



BIG BRANCH MARSH

National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Workshop II



FINAL REPORT

July 19-21, 2004
Lacombe, LA



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A Collaborative Workshop:

**United States Fish & Wildlife Service
The Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (SSC/IUCN)**



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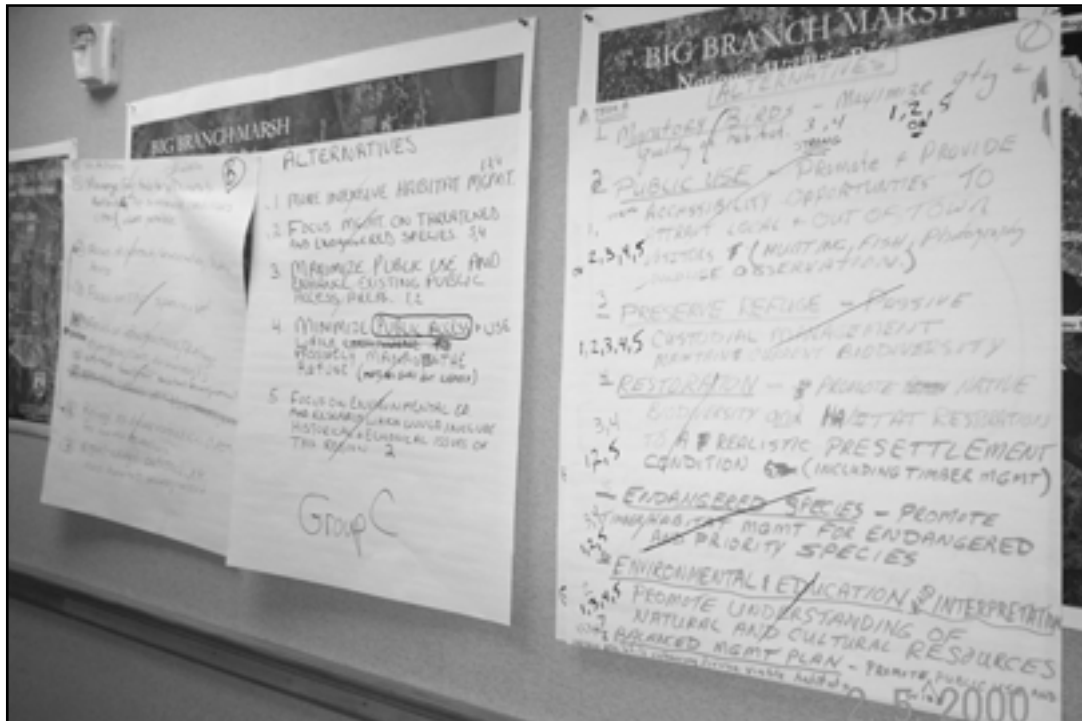
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Section 1 *Executive Summary*

Executive Summary

A. Introduction and Workshop Process

Introduction to Comprehensive Conservation Planning

This workshop was designed to contribute to the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) of Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. The Plan is a required element of the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 which states that all refuges will be managed in accordance with an approved CCP that when implemented will achieve the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (System) and the Refuge purpose.

The National Wildlife Refuge System was created to conserve fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats and this conservation mission will be facilitated by providing Americans opportunities to participate in compatible wildlife-dependent recreation (National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997). For the purposes of the Act:

- (1) The term ‘compatible use’ means a wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a refuge that, in the sound professional judgment of the Director, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the System or the purposes of the Refuge.
- (2) The terms ‘wildlife-dependent recreation’ and ‘wildlife-dependent recreational use’ mean a use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, or environmental education and interpretation.

The Mission of the System

“The Mission of the System as defined by the Improvement Act 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.”

Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and its Purpose

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) authorized the establishment of Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (BBM) on September 29, 1994 under the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The acquisition boundary for the Refuge included 12,000 acres of marshlands and forested wetlands between Cane Bayou on the west, Lake Pontchartrain on the south and the Southern Railroad trestle on the east. The initial acquisition occurred on October 13, 1994 when The Conservation Fund (TCF), with funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, donated 3,660 acres of wetland. The refuge acquisition boundary went through two expansion phases. The first expansion proposal, which was approved in December, 1996, included 10,000 acres at 3 expansion sites: Oak Harbor, a 2,931 acre tract, Fritchie Marsh covering 6,500 acres and a 500 acre tract along the east side of Lacombe Bayou. The second expansion proposal was approved in April, 1998 and included 1,770 acres of wetlands, hardwood ridges and pine flatwoods adjacent to existing refuge lands. These small tracts of land also

included the current 110-acre headquarters site for Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex headquarters. Additional acquisitions were made possible by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and Land and Water Conservation Act funds as well as donations from TCF. Currently, BBM is approximately 15,000 acres of fee title lands within the 24,000 acre acquisition boundary of marshlands and forested wetlands. Additionally, the Refuge manages through a Cooperative Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, St. Tammany Wildlife Refuge, which is 1,300 acres of marsh adjacent to BBM.

The wetlands of the Refuge were threatened by urban expansion from the city of New Orleans. The establishment of the refuge and the approved expansions were supported by several local organizations, including Northshore Coastal Watch, the St. Tammany Sportsman's League, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation. These organizations lobbied Senator J. Bennett Johnson and Congressman Robert Livingston to save this important wetland area.

The purposes of the Refuge were defined by the establishing authorities:

Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986

(1) for the conservation of the wetlands on 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.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989

(1) to protect, enhance, restore, and manage an appropriate distribution and diversity of wetland ecosystems and other habitats for migratory birds and other fish and wildlife in North America;

(2) to maintain current or improved distributions of migratory bird populations;

(3) to sustain an abundance of waterfowl and other migratory birds consistent with the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the international obligations contained in the migratory bird treaties and conventions and other agreements with Canada, Mexico, and other countries.

The Refuge purposes were further defined in the 1994 Final Land Protection Plan and two subsequent Supplemental Environmental Assessments (1996, 1998) for expansion of BBM as the following management objectives:

(1) to provide habitat for natural diversity of wildlife associated with Big Branch Marsh;

(2) to provide wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl;

(3) to provide nesting habitat for wood ducks;

(4) to provide habitat for non-game migratory birds;

(5) to provide opportunities for public outdoor recreation, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and environmental education and interpretation, whenever they are compatible with the purposes of the refuge.

The most striking characteristic of the Refuge is the diversity of habitats in a relatively small area. The Refuge is a mixture of marshes, pine islands, pine ridges, hardwood hammocks and cypress breaks along the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Lake Pontchartrain is a shallow,

flat-bottomed, fresh-to-brackish water lake with varying salinity levels, depending on rainfall and wind direction. Heavy rainfall refreshes the lake and its adjacent marshes, while strong easterly winds during periods of low rainfall will cause higher saline water to move into the area. The shoreline consists of sandy, narrow beaches with near shore grass beds. Several small bayous and erosional cuts provide water exchange between Lake Pontchartrain and Big Branch Marsh. The tidally influenced marsh, which grades from brackish to intermediate to fresh, is interspersed with shallow ponds. The transition from marsh to pineland is distinct and abrupt. The pinelands near the marsh edge are prone to shallow flooding and an understory of wiregrass is present in some areas. Pine species present are predominantly slash and loblolly, with a few pockets of longleaf.

The diverse habitats attract many species of shorebirds, wading birds, neotropical migratory birds and wintering waterfowl. The Federally listed species, such as the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and the bald eagle, nest on the Refuge. Mammals common in the area include white-tailed deer, mink, nutria, raccoon and river otter. The refuge contains numerous estuaries, ponds and bayous that provide critical spawning and nursery habitat for commercially important fish, shrimp and crabs. It also offers saltwater and freshwater fish for a recreational fisherman. Common species include largemouth bass, redfish, speckled trout, catfish and bream.

Introduction to the Workshop

This workshop was organized to assist the Big Branch Marsh Refuge staff and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continue the CCP process by building on the first workshop, which developed a vision for the future of the Refuge and drafted management goals. This second workshop was designed to identify alternatives for future management of the refuge, and create objectives for reaching the goals.

A concerted effort was made to identify and invite stakeholders that had expressed interest. Participants were invited from a variety of organizations including representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, The Nature Conservancy, and the local public (See Appendix IV).

The goals of this workshop were to: 1) identify and explore key alternative management scenarios for achieving refuge goals; and 2) begin the process of developing objectives for each alternative. This report presents the results of the enormous amount of effort and energy the participants contributed to the workshop. The results presented here are preliminary and subject to review and revision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Workshop Process

The workshop was organized at the request of the Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in collaboration with the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) of the Species Survival Commission of IUCN - the World Conservation Union. To assure credible, fair, and independent conduct of the workshop and of the workshop results, CBSG was requested to design the workshop process, provide facilitation for the workshop, and to assemble and edit the report. Editing of the final report was done with the assistance of the workshop participants. Outside review by non-participants was not part of

the process. No content changes were made by the editors and the participants checked that accurate presentations were made of the work they had done during the workshop.

The workshop was conducted July 19-21, 2004 at the Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex Office in Lacombe, LA. This site was chosen because it is in the Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and allows easy access to the workshop by invited members of the local community. The workshop extended over 3 days with all lunches brought in for maximum use of the time available. There were 23 participants with most present the entire duration of the workshop. This provided for sustained interactions and the benefit of full attention to the goals and process of the workshop. Participants in the workshop were divided into three groups, identified as Group A, Group B, and Group C, throughout this report. Groups were assigned with an effort to have members from different organizations and the public distributed evenly throughout.

The intent was that the stated goals would be accomplished and information and analysis generated in this workshop would feed back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and become the base material for writing the Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The workshop began with a series of presentations covering background information that would be helpful to the group over the course of the workshop. Onnie Byers, CBSG Executive Officer, started with an introduction to the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) and the workshop process that CBSG designed to assist in the development of the Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge CCP (for more information on CBSG see Appendix V). Then she described the concept of alternatives and gave examples from other CCPs. The Refuge staff concluded the presentations by describing current management, which will become Alternative 1 (no action).

Before getting started with the first task of this workshop, participants were asked to introduce themselves and write out and then read aloud answers to three introductory questions: 1) *Please provide your name, a brief identification of organization, your area of expertise and area of primary interest. Did you participate in Workshop I?;* 2) *What is your personal goal for this Workshop?;* and 3) *Was any important problem for the conservation planning process missed in the first Workshop? What is it?.* This process allows for expression of individual perspectives without being immediately influenced by previous responses. In addition, potential areas of common ground and first insights into the diversity of perceived issues present in the group are illuminated. This technique provides a check on whether the workshop deliberations respond to the concerns and issues that are raised. Answers to these questions can be found in Appendix II of this report.

B. Working Vision

After Workshop 1, the Service staff reviewed and revised the vision statement produced. At the beginning of Workshop 2, this vision was presented to the group and the group approved it with a few minor word changes. For details on this discussion see Appendix I. The final draft vision is below.

The Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge Vision Statement

The Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, located along the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, embraces significantly diverse species and habitats of local to international importance. The Refuge preserves a significant remnant of the diversity of natural habitats within the rapidly urbanizing Lake Pontchartrain Basin. It encompasses open waters of Lake Pontchartrain, nearshore grass beds and estuarine marshes, bottomland hardwoods, pine flatwoods interspersed with hardwood hummocks, bayous, and cypress sloughs and swamps. These habitats provide for a wide array of wildlife species within an environmentally aware urban community.

Viable, healthy populations of plants, fish and wildlife are maintained through habitat management activities that adapt to and mitigate the effects of external threats. The Refuge serves as a model of land stewardship and restoration practices and promotes sound habitat management activities within and beyond Refuge boundaries. It serves as a center for the development and application of progressive and innovative techniques and practices in wildlife and habitat management, biology, fire management, and habitat restoration. The Refuge provides and supports opportunities for appropriate studies and research by universities and other agencies.

The Refuge maintains, nurtures and promotes the tradition of community involvement and ownership that led to its formation, and benefits from an expanding advocacy by Refuge supporters and partners. The Refuge is recognized as a hub for environmental education and wildlife-related recreation, which fosters and creates a strong conservation ethic within the community. Cultural resources are protected and where appropriate, interpreted for the public.

As one of the last remaining undeveloped, contiguous tracts of wildlife habitat in the region, the Refuge provides broad opportunities for public use. From waterfowl hunting in the Refuge's marshes to birding and wildlife photography in the restored pine forests, experiencing the Refuge's intense natural beauty replenishes the spirit.

C. Working Goals

After the draft goals were developed in Workshop 1, they were reviewed and revised by the Service staff. On day one of Workshop 2, these goals were presented to the participants and accepted.

1. To provide a rich diversity of recreational opportunities for persons of all abilities to enjoy the Refuge's natural and cultural resources in a safe and compatible manner.

2. Develop and implement a broad spectrum of learning opportunities that promote stewardship among the public through an appreciation and understanding of Refuge resources.
3. To restore, protect, and maintain a mosaic of forested and wetland habitats native to the Lake Pontchartrain Basin in order to ensure healthy and viable plant and animal communities.
4. Identify, conserve, manage, and restore populations of native fish and wildlife species representative of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin, with emphasis on migratory birds and threatened and endangered species.
5. Provide adequate staffing, infrastructure, and maintenance to ensure the efficient, long-term administration of all Refuge programs and facilities.

D. Draft Management Alternatives

Alternative A. No Action/Current Management (*Fish and Wildlife Service Staff will write*)

Alternative B. Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species

The focus of this alternative would be to protect, restore, manage and monitor habitat and wildlife for healthy populations of plants, fish and targeted priority wildlife species, which utilize habitats within the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. Adaptive management activities shall focus on migrant and resident waterfowl, threatened and endangered species, wintering grassland birds, and species of concern to state and federal agencies with an emphasis on improving marginal habitat for priority wildlife species. The refuge will monitor and evaluate the effects of management on targeted species and future practices will adapt to the monitored effects on these species.

Interpretive and environmental education programs on and off the refuge would focus on the importance of managing priority wildlife and plant species and their habitats on the refuge and on adjacent areas. High quality compatible recreational opportunities for persons of all abilities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and bird watching would be provided commensurate with the requirements of targeted species of the refuge.

The refuge would seek support from the Service and supporters for adequate infrastructure and facilities to manage for priority wildlife species.

Alternative C. Passive Management

Under this alternative, Big Branch Marsh would only apply minimal habitat action to meet mandated responsibilities (RCW recovery plan, mitigate fire threats to neighbors) and to prevent further shoreline erosion. You would allow natural succession and progression of the wetland forests and marshes. Refuge staff would observe, monitor and document habitat conditions and wildlife population changes over time.

Hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography would be available to the public. Minimal improvements or additions to existing facilities in support of these activities would be provided. On and off-site Environmental Education and Interpretative programs will be continued through partnerships and volunteers. Education and interpretation focus is on indigenous wildlife species and habitats, plus those mandated habitat/restoration activities.

Alternative D. Total Restoration Management

Re-introduce natural processes (fire, hydrology, sediment addition/input) to restore to pre settlement conditions. Re-establish shoreline, acquire land and other measures to facilitate ecosystem management and mitigate external threats. Restore composition and structure of natural communities, explore/foster opportunities for partnerships and conservation easements to achieve restoration objectives

Public would benefit from restoration of natural wetland functions and values; storm protection, water quality, educational opportunities

Big 6 activities (Hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretation) would be accommodated in such a way as to minimize costs in facilities and staff.

Education and Interpretation would focus on restoration activities, demonstration areas, natural processes that established plant and animal communities. Outreach would emphasize partnerships in the community to achieve habitat management goals. (Restoring salinities...remove invasive species).

Alternative E. Integrated Management

Priority is placed on a proactive, integrated management plan that promotes and enhances both diverse, viable wildlife habitats as well as a variety of compatible recreational and educational opportunities. Management direction and administration are focused on protecting, conserving, and restoring a mosaic of forested and wetland habitats native to Lake Ponchartrain Basin for the benefit of native fish and wildlife species. At the same time, public awareness and use of the natural and cultural resources will be actively promoted.

Alternative F. Public Use Management

Priority is placed on promoting and providing enhanced educational and recreational opportunities to encourage environmental stewardship and wildlife appreciation. Infrastructure (facilities, funding, and staffing) will be developed to enhance the public's ability to enjoy the Refuge's natural and cultural resources. All management plans will be designed to complement public use and educational opportunities.

E. Draft Objectives

Objectives table for Big Branch Marsh CCP II

Acronyms:

RCW – Red Cockaded Woodpecker
 T & E – Threatened and Endangered
 CCP – Comprehensive Conservation Plan
 ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
 GCJV – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

PUBLIC USE GOALS

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
<i>Goal 1. To provide a rich diversity of recreational opportunities for persons of all abilities to enjoy the Refuge's natural and cultural resources in a safe and compatible manner.</i>					
	<p>1.1. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review hunting programs to insure protection of targeted species and allow for hunts where appropriate.</p> <p>1.2. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review fishing program to insure protection of targeted species and accommodate fishing/crabbing, etc. where appropriate.</p> <p>1.3. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review wildlife observation and photography programs to</p>	<p>1.1. By 2006 complete and implement a maintenance plan for existing public use facilities: parking lots, kiosks, trailheads and boat launches piers for all Big 6 activities.</p> <p>1.2. Participate in 3 outreach events per year to inform public of use opportunities.</p> <p>1.3. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p>	<p>1.1 By 2006 complete and maintain existing facilities: parking lots, kiosks, trailheads, boat launches, and piers for all Big 6 activities.</p> <p>1.2. Participate in 3 outreach events per year to inform public of use opportunities.</p> <p>1.3. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p> <p>1.4. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure</p>	<p>1.1. By 2006, complete improvements at all existing public use sites, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Parking lots-grading bollards/chains, permitted activities signs b. Kiosks c. Trailheads <p>1.2. By 2007/8 – Increase hunter participation by xx% (offer hunter education and license purchases at refuge headquarters 3 courses annually).</p> <p>1.3. By 2007 improve and mark walk-in fisher access (trail and pier) at</p>	<p>1.1. By 2006, FWS and or partners will complete facility improvements and additions (kiosks hiking, biking, auto trails creation, boat launches) that maximize opportunities for Big 6 participation.</p> <p>1.2. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure ADA compliance.</p> <p>1.3. By 200X, increase hunting visits by xx% by offering - youth, handicap, primitive weapons, female only hunting weekend, licenses, wider audiences, hunter education. Complete 2 of the above in the next three years.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>insure protection of targeted species and accommodate these activities where appropriate.</p> <p>1.4. On annual basis, review wildlife viewing programs and adjust to reflect changes in populations.</p> <p>1.5. Visitor safety objectives provided across all alternatives, use reduce violations numbers/incidents</p> <p>1.6. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p> <p>1.7. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure ADA compliance.</p>		ADA compliance.	<p>Sapsucker Rd and sell licenses.</p> <p>1.4. Increase wildlife viewing opportunities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partnering with birding groups to lead 6 birding trips/year. b. Establish a viewing/photography blind at end of Boy Scout Rd. Slough for self-guided birders c. By 2007, complete study for potential auto routes and links to Tammany Trace. <p>1.5. Participate in 5 off-site outreach events annually to promote recreational opportunities.</p> <p>1.6. By 2007, implement partnerships with 3 organizations to help provide/increase recreational opportunities and facilities.</p> <p>1.7. Develop (recruit, train) and maintain volunteer Corps to assist with recreation programs.</p> <p>1.8. Conduct at least 2 guided interpretive tours (hike or canoe) by 2005</p>	<p>1.4. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review fishing program to insure protection of targeted species and accommodate fishing/crabbing, etc., where appropriate.</p> <p>1.5. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review wildlife observation and photography programs to insure protection of targeted species and accommodate and promote these activities where appropriate to increase participation by xx %.</p> <p>1.6. Increase participation in wildlife observation (partner with birding groups, blinds, explore auto routes, links to Tammany Trace?).</p> <p>1.7. Conduct outreach to promote recreational opportunities.</p> <p>1.8. Implement partnerships with organizations to help provide/increase recreational opportunities</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
				<p>each weekend.</p> <p>1.9. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p> <p>1.10. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure ADA compliance.</p>	<p>and facilities.</p> <p>1.9. Recruit, train, and maintain volunteer corps of 40 to assist with recreation programs by 2007.</p> <p>1.10. Conduct outreach to promote rec. opportunities at public events. (i.e., crab festival)</p> <p>1.11. Boater Education partner with Power Squadron Boating Ed./safety</p> <p>1.12. Partner with canoe/bicycle rental concession</p> <p>1.13. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p>
<p><i>Goal 2. Develop and implement a broad spectrum of learning opportunities that promote stewardship among the public through an appreciation and understanding of Refuge resources.</i></p>					
	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2. By 2006, develop and implement an outreach/</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2. Continue existing career outreach.</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize pre-settlement habitat management</p> <p>2.2. By 2006, develop and implement an</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2. By 2006, develop and implement an</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2. By 2007, develop “x” of additional curriculum-</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>marketing plan to educate public on new refuge management focus</p> <p>2.3. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.4. By 2006, establish partnerships with at least three organizations to develop and deliver educational programs and materials on target species management.</p> <p>2.5. By 2011, the refuge will complete installation of a state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>	<p>2.3. By 2006 develop partners, at least 3, and volunteers to administer environmental education program at 2004 level.</p> <p>2.4. Upon implementation of the plan, the visitor center operation will be folded into the headquarters building.</p>	<p>outreach/marketing plan to educate public on new refuge management focus</p> <p>2.3. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.4. By 2006, establish partnerships with 3 organizations or agencies to develop and deliver educational materials and programs on restoration activities.</p> <p>2.5. Research educational opportunities use in all alternatives if applicable.</p> <p>2.6. By 2011, the refuge will complete installation of a state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>	<p>outreach/marketing plan to educate public on new refuge management focus.</p> <p>2.3. By 2007, develop X (less than F) number of additional environmental education programs (curriculum-based).</p> <p>2.4. Develop “X” adult environmental education programs w/leader</p> <p>2.5. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.6. Oriented programs with leader orientation sessions.</p> <p>2.7. Promote career awareness sessions to schools.</p> <p>2.8. Partner with other groups to provide programs/information to public - part of larger landscape</p> <p>2.9. Target senior groups (i.e. elder hostel), tourists - NO and eco.</p> <p>2.10. Target outreach to entities such as New Orleans tourists (i.e. Jazz</p>	<p>based programs for schools/teachers – (aquatic resources, water resources, waterfowl/birds, pine flatwoods, threatened and endangered species, management (i.e., prescribed fire)).</p> <p>2.3. Develop “X” adult environmental education programs with leader.</p> <p>2.4. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.5. Develop “X” scout group oriented programs with leader orientation sessions.</p> <p>2.6. Promote career awareness sessions to schools.</p> <p>2.7. Partner with other groups to provide programs/information to public - part of larger landscape</p> <p>2.8. Target senior groups (i.e. elder hostel), tourists - NO and eco;</p> <p>2.9. Target outreach to entities such as New Orleans tourists (i.e. Jazz</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
				<p>Fest, Conventions) to advertise and encourage refuge visitation.</p> <p>2.11. Develop educational materials such as video and brochures, remote cam and internet links.</p> <p>2.12. Increase visitor usage in areas of special demographics (age, inner city youth, etc).</p> <p>2.13. By 2011, the refuge will complete installation of a state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>	<p>Fest, Conventions) to advertise and encourage refuge visitation.</p> <p>2.10. Increase outreach public education by xx%.</p> <p>2.11. By 2009, the refuge will complete installation of state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>

BIOLOGICAL GOALS

(Note: all notes for consideration by refuge staff and management are highlighted in yellow.)

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
<p>1. Goal 3. To restore, protect, and maintain a mosaic of forested and wetland habitats native to the Lake Pontchartrain Basin in order to ensure healthy and viable plant and animal communities. <i>Note – Group A proposes the following wording for Goal 3:</i> Maintain a healthy, diverse habitat and ecosystem of the marsh, aquatic system, and forest to the needs of migratory birds, non-game birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and insects that fulfills the mission and purposes of the Refuge System throughout the life of the plan.</p>					
	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Within 1 year of plan approval, identify and map degrading marsh that is potentially restorable to a 50/50 ratio of open water to vegetative areas to benefit resident and migratory wildlife.</p> <p>3.4. Implement the RCW Recovery Plan to improve habitat conditions by restoring XXX acres (250 acres per cluster) to reach and maintain 20 clusters within the next 15 years.</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Maintain mandated habitat conditions to support 17 clusters to contribute to the goals and objectives in the RCW Recovery Plan throughout the life of the CCP.</p> <p>3.4. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate, and record changes in habitat due to natural succession.</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and describe the historic habitat community/conditions structure (pre-settlement – 1700’s) of the Refuge within 2 years of plan approval.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.3. Within 2 years after identifying baseline data, write a management plan to determine actions and monitoring (burning, hydrological restoration, sediment addition and inputs) needed to maintain and manage historic communities and species to pre-settlement conditions. (Focus on historic marsh and delay the uplands)</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Within 1 year of plan approval, identify and map degrading marsh that is potentially restorable to a 50/50 ratio of open water to vegetative areas to benefit resident and migratory wildlife.</p> <p>3.4. Within 2 years of identifying baseline data, write a management plan to determine actions and monitoring (burning, hydrological restoration, sediment addition and</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Identify degrading marsh that is potentially restorable to a 50/50 ratio of open water to vegetative areas within 1 year to benefit resident and migratory wildlife.</p> <p>3.4. Maintain mandated habitat conditions to support 17 clusters to contribute to the goals and objectives in the RCW Recovery Plan throughout the life of the CCP.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>3.5. Protect XX acres of ecologically functioning habitat for identified targeted species over the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.6. Over the next XX years restore XX acres to benefit targeted species.</p> <p>3.7. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat.</p> <p>3.8. Complete acquisition of lands identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p>	<p>3.5. Complete acquisition of lands previously identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.6. Take steps to maintain habitats at 2004 status.</p>	<p>3.4. Restore the historic community structure of refuge habitat by increasing the cover of native plants from XX percent to XX percent and native plant species richness from XX species to XX species over the next 15 years. (Note – diversity may have been minimal prehistorically)</p> <p>3.5. Maintain mandated habitat conditions to contribute to the goals and objectives in the RCW Recovery Plan throughout the life of the CCP. (Note: RCW Recovery plan can be modified/revisited to meet another management direction the Refuge may be taking. Further debate may be taking on protection of the bird vs. protection of habitat)</p> <p>3.6. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate, and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat.</p>	<p>inputs) needed to maintain and manage targeted communities and species. (Note – There is an issue about terms native/pre-settlement – need to clarify Elizabeth’s concerned. Is this really just a habitat management plan or a step-down management plan?)</p> <p>3.5. Implement the RCW Recovery Plan to improve habitat conditions by restoring XXX acres (250 acres per cluster) to reach and maintain 20 clusters within the next 15 years.</p> <p>3.6. Protect XX acres of ecologically functioning habitat for identified targeted species over the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.7. Over the next XX years, restore XX acres to benefit targeted species.</p> <p>3.8. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat. (Note – don’t forget to monitor the</p>	<p>3.5. Designate and develop demonstration areas that are representative of at least three additional refuge habitats to be used with environmental education and interpretive programs within XX years.</p> <p>3.6. Manage and/or restore XX acres of XX habitat to benefit public uses such as hunting and fishing within XX years.</p> <p>3.7. Provide XX acres/sites of XX habitat to improve viewing opportunities for wildlife observation and photography within XX years.</p> <p>3.8. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat.</p> <p>3.9. Complete acquisition of lands previously identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
			<p>3.7. Using partners such as LDWF, TNC, Conservation Fund, private owners, and timber and oil companies, meet, identify, and propose candidate lands that are restorable to pre-historic settlement (1700's) conditions throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.8. Through partnerships, annually identify, record, and attempt to mitigate external threats, i.e. contaminants and invasive species, to Refuge habitat. (Describe a type of threat, i.e.– sewage intrusion or contaminants, water quality that would require working with others.)</p> <p>3.9. Complete acquisition of lands identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan. (Note – North Shore Boundary protection – some sort of an expansion proposal may be needed – carefully worded)</p>	<p>impacts of increased public use on the habitat. Also Consider this is done within the management plan)</p> <p>3.9. Designate and develop demonstration areas that are representative of at least three additional refuge habitats to be used with environmental and interpretive programs within XX years.</p> <p>3.10. Manage XX acres of XX habitat to benefit public uses such as hunting and fishing within XX years.</p> <p>3.11. Provide XX acres/sites of XX habitat to improve viewing opportunities for wildlife observation and photography within XX years.</p> <p>3.12. Complete acquisition of lands identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.13. Through partnerships, annually</p>	<p>3.10. Ensure outreach occurs with the public and partners to report findings of external threats and changes to habitats on an annual basis.</p> <p>(Note – Protect and manage habitat in terms of storm protection, sewage contamination, water quality. A research laboratory could be established to encourage research/weather station/encourage university involvement).</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
				<p>identify and attempt to mitigate external threats, i.e. contaminants and invasive species, to Refuge habitat. (A change is made here see Public Use alternatives).</p> <p>3.14. Insure outreach occurs with the public and partners to report findings of external threats and changes to habitats on an annual basis.</p>	
<p><i>Goal 4. Identify, conserve, manage, and restore populations of native fish and wildlife species representative of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin, with emphasis on migratory birds and threatened and endangered species.</i></p>					
	<p>4.1. Develop a refuge comprehensive wildlife list of species present & relative abundance, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan (use range maps and field surveys).</p> <p>4.2. Work with partners to jointly develop a list of wildlife species occurring in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin within three years or less of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.3. Reduce human disturbance to T&E</p>	<p>4.1. Monitor RCW population on the refuge annually, without banding.</p> <p>4.2. Develop a refuge comprehensive wildlife list of species present, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan. (use range maps and field surveys)</p> <p>4.3. Develop and implement monitoring and inventory programs to gain baseline data and information on wildlife species occurring on the refuge within three years</p>	<p>4.1. Develop a refuge wildlife list of species present, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.2. Work with partners to jointly develop a list of wildlife species occurring in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin within three years of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.3. Reduce disturbance to T&E (protected) species by establishing buffer zones within one year of completion of this plan.</p>	<p>4.1. Develop a refuge wildlife list of species presence & abundance, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.2. Work with cooperators (LDWF) to complete aerial waterfowl surveys annually.</p> <p>4.3. Establish an intensive nuisance (non native, invasive) control program (Annually participate in the state nutria trapping program and (eliminate) reduce 60% (a significant</p>	<p>4.1. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to maximize public health concerns, while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p> <p>4.2. Develop a base of 40</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>(protected) species by establishing buffer zones within one year of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.4. Band and survey the RCW population and provide suitable cavities within three years.</p> <p>4.5. Provide habitat for cavity nesting ducks to support objectives of the GCJV. (Band 100 wood ducks annually)(Clean and monitor 100 wood duck nesting boxes annually).</p> <p>4.6. Work with cooperators (LDWF) to complete aerial waterfowl surveys annually.</p> <p>4.7. Survey alligator populations on the refuge annually with cooperator assistance, if possible, to determine future alligator harvest opportunities/program.</p> <p>4.8. Partner (Cooperate) with state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries & others annually to discuss species of concern or other species of interest and</p>	<p>and updated ten years thereafter.</p> <p>4.4. Follow national plan and interim guidance to monitor effects of mosquito control- within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available.</p> <p>4.5. Address threats to current. Develop population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p>	<p>4.4. Band, and survey the RCW population and provide suitable cavities within three years. (Refer to RCW Recovery Plan)</p> <p>4.5. Provide habitat for cavity nesting ducks to support objectives of the GCJV. (Band 100 wood ducks annually, clean and monitor 100 wood duck nesting boxes annually).</p> <p>4.6. Work with cooperators (LDWF) to complete aerial waterfowl surveys annually.</p> <p>4.7. Survey alligator populations on the refuge annually to determine opportunity of an alligator harvest program.</p> <p>4.8. Partner with state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries & others annually to discuss species of concern or other interest to develop adaptive management strategies.</p> <p>4.8. Establish an intensive nuisance (non native, invasive) control program (Participate in the state nutria trapping program</p>	<p>portion) of feral hogs from the refuge through hunting and trapping).</p> <p>4.4. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to minimize effects to priority wildlife species while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of refuge management (fire, marsh restoration) activities and mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p> <p>4.5. Develop population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p>	<p>volunteers to assist in wildlife management activities (clean, install, and monitor 100 wood duck nesting boxes on or off the refuge annually with volunteers, Band 100 wood ducks annually with assistance from the state or volunteers.)</p> <p>4.3. Monitor RCW population on the refuge each spring with volunteers or school groups.</p> <p>4.4. Incorporate (Educate) school groups about RCW's by field trips in capture banding juvenile and adult birds annually.</p> <p>5.5. Optimize population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually, allowing for recreational use (Big 6) of those populations on and off the refuge.</p> <p>5.6. The refuge will develop a generalized baseline wildlife list for use in educating the public</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>develop adaptive management strategies.</p> <p>4.9. Establish an intensive nuisance (non native, invasive) control program (Participate in the state nutria trapping program annually. Annually reduce 60%, a significant portion, of feral hogs from the refuge through hunting and trapping).</p> <p>4.10. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to minimize effects to priority wildlife species while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of refuge management (fire, marsh restoration) activities and mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p>		<p>annually, Annually reduce 60%, a significant portion, of feral hogs from the refuge through hunting and trapping).</p> <p>4.9. Develop population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p> <p>4.10. Identify and Reintroduce historic and sustainable wildlife populations on the refuge, where feasible, within two years.</p> <p>4.11. To evaluate the effect of restoration, the refuge will develop and implement monitoring and evaluation of inventory programs to gain baseline data and information on wildlife species occurring on the refuge within three years and updated ten years thereafter.</p> <p>4.12. Within three years, complete studies to jointly formulate a list of faunal (wildlife) species which occurred during pre-</p>		<p>and school groups.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>4.11. Develop population management strategies (hunting, trapping, predator control) for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p>		<p>settlement times on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.</p> <p>4.13. Conduct research of fire effects on secretive marsh birds within three years of completing this plan.</p> <p>4.14. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to minimize effects to priority wildlife species while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of refuge restoration activities (fire, marsh restoration) and mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p>		

At the workshop, it was agreed by the participants that since goal 5 mainly covers infrastructure and facilities, the objectives for this goal would be written by the Big Branch Marsh Wildlife Refuge staff at another time.

BIG BRANCH MARSH *National Wildlife Refuge*

Planning Workshop II

July 19-21, 2004
Lacombe, LA



Section 2 *Development of Draft Management Alternatives*

Development of Management Alternatives

An alternative is a potential conceptual direction for management. Each alternative will help fulfill the Refuge System mission and resolve identified issues facing Big Branch Marsh and each will require a set of objectives and strategies or means of achieving the Refuge vision and goals. Within the context of Comprehensive Conservation Planning, the Service defines alternatives as: “Different sets of objectives and strategies or means of achieving refuge purposes and goals, helping fulfill the Refuge System mission, and resolving issues.”

The purpose of this exercise was to develop a set of management alternatives within the context of the goals, vision and purpose of the Refuge. Specific tasks assigned to the work groups were: brainstorm alternatives reflecting different possible alternative futures, prioritize alternatives to identify those most promising, list these preliminary alternatives on a flip chart, and identify their most salient characteristics in relation to the agreed goal.

Group A

Group Members: Troy Turner, Chuck Palmisano, Amy LeGaux, Robert A. Baker, Judy McClendon, Larry Burch, Charlotte Parker

At first the group reacquainted with each other and our backgrounds. We decided on roles within the group and realized all of us wouldn't be here for the duration. We picked roles depending on who would be here to present and facilitate. The facilitator then threw out for discussion broad alternative possibilities. Mr. Baker discussed how he felt the refuge needs to be developed into something Lacombe can be proud of and will draw visitors/tourists to it; to be a focal point for community growth and something that can help put the area on the map. Chuck threw out 3 alternative ideas: something that would flow from the refuge being a place for people to have access to it for public use; something that would flow from preserving what the refuge is presently; and thirdly something that would flow from restoring the refuge to what it was sometime in the past. It was discussed that the refuge isn't known about even in the neighborhoods within the small town of Lacombe. Questions were asked about how to link the refuge with the Tammany Trace and Birding Trails; that the word needs to get out about the biking trail and canoeing. Questions were asked about the use of the refuge for camping and a discussion on the public's lack of knowledge about federal versus state refuges and national parks versus refuges ensued. Professional marketing is a need to get the word out. Another broad alternative would be emphasis on consumptive uses such as hunting and fishing. Judy mentioned an approach that would balance all alternatives without an emphasis on any one aspect. One alternative could emphasis managing for endangered species, which the biologist mentioned would be bald eagle, red-cockaded woodpecker, and the stray manatee. Someone mentioned that signing and interpretation needed emphasis. Troy discussed the need for intensive, active timber management. The difference in emphasizing hunting vs. migratory bird management was discussed and it was decided that an alternative that emphasized migratory birds should be added to our list.

After lunch we began to regroup and prioritize. We discussed which alternatives could be combined. We decided to group several under public use and to drop economic development of Lacombe since the refuge can't address that. It was decided to combine timber management and endangered species because of red-cockaded woodpeckers. We discussed if public use and environmental education should be together or not and decided to leave them separate. Migratory birds was decided to be left to stand alone and not combined. We then looked to see if refuge purposes were all covered. Our alternatives now are as follows:

1. Migratory birds
2. Public Use
3. Preservation of refuge
4. Restoration of refuge
5. Timber management/endangered species
6. Balanced management
7. Environmental education

It was decided to describe each alternative so that we would all be on the same page as to what they mean. Therefore, we put a description to each one that follows:

1. Migratory birds -- maximize quantity and quality of habitat for migrating birds (strongly supports goals 3,4; is OK for goals 1,2,5)
2. Public Use -- promote and provide accessibility opportunities to attract local and out of town visitors (strongly supports goal 1; is OK for goals 2,3,4,5)
3. Preserve refuge -- passive, custodial management to maintain populations and current biodiversity (doesn't strongly support any one, but is OK for all 5)
4. Restore -- promote native biodiversity and habitat restoration to a realistic presettlement condition (strongly supports 3,4; is OK for 1,2,5)
5. Endangered species -- promote habitat management for endangered and priority species (strongly supports 3,4; OK for 1,2,5)
6. Environmental education and interpretation -- educate public about natural and cultural resources (strongly supports 2; is OK for 1,3,4,5)
7. Balanced management plan -- promote wise public use and increase education while enhancing diverse, viable habitats (supports 1,2,3,4,5)

Judy presented the alternatives and which goals they most strongly supported to the rest of the group.

Group B

Group Members:

Alternatives Brainstorm

Restore to pre-European settlement conditions (nature, nature, nature) but not prohibit public use.

Maximize access and opportunities for public use (people, people...)
(*The 2 extremes*)

A third one could be manage for diversity of habitat (representing northshore habitats); restore some, leave some alone, live with some changes that have occurred.

A discussion ensued about how you can have two extremes and a spot in the middle with any issue.

Very active habitat management vs. Passive or no management of habitat.

How do we deal with Bayou Lacombe Centre? Separate plan?

Resources (\$\$, staff, etc.) to deal with management of refuge - focus on infrastructure needs first.

Marsh fires include all kinds of noxious trash that creates fumes that are harmful.

We could have each of the five goals be prioritized in an alternative.

Now that we have 12 possible alternatives, how do we lump and prioritize?

Is return to pre European state reasonable? How do you balance with current state? There is policy that says you should return to pre-European state. Pre-European state should be present as guidepost for the future

Want debate to go on; you can't necessarily restore due the permanent changes (salinity, etc).

Can you manage for diversity without actual restoration to pre-European conditions? Can the diversity be reflective of that period?

We don't have to pick the preferred alternative at this point.

Can we combine 1 and 3 (pre European and diversity of wildlife)? A focus on threatened and endangered isn't same as focus on diversity.

Northshore habitat is remnant, i.e. RCW's were once linked to larger populations.

Need to avoid lumping everything into one preferred alternative.

Some of our possibilities aren't really alternatives.

We can't do hands off management because you'd have tallow trees and wild hogs. That won't meet the goals and vision.

What about refuge becoming a demonstration area for habitat management? Would that be part of education and public use alternative?

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Now we are selecting from the long list...

Draft Alternatives

1. Manage for habitat and wildlife diversity reflective of pre-settlement conditions (1740's) where possible
2. Focus on outreach/education/ public use access
3. Focus on T and E species (manage solely for T&E species)
 - a. Example: Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge that manages for an endangered species at the expense of public visitation (the refuge is closed)
4. Focus on infrastructure/refuge expansion/ conservation easement
5. National Park Service - style "hands off" habitat management
6. Refuge as demonstration area for habitat mgt

What about "balance" alternative - is that what we're doing now? Add "equal weight"

7. Equal-weight outreach, etc. and habitat management.

We are giving some extra weight now to habitat management over public use. We are in urban setting - there is great opportunity for the public here. What kind of messages can be delivered here? Does it offer unique habitat - no. What is best investment here from a FWS perspective?

Final Draft Alternatives

0. No Action
1. Habitat alternative 70% / 30%
2. & 6 combined – Environmental Education / Public Use alternative 30% / 70%
3. Threatened and endangered species focus alternative
4. Building your empire - federal land grab
5. Let it be – passive management
7. Equal Weight Alternative 50/50%

Group C

Group Members: Christy Paulsell, Kris Bly, Danny Breaux, J.C.Ciolino, Bob Strader

Draft Management Alternatives

1. Intensive management to maintain a healthy manageable forest and marsh. Forest restoration. Marsh protection/restoration of marsh and shoreline. (Strong in Goal 1,3,4)
2. Focus management on endangered and threatened species. Restore the refuge to historical ecological processes (pre-colonial) to the extent possible. (Strong in Goal 3,4)
3. Maximize public use activities to increase environmental education. Improve/enhance and maintain existing public use access facilities/access areas. Provide adequate and appropriate staffing for facilities. Maintain a professional image. Police/ educate about garbage. Provide only cleanup facilities with small opening. Businesses in Lacombe want to prosper

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and get public support. Commerce dept wants areas to send people to. Hit younger generation on education activities. Kids on the north shore (orig. from south shore) now have less of a concept on outdoor activities. (Strong in Goal 1,2).

Some areas are too hot anyway. Some people may not be comfortable with real nature. Mostly people want fishing and hunting as the public use. You can get info to people without them experiencing it. The other users are typically the same ones.

4. Minimize refuge public use areas, having some closed areas and education sites. Do science and research and publish data, while passively managing the refuge. Have some research areas with no public use. Provide for wildfire fighting and LE. Limited Management/Minimal Use: Set aside areas for minimal management to let nature take its course. Continue to monitor by observing, fight fire, study, make available to public but don't add more access than what's already there. Hands off but don't neglect it. Reduce active management. Close the entire refuge to hunting due to urbanization as urbanization expands. (may not be an alternative but an objective?) With the neighbors growing along the refuge boundary, more conflicts. Allow fishing only. When saturated with people, no one will consider it a good hunt. Too many people are hunting in the woods. (minimally meets goals)
5. Environmental Education and research focused with encouragement of utilizing the natural resources focusing efforts on historical and ecological issues of the natural resources of the region. Promote hunting and fishing and recreation. (Strong in Goal 2)

Comments on Group C presentation:

One important part of CCP is that staff has working document as well as schedule to implement community based CCP for NWR. However needs to be reasonable and "doable".

Point of interest from groups A and B in that they both finalized their alternatives with a "balanced management plan".

"More intensive habitat management then current that would offer recreational and educational opportunities." Is how our #1 Alternative should read!

Proactive verses current REACTIVE plan.

Synthesized Alternatives

After all the groups presented their draft alternatives, one person from each group volunteered to stay and join a synthesis group to integrate all the alternatives into one list. Each synthesis group member had the responsibility of representing their own working group's alternatives and ideas behind them.

Synthesized Draft Alternatives

Keystone/Target/state priority species management

Focus management on threatened and endangered species (RCW)

Focus on migratory bird management

Passive/defensive/minimal habitat management

Focus on passive management.

Arrest invasives

Avoid deterioration

Balanced management

Focus on equal-weight (50:50) between public interface and habitat mgt.

Focus on a balanced mgt. plan that promotes wise public use, increases education, and enhances diverse, viable habitats

Minimal impact philosophy

Habitat protection/restoration management

Focus on restoring and managing habitat and wildlife based on natural resources and diversity to a pre-settlement (1700s?) condition (ecological functionality)

Public dimensions

Focus management on public use (develop infrastructure to promote/enhance public use)

Focus on education/interpretation/outreach/demonstration area for habitat mgt.

Focus on promoting public awareness

Potential tools/strategies:

- Preserve species artificially
- Focus on achieving land expansion through fee title and conservation easements (tool rather than alternative?)

These synthesized alternatives were then presented in plenary and discussed. For notes on the discussion see Appendix I. These alternatives were then divided among the three working groups to be further developed and explained. Group A took the Public Dimensions and Balanced Management alternatives. Group B took the Passive Management and Habitat Protection/Restoration Management alternatives. Group C will focus on the Target Species Management alternative. These alternatives were discussed in plenary and the final draft alternatives are below.

Final Draft Alternatives

Alternative A. No Action/Current Management (*Fish and Wildlife Service Staff will write*)

Alternative B. Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species

The focus of this alternative would be to protect, restore, manage and monitor habitat and wildlife for healthy populations of plants, fish and targeted priority wildlife species, which utilize habitats within the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. Adaptive management activities shall focus on Migrant and Resident Waterfowl, Threatened and Endangered Species, wintering grassland birds, and species of concern to state and federal agencies with an emphasis on improving marginal habitat for priority wildlife species. The refuge will monitor and evaluate the effects of management on targeted species and future practices will adapt to the monitored effects on these species.

Interpretive and environmental education programs on and off the refuge would focus on the importance of managing priority wildlife and plant species and their habitats on the refuge and on adjacent areas. High quality compatible recreational opportunities for persons of all abilities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and bird watching would be provided commensurate with the requirements of targeted species of the refuge.

The refuge would seek support from the Service and supporters for adequate infrastructure and facilities to manage for priority wildlife species.

Alternative C. Passive Management

Under this alternative, Big Branch Marsh would only apply minimal habitat action to meet mandated responsibilities (RCW recovery plan, mitigate fire threats to neighbors) and to prevent further shoreline erosion. You would allow natural succession and progression of the wetland forests and marshes. Refuge staff would observe, monitor and document habitat conditions and wildlife population changes over time.

Hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography would be available to the public. Minimal improvements or additions to existing facilities in support of these activities would be provided. On and off-site Environmental Education and Interpretative programs will be continued through partnerships and volunteers. Education and interpretation focus is on indigenous wildlife species and habitats, plus those mandated habitat/restoration activities.

Alternative D. Total Restoration Management

Re-introduce natural processes (fire, hydrology, sediment addition/input) to restore to pre settlement conditions. Re-establish shoreline, acquire land and other measures to facilitate ecosystem management and mitigate external threats. Restore composition and structure of natural communities, explore/foster opportunities for partnerships and conservation easements to achieve restoration objectives

Public would benefit from restoration of natural wetland functions and values; storm protection, water quality, educational opportunities

Big 6 activities would be accommodated in such a way as to minimize costs in facilities and staff.

Education and Interpretation would focus on restoration activities, demonstration areas, natural processes that established plant and animal communities. Outreach would emphasize partnerships in the community to achieve habitat management goals. (Restoring salinities...explore other word beside exploits...; Remove invasive species)

Alternative E. Integrated Management

Priority is placed on a proactive, integrated management plan that promotes and enhances both diverse, viable wildlife habitats as well as a variety of compatible recreational and educational opportunities. Management direction and administration are focused on protecting, conserving, and restoring a mosaic of forested and wetland habitats native to Lake Ponchartrain Basin for the benefit of native fish and wildlife species. At the same time, public awareness and use of the natural and cultural resources will be actively promoted.

Alternative F. Public Use Management

Priority is placed on promoting and providing enhanced educational and recreational opportunities to encourage environmental stewardship and wildlife appreciation. Infrastructure (facilities, funding, and staffing) will be developed to enhance the public's ability to enjoy the Refuge's natural and cultural resources. All management plans will be designed to complement public use and educational opportunities.

BIG BRANCH MARSH *National Wildlife Refuge*

Planning Workshop II

July 19-21, 2004
Lacombe, LA



Section 3 *Development of Draft Objectives*

Draft Objectives

According to 602 FW 1.6 and the Goals and Objectives Handbook, an objective is a concise statement of what we want to achieve, how much we want to achieve, when and where we want to achieve it, and who is responsible for the work. Objectives derive from goals and provide the basis for determining strategies, monitoring refuge accomplishments, and evaluating the success of strategies. Each working group was responsible for developing objectives for one or 2 goals across all alternatives and then, if time allowed, applying the SMART criteria to each objective making it attainable, time-specific, and measurable. Goal 5 will be addressed by the Service only since they are the ones with the expertise on infrastructure.

The goals were assigned as follows:

Group A: Goal 3

Group B: Goals 1, 2

Group C: Goal 4

The working groups used tables to organize and guide the development of the objectives. The tables start on the next page.

Objectives table for Big Branch Marsh CCP II

Acronyms:

RCW – Red Cockaded Woodpecker
 T & E – Threatened and Endangered
 CCP – Comprehensive Conservation Plan
 ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
 GCJV –

PUBLIC USE GOALS

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
<i>Goal 1. To provide a rich diversity of recreational opportunities for persons of all abilities to enjoy the Refuge's natural and cultural resources in a safe and compatible manner.</i>					
	<p>1.1. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review hunting programs to insure protection of targeted species and allow for hunts where appropriate.</p> <p>1.2. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review fishing program to insure protection of targeted species and accommodate fishing/crabbing, etc. where appropriate.</p> <p>1.3. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review wildlife observation and photography programs to insure protection of targeted species and</p>	<p>1.1. By 2006 complete and implement a maintenance plan for existing public use facilities: parking lots, kiosks, trailheads and boat launches piers for all Big 6 activities.</p> <p>1.2. Participate in 3 outreach events per year to inform public of use opportunities.</p> <p>1.3. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p>	<p>1.1 By 2006 complete and maintain existing facilities: parking lots, kiosks, trailheads, boat launches, and piers for all Big 6 activities.</p> <p>1.2. Participate in 3 outreach events per year to inform public of use opportunities.</p> <p>1.3. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p> <p>1.4. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure ADA compliance.</p>	<p>1.1. By 2006, complete improvements at all existing public use sites, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Parking lots-grading bollards/chains, permitted activities signs e. Kiosks f. Trailheads <p>1.2. By 2007/8 – Increase hunter participation by xx% (offer hunter education and license purchases at refuge headquarters 3 courses annually).</p> <p>1.3. By 2007 improve and mark walk-in fisher access (trail and pier) at Sapsucker Rd and sell licenses.</p>	<p>1.1. By 2006, FWS and or partners will complete facility improvements and additions (kiosks hiking, biking, auto trails creation, boat launches) that maximize opportunities for Big 6 participation.</p> <p>1.2. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure ADA compliance.</p> <p>1.3. By 200X, increase hunting visits by xx% by offering - youth, handicap, primitive weapons, female only hunting weekend, licenses, wider audiences, hunter education. Complete 2 of the above in the next three years.</p> <p>1.4. Upon implementation</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>accommodate these activities where appropriate.</p> <p>1.4. On annual basis, review wildlife viewing programs and adjust to reflect changes in populations.</p> <p>1.5. Visitor safety objectives provided across all alternatives, use reduce violations numbers/incidents</p> <p>1.6. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p> <p>1.7. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure ADA compliance.</p>			<p>1.4. Increase wildlife viewing opportunities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partnering with birding groups to lead 6 birding trips/year. b. Establish a viewing/photography blind at end of Boy Scout Rd. Slough for self-guided birders c. By 2007, complete study for potential auto routes and links to Tammany Trace. <p>1.5. Participate in 5 off-site outreach events annually to promote recreational opportunities.</p> <p>1.6. By 2007, implement partnerships with 3 organizations to help provide/increase recreational opportunities and facilities.</p> <p>1.7. Develop (recruit, train) and maintain volunteer Corps to assist with recreation programs.</p> <p>1.8. Conduct at least 2 guided interpretive tours (hike or canoe) by 2005 each weekend.</p>	<p>of the plan, and on an annual basis, review fishing program to insure protection of targeted species and accommodate fishing/crabbing, etc., where appropriate.</p> <p>1.5. Upon implementation of the plan, and on an annual basis, review wildlife observation and photography programs to insure protection of targeted species and accommodate and promote these activities where appropriate to increase participation by xx %.</p> <p>1.6. Increase participation in wildlife observation (partner with birding groups, blinds, explore auto routes, links to Tammany Trace?).</p> <p>1.7. Conduct outreach to promote recreational opportunities.</p> <p>1.8. Implement partnerships with organizations to help provide/increase recreational opportunities and facilities.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
				<p>1.9. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p> <p>1.10. Review and modify all refuge facilities to insure ADA compliance.</p>	<p>1.9. Recruit, train, and maintain volunteer corps of 40 to assist with recreation programs by 2007.</p> <p>1.10. Conduct outreach to promote rec. Opportunities a public events (i.e., crab festival)</p> <p>1.11. Boater Education partner with Power Squadron Boating Ed./safety</p> <p>1.12. Partner with canoe/bicycle rental concession</p> <p>1.13. Provide the refuge with law enforcement sufficient to insure public safety and resource protection upon implementation of the CCP.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
Goal 2. Develop and implement a broad spectrum of learning opportunities that promote stewardship among the public through an appreciation and understanding of Refuge resources.					
	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2 .By 2006, develop and implement an outreach/ marketing plan to educate public on new refuge management focus</p> <p>2.3. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.4. By 2006, establish partnerships with at least three organizations to develop and deliver educational programs and materials on target species management.</p> <p>2.5. By 2011, the refuge will complete installation of a state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.3. By 2006 develop partners, at least 3, and volunteers to administer environmental education program at 2004 level.</p> <p>2.4. Upon implementation of the plan, the visitor center operation will be folded into the headquarters building.</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management</p> <p>2.2. By 2006, develop and implement an outreach/marketing plan to educate public on new refuge management focus</p> <p>2.3. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.4. By 2006, establish partnerships with 3 organizations or agencies to develop and deliver educational materials and programs on restoration activities.</p> <p>2.5. Research educational opportunities use in all alternatives if applicable.</p> <p>2.6. By 2011, the refuge will complete installation of a state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2. By 2006, develop and implement an outreach/marketing plan to educate public on new refuge management focus.</p> <p>2.3. By 2007, develop X (less than F) number of additional environmental education programs (curriculum-based).</p> <p>2.4. Develop “X” adult environmental education programs w/leader</p> <p>2.5. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.6. Oriented programs with leader orientation sessions.</p> <p>2.7. Promote career awareness sessions to schools.</p> <p>2.8. Partner with other groups to provide programs/information to</p>	<p>2.1. By 2006, refocus all learning opportunities to emphasize current habitat management.</p> <p>2.2. By 2007, develop “x” of additional curriculum-based programs for schools/teachers – (aquatic resources, water resources, waterfowl/birds, pine flatwoods, threatened and endangered species, management (i.e., prescribed fire)).</p> <p>2.3. Develop “X” adult environmental education programs with leader.</p> <p>2.4. Continue existing career outreach.</p> <p>2.5. Develop “X” scout group oriented programs with leader orientation sessions.</p> <p>2.6. Promote career awareness sessions to schools.</p> <p>2.7. Partner with other groups to provide programs/information to</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive/Defensive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management 50:50	Alternative F Public Dimension
				<p>public - part of larger landscape</p> <p>2.9. Target senior groups (i.e. elder hostel), tourists - NO and eco.</p> <p>2.10. Target outreach to entities such as New Orleans tourists (i.e. Jazz Fest, Conventions) to advertise and encourage refuge visitation.</p> <p>2.11. Develop educational materials such as video and brochures, remote cam and internet links.</p> <p>2.12. Increase visitor usage in areas of special demographics (age, inner city youth, etc).</p> <p>2.13. By 2011, the refuge will complete installation of a state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>	<p>public - part of larger landscape</p> <p>2.8. Target senior groups (i.e. elder hostel), tourists - NO and eco;</p> <p>2.9. Target outreach to entities such as New Orleans tourists (i.e. Jazz Fest, Conventions) to advertise and encourage refuge visitation.</p> <p>2.10. Increase outreach public education by xx%.</p> <p>2.11. By 2009, the refuge will complete installation of state of the art exhibitry that interprets refuge resources and begin operation of a visitor center.</p>

BIOLOGICAL GOALS

(Note: all notes for consideration by refuge staff and management are highlighted in yellow.)

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
<p>Goal 3. To restore, protect, and maintain a mosaic of forested and wetland habitats native to the Lake Pontchartrain Basin in order to ensure healthy and viable plant and animal communities. Note – Group A proposes the following wording for Goal 3: Maintain a healthy, diverse habitat and ecosystem of the marsh, aquatic system, and forest to the needs of migratory birds, non-game birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and insects that fulfills the mission and purposes of the Refuge System throughout the life of the plan.</p>					
	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Within 1 year of plan approval, identify and map degrading marsh that is potentially restorable to a 50/50 ratio of open water to vegetative areas to benefit resident and migratory wildlife.</p> <p>3.4. Implement the RCW Recovery Plan to improve habitat conditions by restoring XXX acres (250 acres per cluster) to reach and maintain 20 clusters within the next 15 years.</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Maintain mandated habitat conditions to support 17 clusters to contribute to the goals and objectives in the RCW Recovery Plan throughout the life of the CCP.</p> <p>3.4. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate, and record changes in habitat due to natural succession.</p> <p>3.5. Complete acquisition</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and describe the historic habitat community/conditions structure (pre-settlement – 1700’s) of the Refuge within 2 years of plan approval.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.3. Within 2 years after identifying baseline data, write a management plan to determine actions and monitoring (burning, hydrological restoration, sediment addition and inputs) needed to maintain and manage historic communities and species to pre-settlement conditions. (Focus on historic marsh and delay the uplands)</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Within 1 year of plan approval, identify and map degrading marsh that is potentially restorable to a 50/50 ratio of open water to vegetative areas to benefit resident and migratory wildlife.</p> <p>3.4. Within 2 years of identifying baseline data, write a management plan to determine actions and monitoring (burning, hydrological restoration, sediment addition and</p>	<p>3.1. Identify and quantify baseline vegetation on the Refuge within 2 years of Plan approval with a final product being a map and GIS database.</p> <p>3.2. Identify and quantify marginal and target habitats and develop a database of those habitats within 2 years of Plan approval.</p> <p>3.3. Identify degrading marsh that is potentially restorable to a 50/50 ratio of open water to vegetative areas within 1 year to benefit resident and migratory wildlife.</p> <p>3.4. Maintain mandated habitat conditions to support 17 clusters to contribute to the goals and objectives in the RCW Recovery Plan throughout the life of the CCP.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>3.5. Protect XX acres of ecologically functioning habitat for identified targeted species over the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.6. Over the next XX years restore XX acres to benefit targeted species.</p> <p>3.7. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat.</p> <p>3.8. Complete acquisition of lands identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p>	<p>of lands previously identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.6. Take steps to maintain habitats at 2004 status.</p>	<p>3.4. Restore the historic community structure of refuge habitat by increasing the cover of native plants from XX percent to XX percent and native plant species richness from XX species to XX species over the next 15 years. (Note – diversity may have been minimal prehistorically)</p> <p>3.5. Maintain mandated habitat conditions to contribute to the goals and objectives in the RCW Recovery Plan throughout the life of the CCP. (Note: RCW Recovery plan can be modified/revisited to meet another management direction the Refuge may be taking. Further debate may be taking on protection of the bird vs. protection of habitat)</p> <p>3.6. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate, and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat.</p> <p>3.7. Using partners such as</p>	<p>inputs) needed to maintain and manage targeted communities and species. (Note – There is an issue about terms native/pre-settlement – need to clarify Elizabeth’s concerned. Is this really just a habitat management plan or a step-down management plan?)</p> <p>3.5. Implement the RCW Recovery Plan to improve habitat conditions by restoring XXX acres (250 acres per cluster) to reach and maintain 20 clusters within the next 15 years.</p> <p>3.6. Protect XX acres of ecologically functioning habitat for identified targeted species over the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.7. Over the next XX years, restore XX acres to benefit targeted species.</p> <p>3.8. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat. (Note – don’t forget to monitor the</p>	<p>3.5. Designate and develop demonstration areas that are representative of at least three additional refuge habitats to be used with environmental education and interpretive programs within XX years.</p> <p>3.6. Manage and/or restore XX acres of XX habitat to benefit public uses such as hunting and fishing within XX years.</p> <p>3.7. Provide XX acres/sites of XX habitat to improve viewing opportunities for wildlife observation and photography within XX years.</p> <p>3.8. Within 5 years, implement a plan to measure, monitor, evaluate and record the effects of adaptive management actions on habitat.</p> <p>3.9. Complete acquisition of lands previously identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.10. Ensure outreach</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
			<p>LDWF, TNC, Conservation Fund, private owners, and timber and oil companies, meet, identify, and propose candidate lands that are restorable to pre-historic settlement (1700's) conditions throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.8. Through partnerships, annually identify, record, and attempt to mitigate external threats, i.e. contaminants and invasive species, to Refuge habitat. (Describe a type of threat, i.e.– sewage intrusion or contaminants, water quality that would require working with others.)</p> <p>3.9. Complete acquisition of lands identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan. (Note – North Shore Boundary protection – some sort of an expansion proposal may be needed – carefully worded)</p>	<p>impacts of increased public use on the habitat. Also Consider this is done within the management plan)</p> <p>3.9. Designate and develop demonstration areas that are representative of at least three additional refuge habitats to be used with environmental and interpretive programs within XX years.</p> <p>3.10. Manage XX acres of XX habitat to benefit public uses such as hunting and fishing within XX years.</p> <p>3.11. Provide XX acres/sites of XX habitat to improve viewing opportunities for wildlife observation and photography within XX years.</p> <p>3.12. Complete acquisition of lands identified in the approved acquisition boundary throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>3.13. Through partnerships, annually</p>	<p>occurs with the public and partners to report findings of external threats and changes to habitats on an annual basis. (Note – Protect and manage habitat in terms of storm protection, sewage contamination, water quality. A research laboratory could be established to encourage research/weather station/encourage university involvement).</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
				<p>identify and attempt to mitigate external threats, i.e. contaminants and invasive species, to Refuge habitat. (A change is made here see Public Use alternatives).</p> <p>3.14. Insure outreach occurs with the public and partners to report findings of external threats and changes to habitats on an annual basis.</p>	
<p><i>Goal 4. Identify, conserve, manage, and restore populations of native fish and wildlife species representative of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin, with emphasis on migratory birds and threatened and endangered species.</i></p>					
	<p>4.1. Develop a refuge comprehensive wildlife list of species present & relative abundance, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan (use range maps and field surveys).</p> <p>4.2. Work with partners to jointly develop a list of wildlife species occurring in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin within three years or less of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.3. Reduce human disturbance to T&E</p>	<p>4.1. Monitor RCW population on the refuge annually, without banding.</p> <p>4.2. Develop a refuge comprehensive wildlife list of species present, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan. (use range maps and field surveys)</p> <p>4.3. Develop and implement monitoring and inventory programs to gain baseline data and information on wildlife species occurring on the refuge within three years</p>	<p>4.1. Develop a refuge wildlife list of species present, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.2. Work with partners to jointly develop a list of wildlife species occurring in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin within three years of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.3. Reduce disturbance to T&E (protected) species by establishing buffer zones within one year of completion of this plan.</p>	<p>4.1. Develop a refuge wildlife list of species presence & abundance, specially noting those species that are T&E or of special concern within two years of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.2. Work with cooperators (LDWF) to complete aerial waterfowl surveys annually.</p> <p>4.3. Establish an intensive nuisance (non native, invasive) control program (Annually participate in the state nutria trapping program and (eliminate) reduce 60% (a significant</p>	<p>4.1. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to maximize public health concerns, while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p> <p>4.2. Develop a base of 40</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>(protected) species by establishing buffer zones within one year of completion of this plan.</p> <p>4.4. Band and survey the RCW population and provide suitable cavities within three years.</p> <p>4.5. Provide habitat for cavity nesting ducks to support objectives of the GCJV. (Band 100 wood ducks annually)(Clean and monitor 100 wood duck nesting boxes annually).</p> <p>4.6. Work with cooperators (LDWF) to complete aerial waterfowl surveys annually.</p> <p>4.7. Survey alligator populations on the refuge annually with cooperator assistance, if possible, to determine future alligator harvest opportunities/program.</p> <p>4.8. Partner (Cooperate) with state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries & others annually to discuss species of concern or other species of interest and</p>	<p>and updated ten years thereafter.</p> <p>4.4. Follow national plan and interim guidance to monitor effects of mosquito control- within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available.</p> <p>4.5. Address threats to current. Develop population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p>	<p>4.4. Band, and survey the RCW population and provide suitable cavities within three years. (Refer to RCW Recovery Plan)</p> <p>4.5. Provide habitat for cavity nesting ducks to support objectives of the GCJV. (Band 100 wood ducks annually, clean and monitor 100 wood duck nesting boxes annually).</p> <p>4.6. Work with cooperators (LDWF) to complete aerial waterfowl surveys annually.</p> <p>4.7. Survey alligator populations on the refuge annually to determine opportunity of an alligator harvest program.</p> <p>4.8. Partner with state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries & others annually to discuss species of concern or other interest to develop adaptive management strategies.</p> <p>4.8. Establish an intensive nuisance (non native, invasive) control program (Participate in the state nutria trapping program</p>	<p>portion) of feral hogs from the refuge through hunting and trapping).</p> <p>4.4. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to minimize effects to priority wildlife species while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of refuge management (fire, marsh restoration) activities and mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p> <p>4.5. Develop population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p>	<p>volunteers to assist in wildlife management activities (clean, install, and monitor 100 wood duck nesting boxes on or off the refuge annually with volunteers, Band 100 wood ducks annually with assistance from the state or volunteers.)</p> <p>4.3. Monitor RCW population on the refuge each spring with volunteers or school groups.</p> <p>4.4. Incorporate (Educate) school groups about RCW's by field trips in capture banding juvenile and adult birds annually.</p> <p>5.5. Optimize population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually, allowing for recreational use (Big 6) of those populations on and off the refuge.</p> <p>5.6. The refuge will develop a generalized baseline wildlife list for use in educating the public</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>develop adaptive management strategies.</p> <p>4.9. Establish an intensive nuisance (non native, invasive) control program (Participate in the state nutria trapping program annually. Annually reduce 60%, a significant portion, of feral hogs from the refuge through hunting and trapping).</p> <p>4.10. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to minimize effects to priority wildlife species while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of refuge management (fire, marsh restoration) activities and mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p>		<p>annually, Annually reduce 60%, a significant portion, of feral hogs from the refuge through hunting and trapping).</p> <p>4.9. Develop population management strategies for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p> <p>4.10. Identify and Reintroduce historic and sustainable wildlife populations on the refuge, where feasible, within two years.</p> <p>4.11. To evaluate the effect of restoration, the refuge will develop and implement monitoring and evaluation of inventory programs to gain baseline data and information on wildlife species occurring on the refuge within three years and updated ten years thereafter.</p> <p>4.12. Within three years, complete studies to jointly formulate a list of faunal (wildlife) species which occurred during pre-</p>		<p>and school groups.</p>

Alternative A Current Management	Alternative B Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species	Alternative C Passive Management	Alternative D Total Restoration	Alternative E Integrated Management	Alternative F Public Dimension
	<p>4.11. Develop population management strategies (hunting, trapping, predator control) for wildlife species occurring on the refuge within two years and reviewed annually.</p>		<p>settlement times on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.</p> <p>4.13. Conduct research of fire effects on secretive marsh birds within three years of completing this plan.</p> <p>4.14. Continually strategize (partner) with mosquito control management agencies through the National Mosquito Management Plan to minimize effects to priority wildlife species while controlling mosquito populations within the boundaries of the refuge using an integrated pest management approach and applying best management practices when available. Research the effects of refuge restoration activities (fire, marsh restoration) and mosquito control methods on mosquito predator populations.</p>		

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Appendix I *Plenary Notes*

Appendix I: Plenary Notes

Monday, 19 July 2004

Revised Vision Statement

First Paragraph

Interesting that the first paragraph mentions the open waters of Lake Ponchartrain because that is such a large area. It's not part of the Refuge.

Big Branch is the nursery for Lake Ponchartrain species.

State is involved in reclaiming these areas.

How far out does Big Branch go in Lake Ponchartrain? It used to go farther out when there was more shoreline. We don't mean to include the whole lake basin.

FWS would like to talk to state about how to reclaim shoreline and see how they're doing it.

Last workshop we talked about past issues, present issues, and tried to envision future refuges

It reads better if you take "the" out of the open waters: "It encompasses open waters of Lake Ponchartrain..."

People agree.

One of the suggestions at the last workshop was to rename the Refuge "Lake Ponchartrain Refuge" so we were thinking very large. That is where that statement came from.

Third paragraph

As a business man, I would like to see a more positive marketing effort. Instead of "nurturing a tradition" more of a focus of marketing the refuge to gain more visitors and appreciation in the area.

Big Branch was formed by a grass roots community that was really concerned about the development of this area.

One thing we missed is that we think we are well known and big, but we really aren't. Even the whole refuge system is not real known. We do need to be more visible and market ourselves in the community more.

In third paragraph, first sentence after nurtures add promotes: "The Refuge maintains, nurtures, and promotes the tradition of community involvement..."

People like and accept that new wording.

Revised Goals

Goal 4

Does include marine and lake species, therefore talking about the open water of Lake Ponchartrain.

Big Branch is the nursery for these species so it contributes to the survival of these species.

Are these goals ranked in order by number?

No, they are all equal.

It will become clear that they are equal later when we start writing objectives for each goal under each alternative.

Tuesday, July 20, 2004

Synthesized Alternatives

We're doing a good job and really want to promote this refuge!

Keystone Species management

Contribute to the recovery of endangered species, but we don't have the land to actually totally recover them. – This detail will come out when the working groups expand the alternatives.
Define species more in the Target

Habitat Restoration

Some habitats and species aren't around anymore and can't be recovered. You'd have to say recover and restore what you can.

Custodial management

Is this alternative reasonable? Why do we want passive management? What are you aiming for? Every group came up with this, but they may not have kept it in the end.

This alternative is feasible, but maybe not desirable.

There is a gradient of passive management.

If you lose the refuge and have passive management, are you still keeping with the FWS purpose and vision?

Everyone may understand this alternative differently. The extreme of custodial management would mean signs are up, no public use, no maintenance of trails, no environmental education, leave exotics and invasives, no mosquito spraying, no primitive use of the refuge, no restoration, no burning, no inventory or monitoring of wildlife and plant species.

Keep in mind light on the hand, but not totally hands off.

You have a minimal impact thought process in any management.

Can you add minimal impact philosophy to the 50:50 Balanced Management alternative?

We debate every day about how to manage the Refuge.

When we found the RCW, we needed to manage for it. Do we manage more of the refuge for it or do we let the rest of the uplands continue their own diversity?

Does this explanation describe the Target Species Alternative and the Balanced Alternative?

Some of it is in semantics. Custodial management to FWS is a very specific; it means no staff and no funding. We don't like the word "custodial", it doesn't meet our vision and goals. Can we change it to Passive Habitat Management? Yes.

How can you do passive management? You would lose your marsh without any management.

I think the word passive and custodial are relative terms. It's relative to size, area, and impact by man. A place that is large and doesn't have impact by man, you can do passive management.

At Big Branch, there is so much impact by man, that you can't be passive. If you let it go, it's not going to automatically go back to pre-settlement conditions. It will get taken over by invasives and other species in forest succession.

Big Branch is already so fragmented; we don't want to fragment it more.

The next step in this planning process, we need to evaluate the environmental impact of each alternative. Things will fall out at that time.

In the passive alternative you still do fight invasives and restore the shoreline, you just use the most minimal approach - more reactive and defensive approach.
Doing nothing would also not be possible because you have to manage for the RCW.

Balanced Management and Public Dimensions

Can you combine these two alternatives?

In the Public Dimensions alternative, you make public use more than habitat management. So it does have a different focus.

One is balanced and one is not balanced, it's skewed toward public use.

Just because you maximize the public access, doesn't mean you can have any kind of public access.

Public interface is the whole public dimensions alternative. Public dimensions are all wildlife dependent. You can't have hunting, fishing, and wildlife observing without wildlife.

You can't do the public stuff at the expense of the wildlife.

What type of management style do we want in each alternative?

At the moment, the room agrees that these two alternatives stay different. We'll see later how they fall out among objectives and see if they remain different.

Active Management

What does this mean? How will a group elaborate on this?

To me, active management would go into the Restoration Alternative.

In an area of each alternative, there will be some active management at some area of the refuge.

Active management to what end?

The idea here was that you would manage for the habitat – “if you build it they will come” as an opposite to managing for the species.

Is habitat/restoration management that same thing?

You can have active management for other things than pre-settlement conditions.

Does balanced management mean that everything else is not balanced? It just means that that is the focus of that alternative.

Is everyone ok with getting rid of the Active Management Alternative?

Yes, we can have active management in each of the other alternatives.

Revised and Expanded Alternatives

Focused Adaptive Management for Priority Wildlife Species

Looks great!

Everyone understands it.

Passive/Defensive Management

Focus on defense, but still need to protect RCW and mitigate fire threat to neighbors

Because it is passive management, I don't understand why the RCW recovery plan would be implemented. We have to protect RCW because law requires us to.

Almost like status quo, but more defensive than offensive.

Public use is basically the same.

Education and interpretation focus on resident wildlife – what does that mean? Telling people about the indigenous wildlife.

Total Restoration

This alternative focuses on reintroducing the natural processes of the landscape.

I don't see anything about restoring vegetative communities.

Third line says to "restore the composition and structure of natural communities."

How do you accomplish sediment addition?

Dredge the lake.

Replace "exploit" with "explore".

Do you have to add something about controlling invasives or does that fall out under an objective? It is a very important aspect.

Indigenous composition rules out invasives.

Integrated Management

What is a cultural resource?

Native American culture in the region.

Confused on the last sentence. It says you're emphasizing one more than the other when the first sentence says they're equal.

It expands upon the recreation part of the first sentence.

In this plan you're managing for the resources but also the public.

You could begin the last sentence with "The Public use emphasis will be devoted to..." so that it clarifies that public use isn't emphasized above habitat.

They're trying to explain the public opportunities.

Public Dimensions

In the second sentence about infrastructure, do you mean the infrastructure will enhance the public's ability to enjoy the resources?

Does infrastructure include just facilities or staff as well?

It means everything: facilities, funding and staffing.

Why is this the only goal that includes infrastructure?

It may be included in objectives of other alternatives.

Numerous facilities, and trailheads.

Overall Alternative discussion

The problem we're having overall is that it's hard to make the alternatives sound different but still make them meet each goal.

Even if you're in passive management, you still need to provide the big 6, it would just be to a different extent.

The things that will vary for public use across all alternatives will be:

- Education Themes
- Facilities development
- Volume/frequency of programming
- Use limits
- Commercial use

There is a lot of discussion on understanding the Integrated Management and the Passive/Defensive management alternatives.

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Appendix II *Participant Introduction Questions*

Personal Goals and Conservation Issues

The first task in the workshop process was for each person to introduce themselves and to write out and then read aloud answers to three introductory questions. This process allows for expression of individual responses without being immediately influenced by previous responses. The responses indicate potential areas of common ground and provide a first insight into the diversity of perceived issues present in the group. The responses also provide a check on whether the workshop deliberations address these concerns.

Question 1: Please provide your name and a brief identification of organization, area of expertise, and area of primary interest. Did you participate in Workshop I?

1. Elizabeth Souheaver, Southwest Louisiana Refuge Complex Project Manager; did participate in workshop 1.
2. Barbara Boyle, Deputy Project Leader; expertise in wildlife, public use, and administrative management, developing a pathway for future management.
3. Kris Bly, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Law Enforcement; participated in workshop 1.
4. Daniel Breaux, SELA Refuges; participated in workshop 1.
5. Troy Turner, State of LA Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry; did not attend workshop 1.
6. Larry Burch, Northlake Nature Center, The Nature Conservancy, Tammany Trace Foundation; participated in workshop 1.
7. Joseph C. Ciolino; Bayou Lacombe Chamber of Commerce; did not attend workshop 1.
8. Randy Myers, LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries; did not attend workshop 1.
9. Chuck Palmisano, Director of St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District; participated in workshop 1.
10. Martha Segura, FWS Lafayette ES Office, did not participate in workshop 1 but someone else from my office did.
11. Sharon White, North Shore Beach Association, did not attend workshop 1.
12. Robert Baker, did not attend workshop 1.
13. Amy Lebaux, Education Curator, Audubon Louisiana Nature Center; participated in workshop 1.
14. Mike Perot, LDWF; did not attend workshop 1.
15. J. Christine Paulsell, St. Tammany Parish School Board.
16. Byron Fortier, Supervisory Park Ranger USFWS, participated in workshop 1.
17. Charlotte Parker, Wildlife Biologist USFWS, participated in workshop 1.

Question 2. What is your personal goal for this Workshop?

1. Step closer to our draft CCP for Big Branch Marsh; appreciation of how to step down objectives from several alternatives. My understanding is that it is difficult.
2. To continue to learn methods for conservation planning activities. To better understand the alternative development process as part of the CCP development.
3. To be an asset to the workshop and hopefully I can provide expertise on public use and its impact on the Refuge resources.

4. To incorporate and capture all ideas and objectives from participants in management functions of the Refuge.
5. To learn more about the Refuge and assist anyway I can.
6. Have Big Branch Marsh continue to develop as an asset to STP community including conservation objectives and passive recreation use.
7. To learn more about the Refuge and its impact on the Lacombe area.
8. To have a better understanding of the management of Big Branch Marsh and to assist in establishing obtainable management goals and how LDWF/ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can work together.
9. To learn and contribute to the development of objectives for the Refuge. To continue to work cooperatively with the Service.
10. Participate and learn from others about all factors impacting the Refuge. Contribute to issues concerning wetlands and marshes.
11. Provide input to Refuge future and be up to date on Refuge plans.
12. To learn more about the Big Branch Marsh and how this asset can be improved and preserved.
13. Continue to learn more about how the master planning process works and to learn more about the Refuge System to facilitate the working relationship our two education departments have.
14. To obtain a better understanding of the operations at Big Branch Marsh.
15. To ensure that educational issues and programs are available to our future citizens – students!
16. Need to protect refuge in face of rapid development in the area.
17. To get fresh ideas for the refuge's future alternatives and goals

Question 3. Was any important problem for the conservation planning process missed in the first Workshop? What is it?

1. Nothing was missed.
2. Nothing was missed; very pleased with the process and outcome.
3. N/A
4. Because it was more general than specific and that it's still in the development stage, nothing was missed, all was within the umbrella of topics concerned.
5. Did not attend.
6. Nothing missed.
7. Was not there.
8. Did not attend.
9. I cannot think of any.
10. N/A
11. Unknown
12. None
13. None that I know of. I thought it was very comprehensive.
14. Did not attend.
15. Not sure.
16. Nothing missed.
17. Nothing missed.

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Appendix III
List of Participants

Participant List

Bob Baker
28480 Roan Ln.
Lacombe, LA 70445
Home: 882-6262
Work: 641-6200
bob@bakersalespipe.com

D. Todd Baker
LA Dept. Wildlife and Fisheries
103 Warwick St.
LaPlace, LA 70068
baker_td@wlf.state.la.us

Kris Bly
USFWS
Law Enforcement
Kristen_bly@fws.gov
985-882-2018

Barbara Boyle
USFWS
61389 Hwy 434
Lacombe, LA 70445
Barbara_boyle@fws.gov

Daniel Breaux
USFWS
Forester, Management of Resources
61389 Hwy 434
Lacombe, LA, 70445
Daniel_breaux@fws.gov

Larry Burch
Northlake Nature Center
106 Holly Lane
Mandeville, LA 70471
burchla@airmail.net
985-778-3926

Onnie Byers
CBSG
12101 Johnny Cake Ridge Road
Apple Valley, MN 55124
onnie@cbsg.org
952-997-9800

J.C. Ciolino
Bayou Lacombe Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 987
Lacombe, LA 70445
jciolino@bellsouth.net
985-882-7092

Byron Fortier
Supervisory Park Ranger,
Education and Outreach
USFWS
61389 Hwy 434
Lacombe, LA, 70445
byron_fortier@fws.gov

Amy LeGaux
Audubon Louisiana Nature Center
Education Curator
10601 Dwyer Rd
New Orleans, LA 70127
alegaux@auduboninstitute.org
504-378-4111

Judy McClendon
Natural Resource Planner
Southwest LA National Wildlife Refuges
1428 Highway 27
Bell City, LA 70630
judy_mcclendon@fws.gov
337-598-2216

Nelwyn McInnis
North Shore Program Manager
The Nature Conservancy
PO Box 1497
Covington, LA 70434
nmcinnis@tnc.org

Randy Myers
LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
PO Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000
rmyers@wlf.louisiana.gov
225-765-2351

Chuck Palmisano
Director, St. Tammany Parish Mosquito
Abatement District
PO Box 696
Slidell, LA 70459
chuck_palmisano@yahoo.com
985-643-5050

Christy Paulsell
St. Tammany Parish School Board
Brooks Curr. Center
2552 Sgt. Alfred Drive
Slidell, LA 70458
jchristine.paulsell@stpsb.org

Charlotte Parker
Fish & Wildlife Biologist
USFWS
61389 Hwy 434
Lacombe, LA
charlotte_parker@fws.gov

Mike Perot
LDWF
PO Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000
mperot@wlf.louisiana.gov
225-765-2360

Moriya Rufer
CBSG
12101 Johnny Cake Ridge Road
Apple Valley, MN 55124
moriya@cbsg.org
952-997-9800

Martha Segura
USFWS
Lafayette ES Office
646 Cajundome Blvd.
Martha_segura@fws.gov
337-291-3110

Elizabeth Souheaver
USFWS
61389 Hwy 434
Lacombe, LA 70445
Elizabeth_souheaver@fws.gov

Bob Strader
USFWS
6578 Dogwood View Pkwy. Ste B
Jackson, MS 39213
bob_strader@fws.gov

Troy Turner
Louisiana Office of Forestry
tturner@ldaf.louisiana.gov

Sharon White
387 Carr Drive
Slidell, LA 70458
sawhite@pobox.com

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Appendix IV
Workshop Invitation and Invitation List

Insert Invitation here (hard copy)

Invitation List

- 1 Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures
- 2 Carlton Dufrechou, Lake Pont. Basin Foundation
- 3 Brian Fortson, St. Tammany Parish
- 4 Hyatt Hood, Tourist Commission
- 5 Randy Myers, LADWF
- 6 Kenny Ribbeck, LADWF
- 6 Chuck Smith, Ducks Unlimited
- 7 Newlyn McInnis, The Nature Conservancy
- 8 Martha Segura, USFWS
- 9 John Gnaidy, President Chamber of Commerce
- 10 Jamene Dahmer, Chamber of Commerce
- 11 Lacey Toledano Chamber of Commerce
- 12 Judy McClendon, Natural Resource Planner
- 13 David Fitsmorris
- 14 Joe Impastato
- 15 James Smith, Executive Assistant to President
- 16 Christine Paulsell, St. Tammany Parish School District
- 17 John Lopez /Sharon White, Northshore Beach Assoc.
- 18 Kevin Davis, Parish President
- 19 St. Tammany Home Builders Association
- 20 Brendon Reine, St. Tammany Econ. Develop. Found.
- 21 Sue Wilson
- 22 David Soileau, LDWF
- 23 Michelle Hubert, President, Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges
- 24 Larry Burch, Northlake Nature Center"
- 25 Connie & Cliff Glockner
- 26 Denise Bonck, Planning Dept.
- 27 Amy LeGaux, Audubon Nature Center
- 28 Troy Turner
- 29 Cheryl Fisher, LDWF
- 30 Chuck Palmisano, St. Tammany Mosquito Abatement
- 31 Bob Strader, USFWS

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Appendix V
About CBSG

About CBSG

CBSG is part of IUCN — The World Conservation Union. With 975 volunteer members, CBSG is one of the largest of more than 110 Specialist Groups comprising the Species Survival Commission (SSC), one of six IUCN Commissions. CBSG has over 10 years of experience in developing, testing and applying scientifically based tools and processes for risk assessment and decision-making in the context of species and habitat management. These tools, based on small population and conservation biology, human demography, and the dynamics of social learning are used in intensive, problem-solving workshops to produce realistic and achievable recommendations for both conservation and management.

CBSG's workshop process provides an objective environment, expert knowledge, and neutral facilitation to support the exchange of information across diverse stakeholder groups in order to reach some agreement on the important issues facing both humans and wildlife. With this understanding, meaningful and practical management recommendations can be made. The process has been remarkably successful in uncovering and integrating previously unpublished information vital to the decision making process.

CBSG has learned a host of lessons in more than 100 workshop experiences in 40 countries. Traditional approaches to endangered species problems have tended to emphasize the lack of information and the need for additional research. This has been coupled with a hesitancy to make explicit risk assessments of species status and a reluctance to make immediate or non-traditional management recommendations. The result has been long delays in preparing action plans, loss of momentum, and dependency on crisis-driven actions or broad recommendations that do not provide useful guidance to the managers.

CBSG's interactive and participatory approach produces positive effects on management decision-making and generating political and social support for conservation actions by local people. Workshop participants recognize that management policies and actions need to be designed as part of a biological and social learning process. CBSG workshops provide tools for designing management decisions and programs on the basis of sound science, while allowing new information and unexpected events to be used constructively to adjust management practices. Timely production of workshop reports has immediate impact on stakeholders and decision makers.

Our basic set of tools for workshops include small group dynamic skills, explicit use in small groups of problem restatement, divergent thinking sessions, identification of the history and chronology of the problem, causal flow diagramming (elementary systems analysis), matrix methods for qualitative data and expert judgments, paired and weighted ranking for making comparisons between sites, criteria, and options, utility analysis, stochastic simulation modeling for single populations and metapopulation and deterministic and stochastic modeling of local human populations.

CBSG is funded by annual voluntary donations from more than 150 institutions and individuals worldwide. Support for individual projects comes from conservation organizations, private foundations, zoos, aquariums and regional zoo associations, corporations and wildlife agencies.

Moriya Rufer

Program Assistant

B.A., Biology, St. John's University/College of St. Benedict, 1999

Moriya joined CBSG in September 2000 after completing a marine mammal training internship at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. She has experience as an interpretive naturalist and in insect rearing and studied marine biology for a semester at the University of Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Moriya's main biological interests have evolved to include wildlife ecology, entomology and taxonomy. This background has helped her in her role as recorder and process assistant at CBSG workshops as well as when assisting the CBSG Program Officers with assembling workshop briefing books, editing reports, and other workshop preparation. Moriya also graphically designs report covers, designed and now updates the CBSG website and edits the CBSG Newsletter.

Dr. Onnie Byers

Program Officer

B.S., Animal Science, University of Wisconsin, 1983

M.S., Animal Physiology, University of Minnesota, 1987

Ph.D., Animal Physiology, University of Minnesota, 1990

Post Doc., National Zoological Park/Smithsonian Institution, 1990-1993

Onnie earned her Ph.D. in reproductive physiology from the University of Minnesota and completed a post doctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoo in Washington D.C. She was a member of the National Zoological Park's Mobile Laboratory Research team, and participated in reproductive studies involving cheetah, pumas, tigers and the giant panda.

Onnie joined the CBSG staff in 1991 as a Program Officer. In addition to serving as a reproductive specialist in workshops conducted by CBSG and other conservation organizations, Onnie is responsible for organization, design and facilitation of CBSG's Population and Habitat Viability Assessment, Conservation Assessment and Management Plan and Organization-based workshops. She also has been collaborating with the SSC and the IUCN Red List office to develop a process for feeding species threat assessments made at CBSG workshops directly into the global IUCN Red List. Onnie is dedicated to the transfer of these tools and processes to conservationists around the world through the establishment and nurturing of regional and national CBSG Networks.

