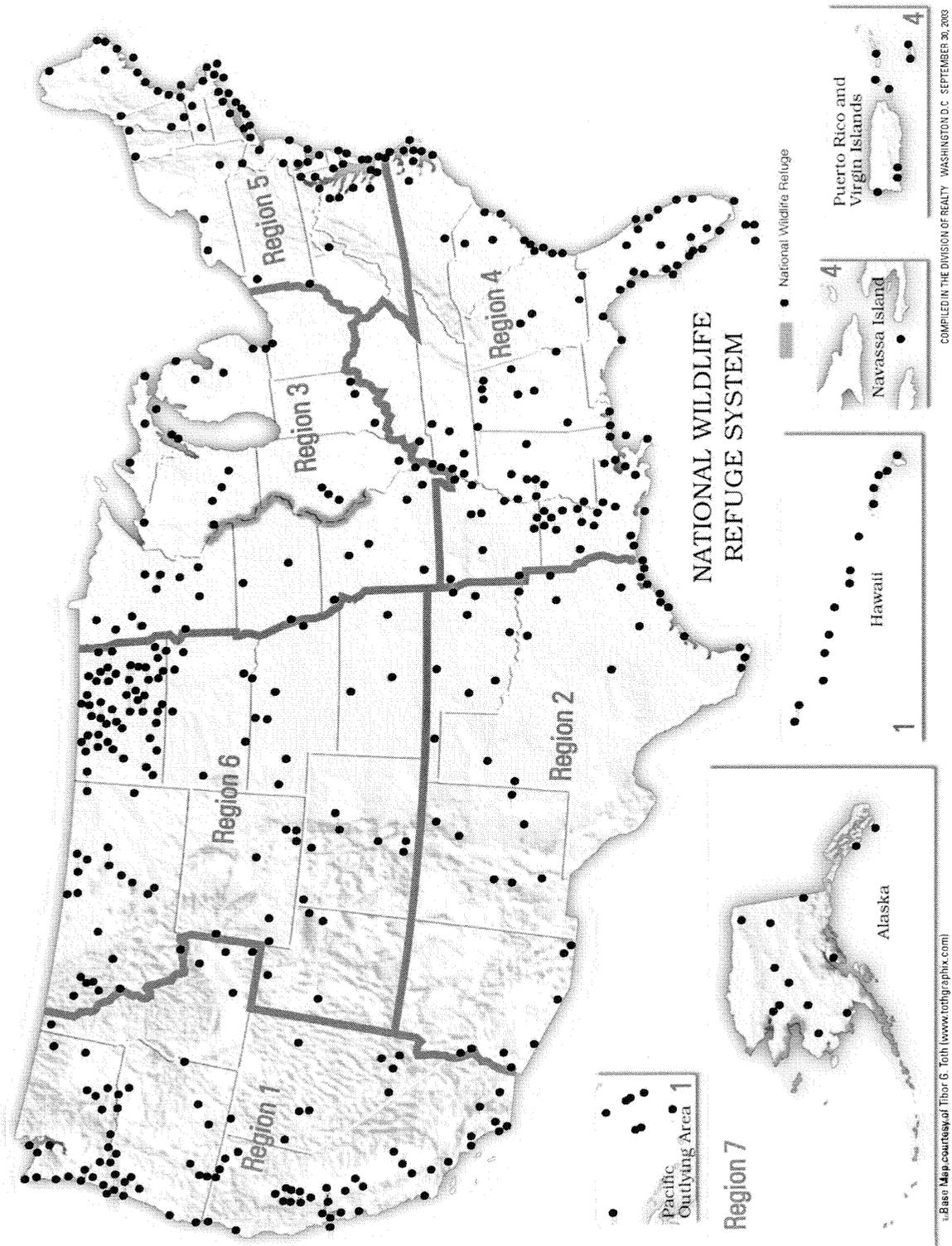


Refuge Operations and Maintenance

Refuge Operations and Maintenance		2003 Actual	2004 Enacted	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Change from 2004(+/-)
Refuge Operations	\$(000)	271,275	291,603	+1,594	-4,340	288,857	-2,746
	FTE	2,964	2,963	-	+17	2,980	+17
Refuge Maintenance	\$(000)	97,094	99,890	-	-1,090	98,800	-1,090
	FTE	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAM (see General Business Operations Expenses)	\$(000)	[8,584]	[TBD]	-	-	[TBD]	-
Total, Refuge Operations and Maintenance	\$(000)	368,369	391,493	+1,594	-5,430	387,657	-3,836
	FTE	2,964	2,963	-	+17	2,980	+17

*The Service is reviewing the Cost Allocation Methodology and will provide a FY 2005 budget proposal by April 15, 2004.



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Refuge Operations

Refuge Operations		2003 Actual	2004 Enacted	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2005 Budget Request	Change from 2004(+/-)
Protect Wildlife	\$(000)	54,336	56,605	332	-518	56,419	-186
	FTE	621	620	-	-3	617	-3
Improve Habitat	\$(000)	91,053	99,242	582	-5,673	94,151	-5,091
	FTE	1,081	1,081	-	-	1,081	-
Serve People	\$(000)	125,886	135,756	680	+1,851	138,287	+2,531
	FTE	1,262	1,262	-	+20	1,282	+20
Total, Refuge Operations	\$(000)	271,275	291,603	+1,594	-4,340	288,857	-2,746
	FTE	2,964	2,963	-	+17	2,980	+17

Program Overview

Since 1903, the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) has grown from one small Florida sanctuary, Pelican Island, to a nearly 96 million-acre network of lands and waters. The system ranges from remote coral atolls and expansive wilderness areas to wildlife oases near our largest cities. The NWRS's 542 national wildlife refuges and 37 wetland management districts conserve the best of this nation's diverse ecosystems: tundra, deserts, forests, great rivers, vast marshes, small prairie potholes, swamps, mountains, prairies, estuaries, tropical lagoons, and coral reefs. Located in every state and territory, a wildlife refuge is just an hour's drive from every major metropolitan area, opening for all Americans the chance to experience the nation's outdoor heritage in all its vibrant colors, tones, textures, and sounds.

Refuges are part of the American landscape, drawing more than 39 million visits a year. More than 2,800 refuge employees, tens of thousands of volunteers, and hundreds of support groups and local communities have dedicated themselves to national

Use of Cost and Performance Information

- The NWRS Invasive Species program participates in a multi-agency group of government leaders that coordinates the development of the National Invasive Species Management Plan and promotes prevention and control of invasive species at the federal level, and coordinates between Service fire and resource programs to improve efficiency in controlling invasive plants such as tamarisk and cheatgrass.
- The NWRS Law Enforcement program supports the President's Management Initiative of Strategic Management of Human Capital through the International Association of Chiefs of Police recommendations and the Secretary's directives for implementing Law Enforcement reforms. Specifically, implementation of the Refuge Law Enforcement Zone System and transition from reliance on a dual-function refuge law enforcement program to full-time law enforcement link human capital strategies to organization mission, vision core values, goals and objectives to develop a high-performing workforce.
- The Challenge Cost Share Program supports the Secretary's Cooperative Conservation Initiative and benefited refuge lands and communities through cooperative programs that matched \$1.5 for every \$1 of federal fund.
- In FY 2004 the FWS is implementing Activity Based Costing (ABC) which will track costs for all work activities and outputs and provide leadership new insight into what resources are needed to achieve our mission.
- The NWRS is a significant engine for economic growth and jobs, generating \$816 million in spending and 19,000 jobs in surrounding communities.
- To improve performance based management capabilities and better align with the DOI strategic plan the NWRS will revamp its budget structure under the 2006 formulation process.
- NWRS is undergoing a peer review of its inventory and monitoring activities by scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey – Biological Resource Division. Results of the study will be incorporated into current and future program revisions.

wildlife refuges, providing integral assistance to manage the wildlife resources close to their hearts. These partners are stepping forward to help create a plan that will take these lands and wildlife treasures into a second century of conservation.

The Service is developing a new draft operational performance plan that directly aligns all program activities and objectives with the Secretary's four strategic plan mission components - Resource Protection, Resource Use, Recreation, and Serving Communities. The operational plan will contain new long-term and annual performance goals and measures to guide the delivery of Service program implementation, management reform, and budget formulation. The alignment and integration of program performance with budget formulation will provide the context for accountability and the foundation for continual improvement. The Service anticipates completion of the draft operational plan by summer 2004.

Program Assessment and Rating Tool (PART) – For development of the FY 2005 President's Budget request, the Service selected the NWRS to undergo a PART evaluation. Overall, the results of the PART indicate the Refuge system has a clear purpose but lacks adequate goals and measures to guide its future management and improvement. Specific findings include:

1. The purpose of the Refuge system is clearly articulated in the Refuge system Improvement Act of 1997, which provides a clear mission statement for the System supplemented by additional guidance on how to administer the System.
2. The 1999 "Fulfilling the Promise" document provides a vision for the System but lacks specificity and prioritization needed to focus management programs.
3. Measurable outcome based performance goals are needed to effectively and efficiently guide management of the program.
4. The program has taken meaningful steps to correct its strategic planning deficiencies but still has more to do.

Based on the findings of the PART review, the NWRS will complete the following actions:

1. Develop a 5-year strategic plan (FY 2005-2009, consistent with the DOI strategic plan, and consistent with the PART review) to guide management and improvement of the Refuge system; establish measurable outcome based performance goals as part of the plan.
2. Establish baselines for outcome based performance goals that do not have baselines. By September 30, 2004: a) baselines will be verified for FY 2004 activities for most PART measures; and b) an agreed upon process will be developed to allow measuring of PART measures 1, 2, and 7.
3. Develop a process for and schedule independent program evaluations every 3 to 5 years. Evaluations will include a comprehensive view of the performance of the Refuge system at the national level and consider factors such as impact, outcomes, effectiveness and efficiency of processes or programs, and other indicators of performance.
4. Link individual employee performance plans with goal-related performance targets for each fiscal year.

A plan is being developed to detail the implementation of these five actions with progress made on several actions. The NWRS 5-year strategic plan is being developed. Goals and objectives have been identified that integrate NWRS strategic plan with strategic plans for the Department and Service. The baselines and targets for outcome based performance goals are being defined. The budget restructure proposal will be developed with additional detail for presentation and review during the development of the FY 2006 budget request. Independent program reviews are conducted periodically on major segments of the NWRS operations and maintenance programs. For example, scientists from

the U.S. Geological Survey – Biological Resource Division will conduct a national review in FY 2004 of the NWRS biological inventory and monitoring efforts. Results from the review will be used to continue improvements in the program, and in developing future budget proposals. Results are already being used in the FY 2004 and 2005 budgets to define and implement the actions, and will have much greater impact on future budgets with the completion of the strategic plan and the other actions.

Key strategies and performance measures that support Resource Protection goals are implemented by applying good science to resource inventories; monitoring, studying, and restoring or improving biological communities; restoring, enhancing, or managing habitats; reducing or removing problems such as invasive species, wildlife diseases, and impacts of environmental pollutants and contaminants; and managing, protecting, identifying and interpreting heritage resources such as wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and numerous others.

Recreation goals are achieved by providing public access for enjoyment of wildlife-dependent recreation and education consistent with protection of fish, wildlife and plant resources; rendering quality experiences that include adequate availability of staff, signs, brochures, etc.; supplying safe and accessible facilities for the public; and managing recreation fees in a manner that provides the government with a fair return on investments and visitors with appropriate value for fees paid.

Serving Communities goals are pursued through collaborative cost-shared projects with refuge resources or enhanced visitor services that benefit both the refuge and local communities; volunteer and community projects; management of educational programs; wildland fire prevention, response and recovery; and law enforcement that protects visitors, natural and cultural resources, and government property.

The NWRS Leadership Development Council supports Management Excellence and the President's Management Agenda goals using a variety of approaches. First, the Council identifies future staffing and leadership needs through workforce planning. The Council, working with a variety of units and staff in the Service and NWRS, is enhancing organizational vitality and the caliber of the workforce by improving recruitment, training and other programs for professional staff growth, leadership development, and training or work details that foster greater organizational depth. In addition, by implementing and participating in numerous organizational, operational, interregional, financial and performance reviews and audits, the NWRS continues to improve and integrate performance and budget alignment, accountability and customer value.

Woven throughout all NWRS activities and in support of all mission areas in the Department's strategic plan, is the fundamental element of **sound science**. The System strives continually to develop and deliver new scientific tools to all levels, including better maps and geo-spatial information, access to information databases, Web sites, guidelines and handbooks that promote consistency, provide appropriate methodology and good policies that provide for program integration, accountability, oversight and information sharing to accomplish the NWRS mission.

The NWRS plays a key role in the Service's mission of working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For example, the NWRS cooperates closely with the Ecological Services, Law Enforcement, Migratory Birds, and Fisheries programs to protect, maintain and restore healthy populations of species that live on or migrate through refuges and nearby habitat; works closely with the Engineering program to develop streamlined standards for moderately priced visitor centers and kiosks, parking, trails and other public use facilities; and provides subject matter experts to work with the International Affairs program. In addition to working with internal partners, the Service is working with the

Department of Transportation to prepare for reauthorization of the Refuge Roads program and prides itself in working cooperatively with numerous other federal, state, and local agencies, conservation and environmental organizations, private landowners and citizen volunteers. All of these efforts are premised on strong partnerships with local communities, state agencies and other groups who want to help protect our nation's wildlife heritage.

The NWRS of the 21st century is facing new opportunities and many complex challenges and management issues: maintaining or improving habitat for a wide array of species; implementing new policies directing monitoring and habitat management in a consistent, system-like way; addressing the ecological integrity of NWRS lands pursuant to the Refuge Improvement Act; protecting larger numbers of visitors; providing more opportunities for volunteers and community partnerships; helping secure the nation's borders; controlling illegal activities on federal lands; maintaining facilities; accommodating new and expanded refuge lands; and, strategically planning for the system's functions during its second century.

Other Sources of Funding

Before moving to the description of the budget request we will briefly describe two sources of funding that support important operations of the NWRS, but are not included within the Service budget request.

Fire Management Program – Funding for the refuge system's wildland fire management program is included in the Interior fire account and presented within the BLM request. However, a brief overview follows given its overall importance to the NWRS. This program supports the Department's strategic plan mission of Serving Communities and Resource Protection improving health of watersheds, landscapes and marine resources and sustaining biological communities by protecting lives, resources and property through improved fire suppression response and through prescribed fire and fuels treatment.

The Director represents the Service on the inter-Departmental Wildland Fire Leadership Council, providing senior leadership guidance for federal wildland fire policy and the National Fire Plan. The refuge system's Fire Director is a voting member of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and the National Fire and Aviation Executive Board. The fire program works in coordination with other fire managers to address common issues and prioritize assignment of fire suppression resources on a regional and national level through the Multi-Agency Coordinating Group.

The NWRS fire program is a national leader in the use of prescribed fire, a critical tool for managing fuels and habitat. Fuels treatments emphasize community protection and ecological restoration, in keeping with the objectives of the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forest Initiative. Refuge system fire personnel manage fires and hazardous fuels conditions to prevent catastrophic wildfires and their effects on surrounding communities and to protect and enhance refuge resources. Other activities include emergency stabilization and rehabilitation of soils, habitat, cultural sites and minor infrastructure; wildland fire and fire safety training; and assistance to rural fire departments through small grants for personal safety gear, training, and equipment.

The Service receives hundreds of applications for rural fire assistance grants annually. In addition, the wildland fire program trains employees throughout the Service to assist international, national, state, and local partners with wildland fire and national disaster recovery efforts.

Refuge Roads Program – Congress created the Refuge Roads program with passage of the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21) in 1998. Congress limited use of the funds to major maintenance and reconstruction of federally owned public-use roads and three transportation

enhancements (parking lots, roadside rest areas, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities) within the NWRS. During FY 2002, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) completed an inventory and condition assessment of public-use roads and parking lots within the NWRS and National Fish Hatchery System, finding only 23 percent of the 4,800 miles of roads and 24 percent of the 5,000 parking lots were in good condition.

During FY 2003, the Refuge Roads program obligated more than \$14 million in funding to improve public transportation facilities. The program supported more than 100 projects to improve roads, parking lots, and bridges. Additionally, one project was funded by FHWA under the Public Lands Highways Discretionary and one project under TEA-21 as high priority projects.

The Administration has recommended reauthorization of the *Transportation Equity Act* (H.R. 3550, S.1072), which would provide the Refuge Roads program with funding levels of \$30 million per year for the life of the 6-year bill.

Data Management in the National Wildlife Refuge System – The Service developed and implements a series of national databases that collect and provide crucial information for managing the NWRS. These include:

- **The Refuge Management Information System (RMIS)** – Provides managers a prioritized, comprehensive list of operational and maintenance projects.
- **Refuge Comprehensive Accomplishment Reporting System (RCAR)** – Used to develop the GPRA report, RCAR documents annual "inputs" (dollars/staff days) for each management "output" (e.g., acres of habitat restored, biological surveys conducted). Outputs are linked to refuge system "outcomes," such as endangered species recovery, maintenance of migratory bird populations, and public recreation. Amendments are being developed to capture elements included in the Department's Strategic Plan not currently measured by RCAR.
- **Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS)** - Prioritizes operational staffing, wildlife and habitat conservation, and visitor service needs at individual refuges and allows staff to develop budget requests and track priority projects.
- **Maintenance Management System (MMS)** – Tracks and prioritizes the refuge system's major maintenance needs. MMS information is used to develop budget requests, track accomplishments, and plan and prioritize facility needs for the NWRS Five-Year Deferred Maintenance Plan. This Internet based system allows around-the-clock project initiation and tracking by field managers.
- **Real Property Inventory (RPI)** - Tracks the inventory, condition, and replacement value of all real property within the NWRS. The RPI contains information on each piece of real property and is linked to the MMS for those properties that have deferred maintenance components.
- **Personal Property Inventory (PPI)** - Tracks vehicles, equipment, and other personal property individually valued over \$5,000.
- **The Facility Management Information System (FacMIS)** - Tracks account expenditures on maintenance projects. FacMIS links information from the Federal Financial System (FFS) and other Service databases to track expenditures on NWRS maintenance.
- **Service Asset and Maintenance Management System (SAMMS)** – Is a powerful commercial data management system (based on DOI standards) designed to make maintenance operations more efficient and accountable by tracking maintenance projects, maintenance personnel duties, preventive maintenance expenditures and property conditions.

2003 Program Performance Accomplishments

In FY 2003, NWRS Operations received \$271,275,000 to fulfill its mission critical objectives. To achieve those objectives the NWRS Operations budget is divided into three program elements, (1) Protect Wildlife, (2) Improve Habitat, and (3) Serve People that define our commitment to the stewardship of wildlife and wildlife lands for the citizens of the United States. This core funding keeps the NWRS operating on a daily basis and supports the Department's strategic mission areas and outcome goals under Resource Protection, Recreation and Serving Communities.

Beginning in FY 2000, the NWRS, at the direction of Congress, developed a prioritization system within the Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS) to identify the highest priority program areas and associated projects. A two-tiered system within the RONS separates the essential needs of the NWRS (Priority Tier One) from other important opportunities and strategic needs (Tier Two). Tier One represents essential projects needed to establish adequate baseline operational funding to meet the NWRS mission. Specific project types are classed as mission critical, essential staffing, and new and significantly expanded refuge lands. The NWRS has made steady progress in funding these highest priorities, as identified and ranked nationwide in RONS.

Protect Wildlife

This element supports the DOI strategic plan mission of Resource Protection. The NWRS supports at least 700 species of birds, 220 mammals, 250 reptiles and amphibians, more than 200 kinds of fish, and countless species of insects and plants. Roughly 260 of these species, representing 21 percent of all endangered and threatened species in the U.S., are listed under the Endangered Species Act. This diversity of life and the habitat on which it depends form the very foundation of the NWRS. In adhering to the spirit of the *National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997*, "... wildlife and wildlife conservation must come first," FY 2003 projects supported the DOI outcome goal to sustain biological communities and focused on surveying and monitoring, managing and restoring populations, and working with others. The NWRS accomplishments in FY 2003 include:

- Managed 3.5 million acres actively for wildlife.
- Initiated the latest technologies for monitoring, surveying, in-depth field studies, and collecting and analyzing baseline information at selected Land Management Research Demonstration Areas on refuges throughout the country, such as Rachel Carson NWR (ME), Bosque del Apache NWR (NM) and Hanford National Monument (WA).
- Continued ecological studies of musk oxen on Arctic NWR (AK) including aerial pre-calving surveys; ground-based surveys to estimate calf production, recruitment, and adult sex ratio; and monitoring over 100 radio-collared animals to document distribution, habitat use, and causes of mortality.
- Trapped, relocated, and evaluated red-cockaded woodpeckers at St. Marks NWR (FL).



- Provided staff and resources to support the rearing, conditioning, and release of endangered black-footed ferrets at Bowdoin NWR (MT).
- Improved wetland management capability by studying nutria herbivory effects on marsh vegetation at Delta NWR (LA).
- Initiated a biological monitoring program to guide current management and the development of the refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan at Canaan Valley NWR (WV).
- Continued on-site wildlife and habitat management reviews to assess quality and relevance of wildlife monitoring and population management programs on selected field stations, including Desert NWR (NV) and Stone Lakes NWR (CA).
- Released 133 captive propagated endangered Attwater's Prairie Chickens on Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR (TX) and partner lands as part of a long-term effort between the refuge and several cooperators to reestablish the prairie chicken on its native range.
- Initiated a multi-year Black Scoter breeding ecology study with USGS Alaska Science Center to identify nesting habitat and the timing of nesting on Yukon Delta NWR (AK). Black Scoters are the least abundant scoter and the least known waterfowl in North America.
- Concerned about emerging infectious diseases such as West Nile virus (WNV) and Chronic Wasting disease (CWD) impacts to wildlife, the Refuge system developed and distributed guidelines for surveillance and management of WNV and prepared draft guidelines for CWD surveillance and contingency disease management planning within the NWRS.



Numerous fish and avian die offs in recent years at the Salton Sea, a major stopover for millions of migratory water birds along the Pacific Flyway, have raised concern for its overall health as an ecosystem. Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR (CA) staff have coordinated multi-agency responses; completed daily airboat patrols to collect affected birds; operated a pathology and necropsy laboratory; provided emergency treatment; transported ill birds to rehabilitation facilities; and released healthy birds back to the wild. Outbreaks that at one time would escalate and cause thousands of avian and fish deaths were detected early and countered aggressively by refuge personnel who:

- Found 25 California brown pelican (83 percent fewer than in 2002) and 8 white pelican carcasses as a result of avian botulism outbreak, and sent an additional 10 California brown pelicans (91 percent fewer than in 2002) and 3 white pelicans to rehabilitation centers. Of these, six were released back into the wild.
- Took the lead in addressing salmonella, Avian Cholera and algal toxins outbreaks that killed at least 3,000 eared grebes. An outbreak of Newcastle Disease in captive chickens near the Salton Sea and Imperial Valley and the first recorded case of West Nile virus in California at an adjoining state Wildlife Management Area warranted increased monitoring of wild bird populations.

Improve Habitat

This element supports DOI strategic plan mission of Resource Protection. The Service strives to protect a national network of virtually every type of habitat and landscape found in the United States. The Service's goal is to represent all habitats and keep NWRS lands and waters biologically healthy and secure. Management focuses on restoring damaged habitats to productive states; managing lands and permanent and non-permanent wetlands to maintain their productivity; maintaining or restoring the biological integrity, biodiversity, and environmental health of refuge lands; and protecting wildlife, plant species and communities, including unique areas such as coral reefs. Equally important is developing partnerships with state agencies and neighboring landowners to cooperatively extend these efforts onto adjoining landscapes and throughout watersheds and ecosystems.

Mission-critical habitat programs include on-the-ground wilderness protection, invasive species management and control, coastal habitat protection, clean water protection, water rights protection, compatibility use regulations, riparian habitat protection, contaminant and toxic substance control, law enforcement, coral reef protection, and wetlands protection.

In FY 2003, the NWRS implemented numerous habitat initiatives, linked either to the habitat elements of **Comprehensive Conservation Plans** or with results from evaluation of ongoing refuge habitat management programs. A handbook was completed in FY 2003 to help refuge staff write refuge goals and objectives. It will result in better and more consistent Comprehensive Conservation Plans and other refuge management plans. Another Centennial milestone was the complete revision and updating of the NWRS habitat management policy, which will significantly improve the scientific basis for management of natural resources on refuge lands. Concurrently, on-line habitat management training was developed to aid refuge field personnel in producing new habitat management plans.

Refuges are anchors for biodiversity and ecosystems. Ensuring healthy habitats involves active management. The National Wildlife Refuge System is implementing numerous habitat initiatives, developed by *Fulfilling the Promise* teams comprised of specialists in specific disciplines or fields, to address the goal of maintaining biologically healthy, productive wildlife habitat. In addition, refuge managers and biologists use a variety of tools, including monitoring at field stations, to understand the complex relationships between plant communities and wildlife, both on land and in the water. In FY 2003, Improving Habitat accomplishments included:

- 71,137 acres of habitat were restored.
- Extensive cottonwood riparian restoration, coupled with removal of the invasive species tamarisk (saltcedar), has restored portions of the Bosque del Apache NWR (NM).
- Retired farmland is being seeded back to native grass and forbs to restore habitat for nesting waterfowl and songbirds in the prairie states at refuges like J. Clark Salyer and Arrowwood (ND) Wetland Management Districts.
- Extensive upland restoration and removal of the invasive species cheat grass, knapweed, and star thistle are restoring more than 10,000 acres on the Hanford Reach NM (WA). Biologists are sharing their study and monitoring results through presentations to local weed boards and state agencies and nationally for the Society of Ecological Restoration's annual meeting in Portland, OR.

National wildlife refuges are often viewed as both cornerstones and barometers of the environmental health of ecosystems. To maintain, enhance, or restore these systems, we must start with the basics: water quality and quantity, healthy soil, clean air, and the health of plant communities.

Water, perhaps the most fundamental and critical resource of the refuge system, provides habitats for both local and migratory wildlife. Droughts in the western United States in FY 2003-2004 highlighted the value of the nation's water resources. Service water offices provide coordination and technical advice on NWRS needs for water resources, including measuring water quantity, implementation of the Clean Water Act, and identifying water rights or processing permits for use. Regulatory agencies increasingly mandate and control these issues at refuge water recharge and discharge points.

The Service pursues a national water resources program that supports the DOI strategic plan goal to improve the health of watersheds by ensuring water quantity and quality for water-dependent refuge habitats; assisting hydrologic processes crucial to all habitat efforts on wetlands; and, ensuring availability of critical water supplies for fish and wildlife populations. Many refuges pump water in both the spring and the fall to manage water levels that provide quality habitat for migratory, wintering, and nesting birds, and prevent major disease outbreaks. Capabilities to provide additional aquatic resources were recently undertaken at Rainwater Basin WMD (NE), Bowdoin NWR (MT), Monte Vista/Alamosa NWR Complex (CO), Wheeler NWR (AL) and Sacramento River NWR (CA). The Service will address baseline water-quality issues with significant impacts on fish and wildlife resources, including nutrient loading, sedimentation, and water temperature.

Air quality, critical for human health, is also important for healthy fish, wildlife, plants, and the habitats they depend on. Furthermore, the air quality program supports the DOI strategic plan goal to improve health of watershed, landscapes, and marine resources by managing 21 of the designated 158 Class I areas that receive special protection from air pollution under the Clean Air Act (CAA). The CAA requires the Service to preserve, protect, and enhance air quality related values (AQRVs), which include resources such as vegetation, wildlife, water, soils, and visibility. The Service has an important role in both the regulatory process and in forming partnerships to ensure that air pollution does not adversely affect resources on Service lands. In addition, the Service conducts special studies to identify and evaluate AQRVs and monitors air quality at a number of refuges. In FY 2003, the Air Quality Branch (AQB):

- Performed vegetation surveys of species such as milkweed, black cherry, and aspen to evaluate injury from air pollution at Cape Romain NWR (SC), Mingo NWR (MO), Moosehorn NWR (ME), Seney (MI), and Edwin B. Forsythe NWR (NJ).
- Monitored air quality parameters in several Class I areas (CIAs), including scenic conditions and mercury deposition in 3 CIAs; atmospheric deposition in 5 CIAs; and fine and coarse particle concentrations in 18 CIAs. In addition, deposition monitoring at the Cape Romain NWR (SC) is currently in progress and monitoring continues to support the observation that visibility impairment occurs in Service Class I wilderness areas nationwide.
- Reviewed and completed actions on a total of 56 Prevention of Significant Deterioration Project Permits from industries proposing to build new or modify old facilities that can impact air quality related values in Service Class I areas.
- Performed Phase III quality tests at Chassahowitzka NWR (FL) by collecting samples at 20 stations, four times during the year and sampled submerged aquatic vegetation at 30 stations to determine species-specific frequency and abundance. The coastal area near the refuge is susceptible to aging (eutrophication) from atmospheric deposition air pollutants, particularly nitrogen compounds.

Contaminants threaten lands and waters everywhere, including those of the NWRS. The percent of known contaminated sites remediated on DOI managed land is a measure within the DOI Resource Protection mission. Refuge personnel collaborate closely with technical experts from the Service's Environmental Contaminants and Engineering programs to plan and execute contaminant investigations and, where necessary, cleanup contamination that affects NWRS lands.

Prioritized sites include resources at risk of adverse effects from contaminants as well as legal mandates for environmental compliance. For example, effective remediation of lead relies on accurate source identification. Ongoing refuge investigations at Midway NWR (Pacific) and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta NWR (AK) use ratios of lead isotopes to distinguish lead from different environmental sources, such as gasoline, lead paint, lead shot, and natural deposits. On Midway Island NWR, a refuge investigation revealed direct ingestion of lead paint chips from buildings at the decommissioned military base as the source of Laysan albatross chicks' lead poisoning. This technique will be a valuable tool for determining the sources of lead affecting other wildlife populations and providing managers with data needed to formulate cleanup strategies. Additional contaminant activities in FY 2003 included:

- Approximately 30 contaminant investigations and 30 contaminant cleanup projects, most lasting two - three years, were funded in FY 2003 at multiple refuges.
- Refuge program managers provide technical assistance on complicated contaminant issues in negotiations for federal jurisdiction transfers, such as the Hanford Reach Nuclear Site (WA) and Vieques Bombing Range (PR).

Invasive Species, which overtake native species, are also a serious problem throughout the country. They cause significant declines of trust species and degrade millions of acres of refuge lands, waters, and wetlands. These invaders have become the single greatest biological threat to refuges and the Service's wildlife conservation mission. Invasive plants such as purple loosestrife, leafy spurge, yellow star thistle, melaleuca, and Australian pine undermine refuge operations and increase habitat management costs. Other species like buffleggrass, *Phragmites*, and salt cedar are destroying habitat needed by many of America's fastest-declining birds, including Costa's Hummingbird, Seaside Sparrow, Abert's Towhee and the Elf Owl. In addition, a variety of exotic or invasive animals such as nutria, Norway rats, brown tree snakes, Asian swamp eels, exotic wild pigs, and northern snakehead fish spread rapidly and cause extreme damage throughout the NWRS. Rapidly spreading invasive insects and diseases also threaten refuge species and their habitats. Annual control operations are needed on nearly 250,000 aquatic acres within the NWRS, excluding river systems.



The National Invasive Species Council, established by Executive Order 13112, is a multi-agency group of government leaders established to coordinate the development of the National Invasive Species Management Plan and promote prevention and control of invasive species at the federal level. The NWRS conducts activities in response to the Executive Order; coordinates and communicates with Council staff; and, participates in the development of the Plan, national invasive species policy, crosscutting budget initiatives, and legislation with the Council, Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, and other associated organizations and agencies.

NWRS invasive species work supports the DOI goals to sustain biological communities and create habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish. Dove-tailing with DOI guidance, NWRS's invasive species team developed a National Strategy for Management of Invasive Species that will guide invasive species management on refuges nationwide. The strategy emphasizes assessment information, monitoring recommendations and best management practices. Guided by this national strategy, NWRS invasive species operations include preventive activities, control and eradication, research and monitoring, cooperative partnerships and cost-share projects and public education about invasive species. Integrated pest management techniques used in the field include the application of chemicals, mechanical and hand removal, prescribed fire, cultural techniques, and biological control. Prevention efforts, including a new emergency/rapid response program for NWRS, are key to preventing newly discovered infestations from gaining a foothold on refuges.

Early detection and rapid response operations are critical to attacking new and outlying infestations, as well as prioritizing other control and management activities. New activities to fight the onslaught of this habitat destruction include:

- **Early detection** in the invasive species program is critical and relies heavily on inventory and descriptions of the location, status, and spread of invasive species infestations. In partnership with the National Wildlife Refuge Association, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the USGS' National Institute of Invasive Species Science, the refuge system launched a pilot program in FY 2003 on six refuges to use **volunteers** to map the occurrence of invasive species using GPS.

A number of field-based projects using Friends groups and volunteers are being carried out in our nation-wide effort to control advancing populations of invasive species. For example:

- Brazoria NWR (TX) is partnering with Master Naturalist volunteers, Friends volunteers and the Angleton school district to identify areas for treatment of Chinese tallow infestations in the bottomlands during "mucking" adventures. The Angleton School District is assisting by monitoring control of water hyacinth on oxbow lakes in the Hudson Woods.
- On the National Elk Refuge (WY) located in the Columbia River Basin ecosystem, which provides winter range for approximately 7,500 elk and 700 bison, volunteers are assisting refuge staff in restoring grasslands where the elk feed.

In FY 2003, the NWRS Fire Management Program:

- Completed hazardous fuel reduction treatments totaling 154,420 acres in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) and 233,042 acres outside WUI.
- Exceeded the Department's contracting goals for treatments.
- Provided expertise to assess, treat, and monitor hazardous vegetation/fuels within designated WUI areas, and engage partners in collaborative project planning and implementation, using fire and mechanical treatments as appropriate to accomplish land management goals.
- Exceeded National Fire Plan hazardous fuels treatment targets. The Service is the only DOI bureau to accomplish this in FY 2002 and FY 2003.

Special Designation Areas -- The NWRS hosts 16 other special land designations that add value to refuge lands, including **Wilderness, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Marine Protected Areas, National Natural Landmarks, Research Natural Areas, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserves, Critical Habitat for Endangered and Threatened Species, Significant Caves, National Natural Landmarks and Wild and Scenic Rivers**. These unique resource areas demand special management activities to conserve their singular values and are diligently safeguarded to ensure they

remain healthy and viable for future generations, thus supporting the DOI goal to protect cultural and natural heritage resources.

Congress set aside **Wilderness** areas to conserve their ecological, recreational, cultural, and spiritual values for present and future generations. Approximately 20 percent of NWRS lands and waters are wilderness. Our 75 wilderness areas encompass 20.7 million acres in 26 states, with approximately 18 million acres in Alaska. The Service also manages 21 areas of proposed wilderness totaling 8.6 million acres in Alaska and almost 2 million acres in the 49 states.

The Service manages wilderness and proposed wilderness areas to protect their unique values while allowing public use and enjoyment, and is using the Comprehensive Conservation Planning (CCP) process to evaluate wilderness management practices and develop science-based adaptive management strategies to increase the effectiveness of wilderness stewardship, and address complex refuge management issues. Examples include the CCPs for the Cabeza Prieta (AZ) and Okefenokee (GA/FL) refuges, where wilderness makes up a large majority of each refuge. Okefenokee NWR initiated examination of the composition, structure and ecological function within its 353,000-acre Wilderness area to promote natural processes and adapt management activities to mimic the results of natural events.

Congress established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System to preserve and protect free-flowing rivers that possess "outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values." Ten designated rivers flow through the NWRS.

Areas within the NWRS that merit recommendation for wilderness or wild and scenic river designation are identified and evaluated through the CCP process, which ensures recommendations are developed in collaboration with local communities and private citizens. Examples include the wilderness reviews and associated public involvement activities conducted as part of the CCPs for the Alligator River NWR (NC) and Petit Manan NWR (ME).

Marine Protected Areas cover a small percentage of the earth, but form a valuable network of some of its most diverse and biologically complex ecosystems. The NWRS contains the largest number of Marine Protected Areas under federal jurisdiction. Of the 542 national wildlife refuges scattered from Maine to Guam, 162, about a third, have marine and estuarine habitats along coasts and some 12 miles out to sea. Just 13 refuges protect 1.5 million acres of coral reefs and adjacent open water habitats. The significance is most profound in the Pacific, where more than 2 million acres of submerged lands, including more than 800,000 acres of coral reefs, are included within 10 refuges dispersed across the Pacific.

For example, Palmyra Atoll NWR in the Pacific, one of the newest additions to the NWRS, includes 680 acres of emergent lands and more than 500,000 acres of submerged land, home to an array of coral reefs.



These areas play a large role in conserving marine resources, both locally, and within global ecosystems. They are challenging to manage due to their remoteness, but also provide some wonderful opportunities, such as:

- To serve as critical refugia for depleted and unique species,
- To restore native ecosystems,
- To establish research centers of excellence and natural laboratories, and
- To provide limited visitor opportunities and provide virtually unlimited remote educational opportunities.

Refuge lands also include unique areas with international designations such as those under the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**. Eighteen of the more than 20 Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance in the U.S. are located on refuge lands, including White River and Cache River NWR (AR), Catahoula NWR (LA) and Delaware Bay designated sites at Bombay Hook (DE), Prime Hook (DE), Supawna Meadows (NJ), and Cape May (NJ) NWRs. The salt marsh at Quivira Refuge (KS) provides habitat for more than 310 species of birds, including endangered species such as the whooping crane, piping plover and the interior least tern.

Partnerships

Over the last two years, the NWRS has been investing greater effort in **international partnerships** to enhance the delivery of a primary tenet of *Fulfilling the Promise*: partnerships to promote healthy habitats for wildlife. Cross-border collaboration makes sense, since the NWRS shares nearly 390 miles of borderlands with Canada and Mexico. Uniting efforts for migratory species produces more resource benefit for far less cost to either participating country, and provides vital habitat for mobile species along major flyways and migratory routes.

The long-term survival of populations with unique migratory patterns depends on the integrity of breeding, wintering, and stopover areas in countries throughout their range and helps secure major investments on NWRS lands. For example:

- Des Lacs NWR (ND) works with the Canadian Wildlife Service and Canadian scientists to link recovery activities for the endangered piping plover.
- In Arizona at Imperial, Cibola and Kofa, and Buenos Aries NWRs, refuge personnel led the charge on proactive cross-border habitat management for endangered species.
- The NWRS chairs the Protected Areas table under the United States' Trilateral agreement with Mexico and Canada.

Within the U.S. boundaries, the NWRS is involved in developing **cooperative partnership projects** at all levels of government; developing effective volunteer programs and partnerships; and, encouraging establishment of and cooperative work with friends groups and other local and national support groups.

Another successful partnering approach to conservation used by the NWRS is the **Challenge Cost-Share Program** (CCS), part of the Department's **Cooperative Conservation Initiative** (CCI), which embodies the Secretary's Four "C's" of cooperation, communication, and consultation in the service of conservation. The Challenge Cost Share Program provided refuge managers and partners approximately \$6.8 million to complete projects on, or directly benefiting, Service lands. These projects focus on restoration of natural resources and/or the establishment or expansion of wildlife habitat with durable, lasting results; and/or wildlife-oriented recreational and education programs. In FY 2003, more than 1,400 partners provided approximately \$10.5 million in dollars and in-kind matches. This effort indicates the importance of these conservation efforts by leveraging approximately \$1.60 for every \$1 in federal funding for NWRS projects. Highest-ranking projects involve multiple partners; many had four or more partners.

Partners in FY 2003 used innovative means or practices to address some of the NWRS's highest conservation priorities, including restoring native grasslands, invasive species control, and riparian restoration. Examples of CCI projects in FY 2003 include:

- Foraging behavior study on nesting Least Bitterns at Agassiz NWR (MN) received \$33,000 from the University of Missouri toward the \$37,500 total project cost.
- Removal of invasive English ivy to restore coniferous and riparian dune habitat at Humboldt Bay NWR (CA); the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Conservation Corps, and the State Coastal Conservancy provided \$50,000 toward the \$83,400 total project cost.
- Native reforestation on Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR (TX); Friends of the Wildlife Corridor, Audubon Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary, Rio Grande Basin Coalition, and Valley Nature Center & Valley Proud Environmental Council contributed \$39,000 toward the \$59,000 total project cost.
- Tallgrass prairie restoration on Neal Smith NWR (IA); Refuge Volunteers and Friends of the Prairie Learning Center covered \$60,200 toward the \$117,500 total project cost.
- Enhancement of nesting habitat for Blanding's turtle on Oxbow NWR (MA); Oxbow Wetlands Associates, Friends of Oxbow and Refuge Volunteers provided \$8,000 toward the \$15,000 total project cost.

Serve People

This element supports the DOI strategic plan mission of Recreation. Visitor Services are provided for the people, are integral to daily life on a national wildlife refuge, and support the DOI goal to provide for a quality recreation experience on DOI managed and partnered lands. The FWS mission states that the Service works to conserve wildlife for the benefit of the people. Annually, 39 million visits are made to national wildlife refuges. They are educational lightning rods that reach those who do not visit national wildlife refuges. Visitors are tourists and local townspeople who may come from different cultures, but share an interest in discovering a natural world ripe with wildlife treasures. Whether bird-watching, hunting, fishing, photographing, or learning, visitors often leave a refuge feeling special, a part of the largest network of lands set aside to conserve wildlife.

The Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 legally defines wildlife-dependent recreation as a prominent and important goal in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Act recognizes the importance of a close connection between wildlife resources and the American character, and the need to conserve America's wildlife for future generations to enjoy. It supports DOI strategies to provide access for recreation where appropriate and promote and enhance the quality of recreation opportunities.

The Act states that:

“(B) compatible wildlife-dependent recreation is a legitimate and appropriate general public use of the System, directly related to the mission of the System and the purposes of many refuges...

(C) compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are the priority general public uses of the System and shall receive priority consideration in refuge planning and management; and

(D) when the Secretary determines that a proposed wildlife-dependent recreational use is a compatible use within a refuge, that activity should be facilitated, subject to such restrictions or regulations as may be necessary, reasonable and appropriate...

(H) recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general public uses of the System through which the American public can develop an appreciation for fish and wildlife...

(I) ensure that opportunities are provided within the System for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation uses;

(K) provide increased opportunities for families to experience compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, particularly ... traditional outdoors activities such as fishing and hunting.”

The NWRS takes these mandates seriously and weaves them into our daily work to provide greater access to use Service lands where appropriate.

The priority public uses are “the Big 6”: hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, wildlife observation, education, and interpretation. The employees of the NWRS provide quality wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities to visitors, looking for special opportunities to expand a family experience into an exciting escapade. Visitors have the opportunity and often embark on a discovery journey they will remember, share with their family, support through volunteer services or a Friends organization, and learn the value of wildlife and its contribution to the quality of life and our national heritage.

Beyond providing quality wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, Visitor Services administrative programs enhance the likelihood of a quality experience when the visitor comes through the gate. These programs support the DOI goal to provide for and receive fair value in recreation. Included are concessions management, recreation fee demonstration program, uniform program, value of cultural and historical resources, customer satisfaction surveys, accessibility programs, volunteer program, Friends program, opportunities to share valuable information with the public through Recreation.gov and Volunteer.gov, community partnerships, special use permits, and a host of other activities designed to efficiently manage services to visitors.

The NWRS is fully aware of the responsibility to instill community pride in the local refuge; build community partnerships; expand the local volunteer and Friends programs; reach out to the local community with consistent messages in education programs; conserve and interpret cultural and historical resources important to local community traditions; and work fairly and openly with local landowners while meeting the mission of the NWRS. The refuge’s neighborhood, like any neighborhood, is composed of people with distinct perspectives, interests, priorities, and involvement. *The Volunteer and Community Partnership Act of 1998* gives the NWRS new tools and authorities to let the American people share in our wildlife conservation mission and empowers them to become active citizen conservationists.

If quality wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities are successful, local communities will have the ability to enjoy numerous healthy, fun, and educational experiences in the “wild” and citizens could carry that experience to the next level - personal involvement in meeting the mission of the NWRS. Quality wildlife-dependent recreation that captures all of the above will help the National Wildlife Refuge System meet its mission with full public support. In FY 2003, the NWRS:

- Provided Quality Wildlife Experiences. More than 39 million people visited refuges. More than 2 million came to hunt, 6 million to fish, and more than 28 million for interpretation and observation opportunities, with 16 million of them using nature and auto trails. Refuges and waterfowl production areas offered visitors countless opportunities to witness some of the world’s most amazing wildlife spectacles amidst breathtaking scenery.
- Enhanced environmental education and expanded corporate and volunteer supported wildlife interpretation and education through the Friends of Black Bayou, Inc. at Black Bayou Lake NWR (LA),
- Improved public use areas, including hiking trails, public and service roads, parking lots, interpretive panels and roadside turnouts at Boyer Chute NWR (NE).
- Began installation of an exhibit at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, adjacent to Whittlesey Creek NWR (WI) to be used as a springboard for educational activities such as International Migratory Bird Day and Kids Fishing Day.

Take Pride in America is a national partnership established by DOI that empowers volunteers from every corner of America. President Bush has stated, "Our volunteers are a powerful force in the effort to overcome evil with acts of kindness and decency, and their service demonstrates the best of the American spirit." In this spirit:

- More than 39,000 refuge volunteers, 14 percent more than in FY 2002, contributed 1.2 million hours of service valued at \$15 million. This represents 88 percent of the total volunteers in FWS.
- Community-based support groups, also known as Friends groups, skyrocketed from 74 in 1996 to 250 organizations today with approximately 30,000 members who are building a legacy of wildlife conservation through community support.



The strategy to increase economic development falls within DOI's strategic plan mission of serving communities. Proximity to a national wildlife refuge can benefit a community economically. The most recent "Banking on Nature 2002," published in September 2003, quantified these economic benefits to local communities. Specifically, in FY 2002 refuge visitors generated sales of \$809.2 million for regional economies, resulting in 19,000 people employed and \$315.2 million in employment income.

Partnerships include multiple cooperative efforts, such as the Challenge Cost Share Program, at all levels of government; effective volunteer programs and partnerships; and, establishment of, and cooperative work with, Friends groups and other local and national support groups. To accomplish projects that Serve People the Challenge Cost Share Program in FY 2003 provided more than \$2.5 million in federal funding, which leveraged about \$3.4 million from more than 900 partners across the country. Refuge staff and partners completed such projects as construction of photo blinds, trails, or other facilities for recreation and education.

Many refuge events were also sponsored that offered fishing for youth, birding festivals, and other educational programs. For example, Arrowwood Refuge Complex (ND) partnered with Birding Drives Dakota for the First Annual Prairies & Potholes Birding Festival in 2003. This 3-day celebration of communities and the National Wildlife Refuge System included a variety of activities and events that increased awareness and appreciation for natural resources, wildlife, conservation, and habitat throughout the State of North Dakota. Two distinctive products were the publication "Birding Drives Dakota" and the educational Web site - <http://www.birdingdrives.com/>. Other cooperators, including Jamestown and Carrington (ND) Chambers of Commerce, North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Office, Carrington Visitors Bureau and Community Coordinator, donated in-kind services.

Protection and management of historical, archaeological, and **cultural heritage** is part of the refuge system's overall resource stewardship and supports the DOI strategy to ensure responsible use in recreation to protect natural, cultural and recreational resources. More than 12,000 archaeological and historical sites have been identified throughout the NWRS, where communities left their "footprints"

on the landscape.” These areas and artifacts provide a historical record of people’s relationship with natural resources. Museum collections consist of approximately 2.8 million objects maintained in 150 offices or on loan to more than 200 non-federal repositories, such as museums and educational institutions, for study and long-term care.

The NWRS hosts more than 80 sites that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and 9 National Historic Landmarks. The NWRS makes it a priority to meet Department of the Interior and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act requirements for museum collections.

- Bandon Marsh NWR (OR) initiated construction of a parking area, refuge overlook, and interpretive panels at the newly established Ni-les'-tun Unit. Interpretive panels at the overlook will describe the historical use of this area by the Coquille Tribe. Special care was taken to protect archaeological resources.

Law Enforcement

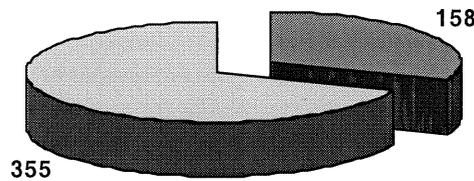
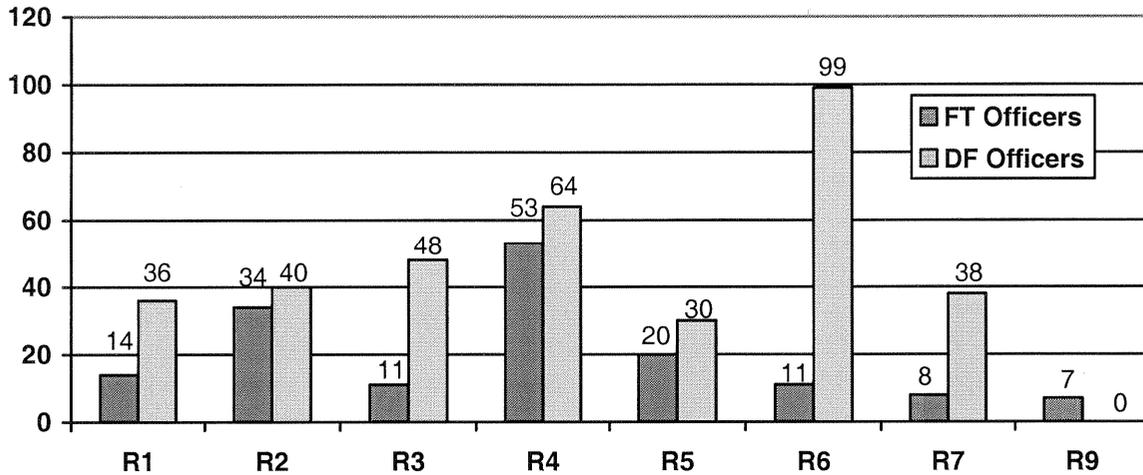
Refuge Law Enforcement supports the DOI Serving Communities mission through the strategic goal to safeguard lives, property, and assets. In order to provide quality wildlife experiences for visitors, it is imperative that the NWRS include prevention, enforcement, protection and security activities to ensure compliance with wildlife laws, refuge regulations and related laws so that: 1) fish and wildlife resources are protected from over-harvest, poaching, or other abuse; 2) visitors' security is assured and they can enjoy recreation, interpretation, and environmental education without fear of crime or incident; and 3) government property is secure from terrorist threat and not subject to vandalism, abuse, or destruction. FY 2003 accomplishments include:

- Established an Integrity Unit (internal affairs), as identified in both the IACP assessment report and the Secretary's Law Enforcement Reform Measure that will service both the NWRS law enforcement program and the Service special agents.
- Continued development of an automated case management system, which will be integrated with the DOI Incident Management, Analysis, and Reporting System (IMARS), a Department-wide law enforcement database. The User Acceptance Team developing the IMARS for the NWRS has completed the functional requirements document.
- Standardized law enforcement officer weapons, primarily to increase officer safety, but also for more efficient management of the weapons systems. Refuge officers received standard weapons after receiving approved transition training on their use.
- Issued Director’s Order No. 155 outlining several law enforcement reforms for the NWRS and approved the implementation report, “Interim and Long-Term Deployment of Law Enforcement Resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System.” The report and ensuing regional implementation plans addressed officer safety issues, established a new structure for the refuge system law enforcement program, and provided interim deployment strategies. Major results of this Director’s Order and reform report include:

1. Reduced dependency on dual-function officers and moving to full-time law enforcement officers. To begin this process, 19 GS-14 and 16 GS-13 refuge managers relinquished their collateral-duty commissions in 2003. One-year GS-13 waivers for 38 officers were approved based on officer safety issues at individual refuges.
2. Required the remaining 355 dual-function officers spend 25-50 percent of their duty time in a law enforcement function, a new standard developed to ensure they maintain a high level of proficiency and increase law enforcement output to meet increasing demands.
3. Implemented the Refuge Law Enforcement Zone System by hiring 23 full-time law enforcement officers to serve as Zone Officers. The zone system provides refuges with technical assistance on law enforcement, institutes reliable record-keeping and

defensible reviews, enhances training, and promotes communication and coordination. There are 59 zones nationwide.

4. Funded three additional full-time law enforcement officers to continue transition from a dual-function law enforcement workforce to a full-time officer workforce to meet obligations for public safety, resource protection, and officer safety.



- Continued development of a deployment strategy and staffing model with the International Association of Chiefs of Police to identify law enforcement resource needs and assign law enforcement officers to locations with the highest need.

Implementation of the refuge law enforcement Zone System and the transition to full-time law enforcement officers are outstanding examples of the Strategic Management of Human Capital within the President’s Management Agenda. In the near-term, they link human capital strategies to organizational mission, vision, core values, goals, and objectives. In the long-term, the NWRS will build, sustain, and effectively deploy a skilled, knowledgeable, diverse, and high-performing law enforcement workforce to meet current and emerging needs of government and its citizens.

Land Protection Planning (formerly Acquisition Planning)

In FY 2003, the Service developed a draft Director’s Order providing interim guidance on strategic growth of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It establishes the priorities for the Service’s land acquisition program: first is the completion of acquisitions within approved refuge boundaries; second is to expand existing refuges where necessary to fulfill the purposes of the refuge and meet the mission and goals of the System; and third is the establishment of new refuges when we or other parties cannot adequately conserve outstanding fish and wildlife resources of national significance using other tools. Expansions that are reasonable to accomplish within a 15-year period are generally

identified during the comprehensive conservation planning process.

The draft Director's Order also establishes the process for identifying and prioritizing lands for expansion of the NWRS to ensure the highest priority lands for conservation will be brought into the System. It will focus on meeting national, regional, ecoregional and local conservation goals for species and habitats; filter proposals through a series of threshold standards to ensure approval of only the most important projects; and consider funding availability for operations and maintenance.

Key FY 2003 Land Protection Planning programmatic accomplishments are summarized in a table at the end of the NWRS Operations section.

This activity could potentially contribute to virtually any of the Department's Strategic Plan goals for Resource Protection, Recreation, and Serving Communities. The most direct contribution is toward the intermediate outcome goal of creating habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish within the Resource Protection mission.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs)

A refuge CCP provides a vision for the next 15 years and ensures resource stewardship is undertaken in accordance with the law and policies, and receives public review. They are the primary avenues the Service uses to conduct citizen-centered government for the NWRS. These long-term management plans, as well as step-down management plans, rely on public participation during development and give communities a stake in the care of refuges. Public participation provides refuges a powerful alliance in local communities and, in the process, refuges become an important force in improving the quality of life beyond its boundaries.

The National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 mandated a CCP be completed for every NWRS station (National Wildlife Refuges and Wetland Management Districts (WMD)) within 15 years of the passage of the Act or establishment of the station, whichever comes first. When the Act passed, there were 514 NWRs and 37 WMDs. Since then, Congress has mandated the Service also complete CCPs for three new stations (Hanford Reach National Monument (WA), Rocky Flats NWR (CO), Red River NWR (LA)) before the 2012 deadline. Thus, 554 NWRS stations require CCPs by 2012.

Due to the complex nature of many planning efforts, which involve extensive public involvement, resolution of highly controversial issues, and lengthy internal review and approval procedures, only 10 of the 43 CCPs scheduled for completion in FY 2003 were finished. CCPs were completed for the following stations in 2003: Salinas River NWR (CA), Buenos Aires NWR (AZ), Big Stone WMD (MN), Detroit Lakes WMD (MN), Fergus Falls WMD (MN), Litchfield WMD (MN), Morris WMD (MN), Windom WMD (MN), Monte Vista NWR (CO), and Alamosa NWR (CO). The remaining 33 plans are included in the 52 CCPs expected to be completed in FY 2004. Since passage of the Act, the Service has completed CCPs for 62 NWRS stations, representing 11 percent of the total workload.

Because it provides a comprehensive strategic look at all functions, the activity contributes to the DOI Strategic goals for Resource Protection, Recreation, and Serving Communities.

2004 Planned Program Performance

In FY 2004, NWRS Operations received \$291,603,000 to fulfill its mission critical objectives. To achieve those objectives the NWRS Operations budget is divided into three program elements, (1) Protect Wildlife, (2) Improve Habitat, (3) Serve People. These elements define our commitment to the stewardship of wildlife and wildlife lands for the citizens of the United States.

Protect Wildlife

This element furthers the DOI strategic plan mission to Protect Resources. Wildlife field efforts focus on monitoring the status and health of wildlife populations and their habitats. Refuge staff conduct or administer natural resource and cultural resource surveys, inventories and studies; map refuge habitats and cover types; and, collect fish, plant, wildlife and public use data to ensure refuge management programs are developed and implemented with current natural resource and public use data. These data are essential to understanding various fish and wildlife communities on the refuge; managing refuge wildlife and habitats, developing and implementing CCPs; and, facilitating the six priority public uses. FY 2004 projects to protect wildlife are a crucial part of refuge management and will include:

- Performing wildlife population surveys, and monitor vegetative changes and waterfowl and wildlife responses to management actions such as prescribed fires, grazing, haying, noxious weed control, and native seeding projects at Upper Souris NWR (ND), Lee Metcalf NWR (MT), Quivira NWR (KS) and at Huron WMD (SD).
- Identifying various habitat types and associated wildlife species within the Coachella Valley NWR (CA), a 4,000-acre refuge with key habitat for the threatened Coachella Valley fringed-toed lizard, the endangered Coachella Valley milk vetch, and numerous other desert dwelling species.

Based on the refuge system's initial PART review, the following actions will be taken in FY 2004 under the Protect Wildlife program element:

- Develop a process to measure the outcome goal of percent of populations of indicator species with improved or stable numbers.
- Verify a baseline for the outcome goal measure of percent of NWRS recovery tasks prescribed in approved Recovery Plans that are completed.

Improve Habitat

This element supports the DOI strategic plan mission to Protect Resources. Additional resources in FY 2004 will resolve critical habitat-related operational needs of refuges nationwide. Restoration will include historic wetland habitats previously drained and converted to agricultural production; deforested areas used for industry or decommissioned from active military activities; important riparian corridors and deepwater habitats; and significant coastal areas. Examples include:

- Restore five desert springs and stream brook channels altered and degraded by agricultural use, mining, and development prior to the establishment of the refuge at Ash Meadows NWR (NV), recognized as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance.
- Develop and manage moist soil impoundments at Huleia NWR (HI), which are critically needed to provide habitat for Hawaii's four endangered waterbirds.
- Improve water management capabilities at White River NWR (AR) and Noxubee NWR (MS) to provide quality habitat for migratory waterfowl, breeding water birds, and maintain healthy seasonally flooded bottomland hardwood areas.

Many refuges have some form of oil and gas activity such as exploration, development, or pipeline right-of-way. In response to the GAO report to Congress, "Opportunities to Improve the Management and Oversight of Oil and Gas Activities on Federal Lands," the NWRS is developing a handbook for refuge managers that will provide guidance on the management of oil and gas programs. This guidance will ensure consistent response to oil and gas exploration, development, and production activities on refuges. Because many refuge lands were acquired with mineral rights outstanding, it has

become essential that the rights and responsibilities of the private mineral owner and those of NWRS as the surface owner are clearly understood and protected. The Service's National Conservation Training Center will support development of a training module in FY 2005.

Increased activities on refuges to address **invasive species** will rely in part on a strong coalition of organized citizen volunteers. In addition, the Service will continue to use a host of integrated pest management techniques, application of chemicals, mechanical and hand removal, prescribed fire, cultural techniques, and biological controls to combat invasive species on refuge lands.

Rapid response strike teams will attack early or outlying infestations of invasive plants in target areas. The overall effort will focus on topical and geographical focus areas identified by the National Invasive Species Council and the Department, such as salt cedar, leafy spurge and yellow star thistle. These teams will create habitat conditions for native biological communities to flourish through control and management of invasive species, including rapid response to infestations and integrated management techniques.

- Three initial strike teams are being launched in FY 2004 in the following priority areas: the Everglades, Lower Colorado River in the Southwest, and the Columbia-Yellowstone-Missouri River Areas. Efforts will be coordinated with the National Park Service's Exotic Plant Management Teams and the Boise Interagency Fire Center, to link prescribed burn activities and invasives control efforts where feasible.

The NWRS has prioritized early detection and rapid response efforts as well as species-specific efforts per Departmental and National Invasive Species Council priorities. Examples of priority projects involving target species are:

- Cibola NWR (AZ) is treating 800 acres of giant salvinia chemically and mechanically. Unchecked, this invasive exotic plant multiplies rapidly and can quickly cover the entire surface of lakes and streams with a 10-inch mat that is too thick for the sun to penetrate, ultimately killing off native plants, choke off fisheries, and hamper boat navigation and irrigation facilities.
- Remove red cedar and salt cedar at Salt Plains NWR (OK) to improve grassland quality and nesting habitat.
- Devote significant invasive species operations to salt cedar activities in the Southwest with multiple partners. Projects include inventory, mapping and control of infestations at Sevilleta and Bosque del Apache Refuges (NM); detection, rapid response and control of saltcedar on five additional refuges in New Mexico and Texas; and the cooperative tamarisk project for Lahontan Valley Wetlands on Stillwater Refuge (NV), Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribal reservation and other areas at the Carson River terminus.
- Nutria control efforts, research strategies, and marsh habitat restoration in coordination with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, at Blackwater (MD), Eastern Neck (VA), Delta (LA) and Sabine (LA) NWRs.

In FY 2004, the NWRS **Fire Management Program** will:

- Complete all National Fire Plan fuels projects for which funds are allocated.
- Coordinate effective treatments to prevent loss of critical resources and infrastructure in the face of intense, fast-moving fires, as was accomplished in southern California in October 2003.
- Collaborate intra-Service between fire and resource programs to improve efficiency in controlling invasive plants such as tamarisk and cheatgrass. The Service will enhance and focus communications at national and regional levels among fuels management and resource

management program leads for National Fire Plan and invasives control projects, and among national program offices and field project leaders for wildland fire restoration under the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Programs and associated Burned Area Emergency Response (emergency stabilization) or Rehabilitation Plans.

- Implement a restructured budget that provides a unified structure across all federal agencies.
- Finalize a strategic plan for the NWRS Fire Management Program.
- Increase awareness of the accomplishments of the NWRS Fire Management Program in a wider internal and external audience.
- Support interagency and DOI initiatives in human capital workforce planning, interagency qualifications systems, and Prescribed Fire Training Center, among others.

Coordination with other **wilderness and wild and scenic river** management agencies is undertaken to provide technical assistance, policy guidance, and public information through the activities of the Wilderness Policy Council, Interagency Wilderness Steering Committee, and the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council. The Service manages all of these areas to protect their unique values while allowing public access and enjoyment. FY 2004 efforts will:

- Develop a series of regional and local events to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.
- Coordinate with other Agencies and the National Forest Foundation to update the National Wilderness System Map, produce a public outreach video and develop a wilderness education curriculum that meets national and state standards for history, geography, and science.
- Update the Wilderness Information website to provide easier access to general wilderness information such as recreational opportunities and unique wildlife resources of the NWRS.
- Develop a Wilderness Action Plan by the NWRS Regional Wilderness Coordinators, which includes recommendations for wilderness monitoring, education, and public outreach.

The NWRS is investing in **international partnerships** to promote healthy habitats for wildlife:

- Imperial NWR (AZ) is publicly promoting conservation activities, building wildlife observation towers in Mexico, and delivering outreach to international partners with an exhibit on cooperative restoration in the Yuma International Airport.
- Buenos Aries NWR (AZ) is helping private Mexican landowners to establish and manage a 100,000-acre Sonoran grassland “sister” protected area to assist in the long-term survival of the endangered Masked Bobwhite Quail. Along with management strategies on refuge lands, this expansion assures habitat conservation for multiple, rare native species.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans – In FY 2004, the refuge system will lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive approach to planning and implementing habitat management and setting habitat management priorities. This will include completing a strategic plan for enhancing system-wide GIS capabilities, moving forward with national habitat goals and objectives that will step-down to individual refuges, and pursuing acquisition of standard, baseline inventory data for vegetation, and other parameters.

Based on the refuge system’s FY 2005 PART review, the following actions will be taken in FY 2004 under the Improve Habitat program element:

- Develop a process to measure the outcome goal of percent of NWRS lands and waters with habitat in good condition.
- Develop a process to measure the outcome goal of percent of refuges with surface and groundwater resources protected that are necessary to fulfill refuge and NWRS purposes.

- Verify baselines for the outcome goal measures of number of NWRS acres affected by aquatic and terrestrial invasive species controlled; percent of refuges meeting federal or state standards for air quality, water quality, and contamination; and, acres of wetlands restored per million dollars expended.

Serve People

This element supports the DOI strategic plan mission of Recreation. Quality environmental education and interpretation activities that provide good wildlife and cultural resource information are being designed to stimulate thoughtful conversation with our community citizens. Quality programs help develop an identity niche for the NWRS, letting visitors know how and why we are different from other land management agencies. In FY 2004, the Service will:

- Expand public use facilities at San Luis NWR (CA) with visitor kiosks, hiking trails, photo blinds, observation towers and public hunting areas within the 4,000-acre West Bear Creek Unit, which was recently restored to wetland and upland habitat through a \$2.0 million dollar multi-partnered North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant.
- Develop an environmental education program for the new visitor center at Alaska Maritime NWR (AK), the largest seabird refuge in North America.
- Support a new National Wildlife Refuge Exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, funded in part by the Department of Transportation. The Smithsonian Institution anticipates 6 million people will view the exhibit.

Guidelines help provide quality wildlife-dependent recreation. All visitors are made welcome and safe in their journey on a National Wildlife Refuge and should know where they are and be able to orient themselves to their desired activities.

- The NWRS began a new small construction initiative to build projects such as trails, docks, and observation towers to get visitors out of buildings and onto the land to enjoy wildlife in a safe manner. Visitors can find brochures with a consistent layout, design and NWRS core messages, signs (both for safety warnings and environmental education), and good maps at these small visitor facilities. Although there is no substitute for interaction with a refuge professional, visitors appreciate the availability of good information.

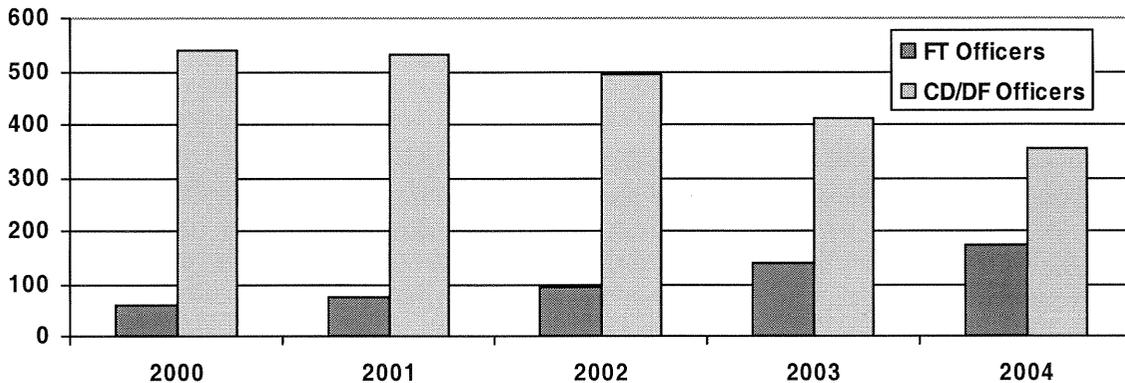
Law Enforcement

In FY 2004, protection of NWRS visitors and lands continues through improved law enforcement and investigative activities. This meets the DOI Strategic Plan to "protect lives, resources, and properties." Increased funding in FY 2004 will allow the NWRS law enforcement program to accelerate compliance with the Secretary's directives to implement law enforcement reforms and address issues identified by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Inspector General. The NWRS is building an improved, highly trained, and professional law enforcement program to provide the safest environment for both Service employees and the public. The Service has completed many recommended improvements, demonstrating that the refuge law enforcement program is a top priority for the bureau. FY 2004 efforts include:

- Continuing implementation of the Refuge Law Enforcement Zone System by funding 8 new Zone System law enforcement officers, bringing implementation to 31 of the 59 identified for the Zone System.
- Improve capability to perform quality law enforcement and continue to transition from a dual-function law enforcement workforce to a full-time officer workforce to meet obligations

for public safety, resource protection, and officer safety by funding 11 new full-time law enforcement officers and one National Training Coordinator position.

- Continuing work with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The IACP will visit all Regional Offices to begin field-testing the draft deployment model developed in 2003 and will finalize the model and assist with the development of a software application.
- Completing the rapid application development of an automated case management system, which will be integrated with the DOI Incident Management, Analysis, and Reporting System (IMARS), a department-wide law enforcement database. We will coordinate with the Department to develop pilot projects for IMARS and develop a training course.
- Other major law enforcement initiatives underway include: the continuation of upgrades to our communication systems to increase the safety of the officer and visitors; the development and updating of law enforcement policies; and the continuation of workforce analysis / career ladder development for refuge law enforcement officers through the use of standardized law enforcement position descriptions.
- Fully funding the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP), a 10-week program that provides highly trained, fully functional, positively motivated natural resource law enforcement officers on every refuge. All officers are required to attend the FTEP upon graduation from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). Graphic depicts Refuge Law Enforcement Officer Trends per Regional Interim Deployment Plans and other data.



Land Protection Planning (formerly Acquisition Planning)

NWRS guidance requires a Preliminary Project Proposal (PPP) be developed for acquisition proposals for new refuges and major expansions of existing refuges. The PPP provides an executive overview of the area's total long-term management and biological and ecological needs and considers how it fits into landscape level plans and the strategic growth of the NWRS. In broad terms, the detailed planning process includes:

- identifying the purpose or need for the action (defining objectives);
- establishing a series of alternatives that could in some significant degree solve the problem or meet the objectives;
- identifying the possible consequences or impacts of each alternative; and,

- determining if the proposed action complies with existing laws, policies, Executive Orders, and other mandates, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act, and contaminants surveys.

Public participation is an important part of the land acquisition planning process and there are several opportunities for public input. Upon completion of the detailed planning process, a decision is made whether or not to proceed with the land acquisition proposal. If the determination is to proceed, a decision document is produced. This document compiles all of the information collected and completed during the detailed land acquisition process, including: a core report or NEPA document; certification of compliance with laws, policies, etc.; supplemental reports; and the Land Protection Plan. Key FY 2004 Land Protection Planning programmatic accomplishments are summarized in a table at the end of the NWRS Operations section.

This activity could potentially contribute to virtually any of the new DOI Strategic Plan goals for Resource Protection, Recreation, and Serving Communities. The most direct contribution is toward the intermediate outcome of creating habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish within the Resource Protection goal.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs)

CCPs have been completed for 62 NWRS stations (National Wildlife Refuges/Wetland Management Districts). With the \$1,987,000 increase in funding received in FY 2004, the following NWRS stations are expected to complete their CCPs in 2004: Kern NWR Complex (CA), Nisqually NWR (WA), Ridgefield NWR Complex (WA), Sacramento River NWR (CA), San Joaquin River NWR (CA), Washington Maritime NWR Complex (WA), Cabeza Prieta NWR (AZ), Hagerman NWR (TX), Las Vegas NWR (NM), Maxwell NWR (NM), Muleshoe NWR (TX), Gullu NWR (NM), Detroit River International WR (MI), Illinois River NW&FR (IL), Mark Twain Complex (MO), Minnesota Valley NWR (MN), Sherburne NWR (MN), Squaw Creek NWR (MO), Bayou Cocodrie NWR (LA), Noxubee NWR (MS), Eastern Massachusetts Complex (MA), Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR (VA), Great Dismal Swamp NWR (VA), Petit Manan NWR (ME), Shawangunk Grasslands NWR (NY), Arapaho NWR (CO), Fish Springs NWR (UT), Lost Trail NWR (MT), and Medicine Lake NWR and WMD (MT).

Because it provides a comprehensive strategic look at all functions, this activity contributes to the new DOI Strategic goals for Resource Protection, Recreation, and Serving Communities.

Projected Number of Stations with Completed CCPs				
	2001	2002	2003	2004
Completed (cumulative)	34	52	62	114
Underway	Not Available	144	152	143
Initiated in FY	Not Available	28	43	31
CCPs required, but not started	Not Available	330	297	266
Total Due 2012 ¹	553	554	554	554

¹ Totals reflect 3 CCPs required to be completed by 2012, but not part of the NWRS at the signing of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.

Based on the refuge system’s FY 2005 PART review, the following actions will be taken in FY 2004 under the Serve People program element:

- Develop a process to measure the outcome goal of percent of refuges that provide compatible wildlife-dependent recreation programs where compatibility determinations indicate such programs can exist.

Justification of 2005 Program Changes

Refuge Operations		2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Protect Wildlife	\$(000)	56,419	-518
	FTE	617	-3
Improve Habitat	\$(000)	94,151	-5,673
	FTE	1,081	-
Serve People	\$(000)	138,287	+1,851
	FTE	1,282	+20
Total, Refuge Operations	\$(000)	288,857	-4,340
	FTE	2,980	+17

The FY 2005 budget request for Refuge Operations is \$288,857,000 and 2,980 FTE, a net program decrease of -\$4,340,000 and increase of +17 FTE from the 2004 enacted level. Portions of funding from Wildland Fire Management, Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, and Refuge Roads, under the Department of Transportation, contribute to Refuge Operations goals.

The NWRS has a number of initiatives underway to continue programmatic improvements and to accomplish tighter integration of the NWRS budget and performance. First, the Service is developing improved performance measures for this program as part of the Service's operational plan, which is expected to be completed by summer 2004. The operational plan will align all program activities and objectives with DOI's strategic plan mission components – Resource Protection, Recreation, and Serving Communities. In FY 2003, NWRS underwent a review using the Administration's Program and Assessment Rating Tool (PART). Recommendations from the PART review are being actively implemented, such as clearly define measurable outcome based performance goals to effectively and efficiently guide management of the program. Lastly, to improve integration of performance and budget, the Service is tracking costs through Activity Based Costing, which will provide Service leadership with valuable insight into work performed and efforts involved to determine what resources are needed for the Service to achieve its goals.

The President's 2004 budget request for NWRS Operations focuses on three program elements: Protect Wildlife, Improve Habitat, and Serve People. The following narrative provides details on the NWRS Operations increase request, which includes \$3,608,000 for increased law enforcement and \$2,246,000 for the Secretary's Cooperative Conservation Initiative. Decreases resulted from elimination of one-time funding and funding for activities deemed completed.

Protect Wildlife

This program element supports the Department's Resource Protection mission and the goal to sustain biological communities on DOI managed and influenced lands and waters.

Rodent Control – Alaska Maritime NWR (-\$444,000)

Funding received in FY 2004 for rodent control at Alaska Maritime NWR is being used to develop a plan for prevention and control of rat introductions, which will serve as a model for similar work elsewhere in the north Pacific. It will also be used to conduct NEPA analysis of rat programs, secure necessary rodenticide registrations and permits, and conduct outreach to a variety of stakeholders. All of the results of the project will be incorporated into ongoing operations; therefore, this funding is no longer required.

Improve Habitat

This program element supports the Department's Resource Protection mission and the goals to improve the health of watershed, landscapes and marine resources and create habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish.

Invasive Species – Strike Teams (+\$1,000,000): The FY 2005 request will build on current and planned FY 2004 activities. The Service is training and equipping volunteers and Friends groups to assist in early detection of invasive species infestations and plans to launch three invasive species "strike teams" in FY 2004 for rapid response to satellite infestations. Currently three strike teams are located in the Southwest, Columbia-Yellowstone-Missouri River focus area, and the Everglades. The NWRS will use FY 2005 requested funding to increase staffing and support of invasive species strike teams to address new invasive infestations. The Service will provide increased support to these efforts by launching two additional strike teams, one in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands and the other on the North Dakota refuges. The overall effort will center on topical and geographical focus areas identified by the National Invasive Species Council and the Department, as follows: Brown Tree Snake (Species specific Category I); Tamarisk (Species specific Category I); Leafy Spurge and Yellow Star Thistle (Species specific Category I); and, Early Detection and Rapid Response (Early Detection and Rapid Response Category IV). This request creates habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish through control and management of invasive species, including rapid response to infestations and integrated management techniques and programs implemented through partnerships on networked lands.

In FY 2004, the Service will closely study the National Park Service's experience with invasive strike teams, forging alliances with this sister agency and modeling our strike teams off its successes. The NWRS will utilize these alliances to promote cooperative anti-invasives efforts with the Park Service within selected geographic regions. Strike teams will also coordinate with the DOI Office of Wildland Fire Coordination, the Boise Interagency Fire Center, and individual refuges to link prescribed burn activities and invasives control efforts where feasible.

The Service will provide the existing and new teams:

- (1) staff training, including fire training;
- (2) equipment for their varied tasks;
- (3) the capability for assessment and monitoring of rapid response and follow-up efforts to reach full control; and,
- (4) implementation of evaluation techniques.

Invasive Species – Willapa Bay NWR *Spartina* Grass (- \$296,303): Funding for this program is eliminated to offset higher priority budget needs identified elsewhere in the President's request. In FY 2004, Congress provided \$296,303 for Willapa NWR to control non-native cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) at this Pacific Coast estuary. *Spartina* eliminates the value of intertidal areas for wildlife, the aquaculture industry, and recreational pursuits because it chokes the bay with dense, rapidly growing stands of vegetation. In FY 2005, the President's budget invests additional resources toward Invasive Species strike teams in lieu of traditional efforts such as the invasive species control project at Willapa NWR. The decrease will eliminate clean up operations on previously treated *Spartina* and prevent the Service from treating additional acres of *Spartina* in FY 2005.

Invasive Species – Control & Management (-\$583,697): Base funding for invasive species is distributed to refuges to fund their highest priority projects for controlling invasive species control. Projects reflect on-the-ground efforts to control a wide-range of invasive animals and plants that degrade native wildlife habitat and plant communities. This reduction will be spread across refuges

nationwide and will include completed RONS projects but not those dealing with NISC priorities or projects with State and local partners. For example, funding decreases may focus on areas where a Strike Team can more efficiently control incipient populations in a geographically integrated manner than individual refuges with specific RONS projects tied only to that refuge. Therefore projects that emphasize control and management of existing invasive species within the geographic areas covered by Rapid Response Strike Teams (North Dakota, Montana, Hawaii and the Pacific islands, and areas of the Southwest) will not be funded, as the requested increase for Strike Teams will help to address control and management of invasive species in these areas.

Improve Habitat – Loxahatchee NWR (-\$5,000,000)

The FY 2004 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act directed the National Park Service to transfer \$5,000,000 of unobligated funds related to the acquisition of lands or water in the State of Florida to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's resource management account for water quality monitoring and invasive exotic plants eradication at A.R.M. Loxahatchee NWR (FL). As directed by the committee, the refuge will use the funding to treat significant additional acreage to control melaleuca and lygodium (\$4,000,000), collect water quality data, conduct transect monitoring, and develop a water quality model (\$1,000,000) for the refuge. This funding is available until expended; therefore additional funding is not required at this time.

Improve Habitat – General Operations (-\$663,000)

The Service requests a reduction of \$663,000 for general program activities within the Improve Habitat program element. Funding will no longer be necessary for completed project activities: removal of dead or dying timber, wetland restoration, or grassland reseeding. Certain activities, such as data gathering, inventories, studies and surveys, are used to establish baselines and assist in making management decisions and developing long-term habitat management plans. In FY 2004, NWRS is undergoing a review of its inventory and monitoring activities by scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey – Biological Resource Division. Results of the study will be incorporated into current and future program revisions. Until the completion of the review, the Service will reduce data collection cost by incorporating these current ongoing activities into operations.

Serve People

This program element supports the Department's Recreation Mission and goal to provide for a quality recreation experience, including access and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources on DOI managed and partnered lands and waters.

NWRS Law Enforcement

In FY 2005, the NWRS law enforcement program will continue compliance with the Secretary's directive to implement law enforcement reforms and address issues identified by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Inspector General. The NWRS is enhancing the quality and professionalism of the law enforcement program with the Zone System and Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP), and by updating communications, reporting systems, weapons, and training standards. Building a credible and highly professional law enforcement program to meet this century's demands for visitor and resource protection is our priority.

The NWRS is transitioning to a smaller dual-function officer workforce and increasing the number of full-time officers. Dual-function officers have a primary job function such as refuge manager or biologist but spend between 25 percent and 50 percent of their duty time on law enforcement functions.

This transition model supports the Strategic Management of Human Capital component of the President's Management Agenda by linking human capital strategies to organizational mission,

vision, core values, goals and objectives. Development of a skilled, knowledgeable, diverse, and high-performing workforce that adapts quickly in size, composition, and competencies to accommodate changes in mission meets the current and emerging needs of the government and its citizens. Returning dual-function officers to their primary duties combined with eliminating the associated need for law enforcement training is an effective and efficient use of that workforce.

This program directly supports DOI’s strategy plan mission of Serving Communities and the goal to protect lives, resources, and property through improving public safety and security and protecting public resources from damage.

Zone System (+\$1,000,000)

Staff at refuge stations will receive high-quality oversight, professional law enforcement guidance and assistance, and technical expertise from Law Enforcement Zone Officers who are seasoned officers. Zone Officers assist refuge managers in developing individual Law Enforcement Plans for the stations and complexes within their zone, and conduct periodic law enforcement reviews and inspections. These positions are a critical part of both the Zone System and the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP) for the NWRS. The Zone System was initiated in FY 2003 with the hiring of 23 Zone Officers; eight more were added with FY 2004 funding. The FY 2005 request will fund eight Zone Officers at the following NWRs and result in filling 39 of 59 positions planned for implementation of the Zone System.

FY 2005 NWRS Zone Officer Locations

Region	State	Location
1	CA	CNO, Sacramento
2	TX	Balcones Canyonlands NWR
3	IA	Desoto NWR
4	AL	Mountain Longleaf NWR
4	MS	Central Mississippi NWRC
5	NY	Montezuma NWR
6	UT	Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge
7	AK	Fairbanks

Incident Management and Reporting System (+\$1,000,000)

The Secretary has mandated implementation of standardized reporting systems for all Department law enforcement programs. The NWRS is currently developing its implementation of the Incident Management, Analysis, and Reporting System (IMARS). The requested funding will complete the design and implementation phase, procure equipment, fund IT support agreements, and fund two staff positions to support and manage the IMARS-NWRS automated case management system.

Border Area Law Enforcement (+\$900,000)

The NWRS manages significant areas along the Southwest and Southeast borders, where tremendous resource damage occurs and public safety is compromised by the lack of law enforcement personnel. The requested funding will enable the Service to hire seven law enforcement officers to be placed at refuges with essential staffing needs along our Southwest borders at San Diego NWR (CA), Buenos Aires NWR (AZ), and Cabeza Prieta NWR (AZ); and Southeast borders at Sandy Point NWR (VI) and Pine Island NWR (FL). DOI Office of Law Enforcement and Security guidance reiterates the need to develop a comprehensive, uniform law enforcement regimen at the Department’s border locations. These officers will also increase the law enforcement capacity necessary to coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security officers (Border Patrol) and other partners, who have primary responsibility for apprehending illegal immigrants and smugglers.

Law Enforcement Officers (+\$254,000)

The Service proposes to continue to increase the number of full-time officers and strategically place a smaller collateral duty workforce. The number of collateral duty officers has dropped from 541 in FY 2000 to 355 in FY 2003. The number of full-time officers has increased from 62 in FY 2000 to 158 in FY 2003. Additional fiscal resources allow the Service to continue this strategy of hiring full-time officers to compensate for the loss of law enforcement capability due to reduction of collateral duty officers. The request will fund two additional law enforcement officers who will be placed at refuges with high priorities for law enforcement needs: Sand Lake NWR (SD) and Horicon NWR (WI).

New and Expanded Refuges – Vieques NWR (+\$454,000)

The transfer of an additional 14,500 acres to Vieques NWR, effective May 1, 2003, has increased requirements for staff at the Caribbean Island Refuge Complex. Severe civil disobedience erupted after the transfer and created damage to federal property and risk of employee and civilian safety. Local intelligence indicates various subversive groups will continue activities against the federal government. Additional law enforcement capabilities are required to address the potential threat. Visitor safety is a concern because there is an expectation by the local community that public uses allowed by the Navy will continue. This request will fund three additional full-time refuge law enforcement officers, complement the increase requested under Law Enforcement, and address the Department's Office of Law Enforcement and Security's guidance to coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security and other partners on border issues, including Caribbean islands.

Challenge Cost Share/Cooperative Conservation Initiative (+\$2,246,000)

The Service recognizes the value of cooperative approaches to conservation and supports the Secretary's Four Cs philosophy - conservation through consultation, cooperation and communication. This request for an additional \$2.246 million for the Challenge Cost Share program will meet expanded opportunities for natural resource restoration partnerships as part of the Secretary's Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI). With additional funding, refuges and partners will build on the current program and pursue results-oriented conservation projects consistent with the CCI criteria to promote citizen stewardship through cost-shared projects that restore or conserve natural resources. Further, partners will use innovative means or practices to address some of the NWRS's highest conservation priorities, including restoring native grasslands, invasive species control, riparian restoration and innovative projects at Land Management and Research Demonstration Areas. The NWRS has developed additional initiatives that provide expanded opportunities for natural resource restoration partnerships. Recent projects leveraged more than \$1.6 for every \$1 in federal funding.

Visitor Facility Enhancements (-\$1,975,000)

Visitor Facility Enhancements are small construction projects that get people outdoors rather than inside more costly visitor centers, enjoying a quality wildlife-dependent recreational experience, per the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997. Docks, kiosks, piers, observation towers, and trails were built to accommodate the growing numbers of refuge visitors with the \$1.975 million provided in FY2004. All projects will be completed successfully in FY 2004.

Visitor Services - General Operations (-\$1,876,000)

General operations fund visitor services programs that provide quality wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities to the millions that visit national wildlife refuges and operations that link refuges to local communities, such as the Volunteer Program and the Friends movement. This request reduces Volunteers and Friends Programs by \$337,000 and programs that provide the public wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities by \$1,500,000.

New volunteer recruitment will be eliminated, reducing the need and associated funding for volunteer training, supplies, awards and sustained group partnerships. Mentor programs for the 250 nonprofit Friends groups and participation in regional Friends workshops will be reduced. The grant program administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for partnerships with Friends groups for habitat restoration, visitor services, and community involvement will be reduced. NWRS funding support for the National Friends Conference will be discontinued.

Wildlife-dependent recreation in the form of education and interpretation programs, hunting and fishing programs, and wildlife observation and photography will be reduced. Activities such as local schools and community programs, recreation facilities such as public trails, and staff time dedicated to administering recreation programs will be curtailed on refuges with the least visitation, allowing remaining funding to be directed to those with higher visitation.

Federal Vehicle Fleet (-\$356,000)

According to recent Office of Management and Budget statistics, among civilian agencies Interior has the third largest motor vehicle fleet. Vehicles are used by Interior employees and authorized volunteers to support multiple mission activities, many in remote areas. In some locations, government vehicles are provided to support service contractors. Over 4,000 vehicles are used seasonally (i.e., only in winter or summer), or for special purposes, such as law enforcement or fire fighting. Nearly 90 percent of the fleet vehicles are trucks, vans, buses and ambulances, and 10 percent are sedans and station wagons.

In 2004, the Department and the bureaus began a collaborative effort to improve the management of vehicle fleets including examination of the infrastructure for fleet management within each bureau, the identification of best practices that could be used Department-wide, and the development of action plans to improve fleet management and realize cost savings.

In anticipation of improved fleet management and the resultant savings, the 2005 budget proposes a reduction in funding. To achieve these savings, the bureau will undertake fleet reductions and cost-savings by: (1) reducing the size of the fleet; (2) employ energy saving practices by fleet operators; (3) acquire more efficient vehicles; (4) acquire the minimum sized vehicle to accomplish the mission; (5) dispose of underutilized vehicles; (6) freeze the acquisition of vehicles from the General Services Administration (GSA) Excess Vehicle program; and (7) explore and develop the use of inter-bureau motor pools.

2002 to 2005 Performance Summary (provided at the end of Refuge Maintenance)

LAND PROTECTION PLANNING PROGRAM FY 2003					
	State	Approved Action	FY 03 ¹	Study Area ²	Approved Acreage ³
Region 1					
Coachella Valley NWR+	CA	Expansion	draft	4,860	3,709
Columbia NWR (Eagle Lakes Unit)+	WA	Expansion	dropped	7,000	29,597
Ellicott Slough NWR+	CA	Expansion	draft	312	170
El Toro NWR+	CA	New	draft	1000	0
Grasslands WMA/Merced NWR+	CA	Expansion	draft	49,300	84,550
Hanalei NWR+	HI	Expansion	draft	6	918
Humboldt Bay NWR+	CA	Expansion	draft	876	9,554
James Campbell NWR+	HI	Expansion	draft	160	321
New River NWR+	OR	New	PPPInWO	5900	0
Marin Baylands NWR#	CA	New	dropped	31,500	0
Moapa Valley NWR+	NV	Expansion	draft	1,542	113
Nisqually NWR+	WA	Expansion	draft	5,300	9,766
North Delta NWR+	CA	New	draft	47,900	0
San Pablo Bay NWR (Mare Island Unit)+	CA	Expan./Trans.	draft	2,689	21,754
Seal Beach NWR#	CA	Expansion	draft	92	911
Tulare Basin WMA+	CA	New	draft	16,000	0
Turnbull NWR+	WA	Expansion	draft	12,000	20,726
William L. Finley NWR (Coyote Creek addition)+	OR	Expansion	PPPInWO	6 - 10,000	5673
Misc small additions (<40 acres or 10% ARB)	CA,ID,WA	Expansion	*completed	1,727	191,871
Region 2					
Aransas NWR+	TX	Expansion	draft	8,000	110,469
Buenos Aires NWR +	AZ	Expansion	final/dd	4,300	125,534
North Neches NWR +	TX	New	final/dd	25,000	0
Ozark Plateau NWR +	OK	Expansion	final/dd	12,000	3,000
Texas Chenier Plain Complex EIS +	TX	Expansion	final/dd	137,500	102,626
Willcox Playa NWR +	AZ	New	final/dd	28,000	0
Region 3					
Big Muddy NF&WR (Unit delineation is ongoing but will not be included in this list in the future) #	MO	Unit Delin.	dd	0	60,000
Crab Orchard NWR+	IL	Expansion	final/dd	5,000	43,889
Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge+	MI	Unit Delin.	final/dd	0	5,000
Glacial Ridge NWR+	MN	New	final/dd	35,756	0
Grand Kankakee Marsh NWR+	IL/IN	Unit Delin.	dd	0	30,000
Green Bay Islands NWR+	WI/MI	Transfer	final/dd	4,133	2
Lost Mound addition to Upper Mississippi NW&FR *	IL	Transfer	dd	9,404	9,404
Marais Des Cygnes+	MO	Expansion	dd	11,145	9,300
Mark Twain NWR Complex (Port Louisa, Two Rivers, Great River, Middle Mississippi)+	IA/IL/MO	Expansion	final/dd	60,000	49,270
Mingo NWR (plus Pilot Knob, Ozark Cave Fish NWRs)+	MO	Expansion	final/dd	4,100	21,747
Minnesota Valley NWR+	MN	Expansion	final/dd	50,000	14,000
Necedah NWR+	WI	Expansion	final/dd	21,000	46,696
NorthernTallgrass Prairie NWR (Unit delineation is ongoing but will not be included in this list in the future) #	IA/MN	delin.& NEPA	dd	0	77,000
Squaw Creek NWR#	MO	Expansion	final/dd	16,700	7,413
Miscellaneous Small Projects (additions, exchanges)+	Region	Exp/Exchg	dd	60	0

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

Region 4					
Currituck NWR#	NC	Expansion	draft	440	20,214
Ding Darling NWR*	FL	Expansion	dd	124,000	8,099
Grand Bay NWR#	MS	Expansion	draft	4,800	17,742
Mackay Island NWR#	NC	Expansion	draft	920	8,000
Mandalay NWR*	LA	Expansion	final/dd	3	8,865
Mattamuskeet NWR#	NC	Expansion	draft	85,600	49,555
Pocosin Lakes NWR#	NC	Expansion	draft	156,200	114,736
Rio Encantado NWR#	PR	New	draft	20,000	0
Roanoke River NWR#	NC	Expansion	draft	44,600	36,024
Savannah NWR#	SC/GA	Expansion	draft	1,200	25,131
Southern Pines NWR#	NC	New	draft	32,000	0
Swanquarter NWR#	NC	Expansion	draft	37,711	42,530
Region 5					
Eastern Shore of VA NWR +	VA	Expansion	draft	6,500	1,431
Lake Umbagog +	NH/ME	Expansion	draft	50,000	19,686
Ohio River Islands NWR +	WV/PA/KY	Expansion	draft	5,500	5,758
Petit Manan NWR Complex +	ME	Expansion	draft	2,314	8,428
Rachel Carson NWR +	ME	Expansion	draft	15,000	7,817
Nantucket	MA	Expansion	draft	1,206	40
Wallkill River NWR	NJ	Expansion	draft	16,450	8,167
Region 6					
Baca NWR +	CO	New	final/dd	92,500	0
Charles M. Russell NWR (cabin exchange) +	MT	Exchange	draft	25,000	1,100,000
Ft. Niobrara NWR (State Land Exchange) *	NE	Exchange	dd	440	72,598
Baca NWR *	CO	New	final/dd	92,500	0
Region 7					
Adak NWR +	AK	Exchange	dd	47,150	
Alaska Peninsula NWR *	AK	LPP4	dd	1,395,000	4,359,000
Becharof NWR *	AK	LPP4	dd	1,171,000	1,171,000
Kanuti NWR *	AK	LPP4	dd	1,635,000	1,635,000
Kodiak/Koniag NWR +	AK	Exchange	dd	189	0
Newtok +	AK	Exchange	dd	21,427	0
Nikoiski +	AK	Exchange	dd		0
Nima +	AK	Exchange	dd	23,636	0
Shumagin +	AK	Exchange	dd	18,000	0
Sitkanik Island +	AK	Exchange	dd	1,653	0
Women's Bay +	AK	Exchange	dd	26.45	0
Yukon Delta NWR +	AK	LPP4	dd	26,291,000	26,291,000
Notes					
¹ FY Status Defined draft - PPP approved, planning underway final - planning mostly complete, sur naming dd - plan approved by Regional Director, forwarded to WO			FY03 Project Current Status " + Project Ongoing" # Project Dropped * Project Completed		
² Area being studied for inclusion in expansion/new refuge					
³ Acreage in existing approved boundary. Not applicable for Exchanges due no increase in refuge size.					
⁴ In Alaska, LPPs are completed for the entire refuge; all inholdings are evaluated; not all will be pursued.					

LAND PROTECTION PLANNING PROGRAM FY 2004					
	State	Approved Action	FY 04 ¹	Study Area ²	Approved Acreage ³
Region 1					
Coachella Valley NWR+	CA	Expansion	on hold	4,860	3,709
El Toro NWR+	CA	New	on hold	1000	0
Ellicott Slough NWR+	CA	Expansion	draft	312	170
Grasslands WMA/Merced NWR+	CA	Expansion	draft	49,300	84,550
Hanalei NWR*	HI	Expansion	dd	6	918
James Campbell NWR+	HI	Expansion	draft	160	321
Kilauea Point+	HI	Expansion	draft	40	206
Moapa Valley NWR+	NV	Expansion	draft	1,542	113
New River NWR+	OR	New	PPPInWO	5900	0
Nisqually NWR*	WA	Expansion	final/dd	5,300	9,766
North Delta NWR+	CA	New	on hold	47,900	0
San Pablo Bay NWR (Mare Island Unit)+	CA	Expan./Trans.	on hold	2,689	21,754
Seal Beach NWR#	CA	Expansion	on hold	92	911
Tulare Basin WMA+	CA	New	draft	16,000	0
Turnbull NWR*	WA	Expansion	final/dd	12,000	20,726
Wapato Lake NWR+	OR	New	final/dd	6,408	0
William L. Finley NWR (Coyote Creek addition)+	OR	Expansion	PPPInWO	6-10,000	5673
Misc small additions (<40 acres or 10% ARB)	CA/NV	Expansion	draft-dd	unknown	unknown
Region 2					
North Neches NWR +	TX	New	final/dd	25,000	0
Ozark Plateau NWR +	OK	Expansion	final/dd	12,000	3,000
Texas Chenier Plain Complex EIS+	TX	Expansion	final/dd	137,500	102,626
Willcox Playa NWR (overlay / Army withdrawn lands)+	AZ	New	final/dd	28,000	0
Region 3					
Crab Orchard NWR (expansion reduced)+	IL	Expansion	final/dd	4,242	43,889
Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge+	MI	Unit Delin.	final/dd	0	5000
Driftless Area NWR+	WI/IA	Expansion	dd	6,220	777
Glacial Ridge NWR (Migratory Bird Funding)+	MN	New	dd	35,756	35,756
Grand Kankakee Marsh NWR+	IL/IN	Unit Delin.	dd	0	30,000
Green Bay Islands NWR+	WI/MI	Transfer	final/dd	4,133	2
Marais Des Cygnes+	MO	Expansion	dd	11,145	9,300
Mark Twain NWR Complex (Port Louisa, Two Rivers, Great River, Middle Mississippi) (expansion reduced)+	IA/IL/MO	Expansion	final/dd	27,659	49,270
Mingo NWR+	MO	Expansion	final/dd	4,100	21,747
Minnesota Valley NWR (expansion reduced)+	MN	Expansion	final/dd	10,767	14,000
Necedah NWR (expansion reduced)+	WI	Expansion	dd	14,684	43,696
Miscellaneous Small Projects (additions, exchanges)+	Region	Exp/Exchg	dd	0	0
Region 4					
Cahaba River NWR+	AL	Expansion	final/dd	302	3,333
Cape Romain NWR+	SC	Expansion	draft	1,499	60,866
Chassahowitza NWR+	FL	Expansion	draft	30	36,860
Clark's River NWR+	KY	Expansion	draft	760	16,051
Crystal River NWR+	FL	Expansion	draft	60	8,395
Grand Bay NWR*	AL/MS	Expansion	final/dd	665	17,742

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

Hillside NWR*	MS	Expansion	final/dd	1,603	24,338
Hobe Sound NWR+	FL	Expansion	ppp	302	1,160
Lake Woodruff NWR+	FL	Expansion	draft	2	24,751
Mississippi Sand Hill Crane NWR*	MS	Expansion	final/dd	170	22,211
Morgan Brake NWR*	MS	Expansion	final/dd	1,152	12,089
Panther Swamp NWR*	MS	Expansion	final/dd	4,710	41,752
St. Catherine Creek NWR*	MS	Expansion	final/dd	2	35,732
Tennessee NWR+	TN	Expansion	final/dd	5	50,200
Theodore Roosevelt NWR+	MS	New	draft	6,600	0
Yazoo NWR+	MS	Expansion	final/dd	2,847	29,000
Region 5					
Blackwater NWR+	MD	Expansion	draft	17,500	29,389
Blackwater NWR (Nanticoke River Division)+	MD	Expansion	draft	16,000	29,389
Eastern Shore of VA NWR *	VA	Expansion	final	6,500	1,431
Erie NWR+	NY	Expansion	draft	7,500	10,903
Lake Umbagog +	NH/ME	Expansion	draft	50,000	19,686
Nantucket +	MA	Expansion	draft	1,206	40
Ohio River Islands NWR +	WV/PA/KY	Expansion	draft	5,500	5,758
Petit Manan NWR Complex +	ME	Expansion	final	2,314	8,428
Rachel Carson NWR +	ME	Expansion	draft	15,000	7,817
Wallkill River NWR+	NJ	Expansion	draft	16,450	8,167
Region 6					
Charles M. Russell NWR (Legislative cabin exchange) +	MT	Exchange	draft	25,000	1,100,000
Montana Front Range Easement Program+	MT	New CCP		170,000	0
Medicine Lake NWRC+	MT	Expansion		8,400	31,484
War Horse NWR+	MT	Exchange	draft	198	3,192
Karl Mundt NWR (easement)+	SD	Expansion		2,000	1,043
Region 7					
Adak NWR+	AK	Exchange	dd	47,150	
Alaska Maritime NWR+	AK	LPP4	dd	6,079,566	6,079,566
Beaver +	AK	Exchange	dd	30,000	0
CIRI+	AK	Exchange	dd	3,000	0
Doyon NWR+	AK	Exchange	dd	180,000	0
Homer+	AK	Exchange	dd	3	0
Kodiak/Koniag NWR+	AK	Exchange	dd	189	0
Koniag+	AK	Exchange	dd	275	0
Newby+	AK	Exchange	dd	1	0
Newtok+	AK	Exchange	dd	12,101	0
Nightmute+	AK	Exchange	dd	5	0
Nikoski+	AK	Exchange	dd	341	0
Nima+	AK	Exchange	dd	37,000	0
Shumagin+	AK	Exchange	dd	18,000	0
Sitkanik Island+	AK	Exchange	dd	1,653	0
Steven's Village +	AK	Exchange	dd	Undetermined	0
Women's Bay+	AK	Exchange	dd	26.45	0
Yukon Delta NWR+	AK	LPP4	dd	26,291,000	26,291,000
Notes					
¹ FY Status Defined			FY03 Project Current Status		
draft - PPP approved, planning underway			" + Project Ongoing"		
final - planning mostly complete, surmounting			# Project Dropped		
dd - plan approved by Regional Director, forwarded to WO			* Project Completed		
² Area being studied for inclusion in expansion/new refuge					
³ Acreage in existing approved boundary. Not applicable for Exchanges due no increase in refuge size.					
⁴ In Alaska, LPPs are completed for the entire refuge; all inholdings are evaluated; not all will be pursued.					

FY 2005 NWRS Border Area Law Enforcement RONS List			
R1	126	San Diego NWR	Hire additional law enforcement officer to address the increasing illegal immigration problem on the refuge. The officer will provide additional protection for refuge visitors and natural resources on the refuge and will protect critical habitat for several federally listed plants and animals that occur nowhere else within the Vernal Pools Unit's scattered acreage that is within urban areas. Project will provide protection from off-road vehicles, dumping, and general trespass. Southern California has lost approximately 95 percent of its vernal pool habitats thus increasing the importance of those pools that remain. MEASURES: 150 incidents will be documented; 100 other public contacts will be made.
R2	133	Buenos Aires NWR	Hire additional law enforcement officer to assist with the increasing undocumented alien problem on the refuge. The refuge sits on the Mexican border and experiences up to 300 illegal immigrant crossings daily. The abandoned vehicles, trash, human waste and drug incidents are at unmanageable levels with the current staff. There are insufficient enforcement resources to handle both the undocumented alien problem and enforce laws related to the hunt program and other public use programs. The additional staff will help ensure a safer place for visitors and employees and reduce the volume of drugs coming into the country. MEASURES: 30 incidents will be documented; 200 other public contacts will be made; 20 cases will be assisted; 10 NOVs and State citations will be issued; 10 written warnings will be issued
R2	133	Buenos Aires NWR	Hire additional law enforcement officer to assist with the increasing undocumented alien problem on the refuge. The refuge sits on the Mexican border and experiences up to 300 illegal immigrant crossings daily. The abandoned vehicles, trash, human waste and drug incidents are at unmanageable levels with the current staff. There are insufficient enforcement resources to handle both the undocumented alien problem and enforce laws related to the hunt program and other public use programs. The additional staff will help ensure a safer place for visitors and employees and reduce the volume of drugs coming into the country. MEASURES: 30 incidents will be documented; 200 other public contacts will be made; 20 cases will be assisted; 10 NOVs and State citations will be issued; 10 written warnings will be issued.
R2	133	Cabeza Prieta NWR	Hire a full-time law enforcement officer to protect refuge visitors and natural resources from increased traffic by Undocumented Aliens (UDA) crossing into the US from Mexico. In recent years there has been a marked increase in the amount of UDA traffic through the Refuge. Currently, 1,000 to 2,000 UDA cross the refuge monthly, both on foot and in vehicle, and several die on the refuge every year. In addition, most of the traffic occurs through Wilderness areas and habitat for endangered species, such as the Sonoran pronghorn. This traffic has resulted in massive damage to the environment through the creation of roads, disturbance to wildlife, litter, and habitat destruction. An additional law enforcement officer would help curtail UDA traffic, thereby reducing impacts to wildlife and habitat and assisting in emergency rescues of stranded UDA. MEASURES: 100 incidents will be documented; 2000 other public contacts will be made; 20 cases will be assisted; 180 NOVs and State citations will be issued; 10 written warnings will be issued.
R2	133	Cabeza Prieta NWR	Hire a full-time law enforcement officer to protect refuge visitors and natural resources from increased traffic by Undocumented Aliens (UDA) crossing into the US from Mexico. In recent years there has been a marked increase in the amount of UDA traffic through the Refuge. Currently, 1,000 to 2,000 UDA cross the refuge monthly, both on foot and in vehicle, and several die on the refuge every year. In addition, most of the traffic occurs through Wilderness areas and habitat for endangered species, such as the Sonoran pronghorn. This traffic has resulted in massive damage to the environment through the creation of roads, disturbance to wildlife, litter, and habitat destruction. An additional law enforcement officer would help curtail UDA traffic, thereby reducing impacts to wildlife and habitat and assisting in emergency rescues of stranded UDA. MEASURES: 100 incidents will be documented; 2000 other public contacts will be made; 20 cases will be assisted; 180 NOVs and State citations will be issued; 10 written warnings will be issued.

R4	121	Pine Island NWR	Provide a refuge officer to increase law enforcement presence on refuge coastal waters and in Manatee conservation zones (i.e. regulated boat speed zones). A refuge officer will increase boat patrols for endangered species protection, archeological resource monitoring and protection, migratory bird monitoring and protection, boating safety, enforcement of fishing laws, and to address illegal smuggling activities on the refuge. The one-way distance from the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR to its remotest satellite refuge (Island Bay NWR) is 23 nautical miles. The remoteness of these islands makes the wildlife and archeological resources easy prey for violators and very conducive for smuggling activities. This position will expand law enforcement coverage to satellite refuges and will protect manatees in "conservation zones." MEASURES: 100 incidents will be documented; 400 other public contacts will be made;30 cases will be assisted.
R4	121	Sandy Point NWR	Provide a full-time refuge law enforcement officer to enhance resource and visitor protection on the refuge. The refuge, located at the southwest corner of St. Croix, has the largest beach area in the Virgin Islands along with the largest population of nesting leatherback sea turtles under U.S. jurisdiction. Also, the refuge provides habitat for over 100 migratory bird species and 225 plant species. With the large, beautiful subtropical beach and many wildlife-viewing opportunities, refuge visitation (11,000+ annually) has increased dramatically over the past several years. Currently, the refuge has two collateral-duty law enforcement officers, providing only reactive visitor safety and resource protection. A full-time law enforcement officer is needed to provide a proactive law enforcement program. An increase in routine patrols, visitor contacts, and coordinated surveillance (both day and night) for criminal activity, including smuggling activities, will enhance Visitor safety and resource protection. MEASURES: 50 incidents will be documented; 500 other public contacts will be made; 10 cases will be assisted.
	900	Total NWRS Border Area Law Enforcement	

FY 2005 NWRS Law Enforcement Officers RONS List

R3	124	Horicon NWR	Provide a full-time law enforcement officer to increase resource protection on five refuges by conducting preventive and proactive enforcement. Horicon Refuge is within an hour's drive of Madison and Milwaukee and attracts more than 400,000 visitors a year. Urban problems such as vandalism and drug dealing on the refuge have increased in recent years. Trespass into closed areas on Horicon and satellite refuges is also an increasing problem, especially since the satellite refuges are closed to all public use except during a special deer hunt. These closed areas are important for migratory bird protection since Horicon NWR is a Wetland of International Importance and a Globally Important Bird Area. MEASURES: 100 incidents will be documented ,1000, other public contacts will be made,10 cases will be assisted,20 NOV's and State citations will be issued 5 written warnings will be issued
R6	130	Sand Lake NWR	Hire a full-time law enforcement officer to expand the existing law enforcement program to provide better short and long-term resource protection. The expansion of the complex's habitat protection programs and the transition to permanent law enforcement officers has resulted in the need to monitor and detect violations beyond the abilities of the dual function officers on staff. The main-stem Missouri River Ecosystem made the acquisition of wetland and grassland easements a priority strategy to deal with the threats to native prairie grasslands and wetland habitats in the Dakotas. The project will monitor easements for compliance, inform new landowners of easement restrictions, and also include the enforcement of migratory bird and special refuge regulations and provide visitor protection for the growing Sand Lake public use program. MEASURES: 60 incidents will be documented; 1000 other public contacts will be made; 40 cases will be assisted.
	254	Total NWRS Law Enforcement Officers – Essential Staff	

FY 2005 NWRS New and Expanded RONS List			
R4	152	Vieques NWR	Provide a full-time refuge law enforcement officer for Vieques NWR. This position will establish a law enforcement presence on the refuge to ensure adherence to refuge rules and regulations. The refuge has recently acquired an extra 15,000 acres and violations (poaching, theft, trespassing, vandalism, etc.) are undocumented due to the lack of law enforcement presence. Without this position, violations will multiply, the safety of the visiting public will be compromised, and cost to the resource and to refuge operations will increase drastically. MEASURES: 35 incidents will be documented; 75 other public contacts will be made; 10 cases will be assisted; 50 NOVs and State citations will be issued; 35 written warnings will be issued.
R4	151	Vieques NWR	Provide a full-time refuge law enforcement officer for Vieques NWR. This position will establish a law enforcement presence on the refuge to ensure adherence to refuge rules and regulations. The refuge has recently acquired an extra 15,000 acres and violations (poaching, theft, trespassing, vandalism, etc.) are undocumented due to the lack of law enforcement presence. Without this position, violations will multiply, the safety of the visiting public will be compromised, and cost to the resource and to refuge operations will increase drastically. MEASURES: 35 incidents will be documented; 75 other public contacts will be made; 10 cases will be assisted; 50 NOVs and State citations will be issued; 35 written warnings will be issued.
R4	151	Vieques NWR	Provide a full-time refuge law enforcement officer for Vieques NWR. This position will establish a law enforcement presence on the refuge to ensure adherence to refuge rules and regulations. The refuge has recently acquired an extra 15,000 acres and violations (poaching, theft, trespassing, vandalism, etc.) are undocumented due to the lack of law enforcement presence. Without this position, violations will multiply, the safety of the visiting public will be compromised, and cost to the resource and to refuge operations will increase drastically. MEASURES: 35 incidents will be documented; 75 other public contacts will be made; 10 cases will be assisted; 50 NOVs and State citations will be issued; 35 written warnings will be issued.
	454	Total NWRS Law Enforcement Officers – New and Expanded	