



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Draft Revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

Koyukuk/Northern Unit Innoko/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuges





U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mission Statement

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.



Refuge Mission Statement

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

—National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997

The comprehensive conservation plan details program planning levels that are substantially greater than current budget allocations and, as such, is for strategic planning and program prioritization purposes only. This plan does not constitute a commitment for staffing increases or funding for future refuge-specific land acquisitions, construction projects, or operational and maintenance increases.

Draft Revised
Comprehensive Conservation Plan

and

Environmental Assessment

for the

**Koyukuk/Northern Unit
Innoko/Nowitna
National Wildlife Refuges**

September 2008

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Alaska Region
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Dear Reader:

This is the Draft Revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan (Plan) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for Koyukuk/Northern Unit Innoko/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuges. The final version of this Plan will guide management of the refuges for the next 15 years. This draft outlines two alternatives, including our preferred alternative, and presents our evaluation of the environmental consequences of both alternatives. Additionally, the refuge manager's preliminary reviews of the compatibility of refuge uses with refuge purposes are presented in Appendix D, Compatibility Determinations.

Please provide comments on the Draft Plan by December 15, 2008. Comments should be specific, addressing merits of the alternatives and adequacy of the environmental analysis. We will consider your comments as we prepare the Final Plan. Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived is not raised until after completion of the Final Plan.

Public meetings will be held in Galena and other area communities during the public review period. Meeting dates, times, and locations will be announced locally.

All comments received will become part of the public record for this action. Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

You may view the Draft Plan online at <http://www.r7.fws.gov/nwr/planning/plans.htm>, or obtain it on a compact disk.

Comments and requests for CD-ROMs or further information should be directed to:

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Request for further information about the Refuge should be directed to:

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*We thank everyone who participated in the planning and public involvement process.
Your comments helped us prepare a better plan for the future of Innoko Refuge.*

Compatibility Determinations

Determining the compatibility of uses is a key process by which refuge managers decides what activities will be allowed on National Wildlife Refuges. An essential element in the process is providing the public an opportunity to provide input for the refuge manager to consider as he or she determines if a use is compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established.

Compatibility determinations are required for all economic and public use activities, as well as for recreational and educational facilities provided by the refuge, and for refuge management economic activities. Compatibility determinations are not required for refuge management activities such as scientific studies or surveys; historic preservation activities; law enforcement activities, and maintenance of refuge management facilities, structures, and improvement. Economic uses must contribute to achieving refuge purposes and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

We reevaluate compatibility determinations for existing wildlife-dependent recreational uses when we prepare or revise a comprehensive conservation plan, or every 15 years, whichever is sooner. We reevaluate other uses every 10 years, or sooner, if conditions change or significant new information relative to the use and its effects becomes available.

As part of the review of this Draft Plan, you are invited to provide relevant information or comment on the compatibility determinations for Koyukuk/Northern Unit Innoko/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuges. A discussion of compatibility determinations can be found in Chapter 2, section 2.4.6. The analysis in Chapter 4 may provide a starting point on which to base your comments. The complete text of each draft compatibility determination can be found in Appendix D.

Public comment on the draft compatibility determinations will be addressed in the final determination to be released with the Final Plan. More information on the compatibility process can be found at <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/compdeter.htm>.