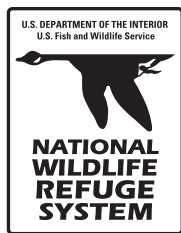


Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update #1/Fall 2006

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Begins in Fall



View of Mt. Scott from Klamath Marsh

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Greetings from the Refuge Manager

Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (refuge) is about to embark on an important multi-year process to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the refuge. This plan will help guide overall refuge management for the next 15 years. Your ideas and comments will be an important part of the process, so I'd like to invite you to participate.

Before we begin the process, I'd like to provide background about the refuge's history and current management. You'll also find some information about the National Wildlife Refuge System and how comprehensive conservation planning fits into the overall picture of refuge management.

Planning will officially begin during the winter of 2007. You should receive our second "Planning Update" at that time,

describing the beginning of the planning process and information about attending our public scoping meetings.

We will frequently refer to background materials provided in this planning update (Planning Update #1) throughout the CCP process. Please try to read it before our first meeting; this will help all of us start on the same page, so to speak, when we begin our public scoping meetings.

I hope you'll feel free to contact me or Mark Pelz, Refuge Planner, if you have any questions. See page 7 to learn about the CCP and page 8 for our phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Carol Damberg

Carol Damberg
Refuge Manager

What is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

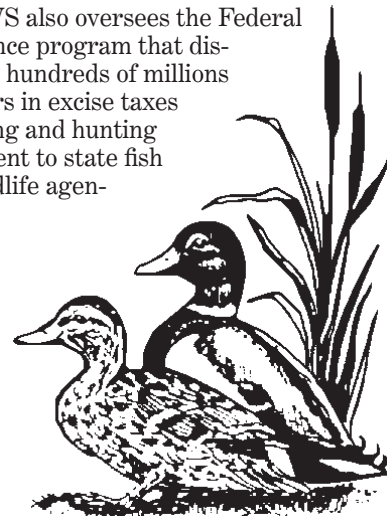
The FWS manages the 94-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses more than 545 refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas.

It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices, and 78 ecological services field stations.

The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such

as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their wildlife and habitat conservation efforts.

The FWS also oversees the Federal Assistance program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.



What is the National Wildlife Refuge System?



In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt protected an island with nesting pelicans, herons, ibis, and roseate spoonbills in Florida's Indian River from feather collectors who were decimating their colonies. He established Pelican Island as the nation's first bird sanctuary and went on to establish many other sanctuaries for wildlife during his tenure. This small network of sanctuaries continued to expand, later becoming the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System).

Today, over 100 years later, Klamath Marsh Refuge is one of 545 National Wildlife Refuges encompassing nearly 94 million acres nationwide. The Refuge System is the largest system of lands in the world primarily dedicated to the conservation of wildlife. It is spread across 50 states, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Johnston Atoll, Midway Atoll, and several other Pacific Islands. About 20.6 million acres in the Refuge System are managed

as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

In 1997 Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (Act), legislation that provides clear guidance for the management of the Refuge System. The act includes a new statutory mission statement and directs the FWS to manage the Refuge System as a national system of lands and waters devoted to conserving wildlife and maintaining the biological integrity of ecosystems.

This law requires the FWS to develop a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for each refuge. It also states that certain wildlife-dependent recreational uses are priority public uses on refuges and strengthens the compatibility determination process for assuring that these and other activities do not conflict with refuge management purposes and goals.

What's in a name?

Many people confuse state and federal fish and wildlife agencies because their names are similar. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Interior. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is a state agency.

Our names are similar and so are our missions: Both agencies are dedicated to wildlife conservation for the benefit of present and future generations. Our jurisdictions are different. The FWS is the lead agency responsible for federally-listed species and migratory birds, whether they are located on federal, state, or private lands. The ODFW has primary responsibility for resident fish and wildlife on state and private lands and oversees state-listed species. Klamath Marsh Refuge is managed by the FWS, which coordinates with ODFW on a variety of natural resource management issues.

“Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of people who are alive today, but the property of unknown generations whose belongings we have no right to squander.”

President Theodore Roosevelt

What is the mission of the Refuge System?



Black-necked stilts

National Wildlife Refuges are places where “wildlife comes first.”

“The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

Lands within the Refuge System are managed first and foremost for the benefit of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Our mission differs from other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, which focuses on forest stewardship and sustainable forest uses; the Bureau of Land Management, which deals with the productivity and multiple use of the land; and the National Park Service, which conserves scenery, wildlife, and historic objects for people's recreational enjoyment.

Refuge History

Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge was established by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission on March 14, 1958. The 24,418-acre acquisition boundary approved by the commission included the southern half of Klamath Marsh and fell entirely within the boundaries of the 2.2 million acre Klamath Indian Reservation.

Later in 1958, the FWS acquired the first four tracts of refuge land totaling 860 acres. Between 1958 and 1959, Congress passed amendments to the Klamath Termination Act, which authorized the sale of tribal lands to the FWS and changed the refuge name to the Klamath Forest National Wildlife Refuge. On September 7, 1960, 14,641 acres of tribal lands were transferred to the FWS. Between 1972 and 1980, the FWS acquired three additional tracts totaling 1,431 acres.

In 1988, the FWS completed an Environmental Assessment which expanded the acquisition boundary of the refuge to 49,583 acres to include the northern half of Klamath Marsh. Since this expansion, the FWS has acquired six additional tracts totaling 24,508 acres. In 1998, Congress changed the name of the refuge back to Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge.

Project Location and Watershed

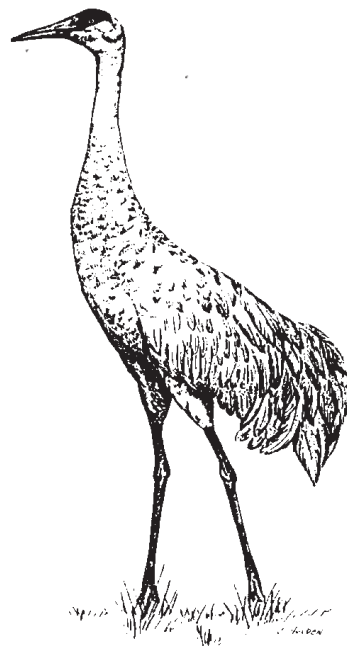
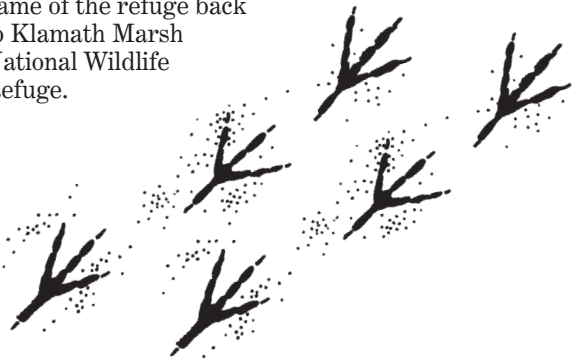
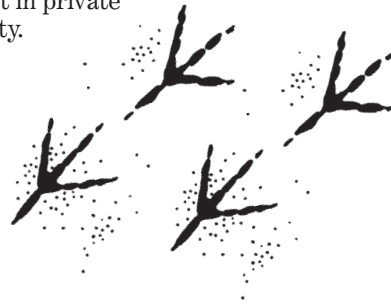
Klamath Marsh Refuge is located in central Klamath County, 20 miles east of Crater Lake and 30 miles north of Chiloquin, OR. It is located within the Williamson River watershed, part of the larger Klamath Watershed, as shown on page 4.

The refuge is bordered by private lands along its west boundary and Winema National Forest along its eastern boundary.

Refuge Project Size and Lands

The approved refuge boundary for Klamath Marsh NWR — the area within which the FWS is authorized to acquire, protect, and manage land — is 49,583 acres (See map on page 5). Within the approved boundary, the FWS currently owns or manages 40,885 acres.

Private lands within the approved refuge boundary may eventually be purchased and managed as part of the refuge. However, FWS policy is to purchase lands only from willing sellers. Furthermore, federal law requires all federal agencies to pay fair market value when acquiring any interest in private property.



“The marsh on the Klamath Reservation is the most important marsh to waterfowl that is left unprotected in the Nation”

F.A. Seaton, Secretary of the Interior, May 5, 1958



Bald eagle



Wocus harvest

Refuge Purposes

The purposes identified below for Klamath Marsh Refuge are defined by language within a number of acts of Congress which grant the FWS general authority to acquire land for National Wildlife Refuges:

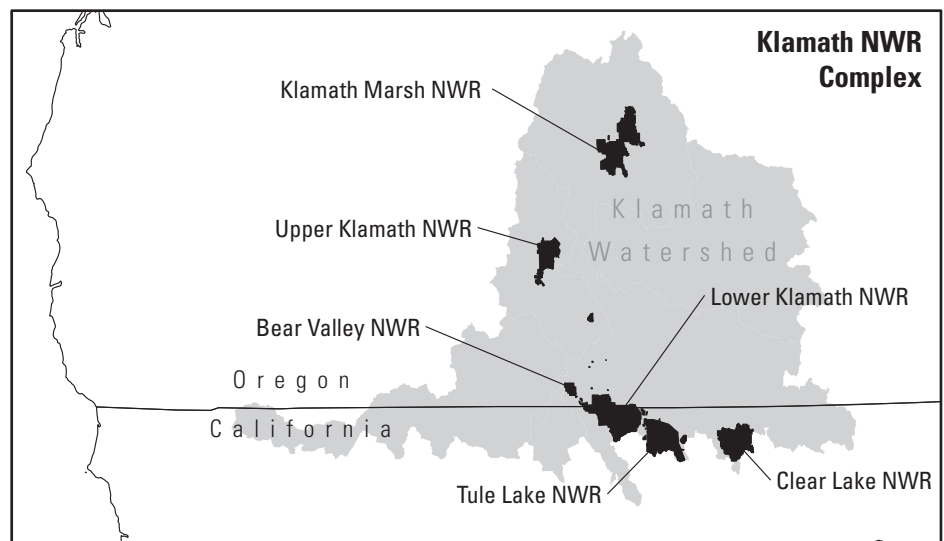
- ...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds. *16 U.S.C. § 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)*
- ...for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources ... *16 U.S.C. § 742f(a)(4)*... for the 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 ... *16 U.S.C. § 742f(b)(1) (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956)*
- ... the conservation of the wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions ... *16 U.S.C. § 3901(b) (Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986)*



Refuge Entrance



Bluebird



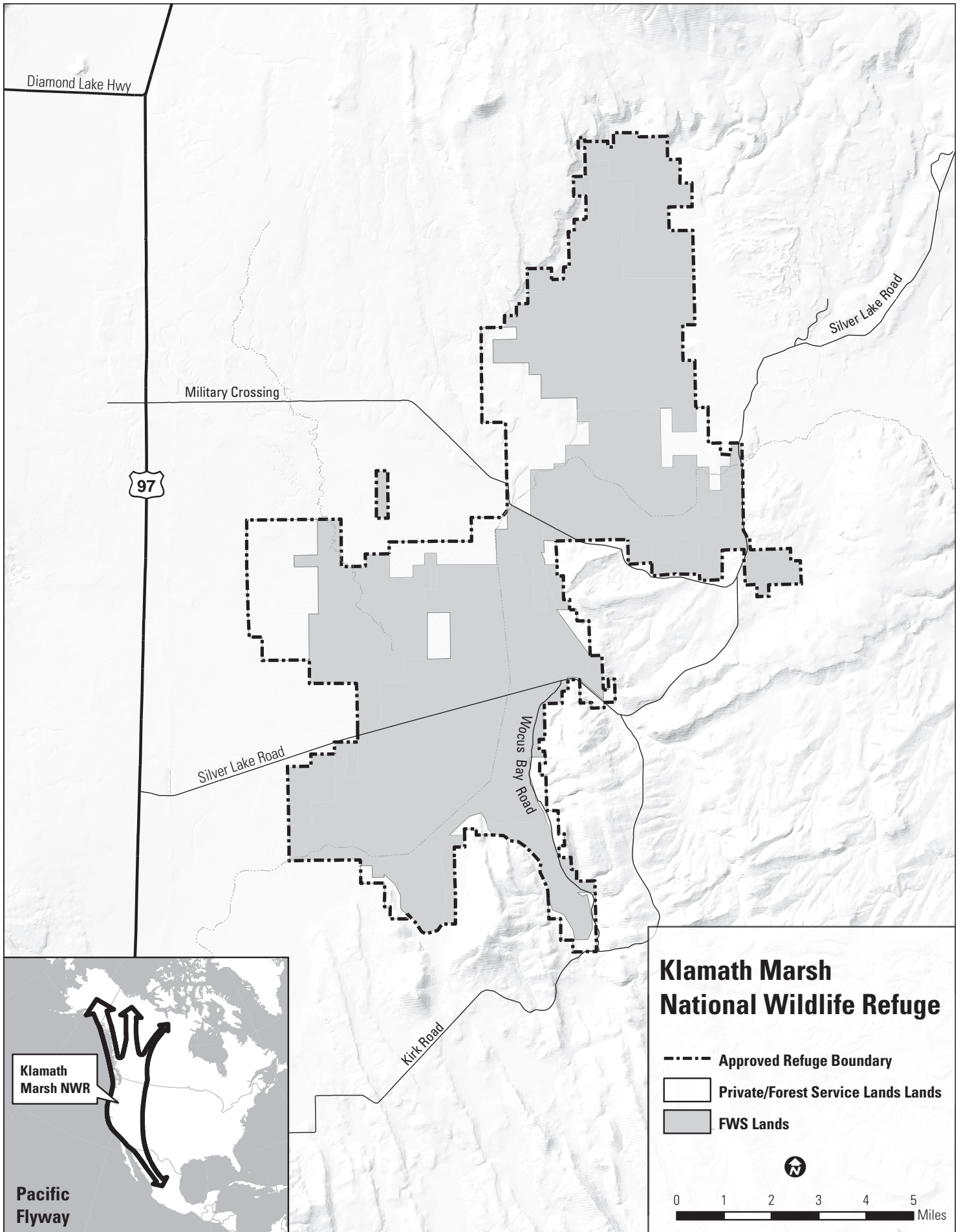
Marmots

The Klamath Basin Refuge Complex

Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge is one of six refuges that make up the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex (see map above). Other refuges included in the complex are: Upper Klamath, Lower Klamath, Tule Lake, Clear Lake, and Bear Valley Refuges. The complex of six refuges was established to conserve much of the Klamath Basin's remaining wetland habitat. Historically, the Klamath Basin was dominated by approximately 185,000 acres of shallow lakes and freshwater marshes that supported peak populations of over six million waterbirds. Today, less than 25 percent of the historic marshes and shallow wetlands remains.

The Klamath Basin Refuges consist of a variety of habitats, including freshwater marshes, open water, coniferous forests, sagebrush and juniper grasslands, agricultural lands, and rocky cliffs and slopes. These habitats support diverse and abundant populations of resident and migratory wildlife with 490 species having been observed on or near the refuges. The refuges serve as migratory stopovers for about three-quarters of the Pacific Flyway waterfowl, with peak fall concentrations of over one million birds. In addition, winter bald eagle numbers peak in mid February, with Klamath Basin populations ranking as one of the largest recorded in the contiguous United States.

For the wildlife enthusiast, a visit to the Klamath Basin refuges during any season is a voyage of never-ending discovery. Year to year and season to season, the dynamic ebb and flow of wildlife is a process of constant change.



“Strategically located in the Pacific Flyway, this marsh has, since time immemorial, served important needs of waterfowl.”

FWS Regional Director, 1955



Group tour at Klamath Marsh



Prescribed fire in sedge meadows



Canoeist on Wocus Bay

Klamath Marsh Refuge Programs Today

The comprehensive conservation planning process upon which we are about to embark allows the public an opportunity to share ideas and make comments about how the refuge will be managed over the next 15 years. To assist you, we'd like to describe our current programs.

Habitat Management Programs

Klamath Marsh Refuge is comprised primarily of wetland marshes and pine forest habitat types. Located within the Williamson River Watershed, the Williamson River traverses across most of the refuge where it creates a narrow band of river and willow riparian habitats. Approximately 36,000 acres of the 40,855 acre refuge are classified as permanent and seasonal marsh. Ponderosa and lodgepole pine forest communities occur on approximately 3,400 acres of the refuge. Sedge meadows and upland grass habitats surround the periphery of the cattail and bulrush dominated emergent marsh and form the transition zone between the wetland marsh and forested uplands.

Haying, grazing, prescribed fire, and the seasonal diversion of water to optimize flooding of wetland areas are the main habitat management strategies used to maintain or improve the wetland, sedge, and grass meadows habitat types. Although these management strategies have been reasonably successful on a small scale, there have been habitat shifts resulting from long-term drought along with other factors (e.g., drainage, ditching). Existing sedge meadows are relatively healthy, diverse, and unchanged since refuge establishment; however, since the early 1900s, the open water habitat of the marsh has been gradually displaced by solid stands of emergent vegetation (cattail and bulrush) that have changed the biological diversity of the marsh. Haying, grazing and prescribed fire programs are the current management strategies used to create more open water areas within the wetlands and stimulate or reinvigorate the regeneration of wetland plant species to enhance the structural diversity of the marsh.

Beginning around 1920, wildfires were actively suppressed in and around the refuge. The result has been ponderosa and lodgepole pine stands that have grown up in the absence of natural low-severity, frequent fires for many decades. Without frequent fires, dense stands of stunted or dying pines have been created, reducing habitat quality for wildlife. Management of pine forests

on the refuge has been minimal since the refuge was established. Although some selected logging and prescribed fires have been implemented, a more active management program is needed to create healthy refuge forests that are reasonably stable, self sustaining, and productive for forest dwelling wildlife. An estimated 85 species of native landbirds breed in ponderosa pine habitats along with numerous mammals, insects, etc. Restoration of surrounding forests through cooperative relationships with adjacent landowners is required for successful future forest restoration.

Willow riparian habitat exists along portions of the Williamson River and other springs or seeps that enter the refuge. Riparian areas have been protected by fencing out domestic livestock that often like to forage and rest in these areas.

A major focus is the control of invasive plant species in all habitat types. The land protected by the refuge has very few populations of invasive weeds. Canada thistle, perennial pepperweed, knapweed, and reed canary grass are a few of the species that have been located and treated on the refuge. Cheatgrass has recently invaded upland areas and poses a significant threat to these areas if future control is not successful.

Tribal Consultations

The Klamath Marsh lies within the former Klamath Indian Reservation established by the 1864 Treaty between the United States of America and the Klamath and Modoc Tribes and Yahooskin Band of Snake Indians (Tribes). Former tribal reservation lands remain very important to the Tribes culturally, spiritually, and for subsistence gathering. The refuge staff collaborate with the Klamath Tribes regarding wildlife management, forestry practices, and the protection of cultural sites. It is imperative to continue consulting with the Tribes during the management planning process to create a successful comprehensive conservation plan.

Visitor Services

The FWS estimates between 2,000 to 4,000 visits per year, with a majority of visits focused on wildlife observation, especially birds. The objective of the current public use program is to provide high quality, wildlife-dependent visitor services that are compatible with refuge purposes and cultural resources. Public uses that are

continued on page 7

Programs...

continued from page 6

currently accommodated on the refuge include wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation, waterfowl hunting, fishing, and canoeing. Development of visitor services and infrastructure on the refuge has remained minimal because of its remote nature, minimal staff, local tribal concerns, and low visitation rate. The entire refuge, except specific interpretive sites and designated roads, is closed to public entry to reduce disturbance to wildlife and for protection of cultural resources. The exceptions are canoeists, who may seasonally boat through the Wocus Bay Marsh, and duck hunters, who may walk or boat into areas south of Silver Lake Road during the waterfowl season.

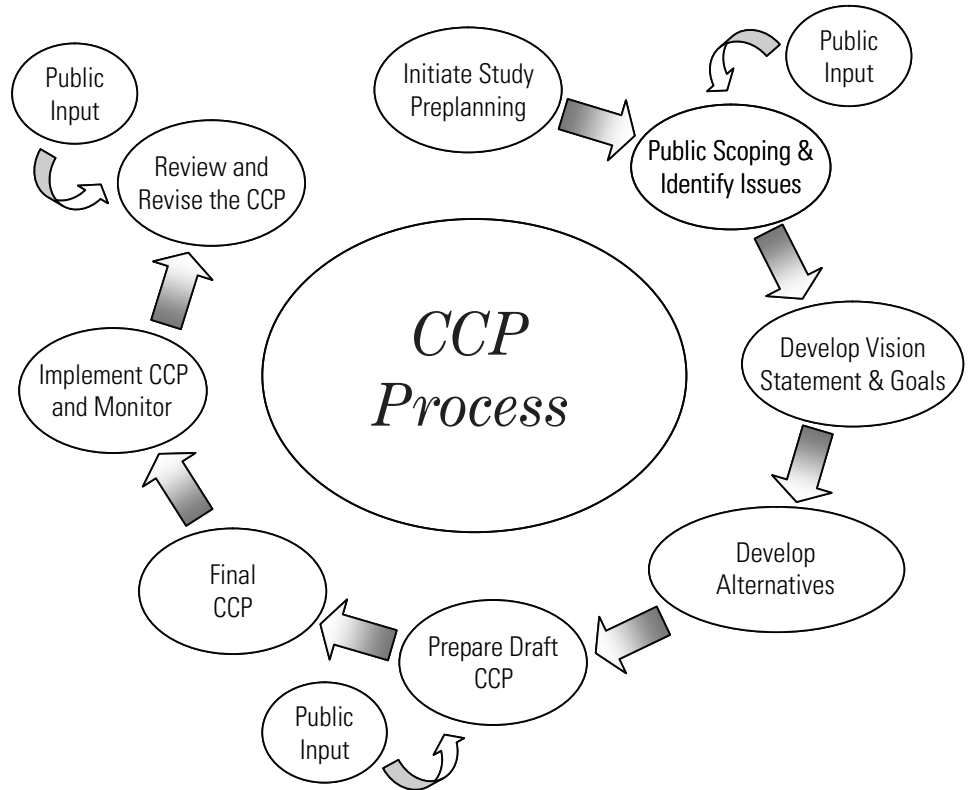
There are three primary roads that are open to visitors for use in observing or photographing refuge resources. The paved Silver Lake Road bisects the southern portion of the refuge and offers several locations for cars to pull off and observe wildlife. The Wocus Bay Road is a 2-track road that allows visitors to observe wildlife along Wocus Bay and also access an interpretive viewing site and primitive boat ramp. The gravel Military Crossing Road bisects the central portion of the refuge and provides general wildlife viewing opportunities in upland and marsh habitats.

There are three locations on the refuge with interpretative kiosks or panels. Interpretative kiosk panels are located at the headquarters and at the beginning of the Wocus Bay Road. A series of interpretative signs have also been placed at an overlook along Wocus Bay Road.

Fall waterfowl hunting is permitted in accordance with Federal and State Regulations within the marsh areas south of Silver Lake Road. Often, the opportunity to hunt waterfowl is very limited because fall water levels in the marsh are very low.

Fishing is restricted to the borrow ditches along Silver Lake Road where brown bullheads are the primary fish caught.

Canoeing opportunities are available in Wocus Bay between July 1 and September 30. The canoe area consists of approximately 700 acres of open water with bulrush and cattail marsh. There are no facilities or equipment rentals at the canoe area, so visitors must provide their own canoes. Wildlife viewing opportunities along the canoe trail are excellent, especially during the morning and evening hours.



What is a CCP?

When Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, it incorporated an underlying philosophy that “wildlife comes first” on refuges.

The Act provides the FWS with guidance for managing refuges to ensure the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Three important principles of the Act are to maintain biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the refuge and facilitate compatible wildlife-dependent recreation.

Every refuge is to have a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) completed by 2012. The CCP will outline refuge goals, objectives, and management strategies. It is a flexible, “living” document that will be updated every 15 years.

The CCP:

- Ensures that management of the refuge reflects the purposes of the refuge and the mission, policies, and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System;
- Provides the public with an understanding of the reasons for management actions on the refuge;

- Provides a vision statement for the refuge;
- Ensures the compatibility of current and future uses of the refuge with its purposes;
- Provides long-term continuity in refuge management; and
- Provides budget justification for operation and maintenance and facility development requests.

The CCP will provide broad management direction and guidance for the refuge, contingent upon future funding and resources. The accompanying environmental document, required by the National Environmental Policy Act, will describe the alternatives considered and their environmental effects. You will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft CCP and environmental document.

In January 2007 we will hold our first public scoping meetings to help identify issues and gather information. The key planning steps are listed above and will be listed in future updates so you can track our progress through the planning process.

CCP Schedule

Summer 2006	Begin preplanning
Winter 2006	Mail out background information
February 2007	Hold public scoping meetings and begin the CCP process

Meeting Dates/Locations

Tuesday, February 6, 2007 (6:00 - 8:30 PM)
Shilo Inn Suites Hotel
2500 Almond Street
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

Wednesday, February 7, 2007 (6:00 - 8:30 PM)
Chiloquin Community Center
140 1st Ave
Chiloquin, Oregon 97624

For more information, visit our website at:
<http://fws.gov/klamathbasinrefuges>

Compatibility of Refuge Uses

Prior to allowing various public uses on a refuge, federal law requires that the FWS first determine that these specific uses are compatible.

A compatible use is a proposed or existing use of a national wildlife refuge that, based on sound professional judgement of the refuge manager; will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System mission or the purposes of the refuge.

Compatibility determinations are used to help evaluate such uses and will be integrated as part of the CCP planning process.

Help us plan the future

During late 2006 and early 2007, Tribes, interested individuals, agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders will be invited to express their concerns and share their visions for the refuge. This will be your opportunity to help us identify issues and concerns and receive answers to any questions you may have. Your comments and/or participation will be critical to the success of this planning effort.

We will send you our second planning update in early 2007, announcing the beginning of the CCP effort and providing more information on how you can get involved.

Please feel free to contact us!

We are available to provide additional information about the refuge history, goals, and accomplishments to date, and to answer any questions about the planning process. Feel free to call, write, e-mail, or come to see us.

If you did not receive this newsletter through the mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please contact us. You can also get information at our website <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning/>

If you would like to be removed from the list or are receiving multiple copies of these notices, please let us know.

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Refuge officer checks waterfowl hunters



Sandhill crane



Visitors at Wocus Bay

