Planning Update

Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update #1

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Preparing New Management Plan

You Are Invited to Help Plan the Future of Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge

This is the first in a series of Planning Updates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to keep you informed and involved in planning efforts for the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge).

This Planning Update provides a brief background of the Refuge, describes the planning and public involvement process, and lets you know how you can become involved (See Page 4). We will be sending these planning updates periodically to local landowners, government agencies, private organizations, and others who express interest.

Refuge Purpose

The purpose of the Refuge is to preserve, restore, and enhance riparian (waterside) habitat for threatened and endangered species, songbirds, waterfowl, other migratory birds, anadromous (migratory) fish, resident riparian wildlife, and plants.

The unique plants and watershed of the riparian community supports a diversity and abundance of wildlife, which makes it one of the most important wildlife habitats in California and North America.

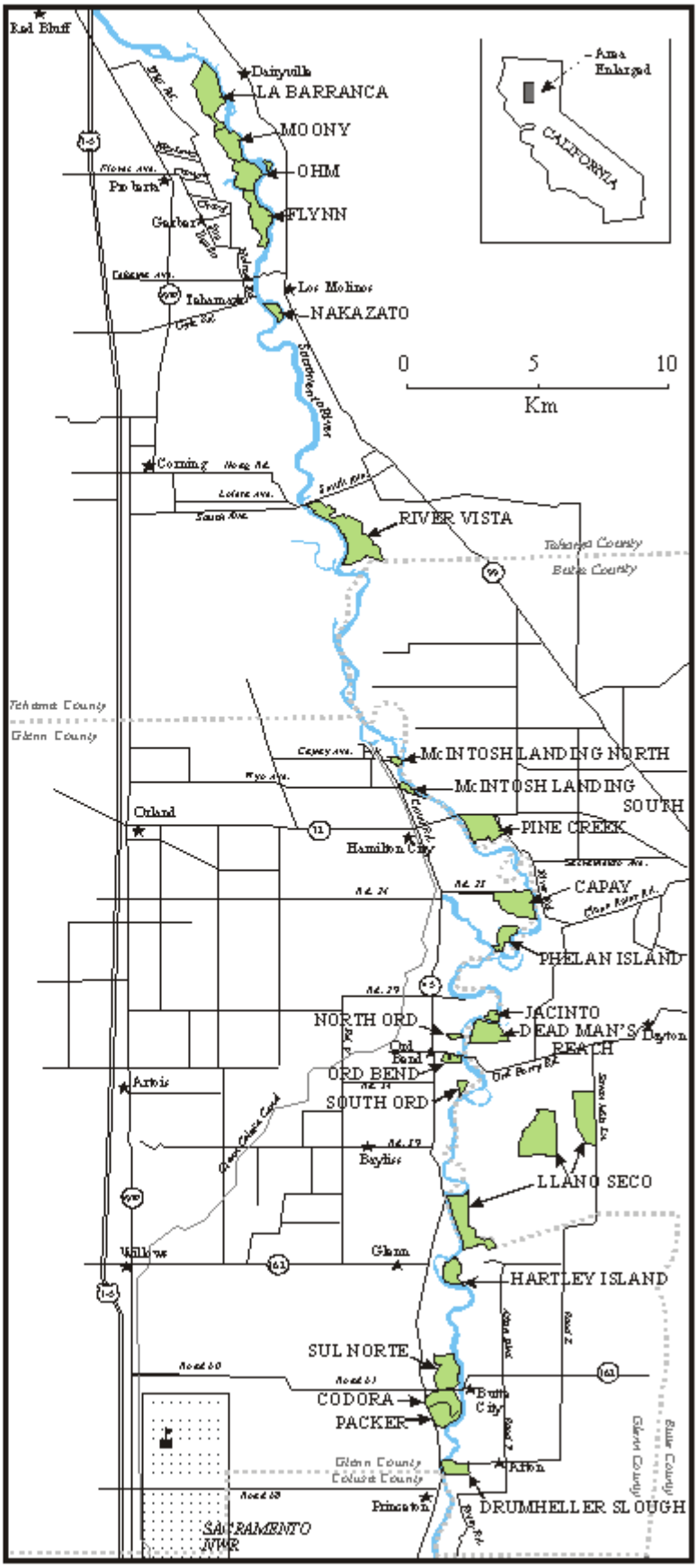
The Refuge Location

The Refuge is part of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex, consisting of six refuges and three wildlife management areas, within the Sacramento Valley. The Refuge is composed of 22 units along a 77-river mile stretch of the Sacramento River between the cities of Red Bluff and Princeton. The Refuge includes, as part of its management, the Llano Seco SI and SII Sanctuaries.

River Slough - USFWS

The Refuge was established in 1989 with a goal of conserving 18,000 acres. As of May 2001, the Refuge consists of 9,423 acres of riparian, wetland, and upland habitat; intensively managed walnut, almond, and prune orchards; and row crops acquired in Tehama, Butte, and Glenn counties. Plus 1,732 acres of Llano Seco Sanctuaries I & II.

SACRAMENTO RIVER
NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE



Refuge Unit

Refuge Map (09 May 2001)

The Sacramento River

Historically, 500,000 acres of riparian forests occupied the Sacramento River flood plain, with valley oak woodland covering the higher river terraces. Use of trees for lumber and fuel, particularly cordwood for steamboats, reduced the extent of the riparian forests in the Sacramento Valley during the late 1800s. Since then, urbanization and agricultural conversion have been the primary factors eliminating riparian habitat. Water development and reclamation projects, including channelization, dam and levee construction, bank protection, and stream flow regulation have altered the riparian system and contributed to vegetation loss. There has been an approximate 89 percent reduction of riparian vegetation along the Sacramento River and its tributaries.

Along portions of the Sacramento River, the processes of flooding and channel movement

Riparian Vegetation - USFWS

continue to sustain a small, viable, remnant riparian community. The plants in the riparian forest of the Sacramento River have many specialized adaptations to life in an environment frequently disturbed by flooding and deposition (new soil and cobble). The 42 common plant species and diversity of other plants provide food and cover for approximately 11 endangered or threatened species, 126 bird species, many fish species and an array of other wildlife.

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan

In 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. The Act presented the mission for the Refuge System, and states that all wildlife refuges must have a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) in place by the year 2013. These plans will provide a 15-year guide, using the best available scientific knowledge, to help managers achieve the purposes for which each refuge was established, and to work toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Act provides the Service with guidance for managing refuges in a way that ensures the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Maintenance of biological integrity and diversity along with facilitating compatible wildlife-dependent recreation in the refuge system are two of the important principles laid out in the Act.

Planning Process

The CCP for the Sacramento River Refuge will outline goals, objectives and management strategies for the Sacramento River Refuge for a 15-year period. The Service is preparing this plan for the following reasons:

- To ensure that management of the Refuge reflects Refuge purposes and the mission, policies and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- To provide the public with an understanding of the reasons for management actions on the Refuge.
- To provide a vision statement for the Refuge.
- To ensure the compatibility of current and future uses of the Refuge
- To provide long-term continuity in Refuge management.
- To provide budget justification for operation and maintenance and facility development requests.

The CCP will be flexible and a “living document.” It will be reviewed periodically to ensure that its goals, objectives and implementation strategies and timetables are still appropriate.

The CCP will provide broad management direction and guidance for the Refuge. The accompanying Environmental Assessment will describe the alternatives considered and their environmental effects. You will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft CCP and Environmental Assessment.

The key planning steps are listed below. Currently, we are identifying issues and gathering data. This list will be included in future planning updates so you can track our progress through the planning process.

Planning Process Steps

- Identify Public and Agency Issues
- Gather Data
- Develop Goals and Objectives
- Develop Management Strategies
- Evaluate Environmental Impacts
- Prepare Draft CCP/EA
- Public Review of Draft EA
- Public Notice of Decision

Help Us Plan the Future

Over the next year, interested individuals, agencies, Tribes, and organizations are invited to express their concerns and share their visions for the Refuge. This is your opportunity to help us identify issues and concerns, and for us to answer any questions you may have. Your participation is critical to the success of this planning effort.

You are invited to our first four public scoping meetings for the Refuge's CCP. They will be held in Willows, Chico, Red Bluff, and Colusa. These meetings will be a good opportunity for you to meet with Refuge staff and learn more about the Refuge, the CCP process, and help us identify issues to be addressed in the CCP.

Public Scoping Meeting Locations

Location: **Willows, CA**
Where: Willows Memorial Hall
525 W. Sycamore St.
Willows, CA
When: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Date: Wednesday 30 May 2001

Location: **Chico, CA**
Where: Masonic Family Center
1110 W. East Ave.
Chico, CA
When: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Date: Monday 04 June 2001

Location: **Red Bluff, CA**
Where: Community Center- Rose Room
1500 South Jackson St.
Red Bluff, CA
When: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Date: Tuesday 05 June 2001

Location: **Colusa, CA**
Where: Colusa Industrial Properties- Conference Room
50 Sunrise Blvd.
Colusa, CA
When: 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Date: Wednesday 06 June 2001

Please join us, have some refreshments and share your thoughts about the Refuge. We welcome your suggestions, questions and comments. Maps are available for each meeting locations, please call the Refuge Planning Office at (916)414-6501.

For More Information

We are available to provide additional information regarding the Refuge and the planning process. Also, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff can attend a meeting of your organization to discuss the development of the Sacramento River Refuge CCP. Please notify us at least three weeks in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts.

If you have questions, comments, concerns, or would like information about the Refuge, please feel free to call, e-mail, or write us:

Kevin Foerster, Project Leader
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
752 County Road 99 W
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-2801
kevin_foerster@r1.fws.gov

Miki Fujitsubo, Refuge Planner
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
CA/NV Refuge Planning Office
2800 Cottage Way, W-1916
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 414-6507
miki_fujitsubo@r1.fws.gov

Or check out the following sites on the Web:

http://pacific.fws.gov/sacnwrc/

http://pacific.fws.gov/planning/

Please pass this planning update along to anyone you think might be interested in the planning process. Thank you!

Call or write to us to be placed on our mailing list to report a change in your mailing address, or if you want to be removed from the mailing list.