

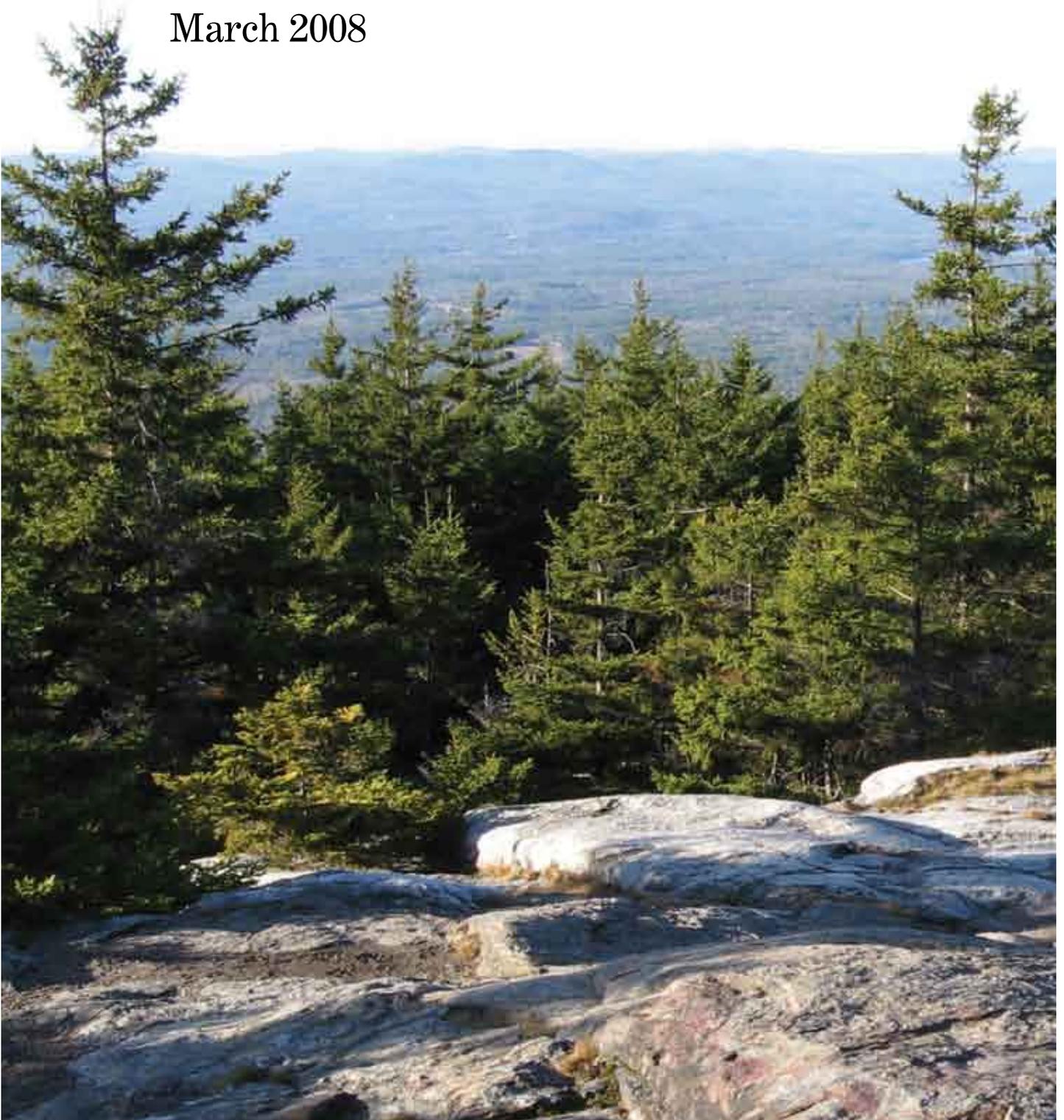


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wapack National Wildlife Refuge

Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

March 2008



Cover Picture: *View from North Pack Monadnock.* Nancy McGarigal/USFWS



This goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 548 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service’s best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



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Refuge Vision Statement

Encompassing the North Pack Monadnock Mountain in southern New Hampshire, the Wapack National Wildlife Refuge provides exceptional mature spruce-fir and northern hardwood-mixed habitat for wildlife, particularly migratory birds. We will manage the refuge to preserve its natural conditions in a setting which appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

All visitors are welcome to enjoy opportunities to observe and photograph nature along refuge trails, including a 4-mile segment of the Wapack trail. The rock outcrop and cliff on the mountain peak afford an ideal location to view migrating hawks each fall. Old and new partnerships with other federal agencies, state agencies, local conservation organization, and volunteers will foster public stewardship of this refuge and its resources, and enhance public understanding of the role of the National Wildlife Refuge System in conserving our nation's trust resources.

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Type of Action: Administrative – Development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

Location: Wapack National Wildlife Refuge
Greenfield and Temple, NH

Administrative Headquarters: Parker River National Wildlife Refuge
Newburyport, MA

Responsible Official: Marvin Moriarty, Regional Director, Region 5, Northeast

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This Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes two alternatives for managing the 1,625 acre Wapack National Wildlife Refuge over the next 15 years. This document also contains four appendixes that provide additional information supporting our analysis. Following is a brief overview of each alternative:

Alternative A: This alternative is referred to as our “No Action” or “Current Management” alternative, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This alternative would maintain the status quo in managing this 1,625 acre refuge for the next 15 years. No major changes would be made to current management practices.

Alternative B: This is the Service-preferred alternative. It represents the planning team’s recommended strategies and actions for achieving refuge purposes, vision and goals and responding to public issues. Under this alternative, we focus on making improvements to our biological as well as our visitor services program through the expansion of partnerships with other federal agencies, state agencies, town departments, local conservation organizations, and individuals. We would utilize partnerships for continued maintenance of trails and the development and maintenance of a parking area. We would also work to increase Service presence and visibility at the refuge and in the local community. Although we would not pursue additional land acquisition at this time, we would work with partners to help them identify land that should be protected for wildlife conservation and help them choose the best methods/techniques for managing those areas.