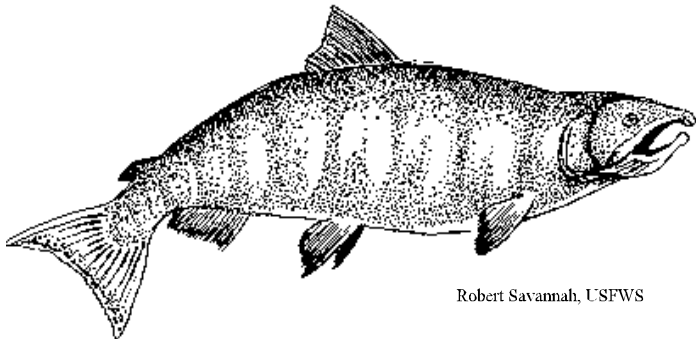
Currently the refuge comprises 5,588 acres within an approved refuge boundary of 12,877 acres.

Creating a Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The Service is preparing a comprehensive conservation plan for the refuge. We will use scientific knowledge to develop this plan to guide future refuge management. The plan will outline goals, objectives and management strategies.

We are also preparing this refuge plan to:

- C ensure that refuge management reflects refuge purposes and the mission, policies and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System;
- provide visitors with an understanding of the reasons for management actions on the refuge;
- provide a refuge vision statement;
- ensure the compatibility of current and future refuge uses ;



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- provide long-term continuity in refuge management;
- and
- provide budget justification for operation and maintenance and facility development requests.

The plan will be flexible. It will be reviewed periodically to ensure that its goals, objectives and implementation strategies and timetables remain appropriate.

The plan will describe the management actions, and the accompanying environmental compliance document will describe alternatives considered and possible effects of those alternatives. You will have an opportunity to review and comment on both documents.

Interim Goals

In 1996, refuge staff developed interim goals. These goals will guide the management of the refuge until the new plan is adopted. We will be reviewing these goals as part of the planning process to verify that the goals are still valid and appropriate.

Here are the interim goals:

- To provide feeding and resting habitat for wintering waterfowl;
- To provide habitat and manage for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species of concern;
- To protect and provide habitat for neotropical migratory land birds;
- To preserve a natural diversity and abundance of plants and animals;
- To provide an area for compatible, wildlife-oriented research;
- and
- To provide public use activities such as wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, fishing, and hunting.



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Please call, write, or e-mail Leslie Lew to be placed on our mailing list or to report a change in your mailing address.

Public Involvement

You can provide input by letting us know your ideas and concerns for refuge management. Your participation at various stages of the planning process is an integral part of the refuge plan's development.

After the comment period closes, we will distribute another planning update with the comments we've received. We will consider these comments as we develop the plan, which will identify the refuge's future management direction.

Submitting Comments

If you have ideas, issues, or concerns, please bring them to the meeting or contact one of the people below on the "Who to Contact" list. Issue identification ends March 31, 1999. If you can't make it to the open house, but would like to submit comments on the interim goals, your concerns, management suggestions and other actions to consider or potential impacts, please send your thoughts to Leslie Lew, Planning Team Leader, USFWS, 2233 Watt Avenue, Suite 230, Sacramento, CA 95825.

Who to Contact

If you have questions or concerns, or would like more information, please feel free to call or write us at the following addresses and phone numbers:

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

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Land Acquisition

Richard Hadley

Planning Process

- : Identify public and agency issues and concerns
- 9 Gather data
- 9 Develop goals and objectives
- 9 Develop strategies
- 9 Evaluate impacts
- 9 Write draft
- 9 Public Review of draft
- 9 Public notice of decision

Map of Study Area

