

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

**July 16-18, 2001
St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN**

FINAL REPORT

A Collaborative Workshop:

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



A contribution of the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group in collaboration with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

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Planning Workshop I**

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Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

Section 1

Executive Summary

Final Report

**July 16-18, 2001
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction, Workshop Goals and Workshop Process

Introduction to Comprehensive Conservation Planning

This workshop is the first of three designed to contribute to the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. The Plan is a required element of the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-57—Oct. 9, 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.”

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge and its Purpose

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) encompasses about 30,600 acres of land in an area of Minnesota known as the Anoka Sandplain. The landscape is interspersed with upland habitats dominated by oak, varying from dense forest, oak savanna, to prairie openings. The St. Francis River winds through the Refuge and impoundments have been created to restore dozens (24) of historic wetland basins along the ditch system of the 1920s and ‘30s originally designed to drain them. These and several other undrained wetlands comprise a mosaic of wetland types on the Refuge ranging from sedge meadows to deep water marshes.

The history of the Refuge began in the early 1940s. Local conservationists and sportsmen became interested in restoring the wildlife values of the St. Francis River Basin. Many of these supporters were interested in creating more waterfowl hunting opportunities in the region. The Minnesota Conservation Department, now the Department of Natural Resources, conducted studies with the intention of managing the area as a state wildlife area. By the early 1960s it was apparent that the magnitude of the project was beyond the funding capabilities of the Minnesota Conservation Department at the time. The State of Minnesota formally requested the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, now known as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to consider the area for a national wildlife refuge.

In 1965, the Refuge was established under the legal authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S. C. 715d. Feb. 18, 1929). The Act created the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and authorized the acquisition of lands from funds appropriated by Congress, and later, from funds generated by the sale of Federal Duck Stamps. The following is the only language in the Act, or subsequent amendments, pertaining to the types of lands authorized for acquisition:

Sec. 715d. Purchase or rental of approved areas or interests therein; gifts and devises; United States lands. The Secretary of the Interior may –
(2) Acquire, by gift or devise, any area or interests therein; which he determines to be suitable for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.

Introduction to the Workshop

This workshop was organized to assist the Refuge staff and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) begin the CCP process by developing a shared understanding of the Refuge purpose, developing a vision for the future of the Refuge and exploring key issues affecting the Refuge and its future in the landscape.

Participants were invited from a variety of organizations including representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (Washington Office, Regional Office, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge), U.S. Geological Survey, Tribal Governments of Ojibwe, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Sherburne County Commissioners and Administrators, The Nature Conservancy, University of Minnesota, Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, interested citizens and refuge volunteers (see attached invitation and participation lists).

This report presents the results of the workshop. It is important to note that this is the first in a 3-workshop process. The results presented here are preliminary and subject to review and revision based on the outcomes of these future workshops.

Workshop Goals

1. Establish a shared understanding of the Refuge purpose.
2. Develop a vision for the future of the Refuge
3. Identify and explore key issues affecting the Refuge and its future in the landscape.

Workshop Process

The workshop was organized at the request of the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Regional Office of the U S Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) in collaboration with the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) of the Species Survival Commission of the World Conservation Union. The goals for the first workshop were developed through a series of meetings between the Service core CCP committee and CBSG. The core CCP committee included Charles Blair, Jeanne Holler, Liz Bellantoni, Bob Adamcik, Gary Muehlenhardt and Jan Eldridge.

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 draft report was done with the assistance of a subset 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 16-18, 2001 in the St. Cloud Civic Center in St. Cloud, MN. This site was chosen because it is near the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge and allows easy access to the workshop by invited members of the local community. The workshop extended over 2 ½ days with all lunches brought into the meeting room for maximum use of the time available. There were 39 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 four groups, identified as Group 1, Group 2, etc., throughout this report. Groups were assigned with an effort to have members from different organizations and the public distributed evenly throughout.

The CBSG team used a combination of Future Search techniques modified to achieve the outcome for the workshop. The intent was that the stated goals would be accomplished and information and analysis generated in this workshop would feed back into the focus group process in preparation for the next workshop, Sherburne National Refuge Planning Workshop II, scheduled for October 2001.

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 two 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:

What is your personal goal or expectation from this workshop?

Responses:

1. To share information about the natural features of the Refuge and contribute to the formation of an ecologically-based management plan.
2. A common understanding of refuge purpose to minimize confusion over management direction on the Refuge.
3. Provide a field-level perspective of wildlife habitat needs and public issues for Refuge planning.
4. Determine to what extent the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) can help the CCP process.
5. Identify elements necessary for Sherburne NWR staff to develop a clear vision. Issues identified in this process will be useful in developing goals and objectives in later workshops.
6. To obtain background information on Sherburne CCP process and to learn how Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center might best provide support for CCP process.
7. To provide information about bird conservation planning in the CCP process and to advocate for the inclusion of regional, landscape focussed bird conservation concepts in the CCP vision.
8. Common ground and agreement on refuge vision so we have a direction to base our more specific discussions about public use and habitat management.
9. To find out the tasks for the public use focus group; to learn what other people see as needs for the direction of recreation and environmental education programs at the Refuge.
10. Gain a better understanding of overall future purposes and goals of the Refuge.
11. Develop a plan for the Refuge to change (improve) habitat to increase biodiversity.
12. To provide meaningful input from a volunteer (and user) standpoint in the development of a comprehensive conservation plan for the Refuge.
13. A common understanding of the planning direction from the Refuge.
14. To learn as much as I can about the Refuge programs and to find more possible cooperative undertakings with the county and the Refuge.

15. Gain understanding of issues and planning process and how our agency's work can be better integrated.
16. To gain an understanding of the process being used.
17. To help draft the CCP, without having any preconceived expectations on its outcome.
18. My goal is observation and understanding of the workshop process and procedures.
19. Protect the natural ecosystems, educate people about the natural world; improve the natural world and its ecosystems; protect and enhance aspects of natural ecosystem with a focus on human awareness.
20. Share information and learn more about Refuge goals and objectives; observe the planing process (our Non-game Program is also in the midst of a strategic planning process).
21. To experience a new method for determining the vision and goals for a National Wildlife Refuge for potential use at another refuge.
22. To gain an understanding about the facilitated process and to share a common understanding with others regarding what this CCP will do.
23. Develop a vision for the Refuge.
24. Reach common understanding and agreement on refuge purpose and vision; if we can do that, the workshop will be successful.
25. Learn more about the Refuge and refuge system; have an opportunity to influence management.
26. To best manage the block of land known as Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge for wildlife.
27. To help develop a long range goal and plan for the refuge that will restore and manage pre-settlement ecosystems and educate the public so that they will both understand and utilize it (the Refuge); to apply my knowledge of pre-settlement landscapes, fire, prairie grasses and large predators to help the Refuge: 1) restore and manage pre-settlement ecosystems, and 2) educate the public so they can both understand and use the Refuge.
28. Experience the CCP process to better prepare for CCP at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge.
29. Learn as much as possible about the Refuge issues and make the best contribution I can to develop the CCP.

Question 2:

What do you see as the primary conservation issue for Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge over the next 25 years?

Responses:

1. To meet one of the best opportunities in the Anoka Sand Plain landscape to protect and restore natural features and ecosystem processes.
2. How to deal with the fact that the Refuge will be an island and must become its own buffer i.e. shrinking effective area of the Refuge for management of healthy wildlife populations while at the same time dealing with increasing expectations and pressures from public (for recreation opportunities, to manage a certain way, etc. e.g. smoke management).
3. Dealing with human population growth and human demands on the Refuge.
4. Protecting the Refuge from encroaching urbanization.
5. Put in place the process and management actions necessary to achieve the “purpose” of the Refuge while maintaining the ecological integrity if the regional landscape.
6. Meeting the growing and varied demands and expectations for the Refuge.
7. Maintaining the integrity of a biologically diverse and ecologically functional wildscape in a matrix of urban sprawl and unfriendly development...and reversing that trend – i.e. allowing the wildscape to reach outwards.
8. Urban development will impact the Refuge’s future in many ways. Increasing pressure, increasing isolation, increasing public use, increasing exotic species, decreasing effective habitat base.
9. Loss of habitat surrounding the Refuge and the increase in population in areas surrounding refuge.
10. The Refuge is located in one of the fastest growing areas in MN. It is of great importance to be able to maintain a refuge area that is a home for wildlife, sustain viable habitat and yet be user friendly to the public.
11. To educate the populace with hands-on conservation without destroying (degrading) the very habitat and species we are trying to conserve.
12. The rapidly increasing population and resulting development in the area near the Refuge.
13. Contribute to conservation of the historic ecosystem complex of the upper Midwest in the face of increasing development pressure.

14. Increasing population density around the Refuge and subsequent use demands.
15. How the Refuge can offset effects of intense development pressure on habitat loss and fragmentation in the area.
16. Development and population growth around the Refuge and its impacts on maintaining healthy habitat and quality public use programs.
17. To minimize the impacts of a rapidly developing metropolitan area that is surrounding the Refuge; to maximize habitat for indigenous wildlife species.
18. The primary issue, as I see it, is the conflicts that will arise at the Refuge boundaries as the surrounding areas are developed.
19. Deal with urban development, establish connections between native and reestablished ecosystems; improve understanding of the natural world so that appropriate conservation efforts can occur at the Refuge.
20. Conflicting natural resource demands from the public with intense land development and human population growth surrounding the Refuge.
21. The isolation of the Refuge as an island within suburban sprawl.
22. Achieving adequate funds for operations and a full compliment of staff (somewhat related); assembling the necessary funds and stuff to achieve its conservation vision.
23. Developing and implementing a habitat management strategy in an urban environment.
24. Maintain biological integrity and establish clear direction and emphasis of refuge's biological program – will the Refuge be “all things to all species or focus on highest and best use of the Refuge in context of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
25. Working with local planning to engender sustainable ecosystem in face of human population growth, dispersion, use and politics.
26. Over crowding from human component; human impact on the Refuge.
27. Encroaching human population and the several demands that the population will place on it.
28. Road map of science-based management decisions with accountability.
29. At this time, the primary conservation issue is the impact of human activities on and off the Refuge.

The Vision: Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

In working groups, participants created draft visions statements based on themes identified in the futures exercise (see Section 4 of this document). A synthesis group comprised of one member for each working group took these four statements and drafted a ‘synthesized’ draft vision statement that was presented to plenary for discussion.

SYNTHESIZED VISION STATEMENT – FIRST DRAFT

In a region where citizens treasure natural areas managed by national, state and local governments, the Refuge is celebrated for its wildlife and extraordinary opportunities for visitors. The Refuge conserves/maintains a mosaic of restored quality native Anoka Sandplain communities. These oak savannas are interspersed with a variety of wetland and riverine habitat ranging from sedge meadow to deeper water within the St. Francis River Watershed. Clean water flows into and out of the Refuge. The Refuge’s hydrologic regime includes a functional St. Francis riparian system, including spring flooding and ephemeral ponds. The wildlife and habitat are in balance with natural forces and management reflects an adaptive response to climate, using pre-European settlement vegetation as a guide and high technology as tools.

The community claims ownership, actively supports and advocates the Refuge, its mission, and purpose. Community leaders actively seek Refuge staff counsel in making land planning decisions. The surrounding lands are recognized as valuable to the integrity of the Refuge by providing green corridors and habitat continuity to adjacent natural areas.

Visitors have high-quality experiences that provide personal and societal benefits, including heightened awareness and support of a strong conservation and environmental ethic. All visitor uses are compatible with the purposes of the Refuge, the 1997 mission of the NWRS, and the Service’s “Wildlife First!” concept.

The following comments were made and incorporated into the revised statement.

- quality (used in second sentence) is without value; needs a qualifier
- What does “ephemeral” mean? Need to define if you keep in.
- Appears to be larger emphasis on wetlands than uplands in our habitat discussion.
- Should we use “pre-European settlement”? Or is “prior to significant environmental change by humans” such as Group 4 said in their vision, a better way to say this.
 - Some folks thought it was important to state a timeframe and pre-European settlement is a way to do this.
- Need to change second sentence in second paragraph to be a two-way street. Meant to have been a responsibility for refuge staff to go out into community and be part of community.
- Potential to delete last sentence.
 - Meaning was for visitor experiences to be biologically-based; i.e., not in conflict with the biological carrying capacity of wildlife and habitats.
 - If that’s the intent, need to change this sentence to reflect it. Delete last sentence.

- Delete high technology tools – this is a strategy. Should not be in a vision.
- Invasives left out
 - Meant to be covered in “quality”
- Cultural and historic concerns not addressed

Based on these comments the synthesis group revised the draft vision statement as follows:

SYNTHESIZED VISION STATEMENT – REVISED DRAFT

In a region where citizens treasure natural areas managed by national, state and local governments, the Refuge is celebrated for its wildlife and extraordinary opportunities for visitors. The Refuge conserves/maintains a mosaic of restored high-quality native Anoka Sandplain communities. The upland habitats are dynamic, ranging from grasslands to oak savannas to forests. These are interspersed with a variety of wetland and riverine habitats ranging from sedge meadow to deep water. The Refuge’s hydrologic regime includes a functional St. Francis River riparian system, with clean water flowing into and out of the Refuge. The wildlife and habitat are in balance with natural forces and management reflects an adaptive response to climate, using pre-European settlement vegetation as a guide.

Visitors have high quality experiences that provide personal and societal benefits, including heightened awareness and support of a strong conservation ethic. Visitor uses and management activities are consistent with the maintenance of healthy populations of wildlife and their associated habitats. The community claims ownership, actively supports the Refuge, and advocates for its mission, purpose and programs. The surrounding lands are recognized as valuable to the integrity of the Refuge by providing green corridors and habitat continuity to adjacent natural areas.

This revised draft synthesized vision statement was brought back to the plenary. Two observations were made from the group for future consideration in finalizing this vision statement (this statement will be reviewed in October at the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop II).

- The protection of cultural resources (identified by Group 1) is important and still lacking in the second version of the draft vision statement.
- The item speaking to the Refuge staff being part of the community was deleted rather than revised. Would like reconsideration to adding it back in.

The Purpose: Interpretation for Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

The purpose of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge was discussed by each working group (see section 3C) and in two plenary sessions. Group consensus was achieved on the migratory bird portion of the Refuge's purpose statement.

Refuge Purpose:

“...Sherburne was established in 1965, the following purposes, corresponding with its acquisition authorities were also established:

‘...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.’ (Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 715d)

Group Interpretation of the Term “Migratory Birds” as referenced in the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Purpose:

Consensus is that the term “migratory birds” as referenced in the Refuge purpose shall refer to those species identified in the Code of Federal Regulations 50 CFR 10.13.

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

Section 2

Understanding the Past

Final Report

**July 16-18, 2001
St. Cloud Civic Center
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Understanding the Past I: Timeline Individual Reports

Purpose: To develop a shared picture of the history of the development of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.

- Tasks:**
1. Make notes on the memorable personal, local (Minnesota) and national milestones, key events, or turning points in the history of the development of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.
 2. Transfer your notes to the corresponding timelines posted on the walls.

Personal Timeline

Some had early experiences at the Refuge

Some people in the room had early experience on the Refuge, periodic experience, over 30 years.

There was a wide diversity of experiences, both professional and personal.

Most reported experiences that were non-consumptive.

Many observations involved early experiences out-of-doors.

Perception that many in the room had experience with the Refuge early in their careers.

People living in the area have a long history of using the Refuge.

The Refuge influenced career choices.

Colleges used the Refuge as an outdoor classroom.

A program was in place for environmental education in the mid-'70s.

Refuge has always been popular for its role in environmental education

In the 90's the Refuge Friend's Group and volunteering in general came into being.

State/Local Timeline

There were negative feelings about the condemnation in the development of the Refuge. These feelings still exist today.

The early history of the Refuge involves fire suppression, the later history 1980s included burning.

Volunteers started on the Refuge in the early '80s.

"On the ground" developments at the Refuge increased with time- funding, research, management, and water control.

Emphasis shifted to more open land and management for birds

Pine tree removal and burning increased with time.

Prairie restoration and then sharp-tailed grouse management started

Gradually increasing development encroached on the Refuge and became a major influence.

Environmental awareness increased with time.

Invasive species became a problem and spread.

There was a strong local initiative to start the Refuge

There were those opposed to the acquisition of land.

Sherburne county board of commissioners went on record against the Refuge

Management philosophies changed often

National Timeline

Vietnam and social conflict lead to a distrust of government
National reports on the timeline were very policy oriented.
Earth Day, Environmental Awareness were all listed as important.
Refuge Improvement Act.
Environmental movement leads to increased use and appreciation of the Refuge.
The Refuge happened because of politics...Stickney and Humphrey.
Fire funding dramatically influenced the Refuge.
Private lands funding also influenced the Refuge.
Organic Act (National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act) influences planning (CCP)

Understanding the Past II: Timeline Summary Report

Working Groups convened to accomplish the following tasks.

Purpose: To identify themes and patterns in the history of the development of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.

Tasks: Discuss the timelines, with particular reference to the following questions:

1. Looking at the Personal timeline, what story can you tell about us - - the people in this room and our contribution to the development of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge?
2. Looking at the Local timeline, what story can you tell about the ways in which the community impacted the development of the Refuge?
3. Looking at the National timeline, what story can you tell about the broader influence on development of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. How does this story relate to those developed from the two other perspectives?

Group 1

We identified our role in the history of the development of the Refuge. In this process we highlighted the following points:

- Refuge establishment is the big event of the '60s
- Two themes of refuge establishment, a reaction to land condemnation (negative) and a concern for conservation (positive).
- There appears to be a long-term positive association with the Refuge represented within the room. Some workshop participants first visited the Refuge as students.
- The Friends Group and Volunteers were first mentioned in 1990s.

Group 2

Summary Observations:

- Individual involvement in the Refuge goes from personal to national within a single lifetime
- The cultural shifts are reflected in the Refuge timeline, the shifts in management focus are reflected, too.
- The increase in the volunteer program reflects what is happening around the country.
- This was a BIG shift in only 3-4 decades.
- Early land condemnation has affected how USFWS does business today.
- Acknowledgement that resources are shrinking, there are fewer places to enjoy than 30 or 40 years ago. Resources are very threatened, shrinking.
- Acknowledgement that we need for open space. Moving to action: from personal, local experience to a national level. Partly it is because we know more now, a recognition of loss of habitat. Need for open spaces
- *Summary: Personal experience goes from local to national policy and action.*

Group 3

Personal Timeline

Perception that many in the room had experience with the Refuge early in their careers.
People living in the area have a long history of using the Refuge.
The Refuge influenced career choices.
Colleges used the Refuge as an outdoor classroom.
A program was in place for environmental education in the mid-'70s.
The Refuge has always been popular for its role in environmental education.
In the '90s the Refuge Friends' Group and volunteering in general came into being.

Local Timeline

There was a strong local initiative to start the Refuge.
There were those opposed to the acquisition of land.
Sherburne county board of commissioners went on record against the Refuge.
Management philosophies changed often.
Pines, as a symbol of conservation, became a symbol of controversy.
Significant local development began and accelerated in the '90s.
Millions of dollars poured into Refuge for water level development.
Development of "donuts" to aid in waterfowl production.

National timeline

Environmental movement leads to increased use and appreciation of the Refuge.
The Refuge happened because of politics...Stickney and Humphrey.
Fire funding dramatically influenced the Refuge.
Private lands funding also influenced the Refuge.
Organic Act (National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act) influences planning (CCP).

Group 4

Themes and Patterns

1. Connection between local and national-earth day, etc.
2. Bicentennial-money.
3. Lots of individual experiences.
4. Clear history/development of refuge.
5. Obvious connection between local DNR and refuge activities.
6. Early local conflicts (condemnation, pine tree removal).
7. Recently more positive relationships-volunteers, partners, stakeholders.
8. WMAs established-local land acquisition reflected national issues.
9. Progression of working "in the box" to working outside the boundaries.
10. In the '60s more use of condemnation- now it is not used.
11. Trend from simple problems/solutions to complex problems/solutions.
12. Purchase for migratory birds/waterfowl to biological diversity/ecosystem mgmt.
13. 1837 treaty controversy is not a refuge issue.
14. More influence locally than on a national basis.
15. Local attitudes changed from early days to current times.
16. Greater public use over time.
17. At first hunting, more recently other activities (non-consumptive).
18. Because of growth of hunters- increase demand for public land to hunt (area and time).
19. Impoundment management scheme has changed overtime.

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

Section 3

Focus on the Present

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Focus on the Present: Issue Identification and “Prouds and Sorries”

Issue Identification

Purpose: To build a shared context of our concerns and priorities.

Tasks:

- Brainstorm a list of issues and trends impacting the current status of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.
- Consolidate similar issues and theme them into topic areas. Then prioritize these issue topic areas.
- For each of your five or so top priority issue, include a descriptive statement of why it is an issue of concern.

Group 1

We built a list of issues that relate to the current status of the Refuge (Part 1) and prioritized this list (Part 2).

Part 1: Issue identification

Eliminate non-native fauna & flora

Human impacts on ecosystem

Urban sprawl

Use of fire in the future - surrounding development may prohibit

Inter-governmental planning coordination

Refuge purpose - Migratory birds?

Increasing acreage/size

Nuisance wildlife

Non-development easements to maintain rural character (cranes use nearby croplands for food)

Green corridors connecting nearby habitats

Corridor to Kunkel WMA

St. Francis watershed, water quality & quantity

(Establish a watershed district)

Management of open landscapes

Refuge as Island

Adverse impacts of drawdowns

Conifer removal

Seasonal refuge closure (sanctuary)

Recreation vs. biologically necessary hunting/trapping

Reintroduction of extirpated species

Acreage of prairie openings
Wildfire control
Horseback-riding, biking, hiking (open sanctuary)
Urban crime - law enforcement shortfall
Cultural resources (Native American) i.e. graves, artifacts
Public facilities (number, placement, type)

Prioritized List (Part 2)

We grouped the issues into major themes and prioritized the new themes using the paired-ranking technique. The list follows:

1. Refuge purpose - Migratory Birds
2. Open Landscape management (Grasslands & Oak Savanna)
3. Land Use planning / protection off refuge
4. Exotic / Nuisance species control
5. Fire Management
6. Public access to refuge
7. Appropriate Uses
8. Recreational vs. biologically necessary hunting/trapping
9. Public Facilities
10. Cultural Resources
11. Reintroduction of extirpated species
12. Urban Crime

We further clarified the high-priority issue themes through descriptive statements:

1. We need to clarify the meaning of “migratory birds” so that one of the Refuge purposes is defined.
2. We need to specify the size and distribution of grasslands and oak savannah.
3. We need to identify the roles and strategies of the Refuge in mitigating off-site impacts to natural resources, i.e. water quality monitoring, wetland & grassland restoration on private land.
4. We need to set priorities and methods to control of exotic/invasive species because resources are limited.
5. We need to reduce risk, increase efficiency and gain public support in order to reach fire management goals.
6. We need to examine the appropriate time, place and amount of public access that is compatible with refuge goals and gain public support.

Group 2

Issues

Improvement Act
Urbanization
Public Use

Conservation

Defining the Refuge purpose

Interpreting the Refuge purpose

What is today's migratory bird

What is a specific, detailed presettlement target

What is our target /model for presettlement

Why are we stuck on presettlement

Management of one habitat at expense of another

Relationship to adjacent lands

Corridors

Historical uses

Constraints on use of prescribed fire

Sanctuary - time

Missing significant species, bison (historical)

Missing keystone species, ones that have a big effect on habitat

Impact of adjacent lands on the Refuge

Involvement of surrounding communities

Management for animals other than birds

Refuges functioning in a system of other refuges and other public lands

Contamination

Changes in the water table

Global climate change

Adequacy of funding to achieve refuge objectives

Appropriate prescribed burning frequency

Invasive species management

Managing and matching changing public interest in the Refuge

Cultural change

Managing humans

Involvement of surrounding communities in the context that it is a national resource.

Local control or federal/national in debate of who's on first?

Deer Management

Significant archeological sites

Encouraging more Native American involvement in the planning process

Which target?

- Historical picture

- historical process

- Emphasis on RCPs

- Emphasis on Keystone Species

- Emphasis on Waterfowl

Incorporate state species and concerns and laws and policies.

Water level management, water/wetland management

Human perception will guide future policy, what our children see today will guide our future, so if they don't see it, they will not protect it. The Refuge/state has to provide that experience.

Refuges role in providing experience to children

Baseline data, biological ability to obtain the same

Local species gene pool is isolated at the Refuge and reservoirs, (species islands) around it are lost.

Gene flow in and out of the Refuge is lost.

Warming will move the transition zone: vision must consider this impact.

Development of vision must be adaptive to this change

Where is the aquifer and how it will be affected by global warming

If farmers can't irrigate development will increase.

Sherburne county has huge potato field, huge pumps, water table will drop

Aquifer in the cities, suburbs that get water from aquifer are having problems, with three week drought, aquifer will not support this level of development.

Wetlands are drying. All the snowmelt did not bring them up.

Are there limitations on what can happen because of development around the Refuge.

May be a constraint to impoundment fluctuations if water becomes an issue.

Wildlife disease, (lymes, encephalites)

Trends

Human impacts

State of the Refuge

Management

Habitat Target

Habitat Constraints

Fire

Water

Migratory Birds

Wildlife

Another way: by scale

Physical scale, refuge, adjacent lands, corridors

integrating beyond the Refuge

ecosystem management

global, how refuge fits in the big picture

local how refuge fits into ecosystem, state and county

micro: the Refuge and its pieces.

Think global, act local, micro

Scoring of Issues

(After all the issues were identified, each member of the group marked what they thought were the top five issues for the Refuge. The numbers below represent the number of tallies each received. Some issues were then combined into a more general category.)

4 Urbanization

3 Public use

1 Conservation

- 5 Relationships to adjacent lands; Are there limitations to refuge management due to surrounding lands
- 4 Corridors and Gene pool isolation
- 1 Refuge functioning as part of National Wildlife Refuge System and other public lands
- 1 Contaminants
- 1 Climate change
- 1 Adequacy of money to achieve objectives
- 1 Appropriate burn frequency
- 4 Invasive species
- 14 \ 5 which target? Historical landscape, historical process, emphasis on RCPs, emphasis on ducks 2 missing historical species especially bison ones not missing keystone species 3 defining refuge purpose 2 what is our target/model 2 management for species other than birds
- 3 Water/wetland management
- 1 Human perception will guide
- 1 Refuge role in providing experience to youth
- 1 Baseline bio data and ability to obtain
- 1 Wildlife disease

Summary of Priority Issues

Urbanization / Adjacent land Use/ Corridors

Public Use

Invasive species

Tool Bag: Grazing, Burning, Water and wetland management/infrastructure

Role of refuge to provide experience to youth

Philosophical: Direction and scale of management emphasis

Expanded Issue Statements for Top 6 Issues

1. Urbanization/adjacent land use

Places constraints on management tools and movement of wildlife and plants and their gene flow.

Adjacent land use has constrained management opportunities on the Refuge, it constrains what you can do in terms of burning, your management because you are near neighbors, your water management, and the wildlife populations are constrained, it constrains the use of tools and the opportunity of movement of the animals.

It constrains management tools and the movement of wildlife and gene flow.

Direction is influenced by the history of the Refuge.

Increases, crime and pollution, brings vandalism, suicides, homicides.

Potential exists for opportunities for corridors and an improved attitude toward the Refuge as a neighbor.

2. Public Use

What is appropriate balance between public use and wildlife first as public demand for use increases.

Needs to be a balance between public use and providing for wildlife. Currently the Refuge is balanced. There is a lot of pressure from the outside to increase public use and demand for public use has increased. What is the appropriate balance? It makes us think about that every day. The public wants more of the Refuge open to a variety of uses. Increasing demand for expanded public use, for more public use opportunities. Increases the need for ongoing education.

3. Invasive species

Threaten restoration of native habitat and genetic diversity.

4. Management Tools

There is an infrastructure on the Refuge for wetland dikes and fire breaks that has defined refuge management today.

5. Conservation Ethic

Role of the Refuge to provide experience to people which will shape the future.

6. Philosophical Direction and scale of management emphasis

Currently not universal agreement and emphasis has changed.

Group 3

Issues from Brainstorming Exercise:

1. Water management
2. Lack of large-group facilities
3. Prescribed burning
4. Invasive species
5. Highest and best use of the Refuge
6. Environmental Education
7. Urban encroachment
8. Vandalism
9. Climate change
10. Hunting pressure...too many
11. Movement to have no hunting
12. Introduced species (buffalo)

13. Public access
14. Pine trees
15. What recreational activities should be permitted on the Refuge.
16. Turkey hunting
17. Endangered species
18. Public relations
19. Creating habitat that are not target species
20. Multi-use trails
21. Other habitat management...prairie, oak savanna, all wetlands, etc
22. Lack of visitor facilities
23. Land acquisition
24. Lack of understanding of the Refuge within a landscape context
25. Kiosks
26. Not a clear definition of the Refuges purpose
27. How to link up with other areas
28. Private land management
29. How to translate other national, state, regional plans...no seamless process
30. Interagency communication
31. Public access
32. Funding
33. Staffing
34. Increasing developer awareness
35. Maintain wildlife research opportunities
36. Pollution/contamination
37. Nuisance wildlife
38. Administrative facilities
39. Potential Native American issues
40. Management of cultural and archaeological sites
41. Threats management
42. Public roads through Refuge.
43. Should the Refuge be sold and moved elsewhere?
44. Public compliance of Refuge regulations/policies
45. Future conflicts between Refuge needs and local ordinances

This list was reduced/combined to:

1. Water management - lots of money invested in the infrastructure. Impacts upland habitats. Infrastructure contributes to "original purpose" (waterfowl)
2. Visitor services facilities - Refuge lacks appropriate infrastructure, ability to accommodate large groups, limits ability to educate select groups.
3. Prescribed Burning - irritates neighbors because of smoke, cannot burn all areas due to urban interface,
4. Environmental Ed. - Need more in the context of expanding urban development.

5. Recreation - Conflicted desires i.e. some people want more rec. use while other want less use of the Refuge.
6. Threats management - The Refuge lacks contingency plans relative to urban encroachment, climate change, pollution, and funding uncertainties.
7. Research
8. Habitat Management - The Refuge needs to decide what to manage for and how best to do it.
9. End. species management
10. Outreach
11. Cultural Resources/Tribal relationships
12. Administrative Logistics (staff and funding) - The Refuge lacks funding and staff
13. Public compliance of refuge regulations - The Refuge needs to control trespass, vandalism, and hunting violations. The Refuge needs a Law Enforcement presence.
14. Strategic land protection - Where does the Refuge fit within its landscape?
15. Definition of Refuge purpose - what is the definition of migratory birds in 2001 as opposed to 1965?
16. Interagency communication and cooperation (who)

Finally the previous list was further combined and scored. The method we used was each person was given ten points to distribute between the 12 categories giving the most points to the most important item.

<u>Final Consolidation</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. Habitat management	195
2. Strategic land protection	95
3. Visitor Facilities	85
4. Water management	75
5. Environmental Education	75
6. Threat management	75
7. Definition of purpose	75
8. Outreach	50
9. Recreation	47
10. Prescribed burning	13
11. Research	10
12. Endangered species	5

Group 4

Issues

Smoke management
Using prescribed fire in an urban environment
Opening day of firearms deer-safety-high numbers
Trash along the road-increasing
Increased human demands on the Refuge
Vandalism of signs
Refuge becoming more of an island
Speed on county 9 and 5 -threat to wildlife and people
Open and closed areas-What should be open for public use
Wildlife raised on the Refuge can become nuisance off the Refuge-deer, bear, cranes, geese
Conflict between x-c skiers and snowshoeing
Snowmobile trespass on Refuge
Conflict in managing for waterfowl vs non-waterfowl species
Appropriate vegetation community management
Increasing development around refuge
Huntable species on refuge
Maintaining an adequate staff-numbers, training, etc.
Providing public education on resource issues (burning, tree removal, exotics)
Degree of revenue sharing-fed govt.
Support adequate acquisition dollars
Increase interest in quality deer mgmt.
“Enchanted forest” on Blue Hill Trail to cut or not to cut
Dogs on trails-off leash- pet dogs-feces
Concern about diminishing waterfowl populations
Water quality inputs and outputs
Conflicting mgmt between Refuge and state forest
Issues between ethnic background of Refuge users
Mgmt of restored prairie with non local ecotypes
Exotic plant encroachment
Exotic animal species
Oak wilt-native or non native
Do prairie chickens, bison, sharp-tails, turkey, elk belong
What is appropriate oak species
Dramatic changes to hiking trails due to burning-dead trees
Four wheels in road ditches-state increase
Utilities expansion /right of way
Illegal nighttime trespass
Changing pattern in groundwater withdrawal
Farming practices adjacent to Refuge
Old schoolhouse inadequate space for special events, school, groups, etc
Increase noise impacts on Refuge, airplanes

The group decided on six categories that could be used to categorize the issues.

Categories

Hydrology

Public Use

Law Enforcement

Biological

Administrative

Increased urbanization

Expansion of Categories-How each individual item fits into the above six categories.

Public Use

increasing noise impacts on refuge - airplanes

old schoolhouse inadequate space for special events, schools groups

dramatic changes to hiking trails due to burning -dead trees

“enchanted forest” on Blue Hill trail-to cut or not to cut

diminishing hunting opportunities creates more demand

issues between ethnic background of refuge users

conflict between xc-skiers and snowshoers on trails

providing public education on resource issues ie burning, tree removal, exotics

opening day of firearms deer/safety concern over high numbers

trash along roads and trash dumping increasing

extent of open and closed areas for public use

Law Enforcement

Trash dumping

vandalism of signs

snowmobile trespass

unleashed pets

increased ATV use in state may increase on refuge

nighttime trespass

potential crimes of society

Biology

refuge becoming more of an island

speed on county roads 9 and 5-threat to wildlife

conflict in managing for waterfowl vs non waterfowl

appropriate vegetation community management

hunnable species on refuge

increased interest in quality deer mgmt

concern about diminishing waterfowl populations

mgmt of restored prairie with non local ecotype

do bison, prairie chickens, s-t grouse, elk belong.

Oak wilt- native or non native

what about appropriate oak species

farming practices adjacent to refuge

Administrative

huntability on refuge
maintaining adequate staff numbers and training
degree of revenue sharing by fed govt.
support adequate acquisition dollars
coordinate habitat mgmt between refuge, state, and other conservation lands
Water quality inputs/outputs
changing pattern in groundwater withdrawals

Increased urbanization

use of prescribed fire in an urban environment
refuge becoming an island
wildlife raised on refuge becoming a nuisance off refuge -deer, bear, geese, cranes
increasing development around refuge
utilities expansion/right of way

Issue Synthesis

A synthesis group made up of one representative from each working group had the challenge of consolidating the issues of each group into a series of issue statements reflecting the concerns of all participants. The results of this effort are the 6 prioritized issues statements listed below. (Values in brackets are results of paired ranking exercise carried out by all workshop participants.)

- 1) **Definition/clarification of purpose** (waterfowl vs non-waterfowl) [107]
- 2) Need to come to agreement on appropriate **vegetation community management** ie. size and distribution of grasslands, oak savannah, wetland type [103]
- 3) Need to identify roles and strategies of the Refuge in coordinating **Landscape issues**, i.e. corridors, gene flow, watershed, mitigation of off site impacts and land protection [71]
- 4) Need to examine the appropriate time, place, facilities and amount of **public access** that is compatible with refuge goals, considers public demand and gains public support [63]
- 5) Need to set priorities for control of **exotic invasive species** that threaten restoration of native habitats and genetic diversity. [45]
- 6) **Rx fire in urban area**: reduce risk, increase of efficiency, maintain habitat and gain public support to attain refuge goals. [44]

Prouds and Sorries

Purpose: To reflect on and accept our feelings about what we're doing now. This is an exercise in owning up to what is, not blaming or problem solving.

- Task:** 1. Brainstorm two lists (prouds and sorries). What are you doing right now that you are PROUD of in relationship to Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge? What are you SORRY or disappointed about?
2. Highlight those items you care most deeply about.

Group 1

In order to understand our feelings better, each individual in the group listed thoughts on what made them Proud about the Refuge. They also noted thoughts about failed efforts and things they are Sorry about. The results:

Prouds

Existence of large Refuge close to metro area
Personal influence on open landscape management
- and resulting sharp-tailed grouse reintroduction
Proud of effort to protect and enhance refuge resources over the years
Wildlife response to the wetlands and grasslands
- especially eagles, cranes, waterfowl and large predators
Quality of prescribed burning program
DNR and FWS working relationships
That Refuge maintains hunting and trapping
Huge volunteer clientele

Sorries

Not enough open landscape management
Sharp-tail reintroduction failed
That urban sprawl had to happen here
Minnesota Ditch Law is not reformed enough to prevent water quality impacts to Refuge.
Have not given enough attention to Indian cultural resources (sites, interpretation).
Hunting programs are so popular on opening days
Inadequate funding for operations
Carp have had such a major influence on wetlands

Group 2

Individuals brainstormed prouds and sorries and then each group member put a tally mark next to what they thought were the top five prouds and the top five sorries. The numbers in parentheses after the items in the lists below represent the number of tallies each received.

Prouds

1. Tread lightly (minim. Env. Impact) (1)
2. Good approach to upland management (2)
3. Commitment to conservation by myself and others (3)
4. I am proud to be involved in the planning process (4)
5. I am proud of my involvement in the friends organization.
6. I am pleased with the fact that we have expanded our focus to include ecosystems and larger species communities. That we think about regional biodiversity
7. I am pleased that the Refuge management has directed focused public use. That is helping to ease the ill feeling that was so prevalent.
8. I am pleased that we are using conservation biology theory in our management (7)
9. I am proud that my students have come back over the last 10 years and said one of the most memorable experiences has been with the Refuge in classwork. (3)
10. People who were displaced and said they are really proud of what is happening, the use of the land. Some former residents of Sherburne “take” area have voiced positive feelings for refuge. (Some don’t-sorry) (2)

Sorries

1. Lack of current knowledge of the Refuge.
2. Volume of public use on the Refuge. There are too many people. The sheer numbers and volume of people on the Refuge. It is incompatible with wildlife first. (2)
3. Personal lack of current knowledge by individuals of refuge for management decisions to be involved in planning process (4)
4. I am sorry that I didn’t get involved with the Refuge earlier in my life. Waited too long to get involved. I knew it was there and I occasionally would go there, but years passed before I took the time to get involved. (1)
5. Grew up with low perception/aesthetics appreciation for “oak scrub”
6. Taken this long to decide what the direction of the Refuge is. (6)
7. My use of the Refuge for environmental education may not have always been successful. Not always successful in developing environmental ethics through use of refuge. (2)
8. In discussion with regard to citizens, with burn policy, have always been positive, I am sorry I have not been actively supportive of refuge policy of burn program.
9. Inadequate land use zoning threatens future of the Refuge.(1)
10. I sometimes let management issues become personal.
11. I am sorry Sherburne fell to political pressure, even though we did condemn land, they didn’t do it right. The acquisition process fell short, due to political pressure.(1)
12. Sorry there is not a greater community appreciation love for the Refuge (4)
13. Sorry there isn’t a greater focus on insects (arthropods). (1)
14. Lack of reintroduction of keystone species. (2)
15. Sorry we didn’t do paired ranking.

Group 3

This is a list of what we are proud of and what we are sorry for in reference to Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. The lists are ranked according to a weighted scale. Each person was again given 100 points to distribute.

Proud	Proud Score	Sorry	Sorry Score
1. Establishment of friends group	145	1. Need an agreed-upon direction for the Refuge amongst staff	106
2. Volunteer program	105	2. Land condemnation	90
3. Landscape plan	75	3. Need a visitor center	80
4. Spatial Database (GIS)	45	4. Impoundment system	75
5. Embrace public use as part of program	45	5. Sherburne county officials aren't more supportive of the Refuge	75
6. Progressive attitude of staff	40	6. Too many roads within refuge splitting up refuge - road kill	51
7. Fire program (execution and public relations)	35	7. Refuge isn't more open to the public during breeding season	40
8. Assumption of non-traditional identity	30	8. Irregular nature of the Refuge boundary	31
9. Increasing public use	30	9. Refuge needs more staff to adequately manage refuge	31
10. Wildlife drive facility	30	10. Refuge didn't acquire more land	30
11. Monitoring system	20	11. Way pine controversy was handled	20
12. Good interagency working relationship	20	12. Too many hunters on opening weekend - DNR needs to limit hunter numbers	20
13. Facilities generally are inviting	20	13. Need to change refuge name to alleviate confusion from county name	16
14. Public relations are good	20	14. Difficulty in finding refuge phone number	15
15. Focus/concern of oak savanna	20	15. Need to bring back loggerhead shrike and red-headed woodpecker (etc.)	10
16. Herbarium & species list	15	16.	
17. Use of public media effective	10	17.	

Group 4

Prouds (Felt most deeply about)*

Resources that refuge has received

Friends Group *

Volunteer Program *

Working relationship on private lands with state *

Community relations

Early refuge planners made good plan for trails and auto tour route lumping public activity in one section of the Refuge

The Refuge is an excellent unit for resource management and conservation

DNR to use the Refuge as a model for managing Kunkel unit

CCP process and the individuals outside the Refuge were invited to be a part

NWRS Improvement Act

NWRS relationship with County Public works, DNR wildlife managers, U of M extension program etc. for on-refuge programs *

Sorries (Felt most deeply about)*

Early history was controversial

The state forest mgmt plan for Anoka sand plain is not finished *

Lack of planning in the urbanized area i.e. sprawl

The Refuge does not have better biological baseline data

Stewardship biologist was not created on a permanent basis

Refuge housing eliminated

Realty acquisition process is not working better

Pressure is so great on opening weekend of firearms deer season

Surrounding area is developing *

Interpreting the Refuge Purpose

Purpose: To come to a common understanding of definition/clarification of the Refuge purpose.

Task: The working groups were given the Refuge's purpose as defined by its land acquisition authority, the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, and asked to discuss their interpretation of the Refuge's purpose.

Group 1

We reviewed the language of the Refuge establishing legislation (MBCA, 1929). The Act does not provide a lot of guidance on the purpose. We tried to interpret the purpose statement and identify problems associated with a vague purpose. The following thoughts came forward:

What do we mean by the phrase "migratory birds"

An opinion: Waterfowl should remain as a priority.

How do State-listed species fit into the Refuge priorities?

(Winter drawdowns can impact Blanding's turtles).

Water impoundments are vital to Refuge's federal and state-listed species.

Abandoning water impoundments would be a catastrophe for refuge/partner/public relations.

What was the intent of early refuge promoters?

Migrating waterfowl have some large-water options in the region..

Why not manage the Refuge for waterfowl and other migratory birds?

The Group condensed our rough interpretation of the Refuge purpose into a short statement:

The Refuge should be managed for a natural diversity of migratory birds without neglecting the habitat needs of waterfowl. The Refuge should include historic habitats such as oak savanna, natural wetlands and established managed wetlands.

Group 2

What is the purpose?

The Refuge was established in 1965

"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose for migratory birds."

1940s sportsmen support restoring wildland values of St. Francis River Basin.

Migratory Bird Act used as establishing authority. Focus on migratory birds.

Migratory birds, as defined by the Act, equals all birds except house sparrows, starlings and rock doves.

Philosophy of the agency is that we are beyond ducks in viewing migratory birds. Wildlife is no longer game management, it is processes and conservation biology, then I see from the Improvement Act that we are part of the system. How can the Refuge make the greatest

contribution to that system. The Refuge could make the greatest contribution by restoring and maintaining oak savanna, a globally imperiled ecosystem.

Restoration of migratory birds in the context of the native vegetation communities and processes.

Restoration of native habitats and processes within climatic conditions.

Keep “in the context of changing landscape.”

Current priorities will be based on national priorities.

Management is within the context of the native plant communities and restricted by the population and distribution of birds and the Refuge has to fit into the broader system of refuges and other lands.

The purpose of the Refuge is to provide a refuge and viable native habitat for wildlife and migratory birds in the context of changing climatic conditions.

Group Interpretation:

Lands managed for migratory birds as described by the Migratory Bird Act and other wildlife within the context of functional native vegetation communities and processes, recognizing limitations that changing climatic conditions may impose.

Group 3

- funding came from duck stamps so focus should be ducks
- has the community grown beyond the belief that migratory birds means ducks
- some management people think managing for oak savanna is more important globally
- we’ve spent a lot of money on impoundments
- migratory bird commissioners were thinking of migratory birds as ducks
- commission approved purchases
- make the definition of “migratory birds” more explicit
- lowland conifer (tamarack) has almost been extirpated
- bio-integrity policy - 1997 Refuge Improvement Act
- water table has been raised too high and caused reed-canary grass to spread
- much refuge management has been derived due to dust-bowl era
- this is a cultural component of the Refuge
- some refuges have very explicit purposes (crab orchard has agr. and industrial)
- most refuges have a general acquisition authority (e.g. migr. bird cons. act)
- any refuge bought with money from MBCA has the same purpose as the Refuge
- many refuges fall along a flyway
- other issues have surfaced (e.g. Endangered Species Act)
- “trust habitats” - Refuge Improvement Act - Refuge system will contribute to the ecosystems of the U.S. - Refuges will be managed to protect Environmental Health, bio. Integrity, etc. - recognizes there is value for communities within the Refuges - (e.g. oak savanna in the Refuge)
- if there is conflict fall back on Refuge purpose
- is the Refuge purpose frozen in time or does it evolve over time?

- Refuge Recreation Act
- Endangered Species Act
- NEPA
- Refuge Improvement Act
- Does management of Refuge evolve along with the public's environmental thought
- Even if opinion hasn't evolved the purpose still identifies "migratory birds"
- NAWMP has evolved from just waterfowl - most of Joint Ventures have evolved to look at all birds
- The Migratory Bird treaty - 1918 - with Canada - referenced three birds - Definition has evolved along with national cultural/feelings
- Has definition from 1965 evolved?
- Are we arrogant to say migratory birds now are the same as what they were in 1965
- We can reach consensus as to what migratory birds are
- If we look at all birds as migratory birds it forces us to look at communities
- Our discussions on waterfowl and impoundments will change how we think about vegetation community management
- Why are the impounded areas so deep?
- Difficult to manage vegetation within ponds
- If you have a legal responsibility. beyond ducks, and your management has altered habitat for other birds than you are in violation of your own purpose
- The act is written to be all-inclusive
- Won't question the decision but the way you came to the decision
- The sporting community is one of the biggest supporters
- Refuges aren't about hunting, they are more for migration and feeding, etc.
- Minnesota still has a high hunting population on the Refuge
- Duck component will always be there
- Don't put the emphasis on waterfowl
- Limiting factor on refuge isn't the wetlands themselves, it's the uplands, nesting, soil base, and the fertility of wetlands
- Production gained by impoundments is not significant
- Can you take away wetlands to produce tamarack and oak savanna?
- If you are for migratory birds you need to make choices on which species to manage, you can't manage them all (look at RCP list, etc.) which ones occur within the Refuge
- What is the value of this location for the particular species?
- Why try to convert feeding cover to nesting cover?
- What did ducks use the Refuge for historically
- How is this habitat important to that species
- Allows you to focus your effort
- What is the "highest and best" use
- Adding a waterfowl clause to migratory birds it perpetuates the debate/problems
- You wouldn't impact the use of the Refuge by taking away some wetlands
- Production might increase with the addition of things such as stands of tamarack
- "Hunting" public expects management for waterfowl
- Refuge shouldn't get too far away from bread and butter (waterfowl)

- Pools are being manipulated more now
- Beaver dams in the past did the same thing
- Legislatively hunters are very active
- There's more habitat than there are ducks to use it
- Explain to public how habitat management will help waterfowl
- Should purpose include clause with emphasis on waterfowl?
- Use "for waterfowl and migratory birds"
- That would be fine in the goals
- In the 70's oak savanna and tamarack didn't matter
- Expense of impoundments in the future is negligible
- Will CCP be followed?
- Can't be too rigid, must be flexible
- Pay attention to waterfowl because it's important to the public
- There is a difference to say manage for waterfowl and to say management of Refuge should include waterfowl
- The real issue may be the impoundments themselves and how they are managed not the emphasis of waterfowl

Why is this an issue?

- Refuge was purchased primarily with duck stamp money therefore established for waterfowl
- Waterfowl should be emphasized in the Refuge goals
- Public will be more inclusive of public representation
- Subsequent legislation/policy recognizes broader representation
- Not just lack of communication, but also the destruction of historical sensitive habitats and reliant species

What is the solution?

- It's all inclusive (waterfowl falls within migratory birds)
- ***Migratory Birds: All migratory birds as appropriate to habitats available and to the resource priorities established by the region and broader landscape issues***

Group 4

Definition/clarification of purpose:

Includes all migratory birds as defined by federal law (RCP, MBTA, State plans, JV Plan, ESA)

Plenary Interpretation

All groups presented their information to the plenary. Much discussion ensued and a synthesis group was formed to develop an interpretation that would be acceptable to the entire group.

Consensus could not be reached on all points but consensus was reached on interpretation of the term "migratory birds". Consensus is that the term "migratory birds" as referenced in the Refuge purpose shall refer to those species identified in the Code of Federal Regulations 50 CFR 10.13.

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

Section 4

Exploring the Future

Final Report

**July 16-18, 2001
St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN**

Exploring the Future: An Ideal Future for the Refuge

Purpose: To imagine the ideal Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge of the future and craft a vision statement encompassing that future.

- Tasks:**
1. The date is July 2026. Create an image of this ideal future wildlife refuge keeping in mind the high priority issues identified in the last exercise.
 2. Develop some kind of visual depiction of this vision, like a drawing on a flip chart, or present a skit or tell a story.
 3. Review the themes each individual identified during the ‘ideal futures’ plenary presentations; synthesize and agree upon dominant themes.
 4. Craft a draft vision statement for Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.

Group 1

We imagined characteristics of the ideal future Wildlife Refuge. The thoughts are organized into the themes of wildlife, habitat and people:

Wildlife:

All wildlife and plant species within the Refuge are in balance with the environment. We will be able to adapt to a changing climate and the resulting species composition. We will see sharp-tailed grouse, loggerhead shrikes and abundant Blanding’s turtles. We will hear the songs of a high diversity of songbirds that depend on grasslands and riparian areas. We see fewer geese than in 2001, more trumpeter swans, lots of cranes and ducks. (Do we see a whooping crane on the horizon?) Bison and elk contribute to the maintenance of the grasslands and savanna.

Habitat:

There will be wildlife corridors connecting all natural areas within the region. Clean water flows into and out of the Refuge. We see a more open landscape with vibrant grasslands and oak savannas. We are still able to use fire as a tool for management. The Refuge may bear a new name reflecting its natural values.

People:

A world-class visitor center will provide a central point for interpreting the natural treasure found on the Refuge. The majority of refuge visits will occur at or near the visitor center. Refuge neighbors appreciate the wildlife found on the Refuge and in their backyards. Visitors, especially area residents, enjoy their time on the Refuge, learn about the landscape, and are advocates for the natural environment.

Draft Vision Statement: We compared our ideal refuge characteristics with those of the other three groups. We then identified common, dominant themes:

Achieve a full complement of native flora and fauna compatible with climate change.
Including - bison and elk, endangered species, control invasive species
High quality visitor experiences without detriment to natural resources.
A system dominated by natural processes or their re-creation.
Land protection and a neighborhood land ethic extends beyond the boundaries of the Refuge.

We wrote a **draft vision statement** based on the common themes and our own list:

In a region where citizens treasure natural areas managed by national, state and local governments, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge is celebrated for its wildlife and extraordinary opportunities for visitors. The Refuge will be an oasis within a developed landscape but it will not stand alone. Refuge neighbors will appreciate the wildlife found on the Refuge and in their backyards. There will be wildlife corridors connecting all natural areas within the region. Clean water flows into and out of the Refuge. All wildlife and plant species within the Refuge are in balance with the environment.

We see a more open landscape with vibrant grasslands, wetlands and oak savannas. Bison and elk contribute to the maintenance of the grasslands. We are still able to use fire as a tool for management. We see sharp-tailed grouse, loggerhead shrikes and abundant Blanding's turtles. We hear the songs of all native songbirds that depend on grasslands and riparian areas. We see plentiful bald eagles, more trumpeter swans, lots of sandhill cranes and many ducks. Perhaps we see a whooping crane on the horizon?

A world-class visitor center will provide a central point for interpreting the natural, historic and cultural treasures found on the Refuge. All visitors, especially area residents, enjoy their time on the Refuge, learn about the landscape, and are advocates for the natural environment.

Group 2

What will the future be about? Discussion about the differences in the next generation's experience in the natural world.

What do you want it to be?

What should it look like? Oak savanna, tamarac swamp, healthy habitats, keystone species present, Karner blue, Unca skipper, Bison or Elk herd, passenger pigeons, buffer zones, and corridors. Refuge edges blend with urban environment. Community effort to have native species.

Inroads on eliminating invasive species

Carp controlled, reed canary grass, house sparrows,

Lottery system for being on the Refuge for high-quality visitor experience.

Different road system. No interior public roads.

Active successful education programs, the most important element the opportunity to develop the thought and experience.

Energy efficient, alternative energy visitor administration.

Management Tools

1. Perimeter fence
2. Burning
3. Satellite monitoring for bison
4. Data collection,
5. Following ecosystem levels, collecting and using for management purposes.
6. Grazing

Assumptions

Technology

Public Perception

Enhances local economics

Ability to create ecosystems, humbler

Ability to deal with climate change, humbler

What critical values and philosophies have you retained from 2001. Which have changed?

Wildlife is still first.

Purpose pr group 2 is still applicable

Values changed?

Genetic difference between species

We will be moving species between island communities.

Radical environmental movement will be more common, more the norm.

What programs or initiatives are in use?

Bison, cluster housing, no roads, fencing. Hunting is quality hunt, quality experience, special events draw 6000

What public uses are incorporated?

Bison hunt

Land managed for all migratory birds and other wildlife within the context of viable functional communities and processes, recognizing limitation that changing climatic conditions may impose.

Big bluestem is as tall as a horse, the impoundments are prairie openings,

Lands managed for migratory birds as described by the Migratory Bird Act and other wildlife within the context of functional native vegetation communities and processes, recognizing limitations that changing climatic conditions may impose.

Releasing the experimental passenger pigeons

“Ideal futures” themes

1. Functional, diverse native communities and processes
2. Wildlife and habitat in balance
3. Visitor Center, high quality visitor experience, that drives conservation ethics.
4. Clean river, riverine habitat, lots of native biodiversity
5. Historical vegetation,
6. Would like to see, oak dominated forest community that covers a transition from open grassland, to closed oak forest.
7. In transition zone, what does that mean in the future, it actually fluctuates between prairie and transition zone, allow the natural fluctuation between prairie and forest as they have in the past.
8. Allow genetic processes to occur

Woodlands would be dominated by oak species with minimal and no exotic species, the tamarac come up and the big woods are oak types,

Upland forest, dominated by oak in a continuum of open prairie to savanna to closed canopy woodlands,

There will be a diversity of wetlands, tamarac swamp ranging from shrub to deep water.

Preserve gene pool and flow

Community corridors and connections between conservation lands.

Refuge functioning.

Increase use of technology

Broad agreement that healthy ecosystems mean healthy communities for people.

Large herbivores, wolves, endangered species, loggerhead, Blanding's, whoopers, and passenger pigeons, greater numbers of rare species.

If your vision is to have healthy populations in balance with the environment, you don't need to say which species you will use.

In a landscape and to the system as a whole, functioning in a greater landscape, in a greater landscape context.

Themes

1. Diverse native communities and process
2. Wildlife and its habitat in balance, right species for habitat, self-sustaining population
3. High quality, biologically based, visitor experiences translates to increased awareness, support environmental ethic
4. Community support - including their role in landscape. Wildlife friendly, promoting and enhancing contributing to landscape goals of refuge.
5. Transition zone - vegetation communities fluctuate

Vision Statement

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge as part of a larger landscape and the national wildlife refuge system will make its contribution through its representation of functional, diverse native communities and processes.

The Refuge lies on the Anoka Sandplain in the transition zone between the prairies to the west, coniferous forest to the north and Big Woods to east. A mosaic of native communities reflects the transition, fluctuating between prairie and dense oak-dominated forest, interspersed with a variety of wetland and riverine habitat ranging from sedge meadow to deep water within the St. Francis River Watershed. Sherburne will thrive in an environment of clean water and air.

The Refuge wildlife and habitat are in balance with natural forces and management reflects an adaptive response to climate, using pre-European settlement vegetation as a guide and high technology as tools.

Sherburne boundaries, are vaguely identifiable by the shapes of human dwellings, but the processes and shapes of the transition zone communities perpetuate themselves. The surrounding villages support the Refuge and understand the role they play in providing open space and green corridors that allow the Refuge to function within a larger landscape.

Sherburne enjoys a broad base of community support and provides high quality, biologically based visitor experiences. These visitor experiences translate to heightened awareness, support and a strong conservation and environmental ethic, ultimately ensuring the continuity of the Refuge. Visitors have high-quality experiences that have been based on biological carrying capacity of the Refuge and result in re-enforcing the awareness and support of the already accepted environmental land ethic.

Group 3

1. What does the Refuge look like?

- Can't move fast enough to buy new land
- Island of habitat surrounded by urbanization
- Buffalo and elk on refuge
- Invasive species are controlled and managed part of refuge
- Oak savanna landscape on significant part of the Refuge
- Diverse and productive wetlands teaming with waterfowl and migratory birds and without carp
- Current prairie areas converted to better restored prairies
- Some present prairies converted to savanna
- Introductions of whooping cranes, breeding trumpeter swans
- Well-balanced wildlife population
- Barrier to keep buffalo and elk in
- Will have visitor center
- Blacktop removed from some roads and some roads removed (through traffic)
- Advanced tamarack regeneration
- Restore floodplain of the St. Francis river
- Added environmental education facilities
- Visitor demographics have changed
- Fully funded
- St. Francis river supports native-fish population

2. What do the management tools look like?

- Less burning because savanna is restored and grazing by buffalo and elk
 - Less smoke is produced
 - Less intense fires
- Grazing
- Bio-control agents
- Nuisance wildlife management
- Water level management perfected
- Tree plantings continue
- No chemical applications

3. What assumptions did you have in 2001 that are no longer valid in 2026?

- Management changes have not significantly altered waterfowl use
- Fire is not as important a management tool as was once thought
- Reduction in hunting public, less concern for the hunting public's ideas
- Environmental education message will be tailored to white-middle -class -land- ethic
- Methods of outreach are not as effective as they were in 2001

- Refuge boundaries have changed - buy more land or sell land to keep refuge open
- Wildlife will adapt to human disturbance

4. What critical values and philosophies have you retained from 2001? Which have changed?

- *Retained*
 - Land ethic
 - Wildlife first
 - CCP was retained because it is well-written
 - Environmental education is important
 - Public still appreciates and uses refuge
 - Recreation supports stewardship of refuge
 - Still contains a hunting community
 - Public still supports preservation of habitat
- *Changed*
 - No Single species management
 - Housing development no longer viewed as good for the area

5. What programs or initiatives are you able to implement in 2026 that you couldn't back in 2001?

- Track wildlife more efficiently with satellites
- Better weather prediction
- Prescribed rains
- Real-time imaging
- DNA Bank
- Broader more interactive home education

6. What public uses are incorporated?

- Virtual tour of refuge
- Cars with less impact
- Aerial tram (monorail)
- Elk/Buffalo hunts

7. Consider how your ideal future for Sherburne fits within the purpose of the Refuge.

- Migratory birds remaining within the Refuge are those which are adaptable to island habitats

Based on this vision the group worked to develop an agreed upon vision statement.

- Refuge name captures the uniqueness of the system

- Refuge as valuable part of the urban landscape
- The community claims ownership of the Refuge
- Hi-tech/hi-use progressive visitor center welcomes guests
- Expanded visitor use of the Refuge where compatible
- Visitors who visit respect the “wildlife first” concept
- Better quality and safer hunting
- Restoring a high-quality Anoka sand plain oak savanna, big woods, tamarack, sedge meadows, and riparian areas
- Established herds of bison and elk, as part of the oak savanna ecosystem
 - Herd dynamics are optimized
- Vibrant community of migratory birds, including waterfowl, whooping cranes, Sandhill cranes. Eagles, shorebirds and songbirds
- Model and demonstration area for how ecosystems and natural processes work together
- Vegetation, wildlife, and hydrology have the appearance of a pre-settlement landscape
- Hydrologic regime includes functional St. Francis riparian system - spring flooding, ephemeral ponds
- corridors and continuity

Draft Vision Statement:

The Refuge name captures the uniqueness of the Refuge’s natural system. The community claims ownership of the Refuge, and it is recognized as a valuable part of the urban landscape with landscape corridors and habitat continuity to adjacent natural areas. Community leaders actively seek refuge staff counsel in making county-wide land planning decisions. A hi-tech/hi-use progressive visitor center welcomes guests, and an innovative environmental education program reaches all segments of the population of the Twin Cities area. Expanded trail systems and self-guided tours accommodate enthusiastic use by visitors who endorse the Refuge’s “wildlife first” concept. A high-quality, safe hunting season is a part of the Refuge’s public use program.

High-quality ecosystems such as Anoka sand plain oak savanna, Big Woods, tamarack wetlands, sedge meadows, and riparian communities have been restored. Vegetation, wildlife, and hydrology have the appearance of a pre-European settlement landscape. The Refuge’s hydrologic regime includes a functional St. Francis riparian system, including spring flooding and ephemeral ponds. Established herds of bison and elk are seen on the landscape. A vibrant community of migratory birds, including waterfowl, Whooping Cranes, Sandhill Cranes, eagles, shorebirds, and breeding songbirds are present. The Refuge is a model demonstration area for how ecosystems, natural processes, and people work together.

Group 4

Our ideal Refuge of the future includes:

1. Continuity, connections, corridors with surrounding lands (federal, state, county, private) that enhances wildlife benefits.
2. Increased oak savanna to maximum extent feasible within constraints of soil, hydrology, microclimate, etc.
3. Increased diversity of wetland types.
4. Improved ability to manage water regimes.
5. Increased understanding of species of special concern, including endangered species, and application of that knowledge in management.
6. Computerized modeling tools that improve the prediction of outcomes of management actions.
7. More efficient burning with reduced negative impacts to surrounding communities.
8. Visitor education center.
9. Better quality hunts based on sound biology.
10. Improved quality of experience for wildlife observation, photography, interpretation, environmental education, hunting, and fishing.
11. Public understands the concept and purpose of the national wildlife refuge system, and Sherburne's role.
12. Visitors continue to have a "real world" experience at the Refuge without damage to resources.
13. Refuge neighbors strongly support the Refuge, its purpose and programs, and are actively involved in the Refuge volunteer and Friends program.

Major themes taken from the futures exercise for incorporation in our draft vision statement:

1. Restoration of habitat to represent a period of pre-European settlement within similar climatic conditions, and minimizing invasive species.
2. Neighbors support and advocate for refuge and its mission and purpose.
3. Wildlife corridors and habitat continuity exist on and off refuge lands.
4. There is an abundance of wildlife and plants representative of healthy oak savanna, wetlands, and other native communities.
5. High quality visitor use continues.

Draft Vision Statement for Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

The Refuge exhibits natural habitats restored to landscape conditions prior to substantial human change with climatic conditions similar to current times. There is an abundance of wildlife and plants representative of healthy oak savanna, wetlands, and other native plant communities. Similar healthy habitats exist in nearby off-refuge land creating wildlife corridors that benefit both migratory and other wildlife. The effects of invasive species are minimal.

Refuge neighbors in adjacent developments, surrounding communities, and nearby metro areas support and advocate for the Refuge, its mission, and its purpose. All refuge visitors participate in the high quality wildlife dependent recreation.

SYNTHESIZED VISION STATEMENT – REVISED DRAFT

A synthesis group comprised of one member for each working group took these four statements and drafted a ‘synthesized’ draft vision statement that was presented to plenary for discussion. After discussion and revision the following revised draft was presented. This statement will be reviewed in Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop II.

In a region where citizens treasure natural areas managed by national, state and local governments, the Refuge is celebrated for its wildlife and extraordinary opportunities for visitors. The Refuge conserves/maintains a mosaic of restored high-quality native Anoka Sandplain communities. The upland habitats are dynamic, ranging from grasslands to oak savannas to forests. These are interspersed with a variety of wetland and riverine habitats ranging from sedge meadow to deep water. The Refuge’s hydrologic regime includes a functional St. Francis River riparian system, with clean water flowing into and out of the Refuge. The wildlife and habitat are in balance with natural forces and management reflects an adaptive response to climate, using pre-European settlement vegetation as a guide.

Visitors have high quality experiences that provide personal and societal benefits, including heightened awareness and support of a strong conservation ethic. Visitor uses and management activities are consistent with the maintenance of healthy populations of wildlife and their associated habitats. The community claims ownership, actively supports the Refuge, and advocates for its mission, purpose and programs. The surrounding lands are recognized as valuable to the integrity of the Refuge by providing green corridors and habitat continuity to adjacent natural areas.

Refuge Goals

Purpose: To develop a framework for action on how to create the desired future working with the resources and opportunities of today.

Task: Using both the issues developed in the “Exploring the Present” exercise and themes identified in the vision statement formulation exercise, develop a list of broad, long-term goals or program focus areas that will build towards the shared vision.

Group 1

The vision statement formed the basis for a rough set of draft refuge goals:

Plants: To sustain healthy and functional plant communities that approximate pre-European settlement conditions.

Wildlife: To restore and maintain native wildlife populations in balance with the environment.

Public Use: To develop public appreciation of the Refuge, and the mission of the Refuge, through wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education.

Land Protection: To develop a land ethic within neighboring communities and stimulate specific conservation actions to benefit the Refuge and its mission.

Water Quality and Quantity: All water flowing into the Refuge will be of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the needs of fish and wildlife.

Group 2

These are the focus areas that we have developed and prioritized through a pair-ranking method: (score in parenthesis)

Habitat Management (24)

- Invasive species:
- Upland management
- Wetland/Riparian Management
- Base on communities
- Habitat based wildlife population objectives

Public Use and Access (11)

- “Big six”
- Compatibility
- Wildlife First

Landscape Issues (8)

- Surrounding land use/corridors
- Cooperate with ecosystem initiatives-broad landscape issues
- Contribute to the national bird initiatives.

Community Support (Development of Environmental Ethics) (5)
Tie with environmental ethic

Group 3

Program focus areas identified are:

- Restoration of habitats—oak savanna, upland, (big woods) forest, riparian—to presettlement condition of this area as a guide.
- A rich program of public outreach, education, and recreation leading to a strong conservation ethic and involvement in and support of the Refuge by the local community.
- Healthy populations of migratory birds and other wildlife that use the Refuge for breeding, migratory stopover, and winter residence with an emphasis on area-appropriate species designated as those of special concern.
- A complex of natural areas and corridors in the broader landscape of which the Refuge is a part.

Group 4

The following “program focus areas” (goals) were developed to support the vision. They are not necessarily in order of priority.

1. Provide high quality public use program
2. Provide a mosaic of native communities
3. Encourage landscape level connections.
4. Promote positive relationships with local and regional communities.
5. Ensure a healthy St. Francis River watershed.
6. Emphasize threatened/endangered species, species of special concern and on invasive species.

Synthesized Focus Areas

A group comprised of one member of each working group synthesized all the focus areas into the four listed below. These goals will be reviewed at the Sherburne National Refuge Planning Workshop II.

- Restoration of Anoka Sand Plain habitats that approximates pre-1850 conditions, and
- Healthy populations of migratory birds and other wildlife in balance with the environment, with emphasis on area-appropriate priority species.
- A complex of high-quality natural areas, corridors, and water sheds in the surrounding landscape.
- A supportive community conservation ethic fostered by a rich program of public outreach, environmental education and “wildlife-first” recreation.

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

Section 5

Workshop Presentations

Final Report

**July 16-18, 2001
St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN**

List of Presentations

- Charles Blair, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
Overview of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
- Jeanne Holler, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
Overview of Refuge Biology and Habitat Management
- Nancy Haugen, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
Overview of Refuge Public Use and Environmental Education Programs
- Brad Ehlers, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
Overview of Refuge Hunting Programs
- Brian Bensen, Sherburne County Administrator
Overview of Population Growth and Trends in Sherburne County
- Mary Mitchell, GIS Coordinator, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecosystem Look: Sherburne in a Landscape Context
- Hannah Dunevitz, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Overview of Minnesota Natural Heritage Program Ranking and Important Natural Communities in Sherburne NWR
- Nick Rowse , U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Overview of Potential Contaminants Issues at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
- Tom Will, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Overview of Migratory Bird Plans
- Jim Mattsson, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Overview of Regional Conservation Priority Species
- Liz Bellantoni, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Comprehensive Conservation Planning Overview
- Bob Adamcik, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Regulatory Context for Refuge Planning

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

Section 6

Participant List

Final Report

**July 16-18, 2001
St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN**

Participant List

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Washington D.C. Office (WO)

Bob Adamcik
Liz Bellantoni

Regional Office, Region 3 (RO)

Nita Fuller
Don Hultman
Jim Mattsson
Tom Will
John Schomaker
Jan Eldridge
Gary Muehlenhardt
Tom Magnuson
Mary Mitchell

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Charles Blair
Jeanne Holler
Brad Ehlers
Gary Swanson
Nancy Haugen
Paul Soler

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge

Jerry Rodriguez

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Margaret Anderson

Ecological Services (ES)

Nick Rowse

U. S. Geological Survey (USGS)

David Fulton
Jason Rohweder
Kevin Kenow
Rick Schroeder

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR)

Fred Bengston
Hannah Dunevitz
Dave Pauly
Pam Perry
Dave Schad

Sherburne County Administrators

Brian Bensen

Representatives of the Public

Bill Berg
Tom Casey
Ron Burley
Judith Hidde
Mike Niziolek
Marv Ziner
Catherine Zimmer

Facilitators:

World Conservation Union (IUCN)

Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG)

Ulrie Seal
Onnie Byers

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Planning Workshop I

Section 7

Invitation List

Final Report

**July 16-18, 2001
St. Cloud Civic Center
St. Cloud, MN**

Invitation List

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Washington D.C. Office

Bob Adamcik
Liz Bellantoni

Regional Office, Region 3

Nita Fuller
Don Hultman
Tom Worthington
Tom Larson
Jim Mattsson
Barbara Pardo
Steve Lewis
Tom Will
Robert Russel
John Dobrovolny
John Schomaker
Jan Eldridge
Gary Muehlenhardt
Tom Magnuson
Mary Mitchell

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Charles Blair
Jeanne Holler
Brad Ehlers
Gary Swanson
Nancy Haugen
Paul Soler

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge

Jerry Rodriguez

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Margaret Anderson

Ecological Services

Dave Warburton
Nick Rowse

Fisheries

Frank Stone

U. S. Geological Survey (USGS)

Carl Korschgen
Sam Droege
David Fulton
Jason Rohweder
Kevin Kenow
Rick Schroeder
Murray Laubhan
Erin Dougherty
Dorothy Anderson

Tribal Governments of Ojibwe

Melanie Benjamin
gaiashkibos
Thomas Maulson
Peter Defoe
Roger McGeshick, Jr
David Merrill

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR)

Bill Barnacle
Fred Bengston
Hannah Dunevitz
Patricia Fowler
Dan Lais
Dave Pauly
Pam Perry
Dave Schad

Sherburne County Administrators

Brian Bensen
Nancy Riddle

Sherburne County Commissioners

Arne Engstrom
Terry Nagorski
Ray Friedl
Betsy Wergin
Rachel Leonard

Representatives of the Public

Bill Berg
Tom Casey
Ron Burley
Judith Hidde

Mike Niziolek
Marv Ziner
Catherine Zimmer

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Garth Fuller, The Nature Conservancy

World Conservation Union (IUCN)

Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (Facilitators)

Ulle S. Seal
Onnie Byers
Phil Miller