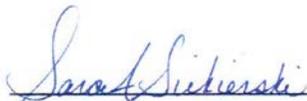

Seney National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Plan



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Midwest Region
2013

Seney National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Plan



Project Leader / Refuge Manager

4/22/2015

Date



Refuge Supervisor

4/28/15

Date



Chief, Division of Visitor Services

6/22/2015

Date



Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System

6/25/2015

Date

Table of Contents

SUMMARY	4
I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	4
A. Refuge Purpose	5
B. Visitor Services Program Purpose and Scope of Plan.....	6
C. History of the Refuge Visitor Services Program	7
D. Visitor Services Issues, Concerns, and Factors To Consider.....	9
E. Themes, Messages, and Topics.....	15
F. Audience	17
G. Visitor Facilities	17
H. Visitor Services Map(s).....	27
J. Visitor Capacity.....	38
II. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	40
Table 4: CCP Goals and Objectives Summary	40
The Ten Visitor Services Program Standards.....	41
Standard 1: Develop a Visitor Services Plan	43
Current program discussion:.....	43
Goals, Objectives, & Strategies:	43
Monitor and Evaluate:	43
Standard 2: Welcome and Orient Visitors	44
Current program discussion:.....	44
Goals, Objectives, & Strategies:	50
Monitor and Evaluate:	53
Standard 3: Hunting.....	55
Current program discussion:.....	55
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies	57
Monitor and Evaluate:	59
Standard 4: Fishing	60
Current Program Discussion:	60
Standard 4 Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies	62
Monitor and Evaluate:	63
Standard 5: Wildlife Observation and Wildlife Photography	64
Current Program Discussion:	64
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies.....	67
Monitor and Evaluate:	68
Standard 6: Environmental Education.....	69
Current program discussion:.....	69
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies.....	72
Monitor and Evaluate:	74

Standard 7: Interpretation.....	75
Current program discussion:.....	75
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies.....	78
Monitor and Evaluate:	80
Standard 8: Manage for Other Recreational Use Opportunities.....	81
Current program discussion:.....	81
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies.....	82
Monitor and Evaluate:	82
Standard 9: Outreach	84
Current program discussion:.....	84
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies.....	86
Monitor and Evaluate:	88
Standard 10: Volunteers and Friends.....	89
Current Program Discussion:	89
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies.....	94
Monitor and Evaluate:	95
Standard 11: Recreation Fee Program	96
Current Program Discussion:	96
Standard 12: Concessions.....	97
Current Program Discussion:	97
Standard 13: Commercial Recreational Uses	98
Current Program Discussion:	98
Standard 14: Wilderness	99
Current program discussion:.....	99
Goal(s), Objective(s), Strategies.....	101
Monitor and Evaluate:	101
III. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE.....	102
Table 8: Strategies Implementation Schedule.....	102
IV. PROJECT COST.....	131
Table 9. Project Cost.....	131
V. VISITOR SERVICES ANNUAL WORK PLAN.....	134
Table 10. Visitor Services Annual Work Plan	134
VI. VISITOR SERVICES ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP PLANNING	137
Table 11. Visitor Services Annual Partnership Planning	137
APPENDICES	139
APPENDIX A: List of Preparers	139
APPENDIX B: List of other visitor services related documents.....	139
APPENDIX C: Compatibility Determination	140
APPENDIX D: National Visitor Services’ Standards.....	152
APPENDIX E: Monitor And Evaluation Tables.....	155

Summary

This Visitor Services Plan provides the reader with background information including the Refuge purpose, history of Visitor Services on the Refuge, goals, objectives, strategies, a list of the present facilities and services. It also discusses Visitor Services issues, concerns, outreach topics and themes. The heart of the plan is the ten standards and the four optional standards that are used to judge and plan Visitor Services program growth. Within these ten standards there are 188 different strategies identified. These strategies are specific actions that the Refuge will strive to carryout to improve and provide vital visitor services. There are three types of strategies in this plan: those that the Refuge presently does; those that are planned for the near future and can be achieved without major additional funding or personnel; and others that are long range and can only be accomplished with increased staffing and/or funding.

Public land is land shared by all of the American people. The responsibility of caring for that land does not belong to any one agency or group of people, but to all. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) partners with many groups and agencies including: Seney Natural History Association, Retired Senior Volunteer Program Volunteers, volunteers, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Hiawatha National Forest, Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, Michigan Audubon Society, the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, and local community groups and schools to care for and manage our nation’s priceless resources. Other partners in this effort are the men, women and children who use our Refuges.

At Seney National Wildlife Refuge (NWR or Refuge) these partnerships are well established, but there are opportunities for further growth and for reaching new partners. This Visitor Service Plan offers tools and recommendations to further develop these relationships while addressing the Visitor Services goals of Seney National Wildlife Refuge.

I. Background Information

The wild land that today is the Seney National Wildlife Refuge has not always appeared so wild. This is a land that was once heavily logged, burned, ditched, drained, and cultivated. Despite repeated attempts to tame the land, the soils and harsh conditions of this country would not provide a hospitable environment for sustained settlement and agriculture. So nature claimed it once again. What was viewed as a loss by early 20th century entrepreneurs became a huge gain for the wildlife, natural resources, and the people of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.



Figure 1: Location Map – Seney National Wildlife Refuge and the Whitefish Point Unit.

Seney NWR is located in the east-central portion of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, halfway between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. Located in northeastern Schoolcraft County, the Refuge is removed from major population centers; the three nearest major communities

are each more than 80 miles away. Seney NWR was established in 1935 by Executive Order under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act for the protection and production of migratory birds and other wildlife. The Refuge encompasses approximately 95,238 acres; 25,150 acres comprise the Seney Wilderness Area, which contains the Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark. While management for migratory birds is paramount, the Refuge provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife species, both migratory and non-migratory. Approximately 20 species of reptiles and amphibians, 48 species of mammals, 26 species of fish, and over 200 species of birds have been documented on the Refuge. Many of these species are Conservation Priorities for the Midwest Region of the Service.

In 1998 the Whitefish Point Unit was obtained. These former Coast Guard lands were divided up and transferred to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society (8.3 acres), the Michigan Audubon Society (2.8 acres) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (33 acres) under the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1996. In 2012 the Service purchased an additional 19 acres, including 1,000 feet of Lake Superior shoreline. The Service plans to pursue a land transfer agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources which would transfer additional acres to the Whitefish Point Unit of the Refuge. The Whitefish Point Unit is located in Chippewa County about 11 miles north of Paradise, Michigan and about 80 miles from the Seney NWR office. Whitefish Point has been designated a Globally Important Bird Area for birds migrating between the US and Canada. Each year thousands of raptors, passerines and waterbirds funnel past the point to cross Lake Superior on their migration. The Whitefish Point Unit has also been designated as critical habitat for the endangered Great Lakes population of piping plovers. Piping plovers have nested on the beach annually from 2009 to the writing of this document. In 2012 a record three pairs of plovers nested on the beach and fledged eleven chicks.

A. REFUGE PURPOSE

The purposes of the Refuge are defined by the following authorities:

Executive Order 7246, dated Dec. 10th 1935

- “as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife...”

Migratory Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. § 715d

- “...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, 16 U.S.C. § 668dd(a)(2)

- “... conservation, management, and ... restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats ... for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans...”

Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1131

- “...to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of Wilderness... Wilderness Areas ... shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as Wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their Wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as Wilderness: ...”

Seney Comprehensive Conservation Plan – Vision Statement

- “Seney National Wildlife Refuge will continue to be a place of excitement and wonder where wildlife comes first. It will be a place where management decisions are made in the best interest of wildlife and their habitats, and people are encouraged to explore and learn about the natural world.

“The Refuge’s rich mosaic of habitats and ecosystems will be viewed as part of the greater eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan ecoregion. Priority will be given to managing for those species, habitats, and ecosystems of regional concern that are best suited to Seney’s unique environment. Management will maintain refuge-level biological diversity while preserving ecological integrity. Habitats will be managed for an array of ecological conditions, including the preservation of Wilderness character. When and where appropriate, an emphasis will be placed on preserving or restoring historic habitat conditions and ecosystem functions.

“As part of a holistic approach to natural resource stewardship, people will be welcomed to use the Refuge to learn about the natural world. The public will be invited to participate in wildlife-dependent experiences that are in concert with the relatively undeveloped nature of the Refuge. Students and researchers will be encouraged to use the Refuge as an outdoor laboratory for biological and ecological research that focuses on understanding natural patterns and processes and developing habitat management techniques.

“Seney NWR will continue to be a source of pride for the staff, those who visit, and the local community. It will showcase biological and ecological diversity, habitat management, and wildlife-dependent public use. It will add to the richness of the broader community by holding in trust a portion of the natural heritage of the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

B. VISITOR SERVICES PROGRAM PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLAN

The purpose of Seney National Wildlife Refuge’s Visitor Services program is to foster understanding and instill appreciation of the fish, wildlife, and plants and their conservation by providing the public with safe, high quality, appropriate, and compatible wildlife-dependent recreational and educational programs and activities. In 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act (Improvement Act) which clearly states, that on National Wildlife Refuges, wildlife comes first. The Improvement Act also identified six priority wildlife-dependent public use activities and programs that are compatible with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. These uses include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

This Visitor Services Plan (VSP) was prepared based upon these guidelines. With the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and this step-down plan, all visitor service activities and programs on the Refuge will conform to national guidelines and will insure that all visitor activities are compatible with the Refuge’s overarching wildlife mission and purposes.

The purpose of the VSP is to establish priorities and identify improvements which will guide the Refuge Visitor Services program over the next fifteen years. Visitor Services goals, objectives, and strategies have been identified in Chapter IV of the CCP for Seney NWR. This VSP addresses compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses on the Refuge including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation (Appendix D of the Seney NWR CCP (152)). The VSP also addresses non-wildlife dependent recreation uses that have been deemed compatible including bicycling, mushroom and berry picking, canoeing, kayaking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking. (Appendix D of the Seney NWR CCP (p. 152)). Volunteer programs and the partnership and resource protection goals from Chapter III of the CCP are also addressed in this plan.

C. HISTORY OF THE REFUGE VISITOR SERVICES PROGRAM

Public use has been an integral part of Seney NWR from the beginning. Hunting and fishing opportunities have existed on the Refuge in one form or another since it was established in 1935. In 1937, the Wigwam Picnic Area was constructed just off of M-77 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). A second picnic area and trail was constructed adjacent to the Driggs River Road off of M-28 early in the Refuge's history. These facilities offered people a place to picnic, fish, hike, and enjoy the Refuge. Both areas were very popular and utilized frequently during the summer months. Changes in funding and recreational priorities eventually led management to close these areas. In 1989, the Driggs River Road Picnic Area was closed because the state opened a rest area three miles to the east. The Wigwams Picnic Area was closed in 1994 because picnicking was considered a low priority at that time. In 2007-2008, the Wigwams Access Point was reopened with the help of the Seney Natural History Association. Little else in the form of public use activities were offered at the Refuge in the early days, aside from a handful of outreach programs.

The first experimental auto tour was conducted on a weekly basis in 1949. This tour has persisted throughout the years and is still a favorite summer tourist activity, drawing hundreds of guests annually. Over the years, the auto tour program grew to the point that the Refuge staff was conducting daily guided tours for visitors. Eventually the Marshland Wildlife Drive (opened in 1963 and named in 1970) was opened to help relieve the demands of the evening tours and allow visitors a chance to experience the Refuge on their own. The drive was wildly popular and leaflets were created so that visitors had a better understanding of the Refuge and its purpose. The Fishing Loop was opened in 1983 to enable anglers as well as sightseers to discover additional areas of the Refuge. Visitors were even allowed to climb the fire tower, before it was closed in 1982 due to safety concerns. Observation decks and spotting scopes were added to the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing loop in the 1980s and 1990s. Interpretive panels about trumpeter swans, common loons, and bald eagles were added to the observation decks and then updated (with swan, loon, crane and fish panels) in 2010. In 2009 wildlife and plant silhouette signs, along with several interpretive signs were removed from the driving tour routes due to the poor condition of the signs and the fact that there was no longer a leaflet that corresponded with the silhouette signs.

In 1965, the Visitor Center was officially opened at the Refuge to interpret its natural and cultural resources. For the last 48 years it has provided the public with staff and exhibits to help interpret the Refuge and encourage recreational activities. A six projector, refuge specific, orientation slide show was produced in 1994 and replaced with a high definition DVD show in 2009. Significant exhibit room and bookstore upgrades occurred in the early 1990s and early in 2006. In 2012, a new bookshelf was installed which helped alleviate some of the crowding in the bookstore.

The 1.4 mile self-guided, interpretive Pine Ridge Nature Trail was constructed in 1952, which offered tourists a chance to explore portions of the Refuge on foot. Plant identification signs were added to the trail and throughout the 1990s the trail received upgrades which connected several portions of the boardwalk. Later the signs were updated to interpretive panels that included both plant identification and wildlife uses. In 2011, two trails associated with the Pine Ridge Nature Trail were reopened for the public's enjoyment, the half mile Wigwam Connector Trail and half mile South Show Pool Loop. Both trails feature new bridges and boardwalks which replaced existing structures that were falling apart and no longer safe. In 2011, work began to make a section of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail accessible, with the intent of having an accessible trail up to the first observation bench by 2014.

From 1989 to 1992 approximately 10 miles of cross-country ski trails were constructed. During the winter months, after the hunting season closes, the Refuge grooms the ski trails for the public's enjoyment.

Due to the rural location of the Refuge and small population in the surrounding area, few schools visit. However, the Refuge does have an active environmental education and interpretation program. Throughout the year several local elementary schools visit and participate in environmental education programs. Our most popular programs include pond studies, guided hikes, and Visitor Center exploration. A number of colleges and universities also utilize the Refuge and its staff as part of their curriculum and staff have drafted curricula for regional universities. Interpretive programs are offered at the Refuge, mostly during the summer season.

Special events are conducted both on-site and off-site.

Current special events include:

1. Winter Film Festival (four consecutive weeks in February) *(since 1975)*
2. Winter Carnival (February) – Offsite *(started Refuge involvement in 2010 –this event was canceled in 2013 and its future is unclear)*
3. Citizen Science - Sharp-tailed Grouse Survey (April) *(since 2010)*
4. Spring Fling (International Migratory Bird Day – late April/early May) – in cooperation with the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory *(restarted Refuge involvement in 2011)*
5. Twilight Tours (one night per week for two weeks in May) *(Started current program in 2010 – before that it was known as the Yellow Rail Tour)*
6. Children's Fishing Day (June) *(started in 1989)*
7. Fourth of July Parades – Offsite
8. Jr. Duck Stamp Exhibit *(since 2006)*
9. Amateur Photo Contest (August) *(since 1989)*
10. Art on the Lake (September) – Offsite *(since 2003)*
11. Youth in the Outdoors (September) – National Public Lands Day *(New 2012, replaced Scout Day)*
12. National Wildlife Refuge Week (October) – Fall Color Float *(since 2010)* & Ham Radio Program

Past Special Events have included:

- Snowfest *(1999 – 2005)*
- National Hunting and Fishing Day *(1973 – 2004)*

-
- Love a Loon Day (1992 – 1999)
 - Meet the Mammals Day (1993 – 1998)
 - Backyard Wildlife Day (1999 – 2002)
 - Birding by the Bay (2003 – 2006)
 - Endangered Species Day (2000-2002)
 - Older Scout Day (1999-2002)
 - International Migratory Bird Day (1999 – 2005 and 2010)
 - Monarch Madness (2010 – 2012)
 - Scout Day (1997 – 2011 – replaced with Youth in the Outdoors)
 - Discover Seney –2012 (August)
 - Critter Camp (July) – Offsite (2009 - 2011)

In addition to the outreach activities listed above staff also travels to club meetings, schools and universities to conduct outreach programs.

D. VISITOR SERVICES ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Seasonal Operation and Day Use Only

Each year, thousands of people visit Seney NWR (58,462 visitors in 2013) to enjoy the Refuge. At present the Visitor Center and Marshland Wildlife Drive are open from May 15th to October 20th. The May 15th opening date is meant to ensure that waterfowl have a relatively undisturbed spring migration and mating season if they are residents. The Fishing Loop is open from May 15th to September 30th. The Fishing Loop closes earlier in the season to allow waterfowl an undisturbed area to rest during their migration. The Marshland Wildlife Drive and Visitor Center close on October 20th to ensure the Refuge is open through the end of National Wildlife Refuge Week but does not remain open through the remainder of the fall and winter due to low visitation.

The Refuge provides opportunities for the six wildlife dependent public uses: hunting, fishing, interpretation, environmental education, wildlife observation, and wildlife photography. Additionally, the Refuge provides opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking, and berry and mushroom picking. These activities as well as other approved activities are allowed from dawn until dusk.

Visitor Center and Exhibits

The Visitor Center is 48 years old and lacks storage, office, sales space, and electrical and internet capabilities for newer technology. Some of the displays in the Visitor Center are outdated, look worn, and are beginning to fall apart. Immediate action should be taken to remove or rework those displays which are no longer factual. The aging building is also horribly energy inefficient and has a heating/cooling system that is difficult to operate and repair. The Visitor Services staff (Visitor Services Manager and permanent Seasonal Park Ranger) have their offices in the Headquarters building and also may use office space at the Visitor Center. While moving back and forth between buildings may sometimes be inefficient it also provides desirable and beneficial opportunities to get outside and be more exposed to visitors. Although Visitor Services staff does use the office at the Visitor Center it is the only office space for interns and volunteers. Despite signage, visitors sometimes manage to miss the Visitor Center building, which is hidden behind trees and shrubs, and end up at the main office. Parking and turning around large RVs at the Visitor Center and headquarters is a challenge. Upgrading or replacing the Visitor Center should be a priority. If this is not possible a large scale renovation will be needed. (See Standard 2 Welcome and Orient Visitors for additional information (p. 43).)

Limited Environmental Education Audience

The Refuge is located in a rural portion of the Upper Peninsula. Travel distances, along with school budgets and underdeveloped environmental education programming at the Refuge, have likely limited the amount of school field trips to the Refuge. Over the years, the Refuge has done its best, with limited staffing, to offer these schools environmental education opportunities. At the same time, increasing pressures on teachers and school administrators have made it difficult for teachers to make field trips to the Refuge a priority.

Foot Trail Improvements

In 2010, the Refuge began the process of renovating its current trail system.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge

At the Seney NWR the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and volunteers have worked to reopen two overgrown historic trails created by the Civilian Conservation Corps and have made a portion of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail American with Disabilities Act (ABA) compliant.

The Northern Hardwoods Cross Country Ski trails are already established and used as hiking trails by the general public during the summer months. We simply propose to change signage to reflect their status, as not only ski trails, but as hiking trails to reduce customer confusion. These trails provide the only formal hiking opportunities on the Refuge for the public to explore the northern hardwoods ecosystem which offers visitors a chance to see spring woodland wildflowers and a different suite of birds and animals.

Whitefish Point Unit

At the Whitefish Point Unit defined trails are needed. Many birders and other users visit the point each year and enjoy hiking opportunities. At this time a series of poorly marked trails wind throughout the property. These “social trails” cause confusion and as people get lost they walk over the fragile habitat trying to find their way back to the main trail causing new “social trails” to form. Due to the fragile nature of the habitat plants are impacted with just a few simple passes. The *2002 Human Use/Natural Resources Management Plan for Whitefish Point* states that, “Trails shall keep all people and pets out of environmentally sensitive habitat at all times of year, with only a few controlled exceptions.” And the entities that share the point should work to “re-establish degraded or disturbed areas within USFWS and MAS property through active revegetation or passive restoration practices, especially to fill in areas where ‘social trails’ have created habitat loss.” The plan states that identifiable markers shall be placed to help visitors locate the trails. According to the plan three of the existing trails are supposed to be selected for maintenance, one trail leading to the Hawk Platform through Michigan Department of Natural Resources property, a “Tip of the Point Trail” which starts at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory’s building and travels through USFWS property and a “Birder’s Trail” which leaves the “Tip of the Point Trail” and travels in a southerly direction though USFWS property. Choosing the best of the social trails, defining these as main trails with markers or signs, interpretive signage and maps would meet these requirements.

Visitor Use Estimation Numbers

There are fairly accurate estimates of people entering the Visitor Center, attending interpretive and environmental education programs, and hiking on the Pine Ridge Nature Trail. However, we have poor estimates of most other numbers. Each year the Visitor Services staff makes an attempt to quantify other types of users such as people traveling the Marshland Wildlife Drive/Fishing Loop, using the Whitefish Point Unit, paddlers, bikers, hunters, anglers and berry pickers. Some of these estimates are likely better than others. For example we call the local canoe and kayak outfitters in Germfask to estimate the number of paddlers using the Refuge annually. This number is likely fairly accurate but does not take into account the number of paddlers not renting from the outfitters so this portion of the number is estimated. The estimates of hunters take into account the number of deer hunters that register for a free camping permit for the regular firearms season in November. Pneumatic counters are used to count cars entering and leaving the Refuge roads during hunting season. These counters have not been calibrated therefore we are not able to produce an accurate estimate of the number of hunters using the Refuge. The numbers of skiers and foragers are not known and are estimates. See Table 1 for the formulas which are used to calculate visitor numbers. In 2013 the Visitor Services staff realized that pneumatic counters used on the Refuge count axels not cars. It is unclear at this point if this was taken into consideration when the calibration formulas were created. This will need to be evaluated and the calibration adjusted if necessary in 2014 as part of the Visitor Estimation Plan.

In 2014 a Visitor Estimation Plan will be created and implemented to address these issues and provide more accurate numbers. This will likely alter the numbers submitted to the Refuge Annual Performance Planning (RAPP) Report. Simple solutions such as posting additional people counters at strategic locations around the Refuge or providing hand counters to places like the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory and asking them to collect data for us may be simple solutions for some numbers.

In 2010, Peter Rea, a Student Career Experience Program Intern helped us calibrate our estimation equations in the "Surveying Recreational Use at Seney NWR" report. The table below describes the formulas and values he used.

Table 1: Formulas and Values Used to Calculate Refuge Visitation.

Location/Activity	Method	Formula	Values
Visitor Center	Hand Held Clicker	One Click per Person	1 Click = 1 Visitor
Wigwams Access Point**	Pneumatic Pressure Counter	Original Count (OC)* Entering-Exiting Ratio * Visitor to Non-visitor ratio * Average Visitors per vehicle = Total Visitors (TV)	$OC * 0.5 * 0.83 * 2.8 = TV$
Driggs River Road**	Pneumatic Pressure Counter		$OC * 0.5 * 0.62 * 2.8 = TV$
Marshland Wildlife Drive**	Pneumatic Pressure Counter		$OC * 1 * 0.93 * 2.8 = TV$
Entrance Road**	Pneumatic Pressure Counter		$OC * 0.68 * 0.88 * 2.8 = TV$
Robinson Road**	Pneumatic Pressure Counter		Not yet calculated
Canoeing and Kayaking	Call outfitters for number of boats rented	Multiply by two	1 Boat = 2 Visitors
Pine Ridge Nature Trail	Infrared Trail Counter	1 to 1	1 = 1 Visitor
Whitefish Point Unit	Estimated at this time	None	None
Mushroom and Berry Picking	Estimated at this time	None	None
Fishing	Patrol	Nt = # of time blocks	$(Nt * Nv) / Np = X$
Biking	Patrol	Nv = # visitors recorded	$(Nt * Nv) / Np = X$
Pedestrian Visits	Infrared Counter and Patrol	Np = # of patrols = estimated # of visitors (X)	$((Nt * Nv) / Np) + \text{Pine Ridge Nature Trail Counter Number} = X$
Cross-country Skiing	Infrared Counter	1 to 1	1 = 1 Visitor
Snowshoeing	Estimated at this time	None	None
Big Game Hunting	Estimated at this time	None	None
Migratory Bird Hunting	Estimated at this time	None	None
Upland Game Hunting	Estimated at this time	None	None
Total Hunting Visits	Add total hunting numbers	Big Game + Migratory + Upland = Total Hunting	
Environmental Education	Manual Count	Number of students * the number of programs = Total Number of EE	
Interpretation	Manual Count	Number of participants * the number of programs = Total Number of Interpretative Program Participants	
Special Events	Manual Count	One count per person – Youth in the Outdoors, Children’s Fishing Day, Film Festival, Jr. Duck Stamp	
Total Number of Visitors	Total numbers from	Entrance Road + Driggs River Road + Wigwams + Robinson Road + Whitefish Point = Total Visitation	
Photography Participants	Number Manipulation	Total Photography Participants = 1/3 Total Visitation	
Wildlife Observation Visits	Number Manipulation	Total Wildlife Observation Visits = Pedestrian Visits + Boat Visits + Bicycle Visits + Auto Tour Visits	

** The pneumatic counters count vehicle axels – these equations need to be evaluated to ensure this was taken into account.

Refuge Has Active Friends Group and Volunteer Program

The volunteer program supports all aspects of Refuge operations. In 2013, volunteers donated a total of 8,164 hours. Volunteers helped with studies, wildlife surveys, habitat management, trail construction, visitor services, outreach, and infrastructure maintenance and improvements. The Seney Natural History Association (SNHA) (the Friends group associated with the Refuge) was established in 1989. The Friends group supports the Refuge in a number of ways including providing a food stipend for five to six interns annually, supporting Refuge events, operating the Friends bookstore, purchasing items for the Refuge, and supporting improvements to the facilities and habitat.

Increased Visibility at Whitefish Point Unit

Very little outreach and interpretation have occurred at the Whitefish Point Unit since it was established in 1998. Until 2012 only two interpretive panels and a handful of low quality informational signs had been posted by the Service and various partner organizations. Non-refuge staff that monitor the Endangered piping plover nests on the beach throughout the summer provide regular contact with the public and answer questions. The Whitefish Point Bird Observatory also has a small visitor contact station and bookstore where they answer visitor questions. Since the summer of 2010 Refuge staff has been increasing their presence on the property to pinpoint and address visitor needs. A one panel informational kiosk has replaced one of the old, worn-out interpretive sign mentioned above, a new welcome sign has been posted on the Refuge's boundary line, and staff seasonally post signs associated with piping plovers. In 2012, Visitor Services staff created and staffed an interpretive station several times a month during the piping plover nesting season to help create awareness of plovers and beach closures. In 2013 signage was placed to delineate the new property line and a list of donors who helped make the land purchase possible. Additional high quality interpretive signs should be developed and placed on the property. Further problem solving is needed to prevent visitors from collecting beach rocks and driftwood, often times removed by the pail full.

Entrance Fees

For one year, in 1988, the Refuge charged an entrance fee. The result was a decrease in visitors and a huge increase in the amount of work for Refuge staff and volunteers. It was estimated that the fee program cost the Refuge \$2,000 more than the 30% return to implement. The fee program was discontinued after just one year. The Refuge has no fee program at this time nor any plans to implement one in the future.

Invasive Species

The introduction of invasive species onto the Refuge is a concern. Large tracts of Refuge land have very few, if any, invasive species. Refuge management has made it policy that each vehicle entering the backcountry, for any reason, needs to be washed down to remove potential seed sources before entering the Refuge. This affects the public who drive their vehicles on tours. Visitor Services staff needs to be prepared to answer questions about this practice, explain the importance of the regulation as well as applying good customer service when dealing with difficult guests. Starting the spring of 2013 all vehicles that have driven off paved roads outside the local area, must be washed down before entering areas that are normally closed to the public.

E. THEMES, MESSAGES, AND TOPICS

Primary Theme

Embedded in a relatively unpopulated landscape Seney NWR offers an escape to the Northwoods, a feeling of wildness, where its rich mosaic of ecosystems offer scientific opportunities and personal discoveries.

Primary Topics

- Habitat Diversity
- Ecological Processes
- Preservation and Active Management (Conservation and Restoration)
- Recreation and Inspiration

Themes for primary topics

The primary themes explored in this plan will be further developed in an interpretive step-down plan.

- **Habitat Diversity:** Seney NWR is comprised of a rich mosaic of ecosystems that support an array of wildlife and plant communities.
 - *These tangible resources will be used to build future messages.*
 - Seney NWR contains several upland and wetland ecosystems types with special designations including the Federally designated Seney Wilderness Area and its imbedded Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark and Research Natural Area; Red Pine, Sugar Maple-Beech-Yellow Birch, and Hemlock Research Natural Areas (Society of American Foresters); and White Pine and the Northern Hardwoods Public Use Natural Areas.
 - Invertebrates, mink frogs and wood turtles are some local species that indicate good water quality.
 - Seney NWR is a home or a stopover for over 200 species of birds, 48 species of mammals, 20 species of reptiles and amphibians, 26 species of fish and hundreds of insect species; more than 80 of these species are considered Region 3 Conservation Priority, Regional Forester Sensitive or Michigan Special Animals.
 - By understanding the needs of specific animals such as beaver, white-tailed deer, black-backed woodpecker or American bittern designated as surrogate species we may be able to understand the important components of the habitat they share with other species helping managers protect a variety of species.
 - Invasive species may pose threats to native plant and animal populations.
 - Seney NWR preserves one of the southernmost patterned peatlands in the world, the Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark, which was formed by complex geologic actions which are unique in this region.
- **Ecological Processes:** Seney NWR's habitats and ecosystems have been changed through time by ecological processes, such as fire, hydrology, climate change and human activities.
 - *These tangible resources will be used to build future messages.*
 - The hydrology of this landscape, with its many creeks and rivers, man-made pools and ditches, spring sheet flow, wetlands and patterned peatlands affects habitats, wildlife communities and management practices.

-
- Fire, like hydrology, has always been a natural disturbance, maintaining and changing the landscape.
 - The history of the Refuge landscape reflects the changing attitudes of people over time from taming the wilderness at the turn of the century through logging and ditching, to game species production and pool creation in the middle part of the century, to current philosophy which focuses on managing entire landscapes and ecosystems in an effort to reflect historical conditions where appropriate.
 - The Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration served at Seney NWR leaving behind a legacy of buildings, water control structures, and large scale landscape remodeling that can still be seen and appreciated today.
 - The historic logging and farming eras altered all Refuge ecosystems.
 - **Preservation and Active Management:** Much of Seney NWR is actively managed, using science based practices and techniques that (when possible) mimic natural processes.
 - *These tangible resources will be used to build future messages.*
 - Because of science based inquiry and changing management philosophies, management actions are increasingly shifting away from single species (or organismal) management to those based on ecological patterns and processes.
 - Today fire is influenced by human action through prescribed burning, managing wildfires and fire suppression.
 - Refuge lands are managed as a part of the larger eastern Upper Peninsula land context.
 - A land management gradient exists from east to west that prioritizes conservation, restoration and preservation in the four different Refuge management units.
 - Seney NWR offers scientists a living laboratory for research and monitoring and whose findings provide essential tools for managers to make informed decisions and the public to learn about the Refuge.
 - **Recreation and Inspiration:** Seney NWR is a place of excitement, serenity and wonder. It is a great place to watch wildlife, to experience nature and is open to wildlife-dependent recreation and other activities that are compatible with the needs of wildlife.
 - *These tangible resources will be used to build future messages.*
 - The Federally recognized Seney Wilderness contains primitive areas relatively undisturbed by human activities where scientific research may reveal information about natural processes and living systems that may have wide-ranging application and may serve as global indicators of ecological change.
 - The Seney Wilderness preserves a special place for humans to experience their relationship to the natural world.
 - Seney NWR offers an environment with limited exposure from motorized equipment which allows a variety of traditional wildlife dependent recreational opportunities fostering a connection between people and their natural world.

Other important messages based on the primary topics and themes

-
- Seney NWR is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the largest network of lands dedicated to wildlife conservation in the world.

F. AUDIENCES

- Bird Watchers
- Photographers
- Hunters
- Anglers
- Families
- Wildlife Enthusiasts
- Local Residents
- Local teachers and students
- Youth groups such as scouts
- Cross-country skiers / Snowshoers
- Colleges and Universities
- Tourists of varying ages and backgrounds from throughout the Midwest, U.S. and world.

G. VISITOR FACILITIES

Refuge Visitor Center

In 1965, the Visitor Center was officially opened at the Refuge to interpret its natural and cultural resources. Today, the Visitor Center is open 9am to 5pm daily from May 15th to October 20th.

Approximate Square Footage of Building

- Visitor Center – 3,860 square feet
- Exhibit Area – 1,500 square feet
- Auditorium – 792 square feet
- Bookstore – 204 square feet
- Office – 144 square feet
- Restrooms – 192 square feet each
- The remaining 836 square feet contain the furnace/electrical room, wall space, hall and closets.

Current exhibits include

- The Children’s Touch Table (1984)
- The “Look Who’s Calling Exhibit” Sound Identification (1992)
- Wolf Diorama (2005)
- Wolf-coyote Comparisons (2006)
- The Loon Diorama (1992)
- Refuge System Display (circa 1992)
- Wetland Flip-up Mural (circa 1996)
- Endangered Species Display (1997)
- Invasive Species Display - portable (2004)
- Fire Display - portable (2008)
- Wildlife Observation Display (circa 1992)
- Refuge Map (circa 1992)
- Track Pit (circa 1984)

-
- Blooming Tree (2005)
 - Herbarium Exhibit (2006)
 - Bird Identification Software – New birding software and computer furniture was purchased to make the station more inviting. (2011)
 - Monarch Life Cycle Live Exhibit
 - Junior Duck Stamp collection (2006 - present)
 - Orientation Film “The Wonder of Nature” - 2009

SNHA and the Refuge loan binoculars, kid’s activity backpacks, fishing poles, tackle boxes, and geocaching packs to visitors during business hours. SNHA also runs a small bookstore in the Visitor Center which provides its main income and financial support for the Refuge.

Refuge Access Roads Open to the Public, Auto Tour Routes, and Associated Facilities

There are two main public access roads to Seney NWR with secondary access points located in five separate areas. Main access points are those entrances that the majority of visitors use to access the Refuge. Secondary access points include all access points that are not considered a main access point.

Main Entrances

1. Refuge Entrance Road: Two miles north of Germfask, Michigan or five miles south of Seney, Michigan exit west off Highway M77 leading to the Visitor Center, Maintenance Shop, Headquarters Office, Marshland Wildlife Drive, Fishing Loop, and Pine Ridge Nature Trail.
2. Main Entrance to the Whitefish Point Unit: Take North Whitefish Point Road 12 miles north of Paradise, Michigan. The road will terminate in a parking lot which provides parking for the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, and Whitefish Point Unit of the Refuge. The Refuge lands are located east of the parking lot.

Secondary Entrances

1. Robinson Road: Robinson Road is a county road connecting M77 to the Refuge boundary. The boundary gate is approximately one half mile west of M77. Robinson Road, within the Refuge boundary, is open during the fall deer rifle and muzzleloader hunting seasons depending on the depth of snow. Robinson Road provides access to Pine Creek Road and Driggs River Road which are also open during the fall hunting seasons. Robinson Road also provides access to the Northern Hardwoods Cross-country Skiing/Hiking trails.
2. Wigwams Access Point: Approximately ¼ mile north of the entrance road on the west side there is a short drive leading to the Wigwams Access Point with walking/hiking access to the South Show Pool Loop and Wigwam Connector and ultimately the Pine Ridge Nature Trail and Visitor Center. This drive is open during the spring, summer and fall.
3. Driggs River Road: Located seven and a half miles west of the town of Seney, Michigan, the Driggs River Road is located south of HWY M28. Driggs River Road

provides access to the first two miles of the north end of the Driggs River Road during the spring, summer and fall including walk-in access to the Driggs River for fishing and the C-3 area for fishing and biking. It also provides access to the North end of Riverside Dike and the interior of the Refuge during the fall hunting seasons mentioned above.

4. Walsh Creek Road: Ten miles west of the town of Seney, Michigan the Walsh Farm Road heads south off of M28 and provides access to Walsh Farm during the fall rifle and muzzleloader seasons.
5. The Creighton Truck Trail, Highwater Truck Trail, M28, M77, and Manistique River Road offer visitors an opportunity to drive a portion of the perimeter of the Refuge.

Auto tour routes offer visitors access to observation decks, the fishing pier, and some of the roads in Unit 1. Unit 1 encompasses Refuge lands east of the Pine Creek Road, contains the majority of the artificial pool system, is managed generally for its conservation value, and offers the easiest access for the largest variety of public use opportunities

Figure 2: Refuge Entrance Map – Seney National Wildlife Refuge

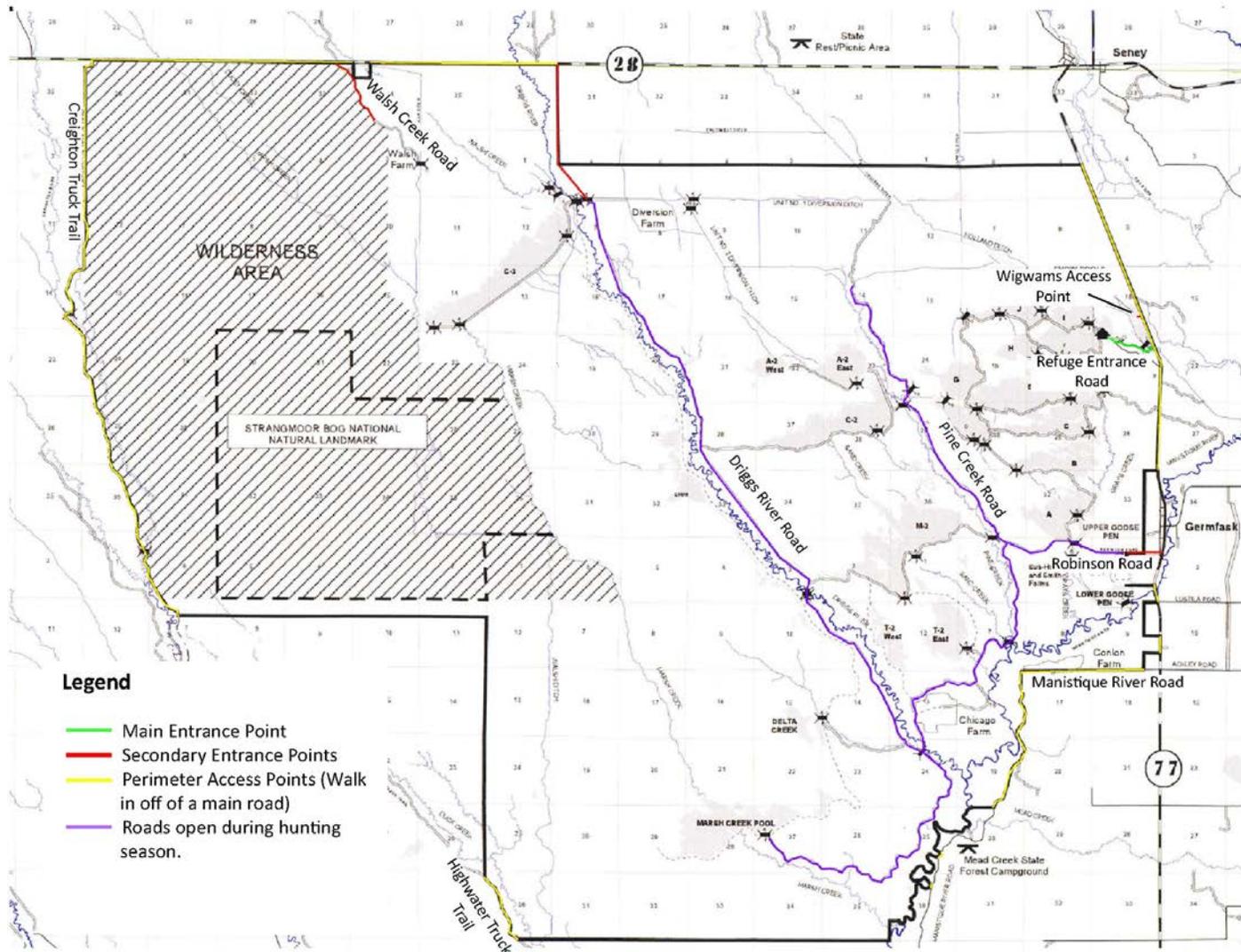
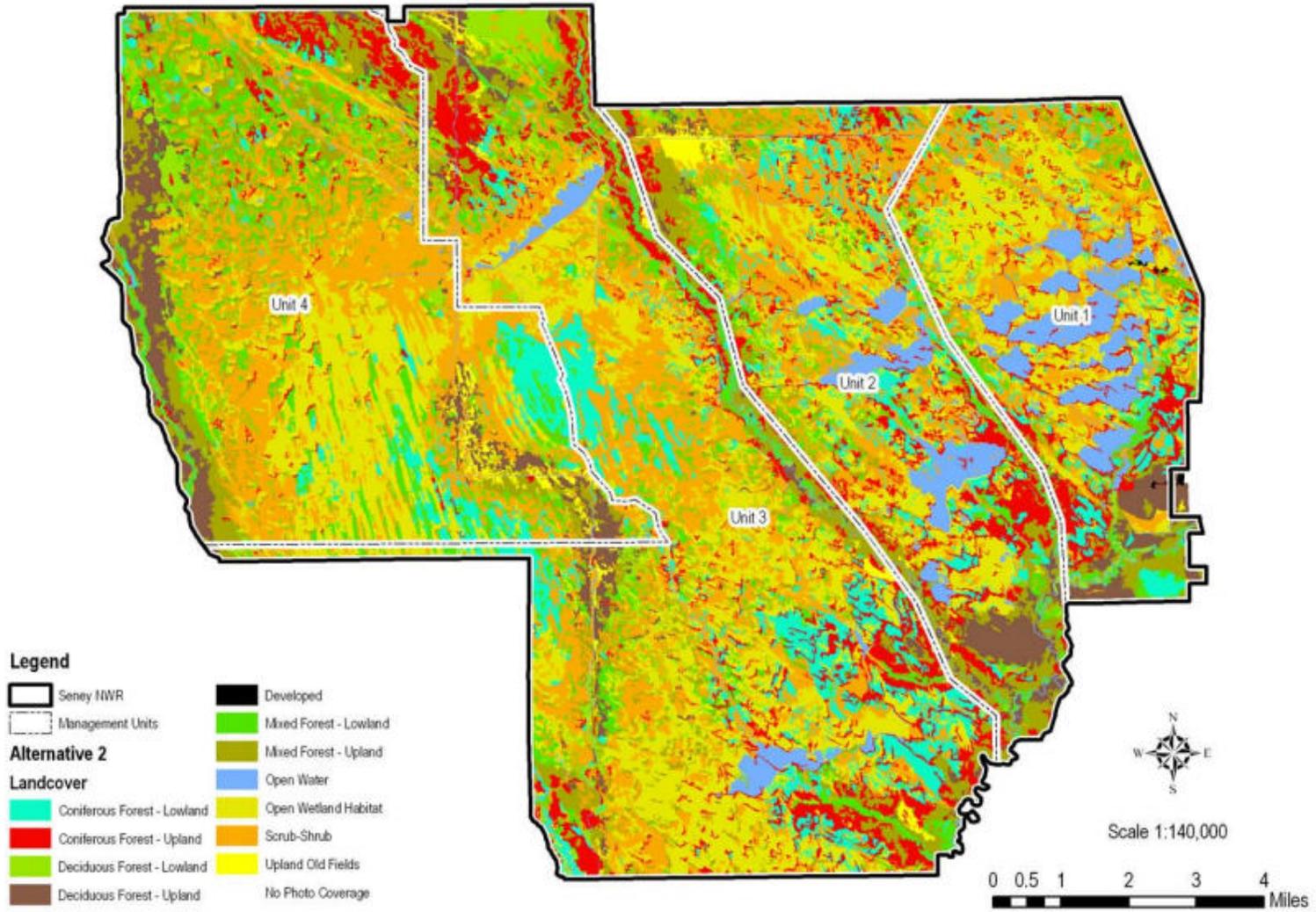


Figure 3: Map of Refuge Units.



The *Marshland Wildlife Drive* provides a seven mile exploration of wetlands, sedge meadows, and forests. There are three accessible observation decks. The 3.5 mile *Fishing Loop* offers an optional extension of the Marshland Wildlife Drive meandering through a larger variety of habitats as well as an accessible fishing pier and access to pools open to fishing. There is a one panel fishing information kiosk at the first spillway (F-E) on the *Fishing Loop*. There are several places along the *Fishing Loop* where fishing-line collection containers have been set up which allows the public to easily dispose of their used fishing line. All observation decks have interpretive panels (updated in 2011).

Nature and Cross-country Ski Trails

The Refuge has three established nature trails and seven cross-country ski trails.

Table 2: Hiking and Ski Trail Information

Trail	Length	Difficulty Hiking	Difficulty Skiing
Pine Ridge Nature Trail	1.4	Easy	Easiest – Not Groomed
Wigwam’s Connector Trail	0.5	Easy	Easiest – Not Groomed
South Show Pool Loop	0.5	Easy	Easiest – Not Groomed
Goose Pen Bend (Ski Trail)	0.8	Easy	Easiest
Otter Run (Ski Trail)	1.8	Easy	Easiest
Manistique River Run (Ski Trail)	2.3	Easy	Easiest
Smith Farm (Ski Trail)	0.6	Easy	Easiest
Bear Hollow (Ski Trail)	1.1	Moderate	More Difficult
Skunk Ridge (Ski Trail)	1.2	Moderate	More & Most Difficult
Cub Hollow (Ski Trail)	0.5	Moderate	Most Difficult

Hiking Trails

The hiking trails allow the public to explore the mixed pine, wetland and pool ecosystems. To some extent all of the current hiking trails could be made accessible.

The 1.4 mile interpretive Pine Ridge Nature Trail has a number of signs which identify plants and interpret how they support wildlife. In 2011, 2012 and 2013 the first half mile of this trail was made ABA accessible. The intent is to continue modification of the trail, creating an accessible path up to the first observation bench. At this time, there are no plans to continue the accessible portion of the trail as it would require re-grading the path and may not be practicable due to terrain without significantly altering the setting. The remainder of this trail is a dirt path with portions of elevated boardwalk. The trail circumnavigates Upper F Pool and goes through mixed-pine, open water and wetland habitats. The trail is rated easy with some slight changes in elevation.

The 0.5 mile Wigwam Connector Trail connects the Wigwam Access Point and the Pine Ridge Nature Trail. This dirt path has a few short boardwalks and one bridge. It is an easy trail with two short flights of stone stairs, with proper funding it would be possible to make this trail accessible, however the South Show Pool Loop should be the priority.

The 0.5 mile South Show Pool Loop begins at the Wigwam Access Point, skirts the edge of the South Show Pool, and has two short bridges. It is an easy trail and would be excellent for future consideration as an ABA accessible trail.

Cross-county Skiing/Hiking Trails

The Northern Hardwoods Cross Country Ski trails are already established and used as hiking trails by the general public during the summer months.

The 0.8 mile Goose Pen Bend is located off of Robinson Road. This trail winds through the northern hardwood forest, south of Robinson road, then around the south and west ends of the Upper Goose Pen Pool. During the summer this is an excellent place to hike and during the winter it is one of the seven groomed ski trails.

At 1.8 miles Otter Run follows one of the Refuge maintenance roads. It is located off of Robinson Road. The trail follows a dike which runs alongside A Pool and near Gray's Creek providing views of open water and glimpses of stream habitat. During the summer this functions as a maintenance road and is open to hiking and biking. Over the winter months it functions as a groomed cross-country ski trail, however due to its elevated and relatively unprotected location snow is often blown off the trail.

Manistique River Run is the longest trail on the Refuge at 2.3 miles. Located off of Robinson Road this trail follows Gray's Creek and a small portion of the Manistique River before doubling back to Robinson Road. This loop trail highlights mixed forest and riverine habitat and is an excellent place to see otter tracks in the winter. It is part of the groomed cross-country ski trails, but is also a great place to hike year round. In the spring this trail offers nice birding opportunities.

The 0.6 mile Smith Farm Trail highlights hardwood habitat and an old farm field. Located off of Robinson Road it is rated easy and serves as a hiking trail during the summer months and a groomed cross country ski trail during the winter months.

The 1.1 mile Bear Hollow is rated more difficult. The 0.5 mile Cub Hollow ski trail is rated most difficult. Cub Hollow is a half mile loop extension off of Bear Hollow. Both are located off of Robinson Road. These two trails wind through the northern hardwood forest habitat and are a wonderful place to view woodland wildflowers in the spring. There are a few vernal pools located on the Bear Hollow trail which prove tricky to navigate in the spring.

The 1.2 mile Skunk Ridge Trail is located off of Robinson Road. This trail serves as a more/most difficult groomed cross-country ski trail in the winter months and a hiking trail for the rest of the year.

Figure 4: Foot and Auto Trails near the Visitor Center.

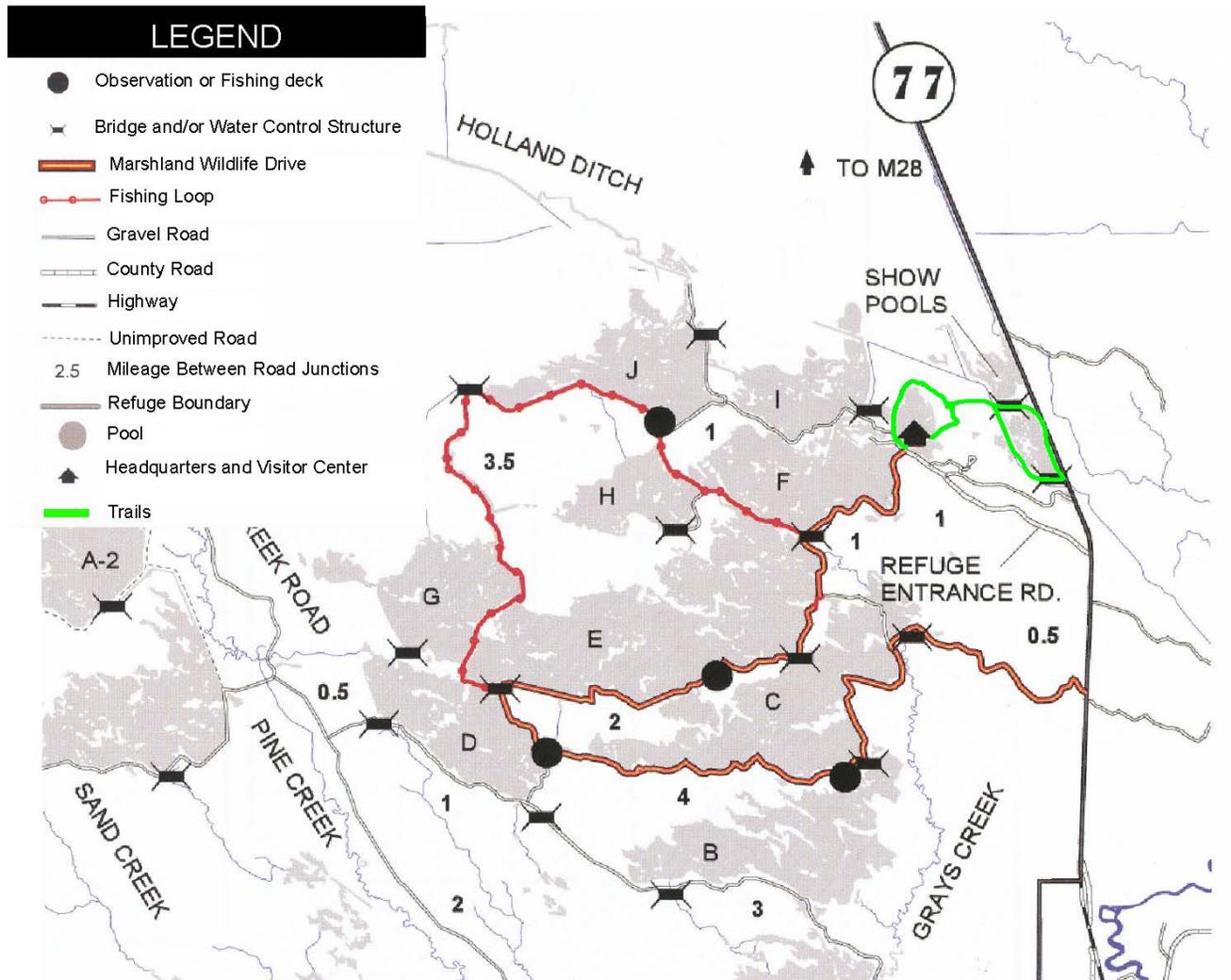
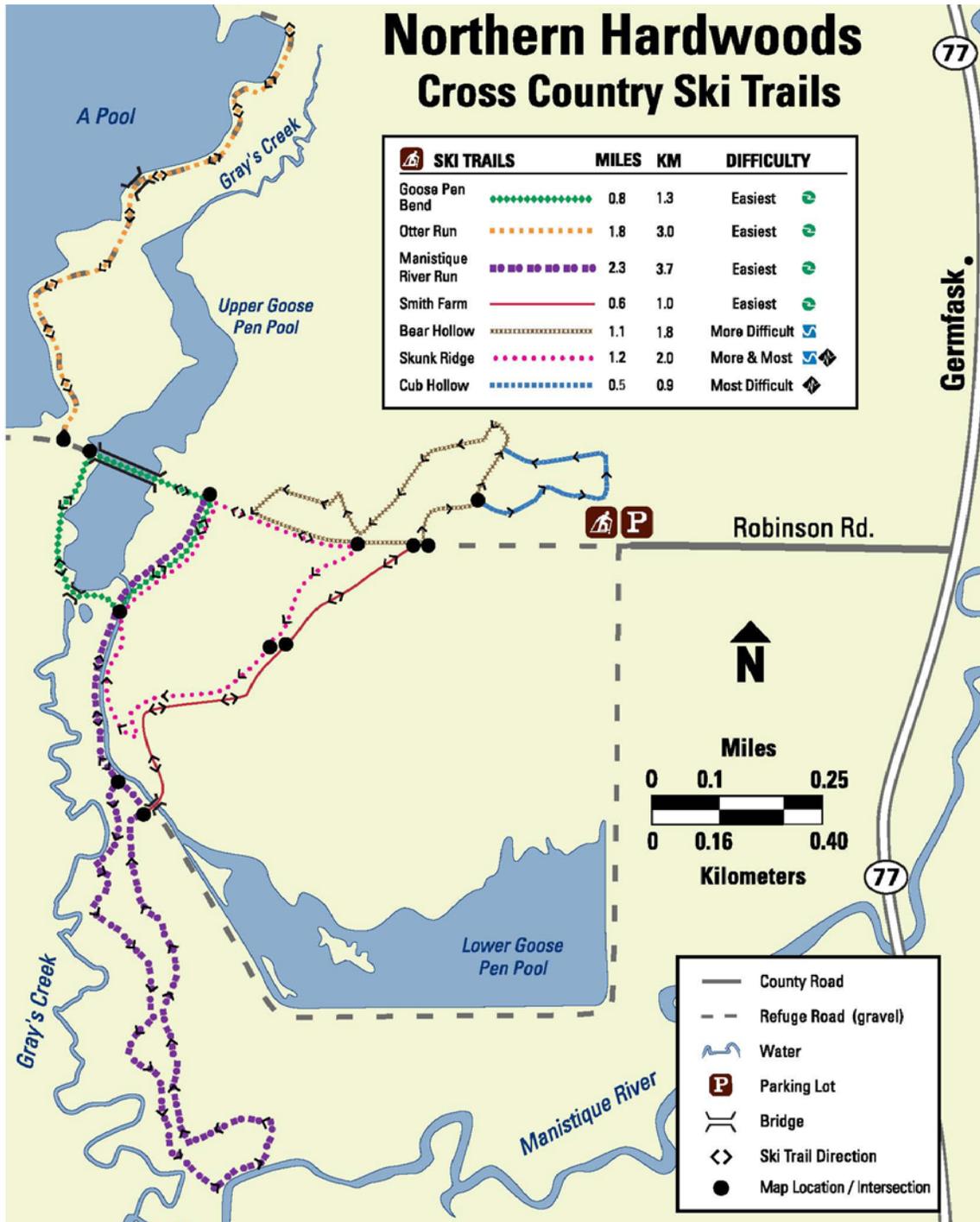


Figure 5: Northern Hardwoods Cross-country Ski and Hiking Trails.



Backcountry roads

All roads other than the auto tour routes and access roads are closed to public vehicles. The only exception to this is during firearms deer season when Driggs River Road, Pine Creek Road and Robinson Road are opened for hunting access. While all backcountry roads are closed to public vehicles they are open to hiking and bicycling. Bicycling on these roads has become increasingly popular, but use is still minimal and provides reasonably solitary experiences. Bicycles are not allowed on footpaths.

Other Visitor Services Facilities

A total of 13 informational kiosks are found throughout the Refuge (including one at the Whitefish Point Unit). These are located at all the major entrance points and other areas where important information needs to be disseminated to the public.

There is one unisex outhouse, which is closed in the winter, located at the Wigwams Access Point. Currently the outhouse is not ABA accessible, at some point an additional accessible outhouse should be built or the stall altered to accommodate ABA regulations. There is also a men's and women's after-hours restroom facility with running water and toilets, located between the headquarters office and the fire tower, available 24 hours a day from May 15th to October 20th until freezing weather closes them for the year. These facilities are ABA accessible.

A pavilion is located near the Headquarters office. During the summer of 2010 a concrete floor was added. Six tables are located there and the area is used for environmental education and special events. The staff and public also use it during the summer months.

Besides the interpretive panels located on the observation decks, there are also interpretive panels at Smith Farm, Conlon Farm, and Chicago Farm. A series of themed interpretive signs are spread throughout the Pine Ridge Nature trail. Interpretive/information signs were removed from the Marshland Wildlife Drive and the Driggs River Road in 2010/2011. Some of the signs that were removed were of simple icons of birds or mammals which were designed to go with a printed guide to the Marshland Wildlife Drive. The guide is out of print and the signs no longer made sense to the public therefor they were removed. Some signs were in poor condition and were removed or replaced with new signs.

A photo blind, which was once located on the Pine Ridge Nature Trail, is now located on the Diversion Farm site and is used for viewing/photographing sharp-tailed grouse.

Fire Tower

The fire tower is no longer open to the public due to safety concerns, mainly the structure and grade of the stairs. Visitors often ask if the tower can be climbed. Visitors are directed to the Refuge website to see the hazecam image which is updated every 15 minutes on a daily basis. The hazecam is located at the top of this tower used to evaluate air quality. The tower is also used for the Refuge radio system antenna.

H. VISITOR SERVICES MAP(S)

Figure 6: General Refuge Map

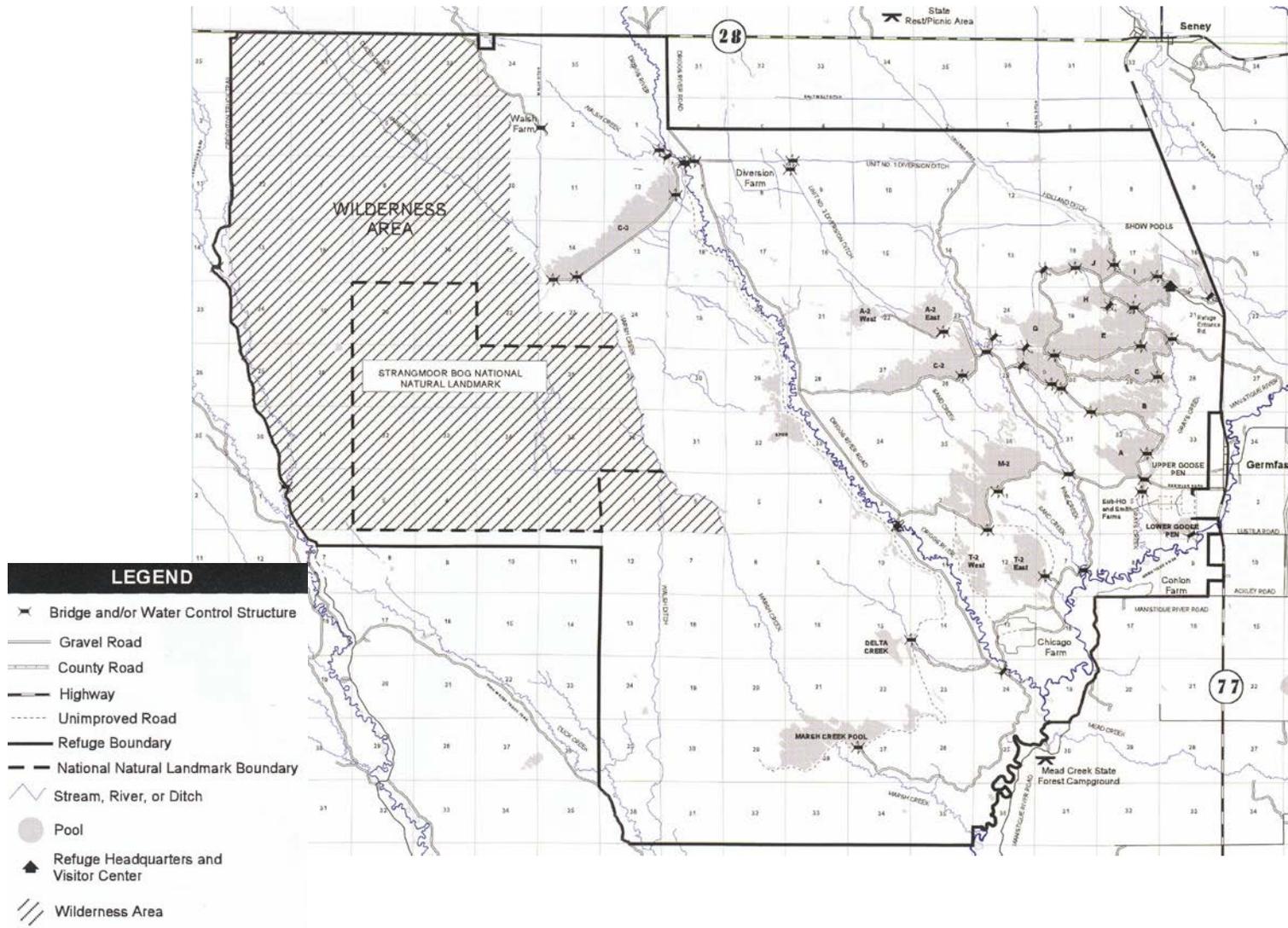
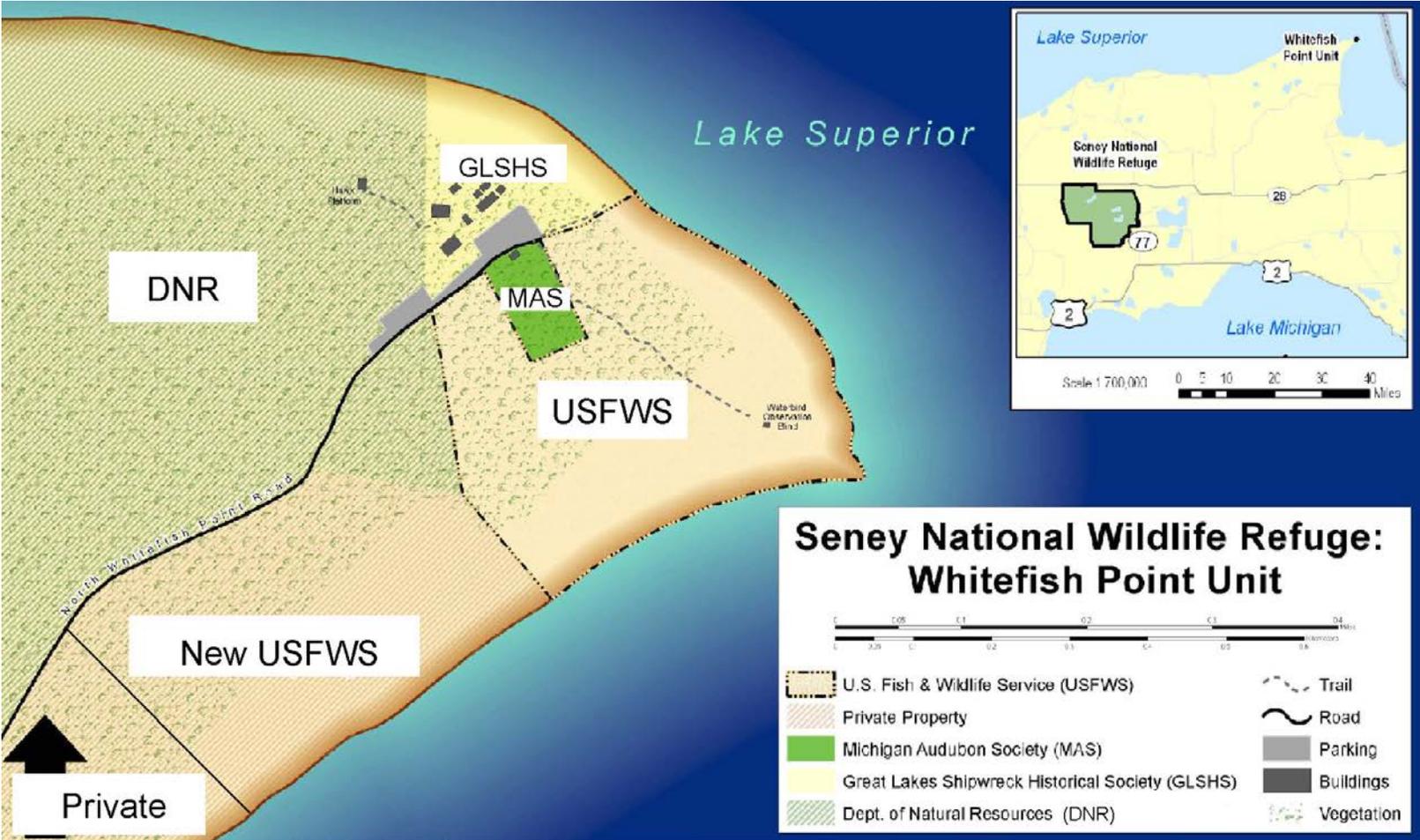


Figure 7: Whitefish Point Property



*Note: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is considering a land transfer agreement which would transfer all or a portion of the DNR lands at Whitefish Point to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Figure 8: Building Locations

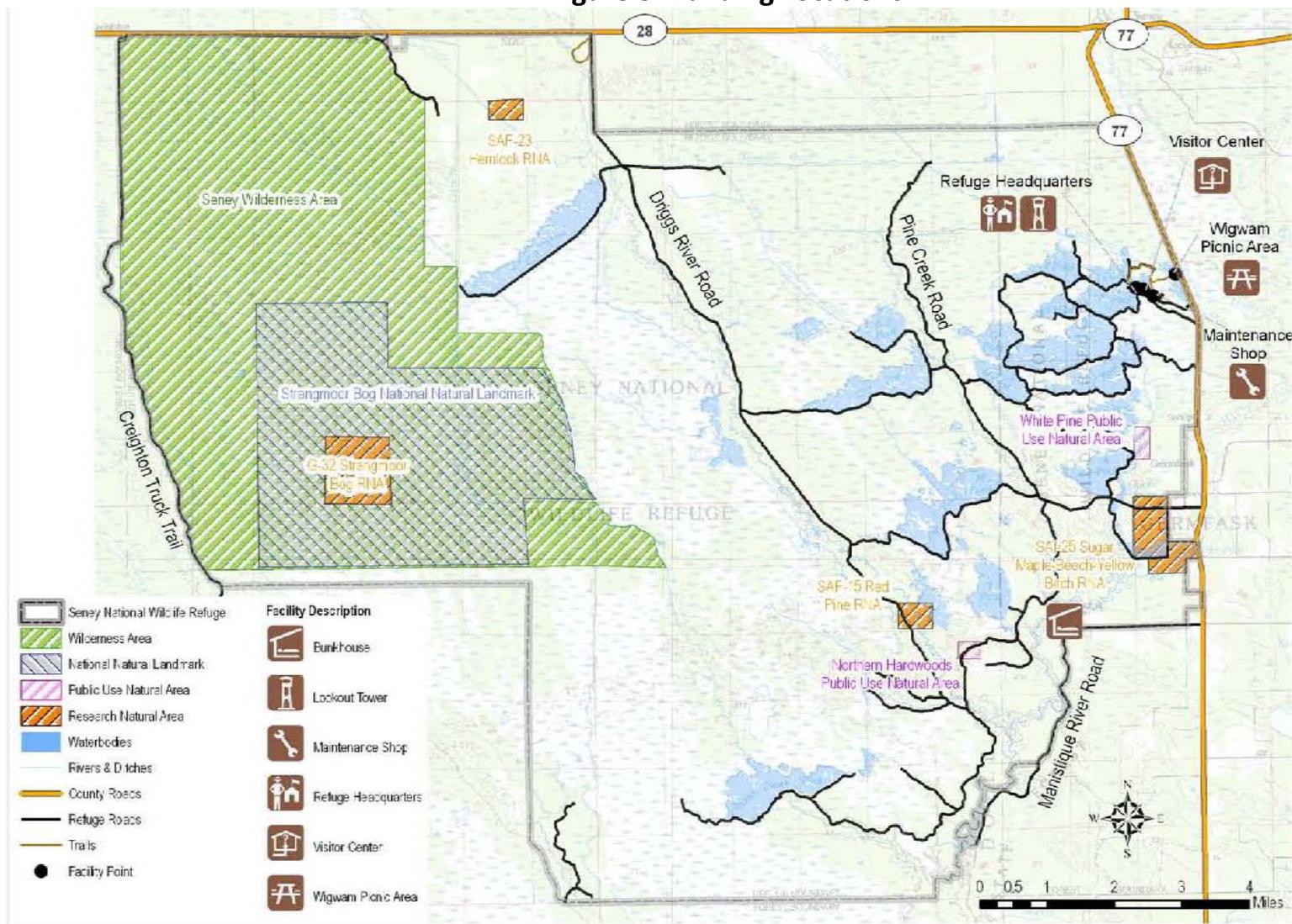


Figure 9: Kiosk Locations

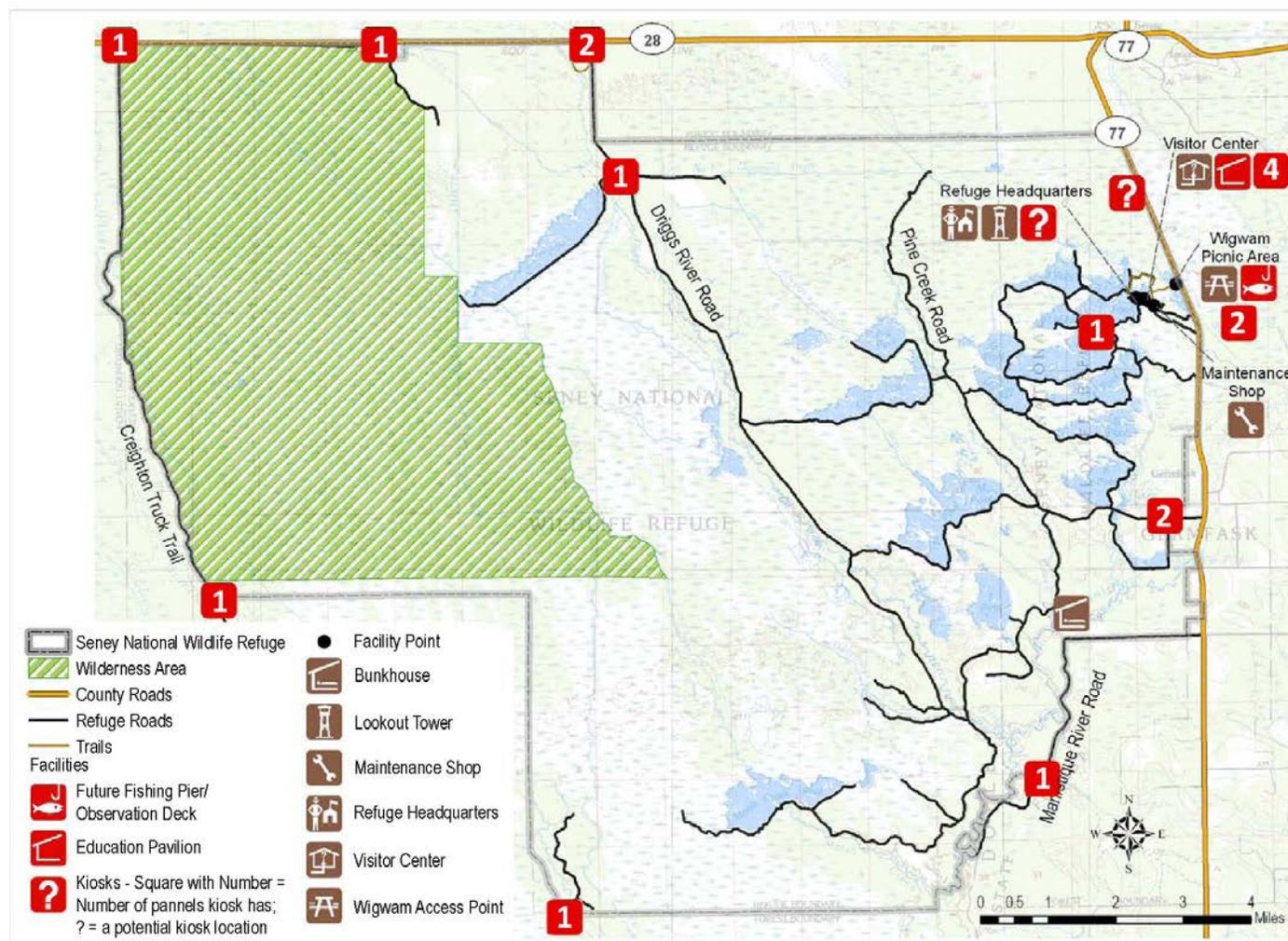


Figure 10: Parking Lots near the Visitor Center

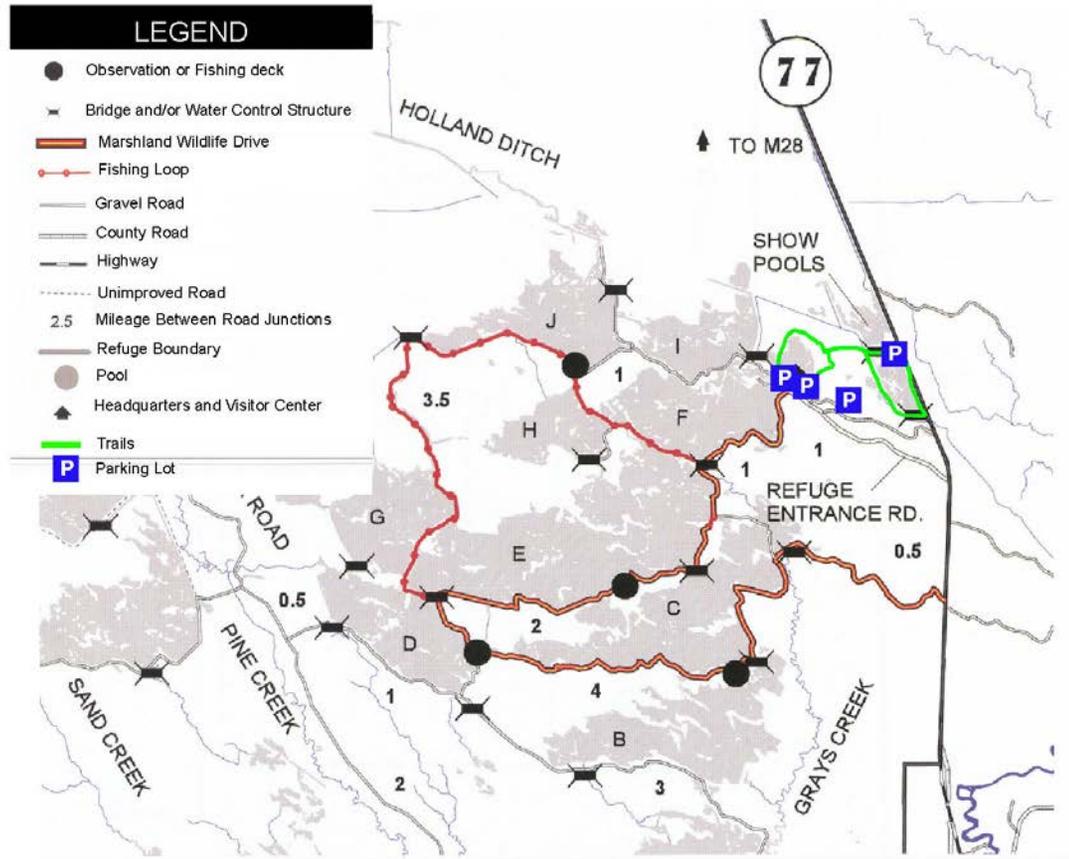


Figure 11: Parking Lots

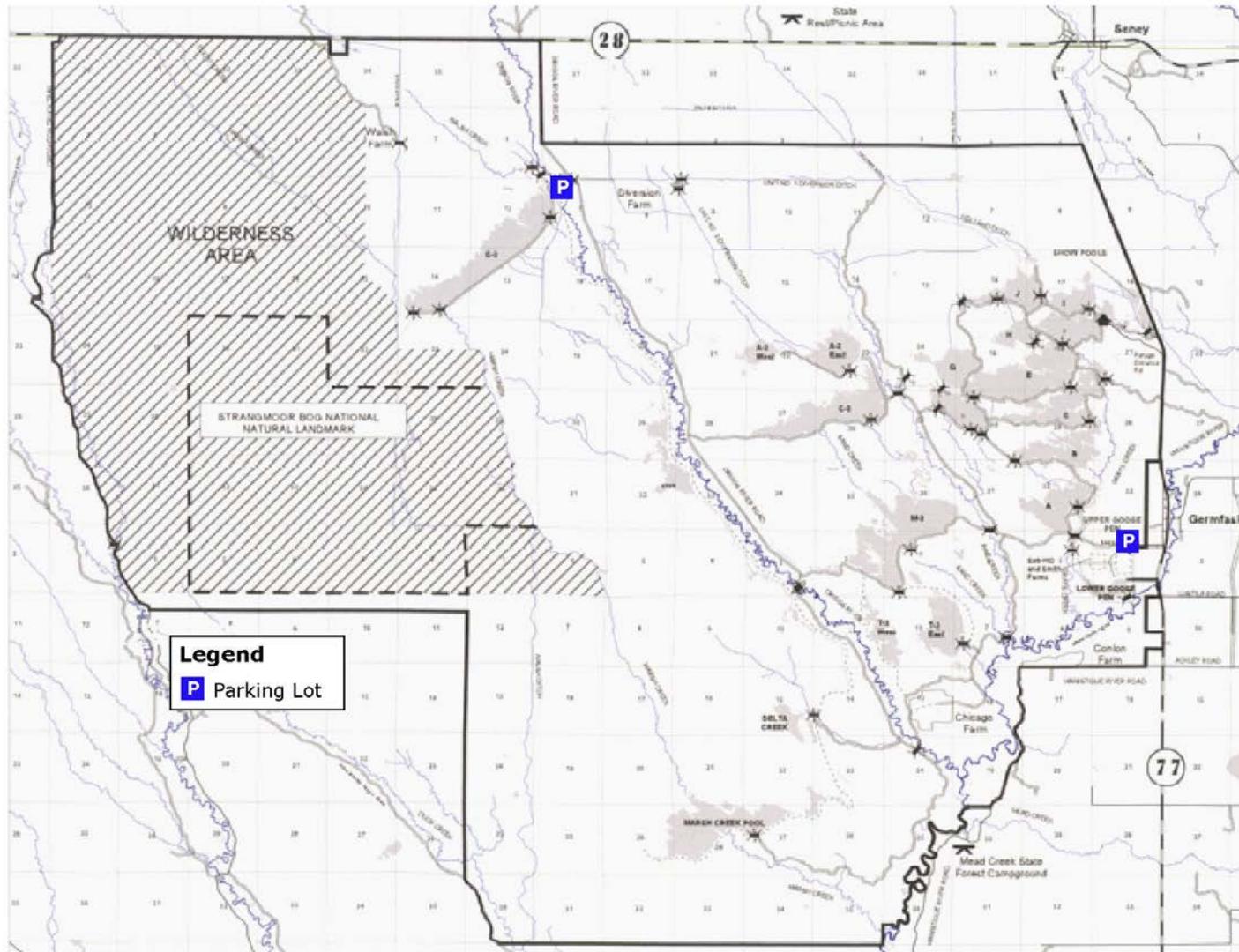


Figure 12: Counter Locations near the Visitor Center

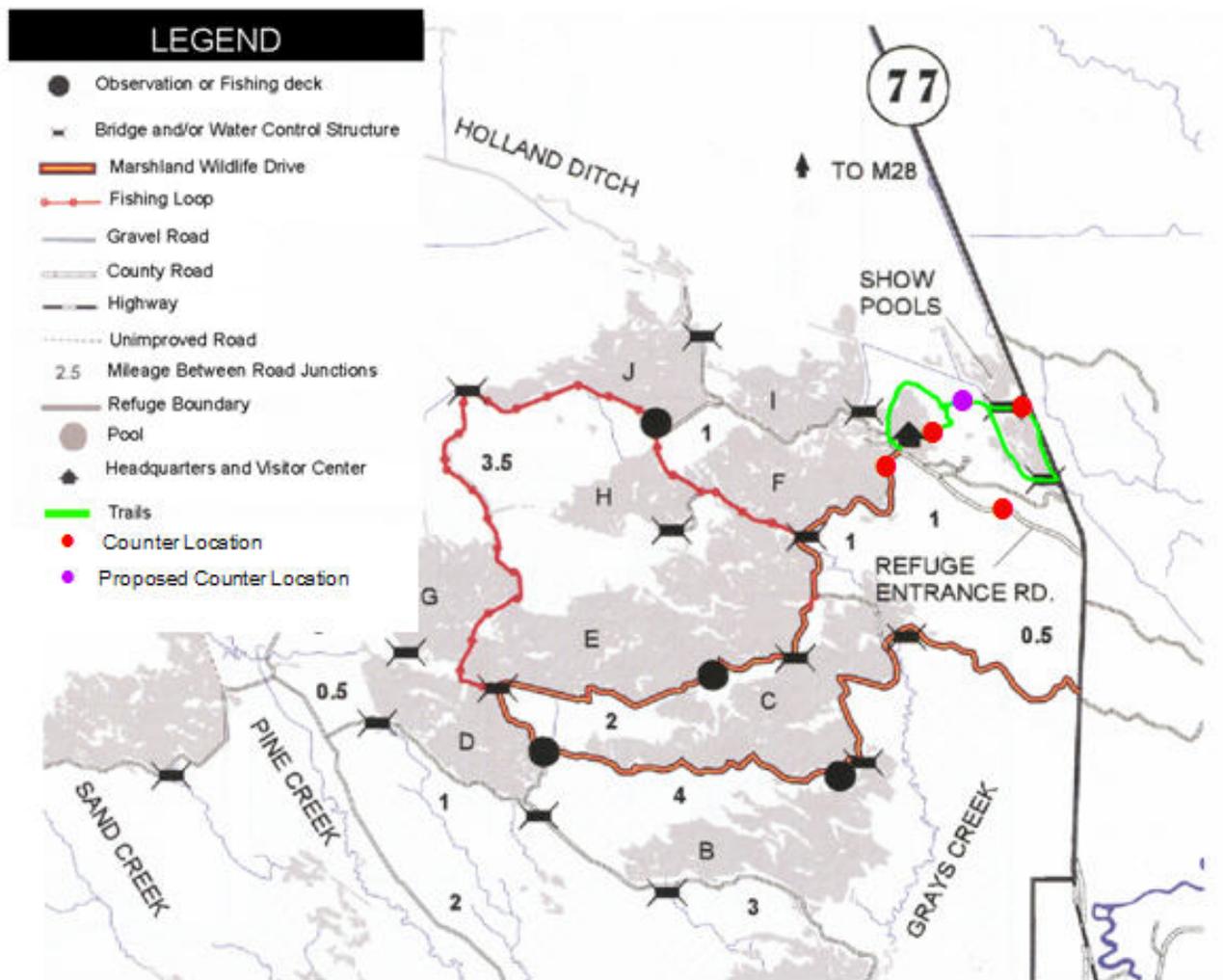


Figure 13: Other Counter Locations

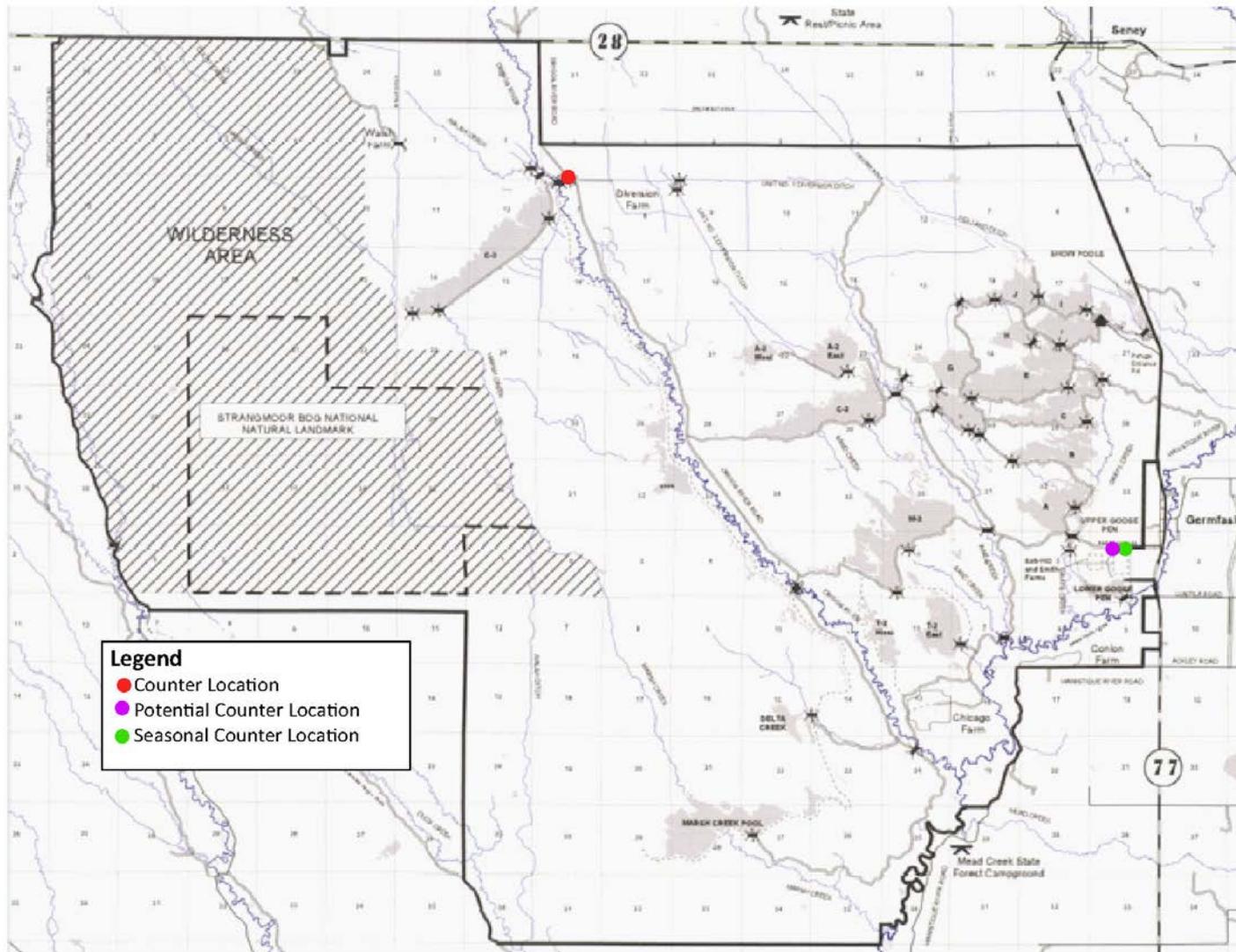


Figure 14: Other Kiosk and Counter Locations – Whitefish Point Unit



I. Refuge Visitation Trends and Identifying Audiences

An estimated 58,462 visits occurred in Fiscal Year 2013; Table 3 shows the Refuge’s visitation trends over the last five years. Refuge staff and volunteers manually compile the number of visits to the Refuge Visitor Center, including the number of students that attend environmental education programs both on- and off-refuge. There is a series of traffic and people counters (both pneumatic and infrared beam) located on the entrance road, the Marshland Wildlife Drive, the Pine Ridge Nature Trail, Driggs River Road, Robinson Road and the Wigwam’s Access Point. The local canoe liveries assist with the estimate of canoe/kayak numbers on the river by providing their rental numbers each month. See Table 1 for calculation formulas (p.13).

Table 3 - Refuge Visitation Trends FY 2009-2013 – shown as entered into Refuge Annual Performance Planning (RAPP) Reports (see Table 1: Formulas and Values Used to Calculate Refuge Visitation to see how these numbers are calculated (p.13).)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Five Year Average
Big 6 Activities						
Hunting Visits	650	650	650	650	650	650
Fishing	2,000	1,022	1,274	1,274	1,274	1,369
Total Wildlife Observation	40,087	35,332	38,279	41,035	48,496	40,646
Auto Tour Visits	24,950	25,876	32,092	33,743	41,135	31,559
Hiking Trail Visits	8,674	6,000	3,803	4,898	5,999	5,875
Wildlife Photography	20,542	20,943	21,604	19,006	19,488	20,317
Environmental Education On and Off Site Visits	938	2,409	1,764	1,380	741	1,446
Interpretation On and Off Site Visits	2,651	1,482	1,365	1,332	1,472	1,660
Other Recreational Activities						
Visitor Center Visits	18,454	19,314	18,194	17,707	17,812	18,296
Canoe/Kayak	1,463	2,806	1,592	1,606	573	1,608
Bike Visits	500	650	792	789	789	704
Other Recreation	2,264	600	550	550	585	910
Number of Special Events	5	6	6	5	8	6
Special Event Participants	1,670	1,798	1,358	1,544	1,702	1,614
Total Number of Visitors	69,626	70,829	55,670	57,076	48,462	60,333

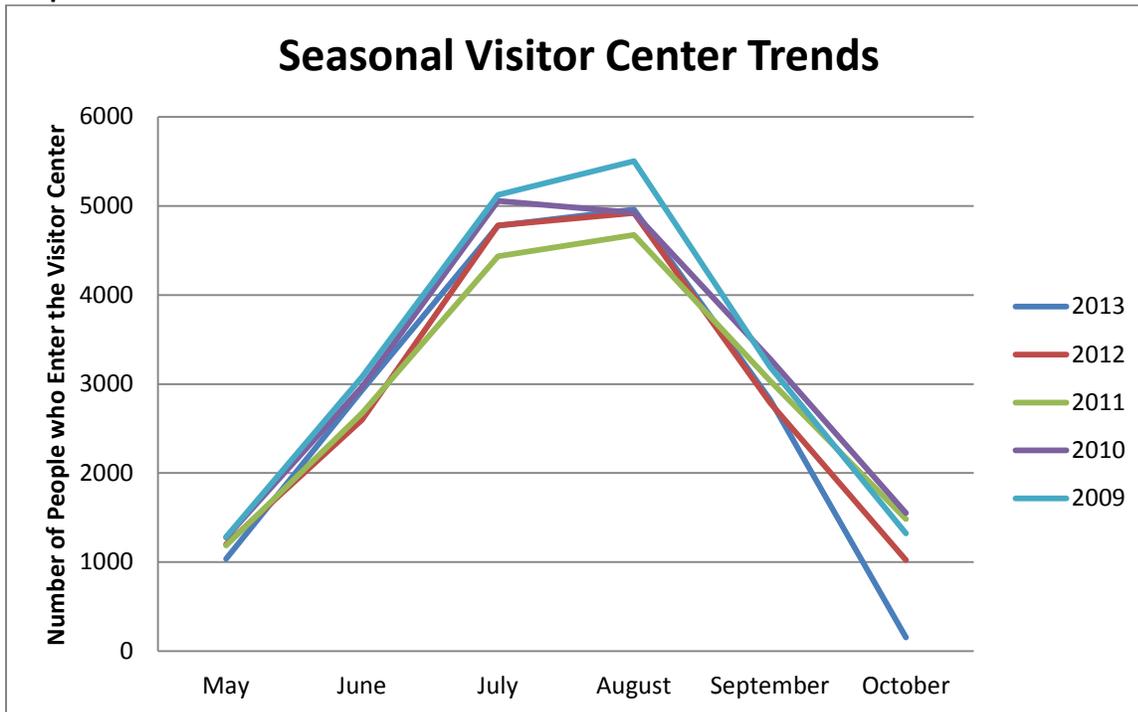
Visitation Trends

In FY 2013, people from 47 states and 14 countries signed our guest book. Eight-one percent that signed in were from Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, or Illinois. Approximately 27% of visitors entering the Visitor Center voluntarily sign into a guest register.

Seasonal Visitation

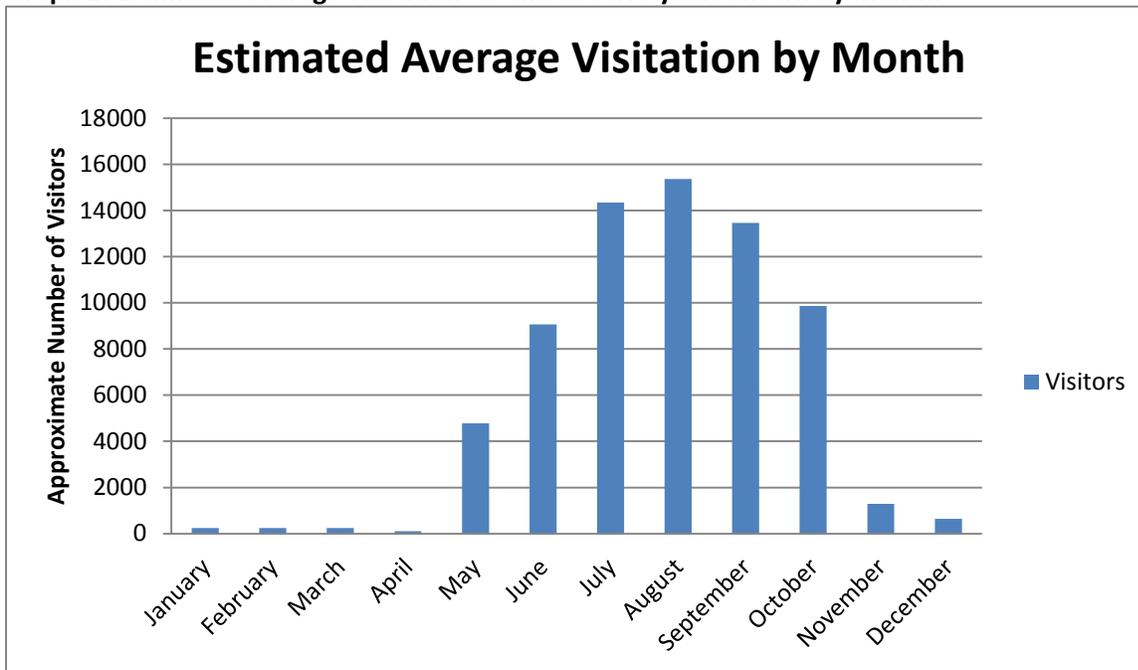
In general, the Refuge experiences its greatest number of visitors during the summer months with most people visiting in June, July, and August. The graphs below show the approximate number of visitors per month for the Visitor Center and the average number of visitors per month to the Refuge in general.

Graph 1: Visitor Center Seasonal Trends for the Past Five Years.



Note: October 2013 the government shutdown for 16 days and the Visitor Center was closed. This is reflected in the number of visits for that month.

Graph 2: Estimated average visitation for the last five years shown by month.



J. VISITOR CAPACITY

Balancing the needs of visitors with the goal of protecting and managing resources can be challenging. Managing visitor capacity is essential both for protecting resources and also for maintaining the quality of the visitor experience. It's not just about limiting numbers of visitors, but also about improving visitor experiences and limiting impacts to resources by providing alternatives, managing visitor flow and creating new opportunities.

Hunting

Overall, the Refuge has consistently offered a quality hunting experience and, as a result, has received positive feedback about the hunting program. Presently the Refuge is open to white-tailed deer, black bear, snowshoe hare, American woodcock, snipe and ruffed grouse hunting. Due to its rural nature, large size, and limited vehicle access, there is light hunting pressure on the Refuge and a greater number of hunters could be supported.

The Refuge is one of the only areas in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan that offers a hunting experience free of bait and all-terrain vehicles. While this limits the numbers of hunters that use the Refuge, those that do use the Refuge seem to appreciate these restrictions.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

At Seney NWR the environmental education and interpretation programs are limited by the rural nature of the Refuge, day-use only restrictions and the public's interest. Currently, the Refuge provides environmental education to local schools as requests are made. The number of requests is limited and we have no problem meeting the needs. Attendance at interpretive programs varies considerably. We have had the greatest success with guided auto tours and walk-up stations where visitors may ask questions and learn about one topic in five minutes or less. Evening auto tours are the most popular and can accommodate a fair number of people, but too

many cars in the caravan can make it difficult to share viewing experiences. We use a 14 seat passenger bus, van, and suburban and often there is disappointment when all the seats are taken. Taking a caravan of unknown vehicles into the backcountry also raises invasive species concerns. In 2013 a wash down protocol was put in place and all private vehicles are washed down to remove dirt which may contain invasive species seeds. This helps reduce the chance of invasive species spreading to the backcountry.

Interpretive programs other than guided tours usually draw fewer participants, possibly due to the limited time people have to visit the Refuge.

Special Events

The Refuge hosts a number of annual special events. The most well attended events include Winter Film Festival, Children's Fishing Day and Youth in the Outdoors (changed from Scout Day in 2012). These events have been going on for a number of years and are very popular with the local community. These events draw anywhere from 25 people per night (Winter Film Festival), to over 200 people (Scout Day).

II. Implementation Strategies

This section uses the format of the fourteen Visitor Services Standards in correlation with the relevant CCP goals and objectives. Visitor Services related objectives may be found within other CCP goals (i.e. Fish and Wildlife Populations, Habitat Management, Resource Protection, and Refuge Administration). This process will identify existing CCP strategies and develop additional strategies that will form the basics of the Visitor Services Plan.

Table 4 lists all CCP goals and objectives that are relevant to Visitor Services:

TABLE 4: CCP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

<p>GOAL 1- Wildlife: Preserve, conserve, and (where and when appropriate) restore the diversity of wildlife native to the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan; with an emphasis on Region 3 Conservation Priority Species.</p>	<p><i>Not relevant to the Visitor Use Plan, other than to share these goals with the public.</i></p>
<p>GOAL 2- Habitat: Conserve the range of habitat conditions now found within the Refuge and (where and when possible) restore to pre-European conditions once characteristic of the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan.</p>	<p><i>Not relevant to the Visitor Use Plan, other than to share these goals with the public.</i></p>
<p>GOAL 3 – People: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan.</p>	<p><i>Objective 3.1: Hunting</i> - Provide 200 days of quality upland hunting experiences per year with fewer than 10 complaints annually. (see Standard 3 (p.54))</p> <p><i>Objective 3.2: Fishing</i> - Provide 125 days of quality fishing experiences per year with fewer than 10 complaints annually. (see Standard 4 (p.59))</p>

	<p><i>Objective 3.3: Wildlife Observation and Photography – Provide year-round opportunities for at least 25,000 visitors annually to observe and photograph wildlife and habitat. (See Standard 5 (p.63))</i></p>
	<p><i>Objective 3.4: Environmental Education and Interpretation – Annually provide no fewer than 400 quality environmental education experiences and 700 quality interpretive experiences per year to promote an understanding of the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula. (See Standards 6 and 7 (p.68, 74))</i></p>
	<p><i>Objective 3.5: Protection of Cultural Resources – Ensure archaeological and cultural values are described, identified, and taken into consideration prior to implementing undertakings. (Should be developed in a separate Cultural Resources Management Plan)</i></p>
	<p><i>Objective 3.6: Cultural Resources Appreciation – Seventy percent of visitors will understand and appreciate the cultural history of the Refuge. (See Standard 2 (p.43))</i></p>
	<p><i>Objective 3.7: Whitefish Point Unit – Within 5 years of CCP completion, implement the Service’s provisions of the 2002 Human Use/Natural Resource Management Plan for Whitefish Point. (See Standard 2 (p.43))</i></p>
	<p><i>Objective 3.8: Provide additional access opportunities upon request on a case-by-case basis if compatible with Refuge purposes. (See Standards 8 and 13 (p.80, 97))</i></p>

THE TEN VISITOR SERVICES PROGRAM STANDARDS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policy establishes 10 visitor services standards that, when appropriate and compatible, should be a part of most National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services programs throughout the country. Service employees, volunteers, concessionaires, and others should conform to these standards when planning, conducting, and evaluating Visitor Services activities, and when developing and maintaining Visitor Services facilities on National Wildlife Refuges. While staffing, funding, and the opportunities to enjoy a variety of wildlife-dependent recreational activities will vary from field station to field station, we should meet the Visitor Services standards whenever possible.”

Following are the 10 Visitor Services standards. You can find this list and their definitions in 605 FW 1, General Guidelines for Wildlife-dependent Recreation.

- *Standard 1. Develop a Visitor Services Plan*
- *Standard 2. Welcome and Orient Visitors*
- *Standard 3. Provide Quality Hunting Opportunities*
- *Standard 4. Provide Quality Fishing Opportunities*

-
- *Standard 5. Provide Quality Wildlife Observation and Photography Opportunities*
 - *Standard 6. Develop and Implement a Quality Environmental Education Program*
 - *Standard 7. Provide Quality Interpretation of Key Resources and Issues*
 - *Standard 8. Manage for Other Recreational Use Opportunities*
 - *Standard 9. Communicate Key Issues with Off-site Audiences*
 - *Standard 10. Build Volunteer Programs and Partnerships with Friends Organizations*

While these 10 Visitor Services standards are the foundation of a Visitor Services program on a field station, there are many other elements to a Visitor Services program that are also important including these additional four standards:

- *Standard 11. Recreation Fee Program*
- *Standard 12. Concessions*
- *Standard 13. Commercial uses*
- *Standard 14. Wilderness*

The 14 standards and other elements are not listed in priority order. Wildlife-dependent recreational priorities will vary from one field station to another.” (USFWS Draft Visitor Services Standards 2010).

STANDARD 1: DEVELOP A VISITOR SERVICES PLAN

Policy (605 FW 1.14 A)

Refuge managers will develop a Visitor Services Plan (VSP) that addresses all compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses on their Refuge.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

A Visitor Services Management Plan is critical to the future of the Refuge's visitor services program. The new Visitor Services Plan replaces the 1980 Interpretation/Recreation Planning Prospectus. This plan will communicate the goals, objectives and strategies for the Visitor Services program and will outline resource needs. The plan will also demonstrate how the Visitor Services program is integrated with the natural and cultural resource management programs and how it will support visitor understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural resource management programs.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. *(CCP Goal 3 (p. 39-40))*

Objectives

Objective: Create a series of plans to help direct the Visitor Services program at Seney NWR. *(New Objective)*

Strategies

Strategy 1.1: Develop a Visitor Services Plan in 2012. *(CCP Step-down Management Plan Schedule)*

Strategy 1.2: Utilize Visitor Services Plan to produce an annual work plan. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 1.3: Develop a hunting/fishing step down plan in 2014/2015. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 1.4: Finalize the sign plan in 2014/2015. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 1.5: Develop and implement a Visitor Estimation Plan for the Refuge by 2015. *(New Strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

Review and update Visitor Services Plan and step-down plans every five years or as needed according to service policy.

STANDARD 2: WELCOME AND ORIENT VISITORS

Policy (605 FW 1.14 B)

We will assure that the Refuge is welcoming, safe, and accessible. We will provide visitors with clear information so they can easily determine where they can go, what they can do, and how to safely and ethically engage in recreational and educational activities. Facilities will meet the quality criteria defined in 605 FW 1, Section 1.6 of the Service Manual. We will treat visitors with courtesy and in a professional manner.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

The Refuge receives most of its visitors from mid-May through mid-October, the same time period that the Visitor Center and Marshland Wildlife Drive are open. Seney NWR spans over 150 square miles and has several access points, facilities, and publications to help welcome and orient visitors to the Refuge. In the following pages each topic will be addressed.

Facilities

Refuge staff and volunteers maintain a number of facilities used to welcome and orient visitors including: the Visitor Center and headquarters buildings, restrooms, roads and parking areas, trails, Wigwam Access Area, pavilion, and observation decks.

Visitor Center and Headquarters Buildings

The Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. May 15th to October 20th. The dates the Visitor Center is open are posted on the entrance sign. Headquarters and Visitor Center hours are posted on all kiosks and the doors of the Headquarters and Visitor Center respectively. The front desk at the Visitor Center is frequently staffed by volunteers or interns.

The Visitor Center is consistently busy during the months it is open. In FY 2013, approximately 17,812 people stopped to visit. The Visitor Center is 48 years old and lacks storage, office, and sales space. Seney Natural History Association operates a bookstore with a large selection of books, t-shirts and other items, displayed nicely in a small space. At this time the Visitor Center is not scheduled to be replaced in the near future (10 to 15 years or more). With that in mind the Refuge should begin to budget upgrades including but not limited to:

- A new heating a cooling system. The current system has never worked properly. An attempt was made during the winter of 2012/2013 to correct the problem of over-heated zones in the cool/cold season. The summer of 2013 was very uncomfortable as the air conditioning system began to malfunction causing large amounts of ice to build up in the compressors and not allowing the cool air to circulate.
- The displays are outdated and most of the mounts look old and are worn. The Refuge should consider updating a display every one or two years as the budget allows. This is discussed further in *Standard 7: Interpretation*.
- Carpeting and other flooring should be replaced.
- The outside décor of the facility is outdated (circa late 1960s) and could use a more modern look.
- The spotting scopes on the deck at the back of the Visitor Center and at the Visitor Center kiosk are getting old and need to be repaired or replaced.
- A telephone should be installed at the front desk as calls are often missed while working at the desk because staff and volunteers cannot hear the phone ring. This is a customer service issue that should be corrected.

-
- Update the electrical in the building and add additional outlets, especially in the exhibit room and the office.
 - Research the need for wireless and other internet capabilities for the Visitor Center, if needed work with SNHA to secure the necessary upgrades.
 - Upgrade lighting to more energy efficient and display appropriate options.
 - Replace the exterior lights.
 - Replace the ceiling. Over the years many leaks have occurred causing discoloration.
 - Replace the glass doors and possibly the windows at the Visitor Center. The doors have approximately ¼ inch spaces between the doors which causes cold air and snow to drift into the Visitor Center in the winter increasing heating bills. It also allows rodents such as mice to enter the building, which are destructive.
 - Install gutters for visitor comfort and safety. During rain storms visitors must pass through a curtain of rain running off of the roof to enter the building. In the winter as snow and ice melt off the roof the water falls on the sidewalk and freezes causing a slipping hazard.
 - Evaluate sidewalks each year. At this time the sidewalks are in good condition and do not pose a safety issue, however they are getting older and starting to crack. As this happens they should be evaluated for safety issues and if heaves occur they should be replaced promptly to avoid tripping hazards.

A concept plan should be developed to help organize the Visitor Center upgrades. This plan will define priorities, dates of installation and a basic budget for the work.

The headquarters building is open year round Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Between 7:00 am and 4:30 pm weekdays, the public can usually reach somebody in the headquarters office by telephone. In addition, the Visitor Center has one telephone line. A caller who is unable to reach a staff member at the Visitor Center is referred to a voicemail and will be given hours of operation and information about upcoming events and instructed to either leave a message or call the main headquarters number to speak to someone right away. The headquarters voicemail lists the headquarters and Visitor Center hours and extension numbers of each staff member and their position title. It also provides time for a visitor to leave a message. These messages are forwarded to the correct staff person the next business day.

After many years of operation the “slide show” was retired in 2009 and replaced by a new film “The Wonder of Nature” which now serves as the Refuge orientation show. The film was created with the combined efforts of the Seney Natural History Association (SNHA) and the Refuge staff. The film was paid for by SNHA and is a nice addition to the Visitor Center. Unfortunately closed captioning was overlooked and will need to be added to the film to make it ABA compliant.

Restrooms

Public restrooms located at the Visitor Center were renovated in 2006 and are ABA compliant, well maintained and open during working hours. There are two public restrooms in the headquarters building but only one is ABA compliant. These are available during office hours year round. Accessible after-hours restrooms are also available May – October next to Refuge headquarters. The Wigwam Rest Area has a latrine with no running water which is maintained by volunteers from May to October. At this time the latrine is not ABA compliant.

Roads and Parking

Seney NWR can be entered from state or county roads and by boat from the Manistique River. All roads found within the Refuge are Refuge-owned and maintained. The Refuge Entrance Road is the only paved road on the Refuge. All other roads are gravel or dirt including the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop. The Refuge Entrance Road is open year round. The Marshland Wildlife Drive is open from May 15th to October 20th. The Fishing Loop is open from May 15th to September 30th. The intent is to keep Robinson Road, Driggs River Road, and Pine Creek Road open from November 13th to the end of the regular firearms deer season. If feasible these roads are left open to the public during the muzzleloader season until they become impassible due to snowfall. The only roads with access points to the Manistique River are off Refuge lands.

As mentioned in *Section D. Visitor Services Issues, Concerns, and Factors to Consider – Visitor Center* from time to time visitors miss the turn off to the Visitor Center building and end up at the main office. A number of signage options have been attempted and an alternate idea needs to be researched and implemented to alleviate this confusion.

There are several parking areas maintained by Refuge staff (see Figures 10 & 11 (p.30,31)): one at the headquarters office, one at the Visitor Center, a staff parking area at the maintenance shop, a small public parking lot near the C-3 Pool, various pull outs along the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop, a public parking lot at the Northern Hardwoods Area, and another at the Wigwams Access Point. The Visitor Center is the only parking lot with designated handicapped parking spots. An accessible parking spot should be designated at the Wigwams Access Point.

There is a large pile of gravel stored near the maintenance area adjacent to the Entrance Road. The pile is unsightly and the 2006 Visitor Services Review suggested moving it to a location that would not be easily seen by the visiting public. This could be accomplished by using up the current pile and placing new gravel stocks elsewhere – possibly by the “boneyard”. This gravel is used to maintain Refuge roads including the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop.

Bridge inspections are completed every other year to ensure Refuge bridges including the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop are safe. In 2011 the J-H spillway bridge was found to have some structural problems and weight restrictions were placed on the bridge. The bridge is scheduled to be replaced in 2014 and the Fishing Loop will be closed for several months while this work is completed. This is all part of the effort to maintain the auto tour loops.

Observation Decks

There are four observation decks located along the auto tour routes and two located near the Visitor Center. This topic will be discussed further in *Standard 5: Wildlife Observation and Wildlife Photography*.

Trails

Trails are discussed in detail in *Section D: Visitor Services Issues, Concerns and Factors to Consider* and *Section G: Nature and Cross-country Ski Trails*. The following is a basic description of the trails Refuge staff maintains:

- *The Pine Ridge Nature Trail* – The trail is a 1.4 mile loop trail which departs from the Visitor Center and rings Upper F Pool. A portion of this trail has already been developed for ABA compliance and the staff plans to continue the accessible portion of the trail to the first bench.

-
- *Wigwam Connector Trail* – The trail is a 0.5 mile trail that connects the Wigwam Access Point to the Pine Ridge Nature Trail. It would be possible to make this trail ABA compliant, however it is not a priority at this time as other trails pose better opportunities.
 - *South Show Pool Trail* – The trail is a 0.5 mile trail which rings the South Show Pool and connects to the Wigwam Connector Trail. This trail is ideal for conversion to an ABA compliant trail.
 - *Northern Hardwoods Trails* – These trails encompass a system of seven ski trails spanning about 10 miles during the winter months. The trails are groomed once a week as snow conditions allow. They also serve as hiking trails throughout the summer months. The Bear Cub trail winds through an area with several vernal pools in the spring. A good Youth Conservation Corps project would be to construct boardwalks over these vernal pools.

These trails require maintenance including trimming brush and vegetation to prevent tripping hazards. The boardwalk and bridges need to be inspected on a regular basis and cracked, broken boards, and other structural problems need to be fixed. Trails should be walked on a regular basis to watch for downed trees, holes and other obstacles that could injure visitors.

Trail counters should be installed at the Whitefish Point Unit, Robinson Road and the Wigwam Connector Trail in an effort to collect better numbers on hikers, skiers, bikers, and snowshoers.

Wigwam Access Point

Constructed in the late 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Wigwam Access Point features signage that interprets the history of the CCC on the Refuge as well as the natural history of the area. Tables at the Wigwams may be used during school visits or for nature study. The Show Pools located next to the wigwams are open to fishing. The *2009 Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)* suggests an accessible viewing platform be constructed at this location. Because of its historical significance and unique design, all efforts should be made to maintain this structure and its historic integrity.

Pavilion

Tables at the pavilion that are used during school visits also provide visitors a place to relax and conduct nature studies while visiting the Refuge.

Signs and Kiosks

Refuge boundary signs have been posted per Service guidelines. Maintaining these signs require constant commitment as signs fade from weather, are vandalized or fall into disrepair due to wear and tear.

In general, the signs, kiosks, and brochures available to the public allow visitors to become quickly oriented to the Refuge and easily find their way around. In 2011, the Refuge completed a number of updates and additions to the Refuge's signs as outlined in the *Comprehensive Conservation Plan of 2009* and the *Visitor Services Review of 2006*. Staff, in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation, replaced a number of fading and worn out directional signs located at key locations along M-28, M-77, and US-2. Staff also installed new entrance signs, interpretive kiosks and replaced faded directional signs in Unit 1. Two M77 highway directional sign leading people to the Northern Hardwoods Trails still need to be replaced (northbound and southbound). The replacement of this sign requires cooperation from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Visitor Center dates of operation (May 15th to October 20th) are posted on the Refuge entrance sign. Actual hours of operation for the office and the Visitor Center are posted on the doors of each facility respectively. Hours of operation and contact information are also located on all kiosks. At this time, no emergency numbers are posted for after hour emergencies.

The Visitor Center is the primary visitor contact facility where visitors can go to seek information seven days a week from 9am to 5pm, May 15th to October 20th. When the Visitor Center is closed (October 16th to May 14th) a sign directs visitors to the headquarters office, where they can get information from 8am to 4pm, Monday – Friday excluding Federal holidays. The sign also suggests to the public various alternative activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter. From May to October signs at the Visitor Center also direct patrons to after-hours restroom facilities and suggest ideas for summer related after-hours visitor activities. According to the *2006 Visitor Services Review* a directional sign should be installed which directs people from the parking lot to the deck on the back side of the Visitor Center for additional wildlife viewing opportunities.

Thirteen orientation kiosks are located throughout the Refuge (see figures 9 and 14 (p.29, 34) for kiosk locations), twelve at Seney NWR and one at the Whitefish Point Unit. The CCP calls for 14 kiosks on Refuge property. These kiosks provide maps of the area, information about activities allowed on the Refuge, rules and regulations, and interpretation of a variety of Refuge related topics. Each kiosk also holds various Refuge brochures including hunting, fishing, skiing, bird checklists, or general Refuge brochures. The brochures found in each kiosk vary depending on the main visitor activities in the vicinity. According to the *2006 Visitor Services Review* a one-panel kiosk should be installed at the start of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail. The benefits of installing a kiosk at this location include:

- showing a detailed map of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail,
- showing a map of the other two trails that may be accessed from the Pine Ridge Nature Trail,
- a place to post trail notices, and
- a place for interpretive signage.

This kiosk is not a high priority due to its proximity to the Visitor Center and the parking lot kiosk. It should be installed after other higher priority items have been completed.

Signs introducing National Wildlife Refuges located in Michigan are located at eight MDOT rest areas throughout the state. These signs were updated in 2011. These signs should be reviewed every five years to evaluate the need to update the signs or replace damaged signs. The locations of these signs are listed in the Refuge Sign Plan.

Refuge Publications

The Refuge has various publications which are printed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service or in partnership with SNHA. These brochures should contain Service and Refuge System messages. If the brochures are not compliant they should be edited before the next printing.

- General Refuge Brochure (*updated 2013*)
- Seney Bird Checklist (*updated 2011*)
- Whitefish Point Bird Checklist (*created 2011*)
- Fishing Brochure (*updated 2006*)
- Hunting Brochure (*updated 2008 – needs revision*)
- 11 X 17 Refuge Map (*updated 2009*)
- Northern Hardwoods Cross-country Ski Trail Maps (*updated 2009 – needs revision to Service Standards*)

-
- Mammal, Herpetofauna, Fish and Butterfly Checklist (*needs revision to Service Standards*)
 - *Refuge News* (newsletter printed three times per year with the Seney Natural History Association)
 - Superior Wildlands newspaper (*printed annually with Hiawatha National Forest and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, monies for our portion of the publication are donated by the Seney Natural History Association*)
 - Rack Cards (*updated 2013*)
 - Whitefish Point General Brochure (*created 2013*)

The 11x17 Refuge Map which is available notes visitor access points and highlights. This map should be updated to show the trails that are not listed. The hunting brochure has changed significantly and additional hunting areas and seasons may be added to the Refuge regulations (see Standard 3 for more information). This brochure will need to be updated in 2014. A trails map should be created which shows the location of all refuge trails.

Other Handouts

Special topic handouts on backyard wildlife gardening, wildfire, etc. are available. The Refuge also supplies a monthly calendar of events flyer available at the Visitor Center. Large print and audio versions of publications for visitors with visual disabilities are not available.

Web Site and Social Media

The Refuge has a website dedicated to orienting visitors to the Refuge; describing Refuge facilities and locations; informing visitors of upcoming events and activities; explaining management practices; interpreting the history of the Refuge; explaining existing regulations; providing teacher resources; providing a comprehensive list of research conducted on the Refuge; learning about volunteer, internship, and job opportunities; and providing links to other sites of interest. Each page is updated on an as-needed basis. The Seney NWR website is in compliance with the Content Management System.

The Refuge also maintains an email address, Seney@fws.gov, where public seeking information can email their questions and receive answers. The account is called an evergreen account because this email does not change as staff changes.

Currently the Refuge host social media sites on Facebook. SNHA sponsors a Flickr site. The Refuge maintained a Twitter account for about one year (2011-2012) but found that it was not the best form of communication with the people visiting the Refuge. It was discontinued in September of 2012. Each week the Refuge posts at least three messages on Facebook. Photos are added to the Seney Natural History Association sponsored Flickr page as they become available.

Visitor Information beyond Refuge Boundaries

Refuge brochures, rack cards (9" X 4" two sided brochures) and the Superior Wildlands guide are regularly distributed to welcome centers, local businesses, and rest areas throughout the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

Refuge staff promote news and special events through radio, newspaper, TV, the Refuge website, social media sites, flyers and radio interviews (weekly with Eagle 96.7 FM). Important messages and advisories are also displayed, when appropriate, at the Visitor Center, headquarters office, Refuge gates, on kiosks, in brochures, on social media and the website.

Visitor Services staff should also work with Google, NavTec, and other navigation companies to update the information on their road navigation software. Many of these companies do not have Refuge boundaries entered correctly, direct people to random points on the Refuge rather than the Visitor Center or Office and contain various other errors. Working with these companies can be frustrating and can take many months for one small change to be entered. This will be a long and ongoing process but is important as more and more people navigate with these gadgets.

Whitefish Point Unit

The Whitefish Point Unit has been a property of some contention ever since the Coast Guard signed the portions of its former property over to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society (GLSHS) and the Michigan Audubon Society (MAS). These tensions lead to MAS suing the GLSHS. MAS won the lawsuit and the court dictated that a plan known as the *2002 Human Use/Natural Resource Management Plan for Whitefish Point* be created, agreed to, signed and followed by all of the entities involved. As part of the agreement the Service chairs the joint committee which has members from all three parties. For the past two years the parties have been working closely to amend certain portions of the plan so that the GLSHS may make site designs with a grant which was received. In 2013 after careful scrutiny and consideration all parties agreed to accept the amendments so that the GLSHS may begin searching for additional funding to begin their planned improvements.

The Whitefish Point Unit also has trail concerns due to sensitive habitats. These concerns are discussed in detail in *Section D: Visitor Services Issues, Concerns, and Factors to Consider - Foot Trail Improvements*. As stated in the CCP two former Coast Guard trails, that have likely been used since the 1800's when the station was founded, need to be delineated to help reduce the trampling of sensitive habitats. The main beach access will be provided by the GLSHS via their boardwalk and a historical sidewalk. The area known as the cut-through will be closed and re-vegetated as the amended site plans are constructed. Part of the Whitefish Point Plan is to have the GLSHS construct a replica of the Second Keeper's Quarters, once that building is completed the service will occupy an office in that building. The CCP also suggests a Refuge Manager trainee be hired to work closely with the Whitefish Point Unit.

The Great Lakes Piping Plover, an endangered species, nests on the beach at Whitefish Point. In order to protect this bird enclosures are set up around their nests and the beach is closed from April to August.

At this time the staff has to estimate the number of visitors at the Whitefish Point Unit. As part of the Visitor Estimation Plan the best way to collect visitor numbers will be evaluated. A trail counter is scheduled to be installed at the point as well as working with the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory to keep track of the number of people who visit their Visitor Contact Station.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: People: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. (*CCP Goal 3(p.39, 40)*)

Objectives

Objective: Replace or update the Visitor Center to improve energy efficiency, safety, décor and fix other problems associated with the current building and its surroundings.

Objective: Whitefish Point Unit – Within 5 years of CCP completion, implement the Service’s provisions of the 2002 Human Use/Natural Resource Management Plan for Whitefish Point. (CCP Objective 3.7(p. 40))

Objective: Provide visitors with good customer service, a safe visit and pleasant experience while visiting or interacting with the Refuge.

Strategies

General Strategies

Strategy 2.1: Move the large gravel pile located adjacent to the Entrance Road to a place not visible by the public. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.2: Seek feedback from visitors by: placing a suggestion box in the Visitor Center; comment area on website; public meetings; and/or at special events. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.3: Maintain after hours restrooms near the Headquarters for use from May 15 – October 20th unless temperatures reach the 30s. (*New Strategy*)

Visitor Center

Strategy 2.4: Replace the Refuge Visitor Center and office. (*CCP Strategy*)

Strategy 2.5: Develop a concept plan for several Visitor Center upgrades with help of professionals and implement the plan over several years until the updates are complete or funding is received for a new Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.6: Update the outside decor of the facility which is outdated to a more modern look. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.7: Install a new heating and cooling system. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.8: Replace flooring in the Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.9: Repair or replace the four outdoor spotting scopes at the Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.10: Install a telephone at the front desk. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.11: Update the electrical system in the Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.12: Upgrade Visitor Center lighting interior and exterior. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.13: Replace the ceiling in the Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.14: Replace doors and possibly windows at the Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.15: Install gutters on the Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.16: Evaluate sidewalks annually and replace when needed. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.17: Work with SNHA to include closed captioning on “The Wonder of Nature” film. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.18: Research the need for wireless and other internet capabilities for the Visitor Center, if needed work with SNHA to secure the necessary upgrades. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.19: Continue to allow access to the Visitor Center May 15 to October 20 during normal business hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 7 days per week including holidays. (*New Strategy*)

Roads & Parking

Strategy 2.20: Research and implement a way to more effectively direct the public to the Visitor Center. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.21: Maintain 7-mile Marshland Wildlife Drive. (*CCP Strategy*)

Strategy 2.22: Maintain roads for fishing route. (*CCP Strategy*)

Trails

Strategy 2.23: Trim brush and vegetation along the trails so that it does not pose a safety hazard to visitors. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.24: Maintain the Northern Hardwoods Trails, South Show Pool Loop and Wigwam Connector Trail as hiking trails. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.25: Construct boardwalks over vernal pools and muddy areas on the Northern Hardwoods trails. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.26: Maintain 1.4 mile hiking trail. (*CCP Strategy*)

Strategy 2.27: Increase facilities (i.e. trails, observation platforms) at Whitefish Point. (*CCP Strategy*)

Strategy 2.28: Maintain 10 miles of groomed ski trails. (*CCP Strategy*)

Strategy 2.29: Continue to extend the accessible portion of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail at least to the first bench overlook. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.30: Establish the South Show Pool Loop as an ABA compliant trail. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.31: Install trail counters on the Wigwam Connector Trail, Whitefish Point Unit and Robinson Road. (*New Strategy*)

Wigwams Access Point:

Strategy 2.32: Provide an accessible viewing platform at the Wigwams Access Point. (*CCP Strategy*)

Strategy 2.33: Add an accessible parking spot at the Wigwams Access Point. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.34: Add a stall or expand the latrine at the Wigwam Access Point to make it ABA accessible. (*New Strategy*)

Signs & Kiosks

Strategy 2.35: Install a one-panel kiosk at the start of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.36: Work with the Michigan State Department of Transportation to post new signs for the Northern Hardwood Cross-country Ski and Hiking trails, if possible it should reflect the Refuge's ownership. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.37: Install a directional sign from the parking lot to the visitor deck for after-hours visitors. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.38: Provide and maintain 14 kiosks that orient visitors and help interpret habitats, wildlife, management, and regulations. (*CCP Strategy*)

Strategy 2.39: Annually identify, replace/add boundary signs, as needed. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.40: Evaluate Welcome Center signs every few years and partner with other Michigan Refuges to update as needed. (*New Strategy*)

Publications

Strategy 2.41: Update the 11 X 17 Refuge map to reflect trail changes. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 2.42: Publish the animal checklist and ski trail brochures using U.S. Fish and Wildlife standards. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.43: Include Service and Refuge System messages in brochures. (*Visitor Services Review, 2006*)

Strategy 2.44: Create a trail map or trail brochure. *(New Strategy)*

Website and Social Media

Strategy 2.45: Maintain and update the Refuge's website as needed, review quarterly for broken links, outdated content, etc. and add new images to keep the site looking new and fresh. *(Visitor Services Review, 2006)*

Strategy 2.46: As appropriate, utilize social media and new technology to interact and outreach with new user groups. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 2.47: Post appropriate comments, information, and pictures to the social media sites at least 3 to 5 times per week to keep the sites current and relevant. *(New Strategies)*

Strategy 2.48: Work with Google, NavTec, and other navigation companies to update the information on their road navigation software so that people are accurately directed to the Visitor Center. *(New Strategy)*

Whitefish Point Unit

Strategy 2.49: Designate trails at the Whitefish Point Unit to allow public access while protecting environmentally sensitive areas. One trail will lead from the parking lot to the tip of the Point. The second will run along an old cobble road in a southeasterly direction. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 2.50: Close the southeast beach from April to August to promote nesting Piping Plovers. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 2.51: Work with Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society at the Whitefish Point Unit to route visitors to the beach via their boardwalk and re-vegetate the cut-through from the parking lot to the beach. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 2.52: Hire a Refuge Manager trainee with a major responsibility for on-site work, mitigation approvals and coordination with partners. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 2.53: Occupy a portion of a Second Keeper's Quarters if the building is re-constructed. The building will also be used by other partners to the Whitefish Point plan. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 2.54: Develop a monitoring program to ascertain the number of visitors using the Whitefish Point Unit; review every 5 years to ensure Refuge resources are not being negatively impacted by overuse. *(New Strategy)*

Completed CCP Strategies

Strategy 2.55: Hire a full-time visitor services manager. *(CCP Strategy; Completed 2010)*

Strategy 2.56: Update the Refuge orientation slide show using new DVD technology. *(CCP Strategy; Completed 2009)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Visit kiosks with high use weekly and other kiosks on an as needed basis to refill with appropriate brochures.
- Annually evaluate supply of tear sheets, bird list, Seney's general brochure and rack cards and evaluate content for accuracy then reorder if needed.
- Annually evaluate website content for corrections. Update website on a quarterly basis.
- Monitor the social media sites for questions posted by visitors.
- Collect data on the use of the website and social media sites to better understand our online visitors.

-
- The welcome and orientation components of the visitor services program will be evaluated by all interns and resident RV volunteers as they start their assignments.
 - Monitor the comments left by visitors in the Visitor Center sign-in book and complex website.
 - Use the “Welcome and Orient Visitors Evaluation” guidance (Table F-1 in Appendix E (p.154-161)) as a tool for monitoring the welcome and orientation components of the visitor services program

STANDARD 3: HUNTING

Policy (605 FW 2)

Hunting is an appropriate use of wildlife resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System, when compatible with the mission of the specific land unit. Hunting programs will be of the highest quality, conducted in a safe and cost-effective manner and to the extent practicable, carried out in accordance with State and specified Refuge specific regulations.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Hunting has been determined an appropriate public use of wildlife resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System and is compatible with the Refuge purposes of Seney National Wildlife Refuge. The 1989 Refuge Hunt Plan provides direction for the hunt program and guidance on how the program will be administered. The Hunt Plan and the Code of Federal Regulation (50 CFR 32.41) permit archery, regular firearms, and muzzleloader hunting for white-tailed deer, migratory bird hunting (American woodcock and snipe), upland game hunting (ruffed grouse and snowshoe hare), and black bear hunting within designated hunting areas according to state regulations and Refuge-specific guidelines and regulations (Table 5 (p. 56)). Since the plan has been put into place the Code of Federal Regulations has been updated as needed. In 2014 the Refuge plans to update the Hunt Plan. Once complete the Hunt Plan will need to be reviewed each year and updated as needed. Hunting accounted for an estimated 650 visits in 2013 (see Table 1 for information on calculating hunting numbers).

Hunting on the Refuge is popular with local residents and visitors. Hunting information is disseminated by informational kiosks, hunting brochures, on the Refuge's website and in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Approximately 85,722 acres are open to hunting during at least a portion of the state seasons. There are two hunting units on the Refuge. Hunting Area A (Figure 15 (p. 55)) encompasses 49,522 acres in the center of the Refuge. Area B encompasses 36,200 acres and covers much of the Wilderness, a strip of land along the north boundary and the southeast corner of the Refuge. The remaining 9,130 acres located around the Unit 1 pool system, the Headquarters office, Visitor Center, Marshland Wildlife Drive, Fishing Loop and River Road Quarters, are closed to all forms of hunting. Hunting is regulated to minimize disturbance to migratory birds during their fall migration. Area A contains a portion of the Refuge's pool system and is managed for migrating waterfowl which utilize the pools. Therefore, allowing hunting during fall migration in Area A is inconsistent with management objectives. Hunting in Area B is authorized according to state regulations for those species which may be taken on Refuge property.

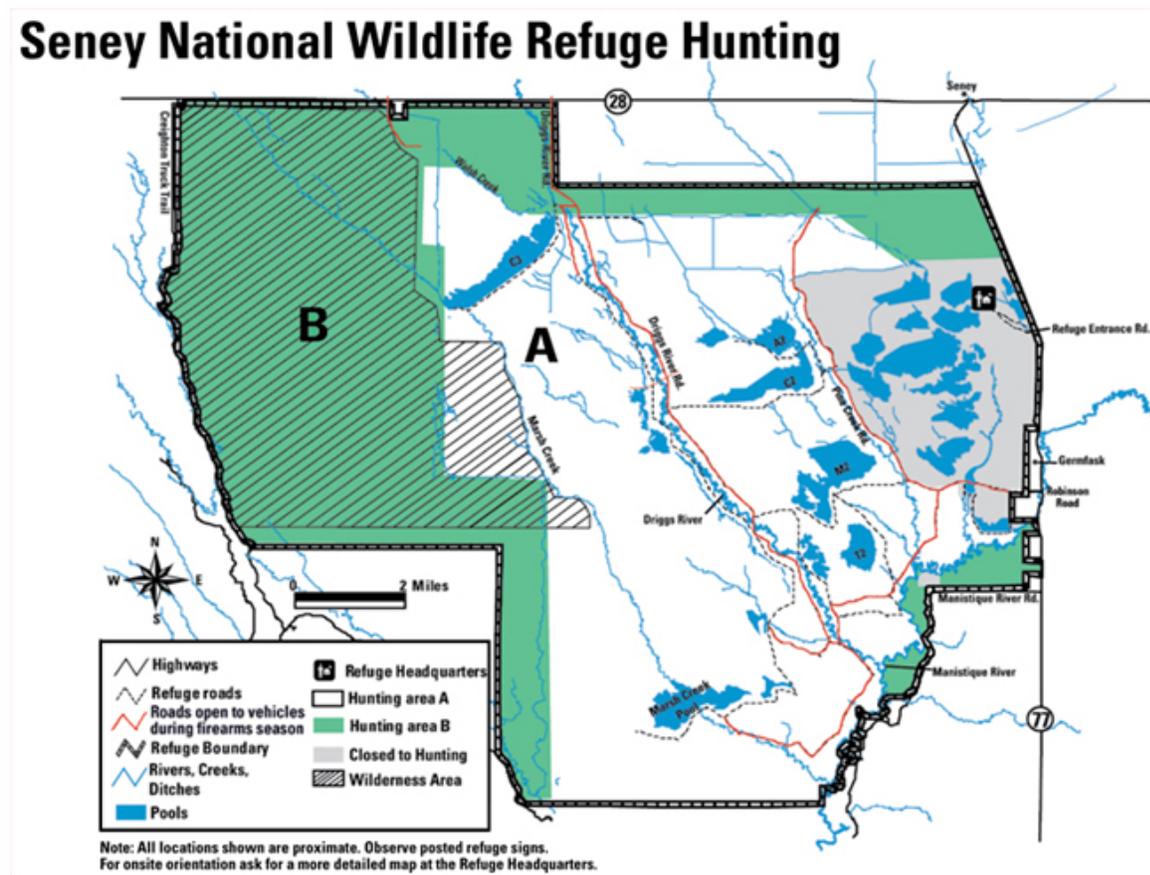
Seney NWR strives to offer opportunities for a quality hunting experience. With this in mind, the possession and use of bait is prohibited on the Refuge. The use of ATVs and snowmobile are also prohibited. No off-road travel is allowed with any motorized vehicles. Parking is allowed along open roads as long as vehicles can pass and gates are not blocked. Canoes, kayaks and all other flotation devices are not allowed on Refuge pools and impoundments.

According to a 2003 survey, most deer hunters indicated that they hunt at Seney because it is a large area that allows for quality hunting as described above. However, the same features that draw deer hunters to the Refuge seem to restrict black bear hunting. The state issues a limited number of bear tags and few hunters are willing to hunt bear without bait or dogs.

During the firearms white-tailed deer seasons, vehicles are allowed on approximately 31 miles of Refuge roads (Driggs River Road, Robinson Road, Pine Creek Road and portions of Walsh Farm Road and Riverside Dike) (Figure 2 (p. 19)). Roads remain open during the muzzleloader season until snowfall makes the roads impassable. Roads may remain open for longer periods at the manager’s discretion if conditions warrant for archery white-tailed deer and snowshoe hare hunting. During the regular firearms season, camping is allowed west of the Driggs River. Campers and other large temporary structures are allowed within 10 yards of the road. However, no camping is allowed in the Wilderness or Natural Areas. Campers must obtain a free camping permit at the Refuge office. In 2013, there were 18 camps with a total of 59 campers located on the property; a decrease from the long-term average. Hunters are allowed to set up temporary blinds and stands provided they do not cut branches or screw anything into the bark of the tree. Blinds must be removed by the end of hunting season. Blinds and stands must be clearly marked with the owner’s name and address and must be readable from the ground. Only one stand per hunter is allowed. The harvest of standing trees or shrubs, dead or alive, is not allowed for any purpose as they provide habitat for wildlife. The use of dead *and* downed wood for camp fires is allowed.

For many years campers have been required to visit the Refuge Headquarters to obtain a free camping permit. Currently Refuge management is considering allowing campers to self-register at the entry points to the Refuge. The safety and emergency contact reasons for having hunters sign in at the Refuge Headquarters are no longer as applicable as most people have cell phones.

Figure 15: Seney National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Map.



Migratory bird and upland game hunting on the Refuge are estimated to draw about 150 visits a year. Dogs may be used to hunt snowshoe hare, ruffed grouse, snipe and American woodcock. Since 2011 shotgun hunters hunting migratory game birds or upland game must possess only approved non-toxic shot while in the field.

Table 5. Hunt Seasons on Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Season	Area A	Area B	Comments
Ruffed Grouse	Closed	State Season	Non-toxic shot only
Snipe	Closed	State Season	Non-toxic shot only
American Woodcock	Closed	State Season	Non-toxic shot only
Snowshoe Hare	December 1 – March 31	State Season	Non-toxic shot only
White-tailed Deer (Archery)	Late State Season	State Season	Possession of bait is prohibited on the Refuge.
White-tailed Deer (Regular Firearms)	State Season	State Season	Possession of bait is prohibited on the Refuge.
White-tailed Deer (Muzzleloader)	State Season	State Season	Possession of bait is prohibited on the Refuge.
Black Bear	Closed	State Season	Possession of bait is prohibited on the Refuge.

Extending Hunting Opportunities

At this time no additional species are being considered to extend hunting opportunities on the Refuge. However, extended deer hunting opportunities are being considered to help deal with white-tailed deer browse issues. Specifically management is considering extending the bow hunting areas to include Conlon Farm, Smith Farm and Sub-headquarters. These are areas that have been designated as afforestation sites. An antlerless hunting season, youth and disabled hunts are also being considered.

Publications

There have been several changes made to the hunting brochure since its last publication. These changes have been depicted by placing a sticker on the front of the hunting brochure. In 2014 the brochure will need to be updated and published. An email address should be provided on Refuge hunting publications where hunters may submit their comments.

The Refuge website and Refuge News (newsletter) are ideal palaces to provide visitors with updates on Refuge specific regulation as well as the philosophy behind the changes. It is always a good idea to explain changes as people will be more likely to accept the changes if they understand the reasoning behind the change. The Refuge website should also maintain a list of current hunting regulations.

Surveys and Hunter Counts

In 2014 a Visitor Estimation Plan will be completed. This plan will define the method which will be used in the future to estimate the number of hunters (per species hunted) using the Refuge. This may include calibrating pneumatic car counters, conducting driving counts and/or utilizing hunter camp registration cards.

The CCP calls for a hunting program evaluation. According to the CCP the Visitor Services program needs to develop an operational definition of success and measure through a hunter satisfaction survey. All surveys need to be approved by the Office of Management and Budget. Refuge staff should also maintain a catalog of visitor comments regarding the hunting program as an evaluation tool.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. *(CCP Goal 3 (p. 39-40))*

Objectives

Objective: Provide 200 days of quality upland hunting experiences per year with fewer than 10 complaints annually. *(CCP Objective 3.1 (p. 39)) Upland hunting in this context of this objective refers to all species hunted on the Refuge.*

Strategies

Strategy 3.1: Continue annual small game hunting opportunities (ruffed grouse, American woodcock, snipe, and snowshoe hare) within framework of Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Refuge restrictions. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 3.2: Continue annual firearms and archery white-tailed deer and black bear hunting opportunities (within framework of Michigan DNR and Refuge restrictions). *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 3.3: Continue to provide camping opportunities and open roads during white-tailed deer firearms season. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 3.4: Conduct counts to determine numbers of ruffed grouse, snipe, American woodcock, and snowshoe hare hunters. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 3.5: Develop operational definition of success and measure for hunting (through an Office of Management and Budget approved) survey of hunter satisfaction. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 3.6: Extend bow hunting areas of the Refuge including Conlon Farm, Smith Farm, and Sub-headquarters to help deal with white-tailed deer browse issues. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 3.7: Consider, and if possible, open an antlerless hunting season on the Refuge; discuss considerations with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 3.8: Consider, and if possible, open a late September youth and disabled hunt per state and Refuge regulations; discuss considerations with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 3.9: Catalog visitor comments regarding the hunting program as an evaluation tool for the hunt program. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 3.10: Update the Refuge hunt plan that was completed in 1989. (*CCP Step-down Management Plan Schedule*)

Strategy 3.11: Review the hunt plan annually, as described in Service policy. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 3.12: Develop a new hunting brochure with updated rules and regulations for distribution. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 3.13: Invite hunters to comment on the Refuge's hunt program by providing an email address on the brochure, website and hunter information kiosks. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 3.14: Develop a better way to estimate hunter numbers for all hunting programs. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 3.15: Provide visitors with updates on Refuge specific regulations, and the philosophy behind the changes, through publications such as the website and newsletters. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 3.16: Maintain current hunting regulations on the Refuge's website. (*New Strategy*)

Strategy 3.17: Allow hunters that camp on the Refuge to self-register at the entry points to the Refuge. (*New Strategy*)

Completed CCP Strategies

Strategy 3.18: Eliminate toxic shot for all species except white-tailed deer and black bear. (*CCP Strategy; Completed 2011*)

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Refuge staff will use the hunting evaluation guidance (Table F-2 in Appendix E (p.155-156)) as a tool for monitoring the quality of the hunting experience on the Refuge.
- The hunt program will be monitored and informally evaluated annually on the Refuge. To do so Refuge staff members, interns, and volunteers will listen to and catalog visitor comments regarding the hunting program. At the end of each season, Refuge staff will evaluate and adapt the hunting program as needed with essential staff and other partners to ensure the program is meeting safety, management, biological, and visitor services objectives.
- The laws listed in the Code of Federal Regulations will be updated as needed.

STANDARD 4: FISHING

Policy (605 FW 3)

Fishing is an appropriate use of the National Wildlife Refuge System, when compatible with the Refuge purposes. Fishing programs will be of the highest quality, conducted in a safe and cost-effective manner, and to the extent practicable, carried out in accordance with State regulations.

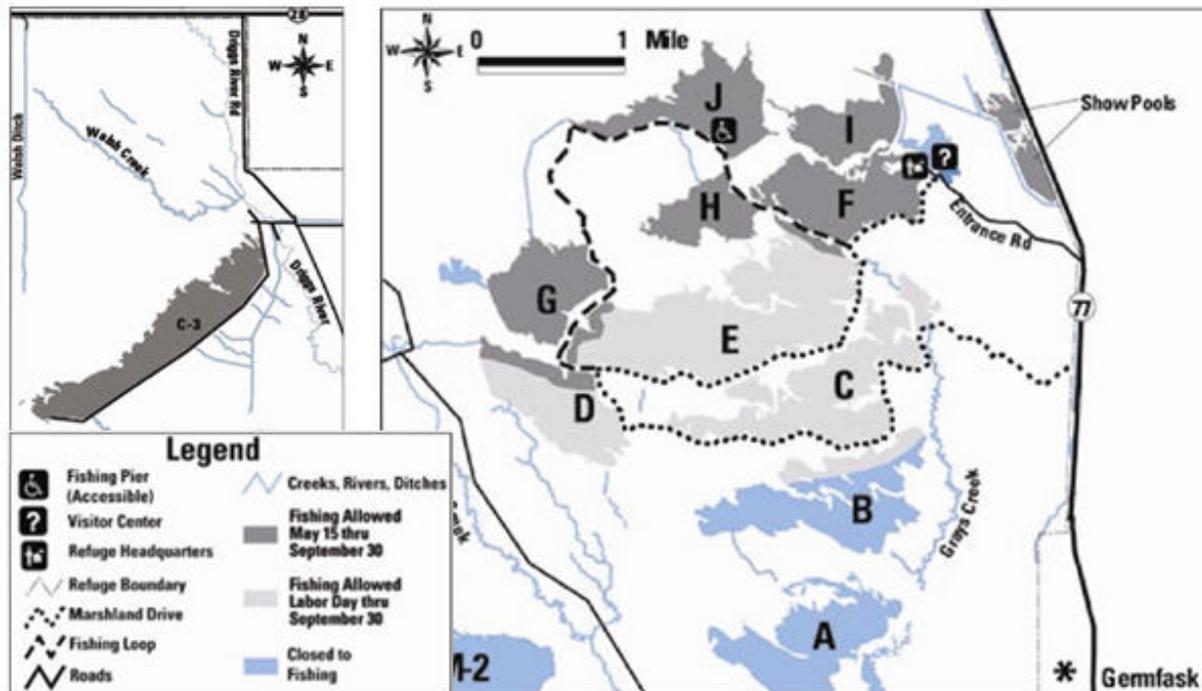
CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Fishing is an appropriate use of wildlife resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System and has been determined as compatible with the Refuge purposes at Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Seney NWR provides fishing opportunities throughout the year, including a 3.5 mile Fishing Loop, a universally accessible pier, and fishing kiosks located at the beginning of the Fishing Loop and C-3 Pool. Many people enjoy fishing for yellow perch and northern pike from the banks of Refuge pools. Others fish the Driggs River for brook trout or the Manistique River for walleye, smallmouth bass, and brown trout.

Fishing is permitted on all stretches of the Walsh Creek and Ditch, the Creighton River, Driggs River and Manistique River during regular state seasons. The Refuge pool system, on the other hand, has several date restrictions designed to minimize impact on nesting and migrating waterfowl. Summer/fall fishing on C-3, Show Pools, F, G, H, I, and J Pools, as well as the portions of D and E Pools adjacent to the Fishing Loop are open from May 15th thru September 30th. Fishing is allowed in C, D, and E Pools, as well as the portion of B pool adjacent to the Marshland Wildlife Drive from Labor Day thru September 30th. All other Pools are closed to summer/fall fishing.

Ice fishing is permitted on all Refuge pools from January 1st to February 28th. However, access to the pools is limited to foot traffic only. Ice shanties may not be left overnight. Fishing pressure is light due to these restrictions and ample opportunities on surrounding lakes.

Figure 16 – Pools open to fishing.



Fishing regulations on the Refuge are enforced in accordance with State of Michigan regulations and Refuge specific regulations. Refuge specific regulations are as follows.

- Fishing is allowed on the Refuge during daylight hours only.
- There is no size restriction on northern pike taken in Refuge pools.
- The use of lead tackle is prohibited on the Refuge as lead is a toxic metal which has adverse effects on the nervous and reproductive systems of wildlife.
- Visitors are asked to dispose of fishing line properly as line left lying on the ground or in the water can cause the serious injury or the death of an animal. Several Refuge fishing sites offer recycling bins for used fishing line to help mitigate the problem.
- Non-motorized watercrafts are permitted on the Creighton River, Driggs River, and Walsh Creek. Motorized craft are permitted on the Manistique River.
- Boats, canoes, and other floatation devices are not permitted on Refuge pools or ditches.

In 2014 a fishing plan will be written then reviewed annually. As changes are made the fishing brochure, kiosk signs and website should be updated to reflect the most recent regulations.

The fish line disposal containers need to be maintained and a volunteer or staff member should collect the line on a regular basis.

In 2013, an estimated 1,274 anglers visited the Refuge (see Table 1 for information on how this was calculated (p. 13)). Many anglers visit from the surrounding community and also spend time enjoying the Marshland Wildlife Drive. A fishing pole and tackle box loan program was started in 2011. This program has had light use with 13 fishing poles and eight tackle boxes checked out in 2013. In 2014 the Visitor Estimation Plan should define the best way to count anglers using the Refuge and the frequency at which these counts should be repeated. A definition of success and measures for fishing should also be developed and an Office of Management and Budget approved survey of fisher satisfaction should be conducted.

By far the most popular and best known fishing program is Children's Fishing Day. Each year Refuge staff, volunteers and the Seney Natural History Association host the event which began in 1990 and has become a tradition with many local families. Volunteers are stationed along the Fishing Loop with poles and bait to help children fish, there are fishing related activities in the Visitor Center and certificates are awarded for the largest yellow perch and northern pike in five age categories. SNHA provides a free fish dinner to participants and their families and local vendors donate fishing-related items as door prizes.

As fishing is a priority general public use of the Refuge System and the Seney NWR, management is considering the possibility of expanding the fishing opportunities open to the public. Opening fishing on Upper Goose Pen, A Pool and portions of B Pool would allow people a quiet fishing experience. These pools are only accessed by foot or bike. The portion of B Pool that is adjacent to the Marshland Wildlife Drive would only be open to fishing from Labor Day through September 30th for traffic flow purposes.

The Refuge maintains an accessible fishing platform on the Fishing Loop. The CCP also calls for an accessible fishing platform to be built at the Wigwam Access Point.

Since the establishment of the Refuge in 1935 several species of fish have been stocked on the Refuge. From 1953 to 1975 the Refuge participated in a northern pike removal plan in which the pike were removed from the Refuge and used as spawning stock for fisheries or placed in surrounding lakes. This was done in an effort to reduce their predatory impact on ducklings. Often times yellow perch, pumpkinseed sunfish, white suckers and brown bullheads were also caught. These fish, along with a portion of the pike that were caught, were transferred to the Show Pools to be enjoyed by the fishing public. Several other species of fish were stocked in Refuge waters including rock bass (1971), smallmouth bass (1989), walleye (1990), largemouth bass (1991), white sucker (1993) and black crappie (1993, 1995, & 1996). Brown and brook trout have been stocked in the Driggs River and these hatchery raised fish may find their way onto the Refuge as well.

Species commonly caught on the Refuge can be found in Table 6. Michigan’s lakes contain mercury which can accumulate in certain fish species. As safe levels of mercury and Michigan’s lakes are reevaluated frequently it is important that the public stays up to date on Michigan’s fish safety. The State of Michigan provides this information on their website www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish. When the fishing brochure is revised it should contain up to date regulations and fish consumption advisories. The signs posted at near fishing areas should also be updated to reflect fish consumption advisories.

Table 6: Fish Species Found on the Refuge.

Game Fish Species - Pools	Game Fish Species – Rivers and Streams
Northern Pike – No size limit*	Northern Pike
Yellow Perch	Walleye
Black Crappie	Yellow Perch
Brown Bullhead	Smallmouth Bass
Bluegill	Brook Trout
Pumpkinseed	Brown Trout

*Size and bag limits are set by the state with the exception of no size limit on northern pike taken in Refuge pools.

STANDARD 4 GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. (CCP Goal 3 (p.39-40))

Objectives

Objective: Provide 125 days of quality fishing experiences per year with fewer than 10 complaints annually. (CCP Objective 3.2)

Strategies

Strategy 4.1: Maintain an accessible fishing platform. (CCP Strategy)

Strategy 4.2: Maintain fish line disposal containers. (CCP Strategy)

Strategy 4.3: Continue the Children’s Fishing Day event. (CCP Strategy)

Strategy 4.4: Provide a fishing platform at the Wigwam Access Point. (CCP Strategy)

Strategy 4.5: Conduct a count to determine the number of anglers. (CCP Strategy)

Strategy 4.6: Develop an operational definition of success and measures for fishing through (an Office of Management and Budget approved) survey of angler satisfaction. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 4.7: Write a fishing plan for the refuge and review it annually. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 4.8: Open Upper Goose Pen, A Pool and portions of B Pool to fishing May 15th to September 30th. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 4.9: Maintain current fishing regulations on the Seney NWR website. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 4.10: Revise the fishing brochure to contain up to date regulations and the www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish website which informs people of the number of fish it is safe to eat from Michigan waters. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 4.11: Add postings of fish consumption advisories to kiosks near fishing areas. *(New Strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Refuge staff will use the fishing evaluation guidance (Table F-3 in Appendix E (p. 156-157)) as a tool for monitoring the quality of the fishing experience on the Refuge.
- For Fisheries or contaminants/water quality expertise the Refuge will work with staff from Green Bay Fisheries Office, East Lansing Ecological Services and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

STANDARD 5: WILDLIFE OBSERVATION AND WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Policy (605 FW 4 and 604 FW 5)

Wildlife observation and wildlife photography are appropriate wildlife-dependent recreational uses of Refuge System lands, when compatible. Visitors of all ages and abilities will have an opportunity to observe and photograph key wildlife and habitat resources of the Refuge. Viewing and photographing wildlife in natural or managed environments will foster a connection between visitors and natural resources.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Since the establishment of the Refuge people have been coming to Seney NWR to observe and photograph wildlife and plants in their natural or managed habitats. Viewing and photographing wildlife fosters an important connection between visitors and natural resources. The staff at Seney NWR strives to maintain high quality wildlife observation and photography opportunities for all Refuge visitors. In FY 2013, wildlife observation accounted for an estimated 48,496 visits to the Refuge and wildlife photography accounted for an estimated 19,488 visits.

Facilities

Visitor Center

Exhibits and staff in the Visitor Center provide wildlife observation tips and wildlife photography information. Visitors are encouraged to document their observations on the eBird website or on the whiteboard outside the Visitor Center which is monitored by staff for accuracy. Birding guides, binoculars, children's activity backpacks and virtual geocaching backpacks are available for check-out at the Seney Visitor Center for enthusiasts to enjoy wildlife observation. There is no charge.

There are ten virtual geocaches located on the Refuge. These virtual geocaches encourage people to navigate to a specific site, read a clue then take a picture of themselves at the site with the object in the background. When people visit these sites they may be asked to observe signs of wildlife (i.e. a nest) or learn about the natural history of the area. Participants can leave something for the geocache at the Visitor Center for the next participant in the virtual geocache. These virtual caches were established because leaving objects or other personal property on the Refuge is prohibited by regulation.

The orientation DVD, *The Wonder of Nature*, introduces visitors to the types of wildlife they might see and the tools and facilities available to enhance their observation experiences.

Roads and Parking

The auto tours wind their way through representative Refuge habitats including open water, wetlands, scrub-shrub and forests. These roads and habitats provide excellent opportunities for people to observe animals such as the common loon, sandhill crane, trumpeter swan, muskrat, beaver, coyote, turtle, woodpeckers, osprey, bald eagle, and a number of other wildlife species. Many people bring their cameras along to photograph the wildlife they see.

Designated graveled pull-offs on the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop should be maintained as a place for people to enjoy wildlife viewing and photographic opportunities.

Trails

The highest portion of trail visits is along the Pine Ridge Nature Trail which is located near the Visitor Center. Efforts have been made over the past two years to rehabilitate the trail system. Several years ago a section of trail known today as the Wigwam Connector Trail was abandoned due to insufficient funds and aging infrastructure. In 2010, the Youth Conservation Corps and volunteers cleared brush off this trail, built several small bridges over muddy or wet sections of the trail, and rehabilitated an old foot bridge over a stream which effectively reopened the trail to the public. In 2011, the Youth Conservation Corps and volunteers again reclaimed a trail known today as the South Show Pool Loop by brushing out the trail and rehabilitating two bridges. These two trails are welcome additions to the trails system. The 2011 and 2012, Youth Conservation Corps also worked to make a section of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail ABA accessible. Roughly a half mile was completed.

From 1989 to 1992 seven cross-country ski/hiking trails totaling nine miles of trails were created in the southeast corner of the Refuge off of Robinson Road near the old sub-headquarters site. During the winter, the Refuge maintains these ski trails and grooms them on an as needed basis, usually on Fridays after significant snowfalls. The ski trails, with the exception of Otter Run, are usually in good condition throughout the winter. Otter Run often suffers from a lack of adequate snow coverage because its location allows snow to blow off the trail. Options for improving Otter Run may be explored for future action. Visitors are encouraged to cross-country ski or snowshoe anywhere they please on the Refuge, but efforts are made to count the skiers using the Northern Hardwoods Cross-country Ski Trails. An estimated 1,069 cross-country ski/snowshoe visits were recorded for FY 2013 on the Hardwoods Trails. These trails are also available for hiking the rest of the year.

Refuge staff assists with clearing fallen trees from the section of the Manistique River that runs through the Refuge. Keeping this river “trail” open allows visitors to observe and photograph wildlife while paddling the river. While boating is encouraged on the Manistique River it is not allowed on Refuge pools. The Driggs River is open to boating but downed trees and other obstacles make it very challenging to navigate and most people do not attempt to float it. There are two canoe and kayak liveries in Germfask which promote tours on the Manistique River, including floats through the Refuge. There is also a roadside park in Germfask which allows access to the Refuge for those wishing to paddle on their own. An estimated 573 people paddled the Refuge in 2013, this number is unusually low because of cool temperatures and high water throughout the summer of 2013. As a comparison an estimated 1,606 paddlers enjoyed the river in 2012.

Wigwams Access Point

The Wigwams Access Point encourages wildlife observation by providing an easy access point to the show pools along the highway, with the comforts of a shelter and an outhouse (closed in the winter). This area is also a trailhead for the Pine Ridge Nature Trail and South Show Pool Trail.

Observation Decks and Blinds

Observation decks and spotting scopes can be found at several places throughout the Refuge including at the Visitor Center parking lot and behind the Visitor Center. As visitors drive along the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop they will encounter a fishing pier and three observation decks (see Figure 10). Each of these decks contains interpretive signage. In 2012 spotting scopes were removed from the Marshland Wildlife Drive decks and the fishing pier. Each deck contained two permanent mounted spotting scopes, one regular and one wheelchair accessible, which were installed in the 1980s and 1990s. These scopes were in need of costly repairs or replacement. Each scope costs between \$3,500 and \$6,000 to replace. Before their removal the Refuge gauged the use of these scopes. As an experiment, over the summer the spotting scope bases were left out on the three observation decks and the fishing pier on the auto tour routes. Only the scopes at the Visitor Center were mounted. Relatively few people commented on the fact that the scopes were missing and of those only a handful were disappointed. In recent years most guests seem to bring their own binoculars/scopes or they may borrow binoculars free of charge from the friends group. Due to this realization the spotting scopes on the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop will be eliminated. This is contrary to the CCP strategy. The scopes at the Visitor Center will need to be repaired or replaced.

The Refuge maintains one observation blind, located at the Diversion Farm. It is currently being used in conjunction with the Applied Science program, to provide sharp-tailed grouse viewing and photographing opportunities in exchange for the collection of research data. This program has been quite successful, with participants and staff alike being happy with the results. When not in use for the sharp-tailed grouse survey the blind is open to the public during normal Refuge hours on a first come first served basis.

Signs and Kiosks

Wildlife information and observation opportunities can be found on some kiosk signs. Interpretive panels at observation decks provide natural history information about certain species that may help some visitors with their observation skills.

Publications

All publications listed below address wildlife viewing and wildlife photography opportunities to varying degrees.

Seney NWR maintains a number of brochures including the general Refuge brochure, cross-country ski brochure, birding brochures, and Refuge maps. In 2011, two bird checklists were published, an updated version of the Seney NWR bird checklist and a newly developed bird checklist for the Whitefish Point Unit.

Website and Social Media

Birders are encouraged to report their sightings on eBird.org. The birding section of our website contains a website widget which links to eBird, when birding observations are logged on eBird pertaining to the Refuge they appear on the birding section of the Refuge's website. A disclaimer on the webpage lets visitors know these bird observations can be made and entered by anyone visiting the Refuge; therefore not all data may be accurate.

Additional information about wildlife observation opportunities, the best viewing times, viewer etiquette, ways to minimize impact on wildlife and habitat, access point information, regulations and management concerns are available on the website.

Special Events and Tours

Since 2003, a volunteer has conducted morning photography tours. At 7am most Thursday mornings from June through September the tours depart from the Visitor Center and travel through portions of the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop before continuing into the backcountry. Photo tour participants are driven to various locations where they have a chance to explore and photograph wildlife. Although participants are asked to have a working knowledge of their cameras, tips on taking good photos and ethics of wildlife photography are also shared. Tours usually end around 11am.

Since 1989 the Seney NWR has hosted an amateur photo contest. In 2013, a total of 137 photos were submitted to the photo contest. Each year contestants enter the best photos they have taken on the Refuge in one of the following categories: landscape, wildlife, public use/recreation, plants, and a special assignment category which changes annually. There is also a category for youth 17 and under. People submit their photos by August 31st and Refuge visitors vote for their favorite photo in each category (at the Visitor Center or on our SNHA sponsored Flickr website. Winners are announced after the Visitor Center closes for the season. First, second and third place winners in each category receive a ribbon and a prize from SNHA. The photo contest not only encourages people to get out on the Refuge and take photos but helps the Refuge maintain a library of beautiful site specific images for use in brochures, publications, and on the website. It has also helped Refuge staff identify species that have not been previously noted. In 2015 the Refuge will drop amateur from the photo contest title and allow anyone to submit photos to the contest. Photographers will still need to sign use of their photos over to the Refuge and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to enter the contest.

School programs and interpretive programs often include wildlife observation and at times wildlife photography opportunities and information. In 2012 the Refuge obtained five cameras for use with school groups visiting the Refuge. New photography programs will be developed for use with schools and small groups visiting the Refuge.

Counts and Surveys

In 2014 a Visitor Estimation Plan will be written which should define the best way to estimate the number of wildlife observation and wildlife photography visitors using the Refuge and the frequency at which these counts should be repeated. A definition of success and measures for wildlife observation and photography should also be developed and an Office of Management and Budget approved survey of user satisfaction should be conducted.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. (*CCP Goal 3 (p.39-40)*)

Objectives

Objective: Provide year-round opportunities for at least 25,000 visitors annually to observe and photograph wildlife and habitat. (*CCP Objective 3.3*)

Strategies

General

Strategy 5.1: Develop a monitoring program to assess the percentage of visitors participating in wildlife photography on the Refuge. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 5.2: Develop operational definition of success and measures for wildlife observation and photography through (an Office of Budget and Management approved) survey of visitor satisfaction. *(CCP Strategy)*

Roads and Parking

Strategy 5.3: Maintain designated/graveled pull-offs on the Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop. *(New Strategy)*

Observation Decks and Spotting Scopes

Strategy 5.4: Maintain six viewing platforms with scopes and interpretive panels. *(CCP Strategy)* – see *Observation Decks and Spotting Scopes discussion Standard 2 which discusses removing the spotting scopes.*

Strategy 5.5: Remove spotting scopes from four of the six viewing platforms keeping the outdoor spotting scopes at the two observation decks at the Visitor Center only. *(New Strategy)*

Trails

Strategy 5.6: Explore options for improving the Otter Run ski trail. *(New Strategy)*

Websites and Social Media:

Strategy 5.7: Use the eBird Google App to keep an updated list of current bird sightings at the Refuge on the website. *(New Strategy)*

Guided Tours

Strategy 5.8: Provide guided photo opportunities and/or workshops. *(CCP Strategy)*

Special Events

Strategy 5.9: Continue annual amateur photo contest. *(CCP Strategy)* * *In 2015 amateur will be dropped from the photo contest literature and anyone may enter the contest.*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Refuge will continue to use the wildlife observation and photography evaluation guidance (Table F-4 in Appendix E (p. 157)) as a tool for monitoring the wildlife observation and wildlife photography components of the visitor services program.
- Monitor the comments left by visitors in the Visitor Center sign-in sheet and comment box (once established).
- Capture visitation using counters at strategic locations.
- File and save comments and feedback from visitors after tours and programs and make changes as appropriate.
- Collect as accurate estimates as possible of people using the Refuge for the different activities, nature photography, hiking, skiing, hunting, berry/mushroom picking, etc.

STANDARD 6: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Policy (605 FW 6)

Through formal, curriculum-based environmental education tied to national and state education standards, we will advance public awareness, understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of key fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Each Refuge staff person will assess their potential to work with schools in providing an appropriate level of environmental education. The Refuge may support environmental education through the use of facilities, equipment, educational materials, teacher workshops, and study sites that are safe and conducive to learning.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

Seney National Wildlife Refuge is located in a rural portion of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Pictured Rocks National Lake Shore, Hiawatha National Forest, and Clear Lake Education Center are all located within an hour's drive of the Refuge. As a result, there is a lot of competition and few school districts close enough to draw a large number of schools to visit the Refuge. This may allow the Refuge to focus its attention on fewer students and increase the quality of its programming. However, there are several challenges to overcome. With new testing requirements to meet, strict standards and decreasing budgets, teachers have been forced to sacrifice field trips. In response to school budgetary issues, the Seney Natural History Association began to offer bussing grants in 2010. Each local school is offered up to \$100 three times per year to come to the Refuge. To date, three of five schools offered the grant have taken advantage of it at least once. During FY 2011, Refuge staff conducted 25 environmental education programs. For the purposes of this document, environmental education is considered to be any program offered to a formal educational group such as public school, homeschool or scouts. Seven of these programs were on-site and presented to approximately 248 students. Eighteen of the programs were off-refuge and were presented to approximately 384 students. The peak months for educational programs are April and May.

The Refuge staff strives to advance awareness, understanding and appreciation of Refuge resources including fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. However, at this time is the Refuge has no formal environmental education curriculum which is tied to federal and state science standards. Currently, the Refuge works with teachers in an attempt to fit programs to class needs on demand. There are several staple programs to choose from including guided bus tours, pond studies, nature walks, animal classification programs, wildlife adaptations and a frog program. As new programs are developed state curriculum standards are taken into account. In order to increase the environmental education opportunities the Refuge should take a step back and look at its current environmental education program and communicate with local schools to evaluate the school's needs. Over the life of this plan, if demand exists, the environmental education program should use the *Rhythms of the Refuge* guide to establish an Environmental Education plan using appropriate themes and messages for education programs. These themes should then be promoted using state and national education standards as a base to draw in schools. Programs should be offered both on and off site for the greatest effectiveness, reach and quality.

In 2010, Seney NWR and Three Lakes Academy, a local charter school, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The purpose of the MOU is to:

“...establish and define a collaborative working relationship between Seney NWR and the Three Lakes Academy to promote National Wildlife Refuges as special areas of environmental learning that can foster a conservation ethic among students in kindergarten – 6th grades. The partnership provides teachers and students with multidisciplinary, standard based curriculum that includes hands-on, real-life experiences with plants and wildlife, as well as recreational opportunities to immerse students in nature throughout the seasons.”

The agreement specifies Seney NWR’s responsibilities and the responsibilities of the school as listed below. To date not all of the responsibilities have been met. Three Lakes Academy was founded in 2010 and has had a lot of teacher and administrator turn over. As the school stabilizes hopefully the goals will be met.

“Refuge Responsibilities:

Share resources and expertise regarding environmental education, interpretation, wildlife observation and similar wildlife-dependent activities or facilities

1. Assist with scheduling and planning each Refuge field trip.
2. Work with teachers to develop appropriate pre or post-field trip classroom materials or visits.
3. Lead environmental education field trip activities that meet state curriculum standards and supplement classroom learning for each grade level.
4. Look for hands-on opportunities for students to participate in real-life research and data collection that benefits Refuge plants and wildlife, increases environmental awareness and foster a stewardship ethic.

“School Responsibilities:

Participate in educational and recreational programming at Seney NWR

1. Have teachers bring students in grades K through 6 to the refuge at least twice during each school year.
2. Have students participate in at least one outdoor recreation experience during the school year. These activities may include fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, hiking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing or nature photography. Teachers will select the activities most appropriate for their students and the season.
3. Teachers will work with Refuge staff to include a Refuge special event (i.e. duck stamp art contest) into their school year or incorporate Refuge staff/activities into school special events (i.e. science fair).
4. The principal will provide a signed *Agreement for Use of Images and Likenesses in Service Products* at the start of each year attaching the names and classroom of any children not covered by the agreement before the first field trip.

“The Refuge and school agree to:

1. Determine how the financial, staff and information resources and expertise of these two organizations can be coordinated to better address environmental educational issues of common concern.
2. Explore ways to enhance Environmental Education training and professional development for Three Lakes Academy teachers.
3. Regularly evaluate the partnership and its programs.”

Prior to 2004, teacher workshops were presented at the Refuge and/or with Refuge staff. Staff also collaborated with colleagues from Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and Hiawatha National Forest about programming ideas and education trunk workshops. The availability and interest in teacher workshops should be evaluated and if there is no local place to receive training and there is interest the Refuge should consider offering workshops at the Refuge with partner schools.

The Refuge currently has five educational trunks available for teachers to check out: *Raptor Trunk*, *Migratory Bird Trunk*, *Loon Trunk*, *Wolf Trunk* and a *Wetland Trunk*. Each trunk has a curriculum, several VHS videos, cassette tapes and hands-on activities including tools, pictures, examples, reference manuals and guides to ensure a successful teaching experience. Unfortunately, these trunks are filled with ageing materials and are in need of an upgrade to DVDs and CDs, and in some cases, more up to date information. The trunks are only checked out a handful of times each year. An evaluation should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of these trunks and to determine if they should be updated or retired. Teachers also have access to our library of films which they can show in their classrooms. The films have been purchased with the Public Performance Rights for the Winter Film Festivals.

Environmental education for college and university students also occurs at Seney. Throughout the year a number of college and university students are given tours and talks by Refuge staff. The Applied Science staff has developed relationships with several universities, providing curriculum enhancement and being a part of graduate committees.

Scouts, 4-H groups, after school programming and programs such as Jr. Ranger Programs or summer camps may also be ways to provide quality environmental education programs for youth who are interested in the outdoors. When evaluating the environmental education program with *Rhythms of the Refuge* guide these groups should be explored as potential audiences.

The Refuge hosted Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) for several years before it was discontinued and then restarted in 2010. Local students are hired for eight weeks and work on a variety of projects. YCC projects typically include trail construction and rehabilitation, construction and maintenance projects, and clearing buckthorn. The YCC staff also receive several hours of conservation education and get opportunities to see how conservation benefits the environment.

Facilities

Visitor Center

The Visitor Center has exhibits, auditorium space and a large deck which may be used by visiting schools and universities.

Wigwams

The Wigwams Access Point has a shelter, tables, restroom and trail access and could serve as classroom space for visiting schools and universities.

Pavilion

The outdoor pavilion was constructed with environmental education and special events in mind. It is set up with tables to serve as classroom space for visiting schools and universities.

YCC Building

The “YCC building” was redecorated as a place to hold environmental education classes during poor weather. It provides a meeting room with wireless and projector capabilities.

Websites and Social Media

The Refuge website should highlight the prepared environmental education programs by providing a description of the program and which state and federal education standards are met by each program.

Social media sites and the website are areas that could be explored as a way to expand environmental education. By setting up online materials, schools could do pre and post visit activities. Schools too far away to visit the Refuge could still participate in environmental education activities via the internet. Lesson plans, quizzes and fun activities could be posted on the website to encourage learning.

Special Events

Youth in the Outdoors is a special event that offers environmental education opportunities to area youth. Participants sign-up to participate in the daylong event which focuses building outdoor skills, environmental education and helping scouts earn badges.

Whitefish Point Unit

The CCP calls for an increase of environmental education and interpretation at the Whitefish Point Unit. Starting in 2011 Refuge staff have visited Whitefish Point on a regular basis providing interpretation through discovery tables. In 2014 the Refuge will be hiring a part time intern to work at the point through a grant that is funded for three years. This intern can begin exploring ways to increase the environmental education presence at the point. There is one small local school which would be a good place to begin outreach.

Surveys and Plans

A definition of success and measures for environmental education should also be developed and an Office of Management and Budget approved survey of user satisfaction should be conducted.

The Refuge should also conduct an evaluation with outside visitor services staff, local teachers, administrators and other stakeholders. This could be part of the Environmental Education Plan which should be developed as the Refuge uses *Rhythms of the Refuge* to help define the environmental education goals of the Refuge. Phenology, journaling and other elements should be considered as a way to help students focus on local ecosystems. As new management practices are implemented on the Refuge the staff should explore possibilities for complementary environmental education programming.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal 3: People: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. (CCP Goal (p.39-40))

Objectives

Objective 3.4: Annually provide no fewer than 400 quality environmental education experiences and 700 quality interpretive experiences per year to promote an understanding of the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula. (CCP Objective)

Strategies

General

Strategy 6.1: Develop an operational definition of success and measures for environmental education. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 6.2: Conduct an evaluation of the Refuge's environmental education program using outside visitor services staff, local teachers and administrators, and other stakeholders. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 6.3: Determine target audiences, mission-related messages, and identify strategies related to environmental education. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 6.4: Use *Rhythms of the Refuge* to help identify the Refuge's niche in local environmental education. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 6.5: Consider a variety of environmental education strategies, including partner schools, repeat visits for classes, off-site programs, and teacher workshops. Consider incorporating phenology, journaling and other elements that focus students on local ecosystems. *(New Strategy)*

Facilities

Visitor Center

Strategy 6.6: Provide facilities and programs for area schools, universities, community groups, and other Refuge visitors, with a message that emphasizes the importance of habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management. *(CCP Strategy)*

Other Environmental Education Classrooms

Strategy 6.7: Utilize the YCC building, Wigwam Rest Area and pavilion for environmental education classrooms. *(New Strategy)*

Pavilion and Wigwams:

Strategy 6.8: Provide and maintain tables for programs and nature study at the Environmental Education Pavilion and the Wigwams Rest Area. *(New Strategy)*

Websites and Social Media

Strategy 6.9: Use the website as a location to highlight environmental education programs. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 6.10: Explore the use of the website, Facebook and Flickr to interact with students before and/or after their field trip to enhance their program experience. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 6.11: Explore the use of social media and the website to perpetuate environmental education (i.e. create lessons, quizzes, and fun activities families can do together to enhance their environmental awareness). *(New Strategy)*

Education Trunks

Strategy 6.12: Increase use of education trunks. *(CCP Strategy)* *This is a CCP strategy – it may not be realistic. Before working to increase the use of the education trunks the trunks need to be evaluated for effectiveness then updated or discontinued. See Strategy 6.13.*

Strategy 6.13: Evaluate the effectiveness of education trunks and continue, update or discontinue the use of the trunks based on the evaluation. *(New Strategy)*

Programs and Special Events:

Strategy 6.14: Provide teacher workshops with partner schools. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 6.15: Increase environmental education and interpretation presence at Whitefish Point. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 6.16: Work with local teachers to create environmental education programs that meet Refuge goals, National Science Standards and Michigan Science Grade Level Expectations for appropriate grade levels. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 6.17: Increase programming and use of facilities for environmental education activities for area schools, universities, community groups, and other Refuge visitors, with a curriculum based message that emphasizes habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 6.18: Encourage partnerships with local schools, community groups and surrounding agencies. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 6.19: As significant new management practices are implemented, explore possibilities for complementary environmental education programming. *(New Strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Refuge staff will use the environmental education evaluation guidance (Table F-5 in Appendix E (p. 158)) as a tool for monitoring the environmental education components of the visitor services program.
- Include pre/post testing as part of the pre/post program activities.
- Review program evaluation forms (given to teachers) and additional evaluation materials to assess effectiveness of each program.
- Review all educational programs every five years to ensure they meet state curriculum, standards and grade level expectations.

STANDARD 7: INTERPRETATION

Policy (605 FW 7)

We will communicate the most important fish, wildlife, habitat, and other natural resource issues to visitors of all ages and abilities through effective interpretation. We will tailor messages and delivery methods to specific audiences and present them in appropriate locations. Through heightened awareness, we will inspire visitors to take positive actions supporting Refuge goals and the Refuge System mission.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

Seney NWR offers an array of activities and facilities supporting all of the priority public uses. Interpretive messages should relate directly to the Refuge theme (see *Section E: Themes, Messages and Topics* (p. 15)), key resource issues of the USFWS, and the National Wildlife Refuge System, such as endangered species, habitat preservation and wildlife diversity. Whenever reasonably possible, these messages should be delivered in locations on the Refuge that can directly connect visitors to our place and our themes, messages, and topics.

At this time the majority of guided interpretation occurs when the Visitor Center is open. Self-guided interpretation occurs through interpretive signs and brochures. We do not currently have any type of podcast or videos that have been created for the public. In the future we would like to produce a series of videos/podcasts for use on the Marshland Wildlife Drive.

Facilities

Visitor Center

The Visitor Center was opened in 1965 to interpret the natural and cultural resources. It operates 9am to 5pm daily from May 15th to October 20th and is staffed almost entirely by local volunteers. A comprehensive discussion of the Visitor Center can be found in *Section D: Visitor Services Issues, Concerns and Factors to Consider* and *Standard 2: Welcome and Orient Visitors*.

A comprehensive Interpretive Plan and an Exhibit Replacement Plan should be created to update the exhibits in the Visitor Center. Over the years the management philosophy and themes, messages and topics have changed. As new exhibits are installed this change should be taken into consideration. The *2006 Visitor Services Review* suggested that interpretive displays be specifically developed on the research natural areas, Strangmoor Bog and CCC activities. These topics do meet the themes, messages and topics which were defined in Section E. of this plan.

Roads and Parking

The Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop take visitors on a tour of the Refuge pool system and surrounding habitats. These drives provide opportunities for independent exploration and discovery. Along the drives, visitors are invited to stop at the fishing deck and the other three interpretive decks, (see *Standard 2: Observation Decks and Spotting Scopes* for a more comprehensive discussion (p. 43)).

Trails

The Pine Ridge Nature Trail contains a series of interpretive signs located along its length. The trail meanders through a number of habitats including pool edges, wetlands, mixed hardwood forest and mixed pine. The interpretive signs identify plants along the trail and explain how wildlife benefits from these plants.

The need for additional interpretive signs located along other trails should be evaluated. Interpretive signs should be added along the trails at the Whitefish Point Unit explaining the fragile dune habitat to encourage visitors to stay on designated paths.

Wigwams Access Point

The kiosk located at the Wigwams has interpretive signs and the trailhead located here leads to the Pine Ridge Nature Trail.

Observation Decks and Blinds

All observation decks, except those near the Visitor Center, have interpretive signs (topics include: trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes, common loons and fish identification).

Civilian Conservation Corps Cabin

The CCP called for the Refuge staff to explore the idea of converting the CCC cabin into a historic/cultural museum. This idea has been explored and rejected on the grounds the CCC cabin is needed to house temporary Refuge staff, interns and researchers.

Signs and Kiosks

A total of 13 informational kiosks are found throughout the Refuge (including one at the Whitefish Point Unit) at all the major entrance points and other areas where important information needs to be disseminated. The larger kiosks include interpretive signs along with informational signs.

Interpretive panels are placed throughout the Refuge at key visitor use areas (Whitefish Point Unit, Marshland Wildlife Drive, Fishing Loop, and Pine Ridge Nature Trail). The signs tell readers about wildlife and/or wildlife habitat likely to be found in those areas. The Whitefish Point Unit, Visitor Center observation deck and new nature trails would be good places to expand the current interpretive signage.

At times the Refuge uses prescribed burning and timber sales to accomplish Refuge management goals. Visitors do not always understand the reason for these management practices. Developing temporary or portable interpretive signs about these management activities may help visitors understand the reason behind the decision.

Websites and Social Media

Currently the Refuge utilizes Facebook and Flickr social media sites to interact with the public. The Refuge has over 3,500 fans on its Facebook page. This has been a great outlet to interact with the public and answer questions. It is monitored daily and questions are answered promptly. These social media sites offer staff a chance to interpret current events on the Refuge including recent wildlife sightings, natural processes and management practices.

Although no formal plans have been made to begin utilizing new media to interpret resources at this time there is a definite potential to reach a greater audience with podcasts, vodcasts (video podcasts), and a mobile website for the Refuge.

The Refuge website is a good place to interpret the natural areas, Wilderness, Strangmoor Bog and CCC activities. These pages should be created and maintained.

Publications

Three times per year the Refuge and the Seney Natural History Association (SNHA) publish the Refuge News newsletter. The publication informs friend's members, volunteers and visitors about current management practices, answers commonly asked questions, and informs people of upcoming events.

A cooperative publication, *Superior Wildlands: a guide to the Upper Peninsula Federal Lands* is published each year with Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Eastern National, Hiawatha National Forest, Hiawatha Interpretive Association, Seney NWR, and SNHA.

Programs and Special Events

Demand is highest for guided interpretive programs in June, July and August, but guided interpretive programs at other times of the year are scheduled or may be arranged by request. In June, July and August, Wildlife Wednesday tours are conducted every Wednesday night from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. and are very popular. These tours begin at the Visitor Center and lead visitors on a tour of parts of the Marshland Wildlife Drive, Fishing Loop, and backcountry roads. Staff, volunteers, and interns interpret the site history, management and animal behaviors and assist visitors with wildlife observation. Morning bus tours, scheduled at other times, offer visitors experiences similar to the Wildlife Wednesday tours.

Other annual guided interpretive programs include our *Twilight Tours* the last two Thursdays in May from 9 to 11:30 p.m. Formerly known as the *Yellow Rail Tour*, these tours have been adapted to the changing situation at the Refuge. When yellow rails were being banded, visitors were allowed to tag along and see the elusive bird. When the banding was discontinued in 2009 another program was developed in its place. Instead of accompanying biologists out into the field to capture yellow rails we now offer a chance for the public to accompany staff into the field to listen for yellow rails, Virginia rails, sora, bitterns, Wilson's snipe, American woodcock, frogs and a variety of other wildlife which can be seen or heard in the evening hours. Often times this is an audio tour, not a visual tour. Because the Refuge is closed at this time of day it allows visitors a chance to experience the Refuge after dark.

Over the summer months the Visitor Services staff develops a number of guided interpretive programs in which the public is welcomed to participate. A number of types of programs have been tried with varying success. In recent years, indoor talks, lengthy hikes and early morning photography tours have had limited participation. Canoe trips, auto tours, and walk up discovery stations have drawn larger numbers. Reasons for participation, or lack thereof, could be time of day, day of the week, length of commitment, physical demand, topic choice, etc. Ultimately we don't know the reasoning and make guesses based on experience and choices based on the type of experience we want visitors to have. For example, the photography tour may be more popular if conducted later in the day but many photographers prefer the morning lighting and the small group size which makes for easier logistics and a more intimate experience. *Wildlife Wednesday* tours are likely popular because people like to see wildlife and the evening time may be better for residents who work during the day. Lengthy hikes, tours or talks may be too much of a time commitment for visitors just spending a few hours at the Refuge, but they may provide a deeper experience of the place. Walk-up stations expose larger numbers of people to a message. Types of experiences and numbers of people reached should both be considered when developing interpretive programs. Visitor Services staff modify existing programs and develop new programs based on audience response and current staff skill sets. The Refuge does not currently implement any protocol for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of our interpretive programming.

For the past two years the Refuge has invited people to join staff, interns, and volunteers on a *Fall Color Float* the first Sunday in October. Care is taken to explain how long we will be out on the river and the dangers of paddling in the fall when water and air temperatures are cool. Novice paddlers are discouraged from attending this tour. The local canoe outfitters provide boats, paddles, lifejackets, and boat transportation for those who need it at their normal rental fees. The USFWS simply provides an opportunity to paddle through the Refuge with knowledgeable staff who can answer questions and provide some interpretation.

Visitor Services staff also produces self-guided interpretive media. The Refuge has a variety of portable displays available for creating exhibits for special events and other off-site programs. “Bathroom Blurbs” have been created for posting in bathroom stalls, a live monarch lifecycle exhibit is displayed annually, and themed exhibits and self-guided stations are often created for special events. The main exhibits in the Visitor Center are designed to interpret natural history of the area and Refuge management practices. Articles and activities in newsletters are often interpretive.

Staff Development

Visitor Services Interns are taken on a staff retreat with interns from the Hiawatha National Forest, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and the Clear Lake Environmental Education Center for an orientation to interpretation and how to create a good interpretive program.

Surveys and Plans

A definition of success and measures for interpretation should also be developed and an Office of Management and Budget approved survey of user satisfaction should be conducted. A protocol should also be developed to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of interpretive programming.

General

Refuge interpretation should focus on *Section E. Themes, Messages and Topics*. When appropriate interpretation of new management practices should be worked into programs and publications, this helps explain the “why” behind the change. Sharing this information can be an important part of public understanding. Incorporating cultural history messages into interpretive items can also help improve the understanding of changing management practices and the changes in the Refuge’s landscape throughout time.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. (*CCP Goal 3 (p.39-40)*)

Objectives

Objective: Seventy percent of visitors will understand and appreciate the cultural history of the Refuge. (*CCP Objective 3.6*)

Objective: Annually provide no fewer than 400 quality environmental education experiences and 700 quality interpretive experiences per year to promote an understanding of the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula. (*CCP Objective 3.4*)

Strategies

General

Strategy 7.1: Incorporate cultural history messages into programs, exhibits and other media with emphasis on use of the Refuge landscape throughout time. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 7.2: Evaluate all interpretive products and programs against the themes identified in *Section E.* of this document to ensure that they all reinforce station messages. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.3: Develop operational definition of success and measures for interpretation through (an Office of Budget and Management approved) survey of visitor satisfaction. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 7.4: Develop and implement a protocol for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of interpretive programming. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.5: Maintain existing interpretive facilities and materials, including the Visitor Center, exhibits, brochures, waysides, etc. *(New Strategy)*

Facilities

Visitor Center

Strategy 7.6: Develop a comprehensive Interpretive Plan that identifies audiences, key themes and methods for all products and programs (including facilities, signs, publications, websites, social media, AV programs, etc.). *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.7: Utilizing the defined themes, messages and topics discussed in *Section E.* of this document create an Exhibit Replacement Plan using the Interpretive Plan to replace the existing displays at the Visitor Center. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.8: Use the Exhibit Replacement Plan to begin replacing, as the budget allows, the most worn and outdated exhibits in the Visitor Center first until the displays reflect the new themes, messages and topics. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.9: Develop interpretive displays on the Refuge's research natural areas (Red Pine, White Pine, Hardwoods), Strangmoor Bog, and CCC activities in the Visitor Center. *(Visitor Services Review Strategy, 2006)*

Trails

Strategy 7.10: Where appropriate develop interpretive signs for the trails lacking interpretation based on the overall interpretive themes. Use signage sparingly and only in places with strong interpretive value. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.11: Maintain interpretive signs/panels on nature trail and viewing platforms. *(CCP Strategy)*

Signs and Kiosks

Strategy 7.12: Develop temporary/portable signs that could be used for five years after a timber cut and/or a prescribed burn describing the general purposes of the management activities. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.13: Install an interpretive sign on the viewing deck behind the Visitor Center. *(Visitor Services Review, 2006)*

Publications, Websites and Social Media

Strategy 7.14: Interpret the Refuge's natural areas (Red Pine, White Pine, Hardwoods), Seney Wilderness, Strangmoor Bog and CCC activities on the website. *(Visitor Services Review, 2006)*

Strategy 7.15: Use new media, audio technology or some type of publication to create a self-guided interpretive tour along the Marshland Wildlife Drive. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.16: Work with Seney Natural History Association to publish Refuge News the refuge's newsletter three times per year – spring, summer and fall. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.17: Work with Seney Natural History Association, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Eastern National, Hiawatha National Forest, and Hiawatha Interpretive Association to publish Superior Wildlands Guide to the Federal Lands of the Upper Peninsula on an annual basis. *(New Strategy)*

Programs and Special Events

Strategy 7.18: At the start of each Visitor Service's program impart information about US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge System, and Refuge specific messages. *(Visitor Services Review, 2006)*

Strategy 7.19: Continue to provide interpretive programs, events, festivals, tours for Refuge visitors, with a message that emphasizes habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 7.20: Conduct at least two special events, 12-24 auto tours, and 12-24 programs on-site to interpret the Refuge, its habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 7.21: Annually review ranger/volunteer-led interpretive programs and modify, as needed, to ensure that they are accurate, interpretive, mission based and reinforce refuge themes. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 7.22: As significant new management practices are implemented, explore possibilities for complementary interpretive programming. *(New Strategy)*

Completed CCP Strategies

Strategy 7.23: Explore the idea of converting the CCC cabin into a historic/cultural museum. *(CCP strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Refuge staff will use the interpretation evaluation guidance (Table F-6 in Appendix E (p. 159)) as a tool for monitoring the interpretation components of the visitor services program.
- Use the interpretive analysis model to identify whether products and programs are truly interpretive or informational.
- File and save comments and feedback from visitors after tours and programs and make changes as appropriate.
- Schedule inspections of Visitor Center exhibits and outdoor interpretive panels for routine maintenance.

STANDARD 8: MANAGE FOR OTHER RECREATIONAL USE OPPORTUNITIES

Policy (605 FW 1 and 603 FW 1)

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, states that compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are the priority public uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation) and will receive enhanced consideration over other general public uses. Volunteers, partners, recreation fees, and concessions are tools available to assist in managing these uses. We will only permit other uses when we determine that they are legally mandated, provide benefits to the Service, occur due to special circumstances, or facilitate one of the priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

The following public use compatibility determinations have been completed for public use activities and are current for Seney NWR:

- Hunting - Compatible
- Fishing - Compatible
- Wildlife observation and photography – Compatible
- Environmental education and interpretation - Compatible
- Mushroom and Berry Picking – Compatible

Although the following public uses have no formal compatibility determination the wildlife observation and photography compatibility determination states that means of access are included. See Appendix C, use 3 for more information.

- Canoeing and Kayaking
- Biking
- Hiking
- Snowshoeing
- Cross-country skiing
- Automobile (seasonally on the Marshland Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop)

The Manistique, Driggs, and Creighton Rivers as well as Walsh Creek are open to canoeing and kayaking. The Manistique River is the only waterway open to motorized boats. Paddling the Driggs River is discouraged. The distance from the Driggs River Road put-in to the Mead Creek Campground take-out is difficult to complete during daylight hours due to length and hazards. Although listed as non-wildlife-oriented recreation, canoeing, kayaking, and other forms of boating are often used as a means to pursue wildlife-oriented recreation, including fishing, photography and wildlife observation.

All Refuge roads, including maintenance roads, are open year-round to biking unless otherwise posted. Biking is only allowed on Refuge roads. People may hike anywhere on the Refuge at any time of the year, unless otherwise posted. The only designated hiking trails at this time are the Pine Ridge Nature Trail, Wigwams Connector Trail, South Show Pool Loop and Northern Hardwoods trails. In the winter, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are also allowed anywhere on the Refuge. The Refuge maintains 10 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails (Northern Hardwoods Trails). Dogs and snowshoeing are not allowed on the groomed cross-country ski trails as they destroy the groomed trails. Maps of the Refuge's road and trail systems are available at the Refuge office, on the Refuge's website and at the kiosks at the Refuge access points. The main reasons for posting closed areas include maintenance projects and management activities such as timber cuts and prescribed burns.

Picking of berries and mushrooms for personal consumption occurs seasonally on the Refuge where the wild edibles can be found. Commercial picking is prohibited.

A Visitor Estimation Plan will be developed in 2014 and should define the best way to count the numbers of people using the Refuge and the frequency at which these counts should be repeated. The plan should help the Visitor Services staff calculate the approximate number of hikers, bikers, paddlers, winter sport participants and mushroom and berry pickers. Specific locations to install new trail counters include Whitefish Point, Robinson Road and the Wigwam Connector Trail.

Special Use Permits

From time to time Special Use Permits (SUP) may be granted to individuals or groups that request special access to the Refuge. These uses must be appropriate and compatible to the purposes of the Refuge. Permits are issued from one of the three following categories General Use, Research and Monitoring or Commercial. These are generally one time uses or short term agreements that do not fall under the concessions heading.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. *(CCP Goal 3 (p.39-40))*

Objectives

Objective 3.8: Provide additional access opportunities upon request on a case-by-case basis if compatible with Refuge purposes. *(CCP Objective)*

Strategies

General

Strategy 8.1: Consider recreational access requests on a case-by-case basis. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 8.2: Continue to use the Special Use Permit (SUP) program to authorize appropriate and compatible requested uses of the Refuge. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 8.3: Develop a monitoring program to ascertain the number of visitors using the reopened sections of trails and Whitefish Point Unit by installing infra-red trail counters; review every 5 years to ensure Refuge resources are not being negatively impacted by overuse by the public. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 8.4: Continue to offer access to the Refuge's road system for seasonal activities such as biking, hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 8.5: Continue to offer access to the Refuge for seasonal activities such as canoeing, kayaking, research, hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. *(New Strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- See Tables F-7 in Appendix E for specific evaluation criteria.

-
- On an annual basis, evaluate and adapt other recreational use programs as needed in an informal review with essential staff (Visitor Services Manager, Refuge Manager, Refuge Biologist, Law Enforcement, etc.).
 - Ensure that the program is meeting safety, management, biological, and visitor services objectives.

STANDARD 9: OUTREACH

Policy (605 FW 1.14I)

Effective outreach depends on open and continuing communication between the Refuge staff and the public. This communication involves determining and understanding the issues, identifying audiences, crafting messages, selecting the most effective delivery techniques, and evaluating effectiveness. Achieved results will further the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System and purpose(s) of the Refuge. *See the National Outreach Strategy: A Master Plan for Communicating in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and America's National Wildlife Refuge System: 100 on 100 Outreach Campaign.*

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION

This section will discuss those areas of outreach not discussed in the other sections of this document.

Throughout the year the Refuge participates in several outreach activities including presentations for local clubs, participation in community events, and conducting multi-media outreach such as radio interviews, writing articles for local newspapers, news releases, etc.

A broad audience is potentially affected by a number of the Refuge-related issues and actions, such as prescribed burning, smoke management, forest and pool management, land acquisition and facilities development.

Congress, corporate sponsors, local civilians, conservation and civic groups, and local and state media are included in the list of audiences reached through direct contact, press releases, invitations, special events, programs, social media sites and other outreach tools. The Seney Natural History Association has been especially helpful with congressional contacts and with corporate and business contacts in the local area.

A step down plan to the Visitor Services Plan includes writing both an Outreach Plan and if needed an incident information plan. As part of the Outreach Plan an evaluation tool should be developed to seek a way to determine if current outreach efforts are effective.

Programs and Special Events

Each year the Refuge participates in four off-refuge outreach events and is requested to give programs at several different civic organizations including church groups, garden clubs, hunt clubs and other groups.

On an annual basis the Visitor Services staff develops a new program for civic groups. As part of this growing library of programs a program that focuses specifically on the National Wildlife Refuge System should be developed. Often times these programs are created to explain Refuge management practices or other ecological issues that affect the Refuge.

In February, a portable display is taken to the *Winter Carnival* in Curtis, MI. This festival features several fun activities for kids and families including an ice fishing "fish coop" and vendors. The Refuge puts up a display to attract the public and answer questions pertaining to the Refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The future of this special event is uncertain. In 2013 the Winter Carnival was canceled.

Beginning in 2011, the Refuge began to host a booth at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory's Spring Fling at Whitefish Point as our International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) celebration. To celebrate IMBD in the past Refuge staff have presented programs at the Spring Fling, worked extensively with the NPS and USFS to coordinate an Eastern U.P. birding festival (Birding by the Bay), and created exhibits and activities for the Visitor Center. The birding festival and Visitor Center activities were not continued because they took a lot of time and effort to coordinate, but had minimal attendance. Bird enthusiasts flock to Whitefish Point during the spring and fall migrations and attending this membership event is a wonderful time to spread the Service's message and garner support from these bird enthusiasts.

Over the 4th of July weekend the Refuge participates in two local parades. One parade is held in Curtis and is attended every year. Parades are also held in Munising, Manistique, and Newberry. The Refuge attempts to participate in these parades on a rotating basis, once every three years. The parades are seen by thousands of people in the local communities and are a good way to spread our message and let people know about our programs and special events.

Art on the lake is held each year over Labor Day weekend in Curtis, Michigan. This community event draws thousands of visitors and gives the Refuge a chance to share its messages with the public and maybe attract some new guests. *Art on the Lake* organizers choose an annual theme for this event; staff then try to create an exhibit based on the event theme.

Starting in 2008, the Refuge has assisted the Curtis Public Library by presenting programs during their summer reading program. In 2013 the Refuge also shared the programs with the Engadine Library. Other local libraries may also wish to host the program including Newberry, Manistique and possibly Munising. Programs are planned based on the summer reading program theme.

Publications

USFWS brochures such as *Conserving the Nature of America* and *National Wildlife Refuge System* are routinely given out at the Visitor Center. Both these brochures help differentiate the USFWS from state agencies. Due to budget constraints rack cards and the Superior Wildlands publication are the only brochures distributed off the Refuge property. Hunting and fishing brochures, cross-country ski brochures, bird lists, and the general Refuge brochures are distributed in the kiosks located on the Refuge.

Signs and Displays

The Refuge has a variety of portable displays available for special events and other off-site programs. Some give very general information about the USFWS and National Wildlife Refuge System. Portable fire and invasive species displays round out the professionally fabricated portable displays. Refuge staff and interns also create portable interpretive displays in house for specific topics.

Website, Social Media and other forms of Media

The Refuge's webpages provide information about special events, hunting seasons and regulations, public interpretive programming, environmental education opportunities and other topics of interest. It is updated as needed. Regular social media posts help expand Refuge awareness.

Regular news releases and media alerts have been employed as needed for special events, changes to hunt seasons or regulations, and prescribed burns. The local Chambers of Commerce and Tourism Bureaus should be included in these alerts to ensure Refuge events are included in their calendars of events.

A few days before each prescribed burn, signs are placed along public roadways that border the fire management unit. These signs alert the public that a prescribed burn will likely take place soon, but they provide no message about the benefits these burns will provide the habitat and neighboring landowners. In 2012 a wildfire broke out on the Refuge. At that time it would have been helpful to have a staff member trained as a Fire Information Officer. In order to prepare for the possibility of another wildfire a staff member should be nominated and trained to fulfil this position.

Each week a Refuge staff member calls into “The Eagle 96.7” radio station to report any upcoming activities, events, snow conditions for skiing in the winter and other Refuge information. This is an effort to keep the local public apprised of our activities.

Partnerships

Annually the Refuge works with other Federal and State agencies in the area to provide training opportunities for Refuge staff and interns. The Superior Wildlands is a cooperative effort between the Refuge, National Park Service and the National Forest Service to disseminate information to the public from all of the Federal Lands in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

Student Career Development

Seney staff accommodates requests for “career talks” at local schools & universities. Seney NWR participates in career building introductory programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and the Career Discovery Internship Program (CDIP). Recently, the Visitor Services program has opted to participate in the CDIP every other year. Other entry level career opportunities are offered when funding is available through the Pathways Program. The Pathways Program replaced the Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) and the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). The Pathways Program provides opportunities for high school and college students to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, the Refuge Visitor Services program is assisted by several interns who receive living allowances from the Seney Natural History Association.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal 3: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. *(CCP Goal 3 (p.39-40))*

Objectives

Objective: Annually provide no fewer than 400 quality environmental education experiences and 700 quality interpretive experiences per year to promote an understanding of the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula. *(CCP Objective 3.4)*

Strategies

General

Strategy 9.1: Nominate a Visitor Services employee as a Fire Information Officer and get that employee specialized training, including completing a task book. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.2: Seek an evaluation model to help determine if outreach efforts are effective. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.3: Write an outreach plan for the Refuge. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.4: Evaluate the need for an incident information plan, if one is needed write the plan. *(New Strategy)*

Publications

Strategy 9.5: Supply Refuge brochures, rack cards, Superior Wildlands newspaper and events calendar to partners, community businesses and state welcome centers. *(New Strategy)*

Website and Social Media and other forms of Media

Strategy 9.6: Evaluate and apply social media, as appropriate, to expand Refuge awareness. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.7: As necessary, issue press releases to announce activity schedules, special events and changes to hunt seasons. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.8: Utilize the local media to promote Refuge habitat improvements, outreach activities, and other accomplishments. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.9: Annually coordinate adding Refuge events to Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau calendar. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.10: Continue the working relationship with Eagle 96.7 and provide weekly updates on Refuge happenings and wildlife updates. *(New Strategy)*

Programs and Special Events

Strategy 9.11: Develop an outreach program that focuses on the National Wildlife Refuge System. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.12: Annually give presentations to civic organizations (i.e. Kiwanis) to communicate Refuge management practices and solicit volunteers. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.13: Annually participate in the Curtis Winter Festival, Whitefish Point Bird Observatory's Spring Fling, 4th of July Community Parades, Art on the Lake, library programs, and/or other community events as a way to promote the Refuge and its activities (i.e. information table with hands-on activities, brochures, maps, knowledgeable staff and volunteers, etc.). *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.14: Annually consult with biology, forestry and fire staff to ensure all outreach opportunities complement and emphasize current Refuge management practices and landscape-level ecological issues that affect the Refuge. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.15: As significant new management practices are implemented, explore possibilities for complementary outreach programming. *(New Strategy)*

Partnerships

Strategy 9.16: Conduct site visits for FWS and other federal officials (e.g. Congressional staff) to showcase Refuge achievements and needs; select a location and time of year that will best highlight these needs and accomplishments. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.17: Expand Refuge awareness by working with other agencies (Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Hiawatha National Forest, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, etc.) and non-governmental organizations (Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Michigan Audubon Society, Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, etc.) to promote the mission of the Service and the purposes of the Refuge. *(New Strategy)*

Career Development:

Strategy 9.18: Annually participate in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) summer employment program as funding allows. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.19: Biennially participate in the Career Discovery Internship Program. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.20: Annually seek funding to participate in the Pathways program for part-time employment and eventual placement of college students into Service careers. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 9.21: Annually seek funding for food stipends from Seney Natural History Association for the funding of two to three Visitor Services Interns and two to three Applied Science Interns. *(New Strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Refuge staff will use the outreach evaluation guidance (Table F-8 in Appendix E (p.160)) as a tool for monitoring each outreach event conducted by Refuge staff.
- Track the number of positive and negative news articles in the local newspapers.
- Track the number of calls to the office about smoke/fire issues.
- On a 3 to 5 year basis, the Refuge will perform a more formal review of the outreach programs to ensure the programs are meeting management objectives as prescribed in the CCP.
- After each special event, conduct an internal assessment of the effectiveness of the event in meeting Refuge goals and objectives as outlined in the Refuge Outreach Plan (identified in 4.1 above).

STANDARD 10: VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS

Policy (605 FW 1.14J)

Volunteer and refuge support groups fortify refuge staffs with their gift of time, skills, and energy and are integral to the future of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Refuge staff will initiate and nurture relationships with volunteers and refuge support groups, and will continually support, monitor, and evaluate these groups with the goal of fortifying important refuge activities. The National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-242) strengthens the Refuge System's role in developing effective partnerships with various community groups. Whether through volunteers, refuge support groups, or other important partnerships in the community, Refuge personnel will seek to make the Refuge an integral part of the community, giving rise to a stronger Refuge System.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

The volunteer program at Seney National Wildlife Refuge has been a strong and integral part of the Refuge for many years. Volunteers are the life blood of the Visitor Services program, covering front desk duties at the Visitor Center on a daily basis allowing staff time to provide other important services to the public. Volunteers also perform a wide variety of other duties including maintenance, administration, wildlife surveys, landscaping, litter pickup, and some environmental education and interpretation. Seney National Wildlife Refuge has a permanent seasonal volunteer coordinator who is also a visitor services specialist at the Refuge. During the winter the Visitor Services Manager takes over this duty for the few volunteers that are needed.

Table 7 - Number of annual volunteers and volunteer hours for the past five years.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Five Year Average
Volunteer Information						
Annual Volunteers	49	54	63	69	67	60
Volunteer Hours	7,208	7,748	9,621	8,666	8,164	8,281

The total volunteer hours for FY 13 were 8,164 from 67 volunteers for an average of 122 hours of work per volunteer. That is 3.9 full time staff members and \$138,788 of labor (calculated at the USFWS standard of \$17 per hour). Seney NWR's volunteers are very dedicated and work as advocates for the Refuge in their daily lives.

Recruitment

Recruitment for volunteers takes many forms. First, the Refuge's website has an entire webpage dedicated to local volunteers, resident volunteers (RV) and visitor services interns. It links to the volunteer coordinator's email address and phone number where potential volunteers may request additional information. Position descriptions and application packets can also be found on the volunteer website. Thirteen position descriptions are included: Visitor Center Front Desk and Bookstore Volunteer; Proofreader; Archive, Photo and Library Organization; Maintenance Worker; Winter Recycling; Administrative Volunteer; Biological Volunteer; Herbarium; Special Events; Media, Environmental Education/Interpretation; Tour Bus Driver; Brochure, Flier and Publication Distribution; and RV Volunteers. Applicants are asked to fill out a generic volunteer.gov application with their skills, availability and interests.

Second, the Seney NWR is listed on the volunteer.gov website. Updates can be made by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Volunteer Coordinator. The name, phone number, and email address of the current volunteer coordinator can be found on the www.volunteer.gov website.

Third, the Refuge distributes volunteer information at our Visitor Center, headquarters, at special events, on our social media sites, on our weekly radio update, and through a press release each spring. These documents are also distributed to anyone requesting volunteer information over the refuge's website, in person or by phone.

Fourth, current volunteers are our best advocates. Many volunteers and friends members recruit friends and acquaintances to share their positive experiences at Seney NWR.

Lastly, we have a partnership with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), part of Volunteers of America, who refer interested volunteers to the Refuge.

Each potential volunteer fills out a standard volunteer application or submits a resume. References are requested for resident volunteers and contacted by the Volunteer Coordinator in advance of the volunteer starting work. Volunteers are selected based on the Refuge's needs and the volunteers experience, skills and availability.

Each year the Seney Natural History Association (SNHA) sponsors five to six volunteer interns for the Applied Science and Visitor Services programs. These positions are considered volunteer although (SNHA) provides a food allowance and the Refuge provides housing for these full time volunteers. Interns are selected for 12, 15, or 24 week internships and are expected to work 40 hours per week while they are at the Refuge. Interns are recruited through job fairs, college classroom visits, internship flier distribution to professors and career offices at colleges and universities, as well as on several internship sites such as the National Interpreters Association, other career websites, and the Refuge website.

Orientation and Training

Each year, the Wednesday before the Visitor Center reopens (May 15th); the Refuge sponsors a volunteer orientation for returning and potential new volunteers. The orientation gives staff a chance to remind volunteers about important aspects of their programs and to share updates and future plans. This is followed up the next day by a bus tour of the Refuge to highlight management changes, answer questions about the Refuge, and speak to volunteers on a one on one or small group basis to answer lingering questions from the orientation the day before.

Each month the Visitor Center is open the Volunteer Coordinator puts together an evening program for the volunteers. There is usually a pot luck followed by presentations by graduate students conducting research on the Refuge, local wildlife professionals, or staff members. These "volunteer socials" provide an opportunity for staff and volunteers to get to know one another and helps volunteers get a better understanding of management practices and science being conducted on the Refuge or in the local area.

Resident volunteers and Visitor Services interns are given a more detailed orientation by the Visitor Services Staff. Their orientation includes tours of the Refuge buildings, property and a personal introduction to all staff members. They are given copies of orientation packets which include a history of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge System and Seney NWR, USFWS policy regarding volunteers, expectations of the volunteer, housing rules, uniforms, appropriate forms, computer access and associated background checks. Visitor Services Interns are taken on a staff retreat with interns from the Hiawatha National Forest, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and the Clear Lake Environmental Education Center for an orientation to interpretation and how to create a good interpretive program.

New volunteers and interns undergo a training period before they are allowed to operate the front desk on their own. When volunteers need further assistance they contact a staff member or an intern for help. The volunteers are very friendly and knowledgeable about the Refuge and provide a connection to the local community as well as providing great customer service to the visiting public.

To the greatest extent possible, proper work spaces, materials, equipment, safety gear and volunteer work shirts/uniforms are provided to the volunteers so that they can safely and properly do their jobs. As much as possible, volunteers and paid staff are integrated, managed similarly and included in decisions that affect them. Volunteers are given meaningful duties and specific responsibilities.

Local volunteers, resident volunteers (RV) and interns are all expected to fill out a monthly time sheet of their activities. The Volunteer Coordinator enters the volunteer hours into a database to track hours and projects. Time sheets for RSVP volunteers are sent to RSVP coordinators monthly along with in-kind reports as needed.

Housing

The Refuge has three recreational vehicle pads with full hook ups. Amenities for RV volunteers include access to the laundry facilities, restrooms, kitchen, garage and a commons area in the bunkhouse. In addition, these volunteers may receive a living allowance from the USFWS for their services. RV volunteers are allowed to have pets but they must be under control at all times and non-intrusive to others. Use of a vehicle pad typically requires a one month minimum commitment and 20-40 hours of volunteer work per week. The schedule is flexible; weekdays, weekends and holidays may be worked. Some upgrades to the camper pads and electrical are needed. All supplies have been purchased by the Refuge and should be installed in 2014.

SNHA sponsored interns are offered on-site housing. Housing is bunkhouse style at the River Road Quarters. This facility has six bedrooms with two beds each and can accommodate up to 12 people. The facility has a double kitchen, a large commons area, three bathrooms, laundry facilities, a garage for storing outdoor gear and research equipment, an outdoor grill and picnic tables. At times interns may also be housed at one of the two other Refuge houses, in the CCC Cabin or the Student Cabin. This usually takes place in the fall when only one or two interns remain. While RV volunteers are welcome to use most of these facilities, they rarely use more than the laundry facilities and freezer space. Pets are not allowed in the bunkhouse.

Volunteer Appreciation

Each year the Volunteer Coordinator organizes a volunteer appreciation dinner in the fall. Each volunteer and a guest are invited to attend the dinner which has a different theme each year. After the dinner, an awards ceremony is held for the volunteers which includes milestone awards for contributing 500 and 1,000 or more hours and special recognitions such as the *Volunteer of the Year* award. Volunteers are recognized through evening activities and appreciation gifts which change each year. Some of the past volunteer recognition gifts include Lake Superior cruises, gift certificates to a local greenhouse, fleece jackets, mini mag flashlights, birdfeeders, etc. Volunteers also receive small gifts to go along with the milestone awards such as pins, decals, water bottles and America the Beautiful passes.

Resident volunteers and Visitor Services interns are given an evaluation at the end of their stay. They evaluate their time spent with the Refuge and their supervisor evaluates the volunteer's performance.

Community Partners

Refuge staff members work with a variety of community partners such as the Seney Natural History Association (SNHA), the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Retired Volunteer Senior Program (RSVP), Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, Michigan Audubon Society, Hiawatha National Forest, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Clear Lake Environmental Education Center, Three Lakes Academy, youth organizations and local colleges and universities. Each partner helps to provide different services to the Refuge.

These partnerships are both formal and informal. Formal partnerships have Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) or other legal documents which spell out the partnership between the organizations.

Memorandums of Understanding

Seney NWR has a signed MOU with Three Lakes Academy, a local charter school, which allows the two entities to work together to provide quality environmental education opportunities to the students at the school. Seney NWR and RSVP have a signed MOU in place to provide volunteers for the Refuge.

Human Use/Natural Resource Management Plan for Whitefish Point – Joint Committee

The US Fish and Wildlife Service via the Seney NWR, Michigan Audubon Society and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society serve on a Joint Committee tasked with implementing the *Human Use/Natural Resource Management Plan for Whitefish Point*. Each entity has one appointed voting member. Other non-voting but ex-officio members of the Joint Committee include the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, State Historical Preservation Office, Whitefish Township, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Whitefish Point Preservation Society. The Joint Committee helps administer the management of the former Coast Guard lands at Whitefish Point. A copy of this plan can be found on the Seney NWR planning website - www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/seney/pdf/WhiteFishPlan.pdf.

Informal partnerships do not have priorities and missions that are spelled out. They tend to be individual projects accomplished through cooperation with an entity outside of the USFWS. This includes such projects as the annual *Superior Wildlands Guide to Federal Lands in the Upper Peninsula*, partnering on environmental education activities, intern trainings and special events. There are no plans in place to add additional Memorandums of Understandings or formal agreements between current partners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Friends Group

The Seney Natural History Association, Inc. is a 501 c 3 corporation chartered in 1987 to assist the Seney NWR, with various educational and conservation-related activities and projects. The group has a board composed of nine members and a general membership of approximately 200. The board meets monthly from May to October when the Visitor Center is open and every other month, November to April, when the Visitor Center is closed. SNHA conducts its annual meeting immediately following the volunteer orientation in the spring.

SNHA's mission is to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the natural history and natural environment of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge, by working in cooperation with Refuge staff to support its mission.

There is an existing cooperating association agreement with the Friends Group. The three purposes for the formation of the group as outlined in the agreement are:

1. Support the goals of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge to preserve, protect and restore biological diversity and historical resources of the Refuge landscape, while providing opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, education, interpretation and scientific research.
2. Make available interpretive and education books and brochures primarily through retail book sales outlets and free distribution. Educational materials will add to the visitor's understanding of refuge management goals, programs and challenges, the natural resources of the area, the National Wildlife Refuge System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
3. Contribute funds, goods and services for Service interpretation, educational, recreational and biological programs. Interpretive, recreational and educational facilities may also be constructed, rehabilitated or maintained with the use of Friends donations. When financially able, the Friends may supplement the environmental education and interpretive programs of the Refuge.

The agreement also details the Friends Group and the Service's responsibilities with respect to donations; sales terms; facilities and equipment; records, accounting and reporting; personnel; and approval and activities.

The Friends Group operates a small bookstore in the Refuge Visitor Center. Though small, it provides numerous, well displayed items to the visiting public. A variety of custom designed t-shirts and caps, adult and children's books, and small refuge oriented wildlife-related keepsakes are offered. These items are generally supportive of or related to Service, National Wildlife Refuge System or refuge-specific messages. Claudia Slater has been the bookstore manager approximately 10 years. In 2013 a bookstore committee was formed to help come up with ideas to help increase the net profit and reduce inventory. This is in response to decreasing bookstore profits in a tough economic time.

Each year, SNHA holds a budget meeting in January to set the budget for the new year. Refuge staff attends the meeting and requests funding for numerous projects. Visitor Services funding requests often include monies for special events, intern stipends, exhibit and program supplies and general refuge support. Once the budget is agreed upon, staff members are then allowed to utilize the monies as they see fit for each budget item. If an item will surpass the budget amount previously agreed upon by the board, the staff member attends a board meeting and requests that additional monies be provided. Usually the board will approve the request.

The following is a list of some the items the friends group has financially supported:

-
- Purchasing binoculars and field guides for visitors to borrow
 - Funding for displays in the Visitor Center, animal mounts, newsletters, brochures, observation decks and spotting scopes
 - Providing education trunks for use in school classrooms
 - Funding Applied Science and Visitor Services interns
 - Co-sponsoring special events such as Children’s Fishing Day, Youth in the Outdoors, the Amateur Photo Contest, and the Winter Film Festival
 - Funding the orientation film “The Wonder of Nature”
 - Providing items for the intern/temporary researcher bunkhouse
 - Providing equipment for biological surveys
 - Providing help with other Refuge projects, such as building bridges on the trails
 - Run the bookstore – all profits go back into the items listed above
 - Assistance with re-opening the Wigwams Access Point

Members of the Friends Group have attended both national and regional Friends Group conferences in Washington DC and in the Midwest region. A major goal of the group currently is to develop their grant writing abilities and search for more funding for Refuge projects.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Goals

Goal: Provide visitors and the community with opportunities to experience quality, wildlife-dependent activities and to understand and appreciate the rich mosaic of wildlife and habitats found within the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. *(CCP Goal 3 (p.39-40))*

Objectives

Objective: Provide year-round opportunities for at least 25,000 visitors annually to observe and photograph wildlife and habitat. *(CCP Objective 3.3)*

Strategies

General

Strategy 10.1: Work with volunteers that have contact with the public to ensure the messages given to the public are consistent and in line with the Service and Refuge Mission. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.2: Enhance current staffing by recruiting, selecting and training qualified interns, volunteers and Seney Natural History Association members to assist with interpretation program. *(Visitor Services Review Strategy, 2006)*

Recruitment

Strategy 10.3: Update volunteer position descriptions, as needed. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.4: During daily activities recruit volunteers through personal interaction with the public, with the website, volunteer.gov, flyers, local universities and RSVP. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.5: Annually enhance current staffing by recruiting, selecting and training qualified interns, volunteers and Seney Natural History Association members to assist with Refuge projects. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.6: Continue to host resident volunteers annually at recreational vehicle pad and interns at Refuge housing. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.7: Continue to provide volunteers with monthly volunteer socials and evening presentations May - September. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.8: Continue to annually recognize volunteers with a special event. *(New Strategy)*

Volunteer Opportunities

Strategy 10.9: Offer opportunities to help with field/service projects (i.e. tree planting, sharp-tailed grouse counting research etc...). *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.10: Develop a task list of volunteer opportunities for future volunteer projects to keep volunteers interested. *(New Strategy)*

Facilities

Strategy 10.11: Improve parking site to accommodate trailers used by Refuge volunteers. *(CCP Strategy)*

Strategy 10.12: Update Recreational Vehicle pads to 50 Amp. *(New Strategy)*

Seney Natural History Association

Strategy 10.13: Continue a positive partnership with Seney Natural History Association. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.14: Maintain Seney Natural History Association's bookstore operation in the Visitor Center, administered by friends with assistance by Refuge staff. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.15: Continue to have Service staff participate in Friends Group meetings and SNHA board members in Refuge staff meetings. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 10.16: Continue to support the Friends Group on grant applications, as they arise. *(New Strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE:

- Refuge staff will use the Volunteer and Friends Group evaluation guidance (Table F-9 in Appendix E (p.160-161)) as a tool for monitoring volunteer program and Friends Group components of the visitor services program.
- Have resident volunteers and interns fill out a volunteer exit interview.
- Have Volunteer Coordinator fill out an exit evaluation on each resident volunteer and intern.

STANDARD 11: RECREATION FEE PROGRAM

Policy (261 FW 1; 263 FW 1); Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-447); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidance on the Recreation Fee Program – September 2008

“The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (FLREA) allows land management agencies, such as the National Wildlife Refuge System, to charge fees for entry and certain amenities (user fees). The charging of entrance and user fees at national wildlife Refuges can be a helpful management tool if the program is well-managed and implemented.”

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

No current program and not being considered.

STANDARD 12: CONCESSIONS

Policy (50 CFR Part 25.61) and Director's Order No.139

Concession Contracts, discusses the Service's current policy for concession management and provides guidance for permitting and administering concession operations on Service lands. We use concessions to assist us in providing wildlife-dependent recreation activities to the visiting public. The concessions are managed through contracts between the Service and a private entity, where the private entity is allowed to charge a fee for services provided at a field station to the visiting public.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

No Program discussion. Short term uses will be handled via Special Use Permits.

STANDARD 13: COMMERCIAL RECREATIONAL USES

Policy (50 CFR 29.1; 50 CFR 27.97; 8 RM 16; 603 FW 1; 605 FW 5)

A commercial recreational use is a use that generates revenue or that results in a commodity which is or can be sold for income or revenue. Before considering compatibility, the use must be determined to contribute to the achievement of the Refuge purpose or the mission of the Refuge System, as outlined in Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, 29.1.

To be allowed on a refuge, a commercial use must go beyond the “not materially interfere with...” requirement and must contribute to the achievement of the Refuge purpose or mission of the Refuge System. The contribution must be clearly defined in the justification section of the compatibility determination for any commercial use.

Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, 27.97, Private Operations, prohibits an unauthorized commercial enterprise on any National Wildlife Refuge. Thus, commercial tours are required to apply for a special use permit (SUP) from the Refuge Manager. By establishing a SUP system, the refuge staff is able to set sustainable limits on the number of permits issued.

In determining if a commercial recreational use is compatible, one way to connect it to the mission of the System is to determine if the commercial recreation use will facilitate one of the wildlife-dependent priority public use activities which are “directly related to the mission of the System.” (Refuge Improvement Act – 1997)

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

No program discussion.

STANDARD 14: WILDERNESS

Policy (Wilderness Act of 1964 (U.S. C. 1131-1136) Public Law 88-577, September 3, 1964)

The Wilderness Act of 1964 directs the Secretary of the Interior, within 10 years, to review every roadless area of 2,024 or more hectares (5,000 or more acres) and every roadless island (regardless of size) within National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks, and to recommend to the President the suitability of each such area or island for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System by later special Acts of Congress. The Act provides criteria for determining suitability and contains provisions related to activities that can be undertaken on a designated area.

The Wilderness Act establishes additional purposes for the designated Wilderness Areas within refuges (50 CFR 29.12), which “shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as Wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their Wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as Wilderness.” Proposed Wilderness areas are managed so as to protect their Wilderness values pending action by Congress.

CURRENT PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

In 1970, Congress designated 25,150 acres of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge as the Seney Wilderness Area (Figure 6). The Wilderness area encompasses three Land Type Associations (LTAs) known as the Strangmoor Bog, Walsh Fen and West Branch Manistique. The Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark makes up 57% of the Wilderness area and is comprised of string bogs, pine knolls and bog forests. The West Branch Manistique area covers 15% of the Wilderness and is characterized by a mix of spruce-fir-cedar stands and beech-sugar maple-hemlock. The Walsh Fen encompasses about 28% of the Wilderness Area and is dominated by muskeg-bog, mixed conifer swamp, hemlock-yellow birch stands, white and red pines, and shrubland. While the majority of the Wilderness Area remains mainly untouched, the northern portion of the Seney Wilderness Area, the Walsh Fen area, was historically a white pine forest which was logged in the late 1800s and early 1900s then burned repeatedly resulting in the an area now covered with large stumps and a recovering forest. Along the east side of the Wilderness Area is the Walsh Ditch. This ditch was constructed between 1912 and 1915 in an attempt to drain the marshland and make it suitable for farmland. Plugs have been installed in this ditch in an effort to restore the natural hydrological patterns on the adjacent wetlands, including the Wilderness Area.

It is estimated that the Seney Wilderness Area receives fewer than 100 visits per year due to its remote location and the difficulty of travel through the area. The greatest amount of visitation occurs in the fall during the white-tailed deer hunting season.

Minimum tool analysis and other management guidelines help address potential human impacts and their effects and further safeguard against encroachments such as temporary roads, motor vehicles, motorized equipment, mechanical transport, landing of aircraft, structures, and installations. While motorized recreational activities are prohibited inside the Seney Wilderness Area, motorized traffic does occur along adjacent non-wilderness roads. Hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, environmental education and interpretation are allowed, as well as biological research as approved through Refuge management. The Refuge leads group walking tours to a portion of the Seney Wilderness as requested.

Visitors to the Seney Wilderness Area have an increased responsibility for their own safety. Per national policy, we will not modify Wilderness Areas to eliminate risks normally associated with Wilderness (Reference 610FW2 2.33). We provide visitors with general information about the unpredictable nature of risks inherent in Wilderness, including potential dangers related to isolation, terrain, water, wildlife, and weather. We use caution in providing site-specific information to avoid the implication that we have identified all potential hazards. Information on risks and recommended precautions should emphasize that safety is the visitor's responsibility and that the freedom, independence, and self-reliance of the Wilderness experience requires proper mental, physical, and material preparation. While assistance will not always be readily available, Refuge staff will respond to emergencies related to public safety, including conducting or assisting state or local agencies with search and rescue functions. ABA section 507(c) does not require the Refuge to provide any form of special treatment or accommodation or construct any facilities or modify any conditions of lands within a Wilderness Area to facilitate use; at this time refuge management has no plans to consider the principles of Universal Design. Currently there are no trails or facilities or plans to create trails or facilities in the Seney Wilderness Area.

We prioritize public uses in Wilderness Areas of refuges as follows:

- (1) Compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses of the Refuge System (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation). In the Refuge Wilderness Area, we facilitate these uses that do not generally involve prohibited uses unless specifically allowed by the provisions of the Wilderness-establishing legislation. See Refuge System recreation policies at [605 FW 1-7](#) and [610 FW 2](#) for further guidance.
- (2) Other appropriate and compatible recreation uses that are enhanced by a Wilderness setting. Hiking, berry and mushroom picking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing, for example, allow visitors to experience and observe wildlife and its habitat in a Wilderness context. They provide opportunities to experience the physical, psychological, symbolic, and spiritual values of Wilderness under conditions that include risk and challenge, self-reliance, and a spirit of exploration, discovery, and adventure.

Per Service policy, where use conflicts occur or when we must limit the number of visitors, we will give preference to compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses in accordance with the Administration Act that best preserve the Wilderness and are enhanced by a Wilderness setting.

The following public uses are prohibited in Seney Wilderness Area (Reference 610FW2 2.31):

1. Use of motor vehicles, motorboats, mechanical transport, or motorized equipment;
2. Landing of aircraft;
3. Building structures and installations in Wilderness;
4. Extreme or thrill sports; or
5. Competitive events or contests

The use of recreational pack and saddle stock is addressed in the Service Wilderness Policy (Reference 610FW2 2.32). These activities are not permitted on the Seney Wilderness Area.

In the Seney Wilderness Area, refuge management will minimize the presence of modern artifacts of civilization, such as signs, bridges, structures, and technology; large groups; unnecessary managerial presence; and conflicting uses that tend to interfere with one's free and independent response to nature. We will employ nonintrusive survey methods to evaluate visitor satisfaction related to solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and we will correct deficiencies. We will try to maximize the visitor's autonomy and isolation from the influences of the mechanized and settled outside world. To ensure the protection of the Wilderness experience and Wilderness character on Seney National Wildlife Refuge, the Refuge may institute permit systems, limit group sizes, and establish other rules per national Wilderness policy. Management actions, facilities, and onsite presence will be as unobtrusive and subtle as possible, consistent with the overriding criteria of maintaining Wilderness character and values and follow Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and practices.

Under Service Wilderness Policy, established at the time that this VSP was written, Wilderness interpretation is limited to locations outside a Wilderness Area, except as necessary to address visitor health and safety, to administer wildlife-dependent recreation, or to protect Wilderness character. The Refuge Wilderness interpretive and education materials will be designed to increase awareness and appreciation of the full spectrum of Wilderness values, without stimulating unacceptable demand for use.

GOAL(S), OBJECTIVE(S), STRATEGIES

Strategies:

Strategy 14.1: Preserve and protect Wilderness values within the area through proper signage, keeping out unauthorized entry, etc. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 14.2: Inspect the perimeter of the Wilderness Area at least once every 3 years to replace signs that have fallen, disappeared, or been damaged. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 14.3: Ensure that one or more of the Refuge staff have received Service training in Wilderness management, including Minimum Tool Analysis. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 14.4: Ensure new visitor services staff attend Wilderness training. *(New Strategy)*

Strategy 14.5: Implement recreational impact monitoring studies that follow the guidelines established by other agencies or organizations, e.g., David Cole and the U.S. Forest Service, Aldo Leopold Institute, etc. *(New Strategy)*

MONITOR AND EVALUATE:

- See Table F-10 (p. 161) for specific evaluation criteria.
- Refuge management and staff will meet with Wilderness partners to evaluate the relationships, goals and objectives, and analyze program needs and accomplishments.
- On a 3 to 5 year basis, the Refuge will perform a more formal review of the program including project accomplishments and short-term and long-term funding initiatives, etc.

III. Implementation Schedule

This table allows the Refuge to view all the strategies together as it relates to the project completion time frames which is the life of the CCP.

TABLE 8: STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Strategies Implementation Schedule																			
PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 1.1: Develop a Visitor Services Plan in 2012.																			Completed September 2012 – in for approval. Received comments in April but preparations for the summer season then the busy visitor season prevented finishing the plan until the fall.
Strategy 1.2: Utilize Visitor Services Plan to produce an annual work plan.			X																
Strategy 1.3: Develop a hunting/fishing step down plan in 2014/2015.				X															
Strategy 1.4: Finalize the sign plan in 2014/2015.				X	X														
Strategy 1.5: Develop and implement a Visitor Estimation Plan for the Refuge by 2015.					X														
Strategy 2.1: Move the large gravel pile located adjacent to the Entrance Road to a place not visible by the public.									X										As new gravel is delivered a new pile can be established. Instead of moving the existing pile it could be removed as it is used.
Strategy 2.2: Seek feedback from visitors by: placing a suggestion box in the Visitor Center; comment area on				X															

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
website; public meetings; and/or at special events.																				
Strategy 2.3: Maintain after hours restrooms near the Headquarters for use from May 15 – October 20 th unless temperatures reach the 30s.			X																	
Strategy 2.4: Replace the Refuge Visitor Center and office.																				As funding becomes available.
Strategy 2.5: Develop a concept plan for several Visitor Center upgrades with help of professionals and implement the plan over several years until the updates are complete or funding is received for a new Visitor Center.					X	X														
Strategy 2.6: Update the outside decor of the facility which is outdated to a more modern look.							X													
Strategy 2.7: Install a new heating and cooling system.					X	X														2014 or 2015 as we have funds available.
Strategy 2.8: Replace flooring in the Visitor Center.								X												
Strategy 2.9: Repair or replace the four outdoor spotting scopes at the Visitor Center.							X													
Strategy 2.10: Install a telephone at the front desk.					X															

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																		COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027		
Strategy 2.11: Update the electrical system in the Visitor Center.									X											
Strategy 2.12: Upgrade Visitor Center lighting interior and exterior.										X										
Strategy 2.13: Replace the ceiling in the Visitor Center.										X										
Strategy 2.14: Replace doors and possibly windows at the Visitor Center.						X														
Strategy 2.15: Install gutters on the Visitor Center.					X															
Strategy 2.16: Evaluate sidewalks annually and replace when needed.			X																	
Strategy 2.17: Work with SNHA to include closed captioning on “The Wonder of Nature” film.				X	X															As funding is available but as soon as possible since this is for ABA compliance.
Strategy 2.18: Research the need for wireless and other internet capabilities for the Visitor Center, if needed work with SNHA to secure the necessary upgrades.				X			X		X		X		X		X			X		At technology changes so frequently this topic should be revisited on a regular basis.
Strategy 2.19: Continue to allow access to the Visitor Center May 15 to October 20 during normal business hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 7 days per week including holidays.			X																	
Strategy 2.20: Research and implement a way to more effectively direct the public to the Visitor Center.									X	X										

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 2.21: Maintain 7-mile Marshland Wildlife Drive.			X																
Strategy 2.22: Maintain roads for fishing route.			X																
Strategy 2.23: Trim brush and vegetation along the trails so that it does not pose a safety hazard to visitors.			X																Good YCC Summer Project or a project for Volunteers.
Strategy 2.24: Maintain the Northern Hardwoods Trails, South Show Pool Loop and Wigwam Connector Trail as hiking trails.			X																
Strategy 2.25: Construct boardwalks over vernal pools and muddy areas on the Northern Hardwoods trails.							X	X											Good YCC summer project.
Strategy 2.26: Maintain 1.4 mile hiking trail.			X																
Strategy 2.27: Increase facilities (i.e. trails, observation platforms) at Whitefish Point.										X		X							
Strategy 2.28: Maintain 10 miles of groomed ski trails.			X																
Strategy 2.29: Continue to extend the accessible portion of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail at least to the first bench overlook.					X														Good YCC summer project.
Strategy 2.30: Establish the South Show Pool Loop as an ABA compliant trail.							X	X	X	X									Good YCC summer project.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 2.31: Install trail counters on the Wigwam Connector Trail, Whitefish Point Unit and Robinson Road.					X														Trail counters have been purchased but have not been installed yet.
Strategy 2.32: Provide an accessible viewing platform at the Wigwams Access Point.											X								Good YCC summer project.
Strategy 2.33: Add an accessible parking spot at the Wigwams Access Point.					X														Good YCC summer project.
Strategy 2.34: Add a stall or expand the latrine at the Wigwams Access Point to make it ABA accessible.						X	X												Good YCC summer project or volunteer project. 2015 or 2016 as this is for ABA Compliance it should be completed as soon as possible.
Strategy 2.35: Install a one-panel kiosk at the start of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail.												X							
Strategy 2.36: Work with the Michigan State Department of Transportation to post new signs for the Northern Hardwood Cross-country Ski and Hiking trails, if possible it should reflect the Refuge's ownership.					X														
Strategy 2.37: Install a directional sign from the parking lot to the visitor deck for after-hours visitors.								X											

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 2.38: Provide and maintain 14 kiosks that orient visitors and help interpret habitats, wildlife, management, and regulations.			X																
Strategy 2.39: Annually identify, replace/add boundary signs, as needed.			X																
Strategy 2.40: Evaluate Welcome Center signs every few years and partner with other Michigan Refuges to update as needed.								X					X					X	Evaluate every 5 years. Current signs were installed circa 2012.
Strategy 2.41: Update the 11 X 17 Refuge map to reflect trail changes.					X														
Strategy 2.42: Publish the animal checklist and ski trail brochures using U.S. Fish and Wildlife standards.							X												
Strategy 2.43: Include Service and Refuge System messages in brochures.																			As new brochures are created.
Strategy 2.44: Create a trail map or trail brochure.										X									
Strategy 2.45: Maintain and update the Refuge’s website as needed, review quarterly for broken links, outdated content, etc. and add new images to keep the site looking new and fresh.			X																
Strategy 2.46: As appropriate, utilize social media and new technology to interact and outreach with new user	X																		

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
groups.																				
Strategy 2.47: Post appropriate comments, information, and pictures to the social media sites at least 3 to 5 times per week to keep the sites current and relevant.	X																			
Strategy 2.48: Work with Google, NavTec, and other navigation companies to update the information on their road navigation software so that people are accurately directed to the Visitor Center.						X	X													
Strategy 2.49: Designate trails at the Whitefish Point Unit to allow public access while protecting environmentally sensitive areas. One trail will lead from the parking lot to the tip of the Point. The second will run along an old cobble road in a southeasterly direction.					X															
Strategy 2.50: Close the southeast beach from April to August to promote nesting Piping Plovers.			X																	
Strategy 2.51: Work with Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society at the Whitefish Point Unit to route visitors to the beach via their boardwalk and re-vegetate the cut-through from the parking lot to the beach.																				This strategy will be accomplished as funding is received for the GLSHS to begin habitat restoration work.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
Strategy 2.52: Hire a Refuge Manager trainee with a major responsibility for on-site work, mitigation approvals and coordination with partners.																				When funding is available.
Strategy 2.53: Occupy a portion of a Second Keeper's Quarters if the building is re-constructed. The building will also be used by other partners to the Whitefish Point plan.																				When the Keeper's Quarters if completed.
Strategy 2.54: Develop a monitoring program to ascertain the number of visitors using the Whitefish Point Unit; review every 5 years to ensure Refuge resources are not being negatively impacted by overuse.					X					X					X					
Strategy 2.55: Hire a full-time visitor services manager.																				Completed in 2010.
Strategy 2.56: Update the Refuge orientation slide show using new DVD technology.																				Completed by SNHA in 2009 with edits to the disk in 2010.
Strategy 3.1: Continue annual small game hunting opportunities (ruffed grouse, American woodcock, snipe, and snowshoe hare) within framework of MDNR and Refuge restrictions.			X																	
Strategy 3.2: Continue annual firearms and archery white-tailed deer and black bear hunting opportunities (within framework of			X																	

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
Michigan DNR and Refuge restrictions).																				
Strategy 3.3: Continue to provide camping opportunities and open roads during white-tailed deer firearms season.			X																	
Strategy 3.4: Conduct counts to determine numbers of ruffed grouse, snipe, American woodcock, and snowshoe hare hunters.																				In 2014 the Visitor Services staff plans to write a Visitor Estimation Plan. That plan will specify counting techniques and frequency. (see that plan for more details).
Strategy 3.5: Develop operational definition of success and measure for hunting (through an Office of Management and Budget approved) survey of hunter satisfaction.									X											All surveys must be approved by the Office of Management and Budget.
Strategy 3.6: Extend bow hunting areas of the Refuge including Conlon Farm, Smith Farm, and Sub-headquarters to help deal with white-tailed deer browse issues.					X															Need to evaluate possibility before action can take place.
Strategy 3.7: Consider opening an antlerless hunting season on the Refuge; discuss considerations with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.					X															Need to evaluate possibility before action can take place.
Strategy 3.8: Consider opening a late September youth and disabled hunt					X															Need to evaluate possibility before action can take place.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
per state and Refuge regulations; discuss considerations with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.																				
Strategy 3.9: Catalog visitor comments regarding the hunting program as an evaluation tool for the hunt program.			X																	
Strategy 3.10: Update the Refuge hunt plan that was completed in 1989.				X																
Strategy 3.11: Review the hunt plan annually, as described in Service policy.			X																	
Strategy 3.12: Develop a new hunting brochure with updated rules and regulations for distribution.				X																In 2014 and then as needed afterwards.
Strategy 3.13: Invite hunters to comment on the Refuge's hunt program by providing an email address on the brochure, website and hunter information kiosks.				X																
Strategy 3.14: Develop a better way to estimate hunter numbers for all hunting programs.																				In 2014 the Visitor Services staff plans to write a Visitor Estimation Plan. That plan will specify counting techniques and frequency. (see that plan for more details).

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 3.15: Provide visitors with updates on Refuge specific regulations, and the philosophy behind the changes, through publications such as the website and newsletters.			X																
Strategy 3.16: Maintain current hunting regulations on the Refuge's website.			X																
Strategy 3.17: Allow hunters that camp on the Refuge to self-register at the entry points to the Refuge.				X															
Strategy 3.18: Eliminate toxic shot for all species except white-tailed deer and black bear.																			CCP strategy. Completed 2011
Strategy 4.1: Maintain an accessible fishing platform.			X																
Strategy 4.2: Maintain fish line disposal containers.			X																
Strategy 4.3: Continue the Children's Fishing Day event.			X																
Strategy 4.4: Provide a fishing platform at the Wigwam Access Point.										X									Could be a good YCC Summer project.
Strategy 4.5: Conduct a count to determine the number of anglers.																			In 2014 the Visitor Services staff plans to write a Visitor Estimation Plan. That plan will specify counting techniques and frequency. (see that plan for more details).

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
Strategy 4.6: Develop an operational definition of success and measures for fishing through (an Office of Management and Budget approved) survey of angler satisfaction.											X									All surveys must be approved by the Office of Management and Budget.
Strategy 4.7: Write a fishing plan for the refuge and review it annually.					X															
Strategy 4.8: Open Upper Goose Pen, A Pool and portions of B Pool to fishing May 15 th to September 30 th .					X															
Strategy 4.9: Maintain current fishing regulations on the Seney NWR website.			X																	
Strategy 4.10: Revise the fishing brochure to contain up to date regulations and the www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish website which informs people the number of fish it is safe to eat from Michigan waters.					X	X														Brochure will be updated in 2014 or 2015 as the brochure stockpile is used up.
Strategy 4.11: Add postings of fish consumption advisories to kiosks near fishing areas.							X													
Strategy 5.1: Develop a monitoring program to assess the percentage of visitors participating in wildlife photography on the Refuge.																				In 2014 the Visitor Services staff plans to write a Visitor Estimation Plan. That plan will specify counting techniques and frequency. (see that plan for more details).

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 5.2: Develop operational definition of success and measures for wildlife observation and photography through (an Office of Budget and Management approved) survey of visitor satisfaction.												X							All surveys must be Office of Management and Budget Approved.
Strategy 5.3: Maintain designated/graveled pull-offs on the Wildlife Drive and Fishing Loop.			X																
Strategy 5.4: Maintain six viewing platforms with scopes and interpretive panels.																			This is a CCP Strategy we would like to change. See Observation Decks and Spotting Scopes discussion Standard 2 which discusses removing the spotting scopes.
Strategy 5.5: Remove spotting scopes from four of the six viewing platforms keeping the outdoor spotting scopes at the two observation decks at the Visitor Center only.				X															
Strategy 5.6: Explore options for improving the Otter Run ski trail.											X								
Strategy 5.7: Use the eBird Google App to keep an updated list of current bird sightings at the Refuge on the website.		X																	
Strategy 5.8: Provide guided photo opportunities and/or workshops.			X																

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 5.9: Continue annual amateur photo contest.			X																In 2015 amateur will be dropped from the photo contest literature and anyone may enter the contest.
Strategy 6.1: Develop an operational definition of success and measures for environmental education.								X											Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.
Strategy 6.2: Conduct an evaluation of the Refuge’s environmental education program using outside visitor services staff, local teachers and administrators, and other stakeholders.								X											Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.
Strategy 6.3: Determine target audiences, mission-related messages, and identify strategies related to environmental education.								X											Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.
Strategy 6.4: Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> to help identify the Refuge’s niche in local environmental education.								X											Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.
Strategy 6.5: Consider a variety of environmental education strategies, including partner schools, repeat visits for classes, off-site programs, and teacher workshops. Consider incorporating phenology, journaling and other elements that focus								X											Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
students on local ecosystems.																				
Strategy 6.6: Provide facilities and programs for area schools, universities, community groups, and other Refuge visitors, with a message that emphasizes the importance of habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management.			X																	
Strategy 6.7: Utilize the YCC building, Wigwam Rest Area and pavilion for environmental education classrooms.			X																	
Strategy 6.8: Provide and maintain tables for programs and nature study at the Environmental Education Pavilion and the Wigwams Rest Area.			X																	
Strategy 6.9: Use the website as a location to highlight environmental education programs.			X																	
Strategy 6.10: Explore the use of the website, Facebook and Flickr to interact with students before and/or after their field trip to enhance their program experience.								X												Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.
Strategy 6.11: Explore the use of social media and the website to perpetuate environmental education (i.e. create lessons, quizzes, and fun activities families can do together to enhance their environmental awareness).								X												Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
Strategy 6.12: Increase use of education trunks.								X												This is a CCP strategy – it may not be realistic. Before working to increase the use of the education trunks the trunks need to be evaluated for effectiveness then continue, update or discontinue their use. See Strategy 6.13.
Strategy 6.13: Evaluate the effectiveness of education trunks and continue, update or discontinue the use of the trunks based on the evaluation.								X												
Strategy 6.14: Provide teacher workshops with partner schools.									X											Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.
Strategy 6.15: Increase environmental education and interpretation presence at Whitefish Point.					X	X	X													In 2013 funding, through a grant, was received for an intern at the Whitefish Point Unit. Once the intern is selected and placed at the point this would be a good project for them to work on.
Strategy 6.16: Work with local teachers to create environmental education programs that meet Refuge goals, National Science Standards and Michigan Science Grade Level								X												Use <i>Rhythms of the Refuge</i> or create an Environmental Education Plan no later than 2017.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
Expectations for appropriate grade levels.																				
Strategy 6.17: Increase programming and use of facilities for environmental education activities for area schools, universities, community groups, and other Refuge visitors, with a curriculum based message that emphasizes habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management.			X																	The ability to accomplish this strategy will depend largely on school funding.
Strategy 6.18: Encourage partnerships with local schools, community groups and surrounding agencies.			X																	
Strategy 6.19: As significant new management practices are implemented, explore possibilities for complementary environmental education programming.			X																	
Strategy 7.1: Incorporate cultural history messages into programs, exhibits and other media with emphasis on use of the Refuge landscape throughout time.			X																	
Strategy 7.2: Evaluate all interpretive products and programs against the themes identified in <i>Section E.</i> of this document to ensure that they all reinforce station messages.							X													

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 7.3: Develop operational definition of success and measures for interpretation through (an Office of Budget and Management approved) survey of visitor satisfaction.											X								All surveys must be Office of Management and Budget Approved.
Strategy 7.4: Develop and implement a protocol for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of interpretive programming.										X									
Strategy 7.5: Maintain existing interpretive facilities and materials, including the Visitor Center, exhibits, brochures, waysides, etc.			X																The first two that need to be replaced are the Bald Eagle sign and the Refuge System map (2014).
Strategy 7.6: Develop a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan that identifies audiences, key themes and methods for all products and programs (including facilities, signs, publications, websites, social media, AV programs, etc.).					X														
Strategy 7.7: Utilizing the defined themes, messages and topics discussed in Section E. of this document create an Exhibit Replacement Plan using the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan to replace the existing displays at the Visitor Center.							X												
Strategy 7.8: Use the Exhibit Replacement Plan to begin replacing,							X												There are a couple of displays that need more

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
as the budget allows, the most worn and outdated exhibits in the Visitor Center first until the displays reflect the new themes, messages and topics.																			immediate attention but are likely inexpensive fix/replace.
Strategy 7.9: Develop interpretive displays on the Refuge’s research natural areas (Red Pine, White Pine, Hardwoods), Strangmoor Bog, and CCC activities in the Visitor Center.							X												Should be incorporated into the Exhibit Replacement Plan.
Strategy 7.10: Where appropriate develop interpretive signs for the trails lacking interpretation based on the overall interpretive themes. Use signage sparingly and only in places with strong interpretive value.					X			X			X			X					Spread the signage out over several years for funding purposes. Signs should be developed with a specific theme in mind.
Strategy 7.11: Maintain interpretive signs/panels on nature trail and viewing platforms.			X																
Strategy 7.12: Develop temporary/portable signs that could be used for five years after a timber cut and/or a prescribed burn describing the general purposes of the management activities.							X												
Strategy 7.13: Install an interpretive sign on the viewing deck behind the Visitor Center.					X														
Strategy 7.14: Interpret the Refuge’s natural areas (Red Pine, White Pine,							X												

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
Hardwoods), Seney Wilderness, Strangmoor Bog and CCC activities on the website.																				
Strategy 7.15: Use new media, audio technology or some type of publication to create a self-guided interpretive tour along the Marshland Wildlife Drive.										X										
Strategy 7.16: Work with Seney Natural History Association to publish Refuge News the refuge’s newsletter three times per year – spring, summer and fall.			X																	
Strategy 7.17: Work with Seney Natural History Association, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Eastern National, Hiawatha National Forest, and Hiawatha Interpretive Association to publish Superior Wildlands Guide to the Federal Lands of the Upper Peninsula on an annual basis.			X																	
Strategy 7.18: At the start of each Visitor Service’s program impart information about US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge System, and Refuge specific messages.			X																	
Strategy 7.19: Continue to provide interpretive programs, events, festivals, tours for Refuge visitors,			X																	

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
with a message that emphasizes habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management.																				
Strategy 7.20: Conduct at least two special events, 12-24 auto tours, and 12-24 programs on-site to interpret the Refuge, its habitat diversity, natural patterns and processes, and wildlife management.			X																	
Strategy 7.21: Annually review ranger/volunteer-led interpretive programs and modify, as needed, to ensure that they are accurate, interpretive, mission based and reinforce refuge themes.			X																	
Strategy 7.22: As significant new management practices are implemented, explore possibilities for complementary programming.			X																	
Strategy 7.23: Explore the idea of converting the CCC cabin into a historic/cultural museum.																				This was a CCP Strategy and has been explored. At this time the cabin is needed to house interns, researchers, and temporary employees.
Strategy 8.1: Consider recreational access requests on a case-by-case basis.			X																	
Strategy 8.2: Continue to use the Special Use Permit (SUP) program to authorize appropriate and compatible			X																	

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
requested uses of the Refuge.																				
Strategy 8.3: Develop a monitoring program to ascertain the number of visitors using the reopened sections of trails and Whitefish Point Unit by installing infra-red trail counters; review every 5 years to ensure Refuge resources are not being negatively impacted by overuse by the public.																				In 2014 the Visitor Services staff plans to write a Visitor Estimation Plan. That plan will specify counting techniques and frequency. (see that plan for more details).
Strategy 8.4: Continue to offer access to the Refuge's road system for seasonal activities such as biking, hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.			X																	
Strategy 8.5: Continue to offer access to the Refuge for seasonal activities such as canoeing, kayaking, research, hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.			X																	
Strategy 9.1: Nominate a Visitor Services employee as a Fire Information Officer and get that employee specialized training, including completing a task book.					X															Having a staff member trained as a Fire Information Office is important and would have been helpful during the wildfire in 2012.
Strategy 9.2: Seek an evaluation model to help determine if outreach efforts are effective.									X											
Strategy 9.3: Write an outreach plan for the Refuge.											X									

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 9.4: Evaluate the need for an incident information plan, if one is needed write the plan.												X							
Strategy 9.5: Supply Refuge brochures, rack cards, Superior Wildlands newspaper and events calendar to partners, community businesses and state welcome centers.			X																
Strategy 9.6: Evaluate and apply social media, as appropriate, to expand Refuge awareness.			X																
Strategy 9.7: As necessary, issue press releases to announce activity schedules, special events and changes to hunt seasons.			X																
Strategy 9.8: Utilize the local media to promote Refuge habitat improvements, outreach activities, and other accomplishments.			X																
Strategy 9.9: Annually coordinate adding Refuge events to Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau calendar.			X																
Strategy 9.10: Continue the working relationship with Eagle 96.7 and provide weekly updates on Refuge happenings and wildlife updates.		X																	
Strategy 9.11: Develop an outreach program that focuses on the National									X										

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Wildlife Refuge System.																			
Strategy 9.12: Annually give presentations to civic organizations (i.e. Kiwanis) to communicate Refuge management practices and solicit volunteers.			X																
Strategy 9.13: Annually participate in the Curtis Winter Festival, Whitefish Point Bird Observatory’s Spring Fling, 4 th of July Community Parades , Art on the Lake, library programs, and/or other community events as a way to promote the Refuge and its activities (i.e. information table with hands-on activities, brochures, maps, knowledgeable staff and volunteers, etc.).			X																
Strategy 9.14: Annually consult with biology, forestry and fire staff to ensure all outreach opportunities complement and emphasize current Refuge management practices and landscape-level ecological issues that affect the Refuge.			X																
Strategy 9.15: As significant new management practices are implemented, explore possibilities for complementary outreach programming.			X																

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 9.16: Conduct site visits for FWS and other federal officials (e.g. Congressional staff) to showcase Refuge achievements and needs; select a location and time of year that will best highlight these needs and accomplishments.			X																
Strategy 9.17: Expand Refuge awareness by working with other agencies (Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Hiawatha National Forest, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, etc.) and non-governmental organizations (Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Michigan Audubon Society, Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, etc.) to promote the mission of the Service and the purposes of the Refuge.			X																
Strategy 9.18: Annually participate in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) summer employment program as funding allows.			X																
Strategy 9.19: Biennially participate in the Career Discovery Internship Program.					X		X		X		X		X		X		X		
Strategy 9.20: Annually seek funding to participate in the Pathways program for part-time employment			X																

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS		
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027	
and eventual placement of college students into Service careers.																				
Strategy 9.21: Annually seek funding for food stipends from Seney Natural History Association for the funding of two to three Visitor Services Interns and two to three Applied Science Interns.			X																	
Strategy 10.1: Work with volunteers that have contact with the public to ensure the messages given to the public are consistent and in line with the Service and Refuge Mission.	X																			
Strategy 10.2: Enhance current staffing by recruiting, selecting and training qualified interns, volunteers and Seney Natural History Association members to assist with interpretation program.			X																	
Strategy 10.3: Update volunteer position descriptions, as needed.			X																	
Strategy 10.4: During daily activities recruit volunteers through personal interaction with the public, with the website, volunteer.gov, flyers, local universities and RSVP.			X																	
Strategy 10.5: Annually enhance current staffing by recruiting, selecting and training qualified interns, volunteers and Seney Natural			X																	Monthly May – September.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
History Association members to assist with Refuge projects.																			
Strategy 10.6: Continue to host resident volunteers annually at recreational vehicle pad and interns at Refuge housing.			X																
Strategy 10.7: Continue to provide volunteers with monthly volunteer socials and evening presentations May - September.			X																
Strategy 10.8: Continue to annually recognize volunteers with a special event.			X																
Strategy 10.9: Offer opportunities to help with field/service projects (i.e. tree planting, sharp-tailed grouse counting research etc.).			X																
Strategy 10.10: Develop a task list of volunteer opportunities for future volunteer projects to keep volunteers interested.			X																
Strategy 10.11: Improve parking site to accommodate trailers used by Refuge volunteers.				X															
Strategy 10.12: Update Recreational Vehicle pads to 50 Amp.				X															
Strategy 10.13: Continue a positive partnership with Seney Natural History Association.			X																

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 10.14: Maintain Seney Natural History Association's bookstore operation in the Visitor Center, administered by friends with assistance by Refuge staff.			X																
Strategy 10.15: Continue to have Service staff participate in Friends Group meetings and SNHA board members in Refuge staff meetings.			X																
Strategy 10.16: Continue to support the Friends Group on grant applications, as they arise.			X																
Strategy 14.1: Preserve and protect Wilderness values within the area through proper signage, keeping out unauthorized entry, etc.			X																
Strategy 14.2: Inspect the perimeter of the Wilderness Area at least once every 3 years to replace signs that have fallen, disappeared, or been damaged.				X				X			X			X				X	
Strategy 14.3: Ensure that one or more of the Refuge staff have received Service training in Wilderness management, including Minimum Tool Analysis.																			Completed 2012.
Strategy 14.4: Ensure new visitor services staff attend Wilderness training.																			As applicable.

Strategies Implementation Schedule

PROJECTS (Note date of completed CCP) (i.e. 2007)	TIME FRAME FOR PROJECT COMPLETION																	COMMENTS	
	Day	Week	Annual	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Strategy 14.5: Implement recreational impact monitoring studies that follow the guidelines established by other agencies or organizations, e.g., David Cole and the U.S. Forest Service, Aldo Leopold Institute, etc.														X					

IV. Project Cost

This table is designed to view all the Refuge visitor services project costs as it relates to the standards used by the Refuge.

TABLE 9. PROJECT COST

Project Cost Table					
Projects	Targeted Completion Date	Cost	Funding Source (RONS, SAMMS, VFE, Partnership Funds, Etc.)	Date of Cost Estimation	Comments
Replace the Visitor Center and Office (2.4)		\$5 Million	1262	2012	When monies allow.
Update the outside décor of the Visitor Center – mainly new lettering (2.6)	2016	\$10,000	1263	2012	
Install a new heating and cooling system. (2.7)	2014/2015	\$10,000 - 15,000	1262	2013	
Replace flooring in the Visitor Center. (2.8)	2017	\$13,000	1262	2013	
Replace or repair the four outdoor spotting scopes at the Visitor Center (2.9)	2016	\$3,500 to \$6,000 per scope replacement	1262	2012	
Install a telephone at the front desk of the Visitor Center (2.10)	2015	\$500	1263	2012	This is an estimate, the price to add a line at the Visitor Center is not known.
Update the electrical system in the Visitor Center. (2.11)	2018	\$4,000 to \$8,000	1262	2013	
Upgrade Visitor Center lighting interior and exterior. (2.12)	2019	\$8,000	1262	2013	Estimated – could not find price.
Replace the ceiling in the Visitor Center. (2.13)	2019	\$4,000	1262	2013	Estimated – could not find price.
Replace doors and possibly windows at the Visitor Center. (2.14)	2015	\$4,000	1262	2013	Estimated – could not find price.
Install gutters on the Visitor Center. (2.15)	2015	\$2,000	1262	2013	

Project Cost Table

Projects	Targeted Completion Date	Cost	Funding Source (RONS, SAMMS, VFE, Partnership Funds, Etc.)	Date of Cost Estimation	Comments
Boardwalk construction and maintenance (2.25, 2.26)	2016/2017	\$300 per 50 feet	1262 or 1263	2012	Maintenance will be ongoing.
Increase facilities (i.e. trails, observation platforms) at Whitefish Point. (2.27)	2019/2021	\$15,000	1262 or 1263	2012	
Continue to extend the accessible portion of the Pine Ridge Nature Trail at least to the first bench overlook. (2.29)	2014	\$3,000	1262	2012	
Accessible trail expansion (2.30)	2016 to 2019	\$1,000 per .1 miles	1262 or 1263	2012	
Provide a viewing/fishing platform at the Wigwams Access Point (2.32, 4.4)	2020	\$10,000	1262 or 1263	2012	
Add an accessible parking spot at the Wigwams Access Point. (2.33)	2014	\$200	1262	2012	
Add a stall or expand the latrine at the Wigwams Access Point to make it ABA accessible. (2.34)	2015/2016	\$2,000	1262	2012	
One panel kiosk (2.35)	2021	\$500 to \$1,000	1263	2012	Only need signs to place on the kiosk we already have a 1 panel kiosk kit ready to install.
Directional signs (2.36, 2.37)	2014/2017	\$50 to \$150 ea	1263	2012	
Brochures (2.41, 2.42, 2.44, 3.12, 4.10)	2015/2016	\$0.25 to \$0.35 ea	1263	2012	
Trail work (2.49)	2014	\$200 per .01 miles	1262	2012	Estimate only.
Hire a Refuge Manager Trainee. (2.52)		\$75,000	1261	2012	When monies allow.
Interpretive signs (4.11, 6.15, 7.10, 7.11, 7.13)	2015 - 2027	\$200 to \$1,000 ea	1263	2012	
Exhibit Replacement (7.8, 7.9)	2014 - 2027	\$2,000 to \$20,000 each	1263	2012	As monies allow.

Project Cost Table

Projects	Targeted Completion Date	Cost	Funding Source (RONS, SAMMS, VFE, Partnership Funds, Etc.)	Date of Cost Estimation	Comments
Update environmental education trunks to make them more attractive to teachers. (6.13)	2017	\$3,000	1263	2012	
Develop temporary/portable signs that could be used for five years after a timber cut and/or a prescribed burn describing the general purposes of the management activities. (7.12)	2016	\$400 ea	1263	2012	
Biennially participate in the Career Discovery Internship Program. (9.19)		\$6,000	CIP Program	2012	Biennially starting in 2015
Annually seek funding to participate in the Pathways program for part-time employment and eventual placement of college students into Service careers. (9.20)	Annually	\$10,000	1261	2012	
Continue to annually recognize volunteers with a special event. (10.8)	Annually	\$4,000	1263	2012	
Improve parking site for Refuge volunteers (10.11)	2014	\$5,000	1262	2012	
Update Recreational Vehicle pads to 50 Amp. (10.12)	2014	n/a	1262	2012	Already Purchased
Boundary Signs (2.39, 14.1)	Annually	\$10 ea	1262	2012	
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST		\$5,300,000			

V. Visitor Services Annual Work Plan

This table allows the individual responsible for the visitor services program to see at a glance what are the plans for the year and associated deadlines for the task.

TABLE 10. VISITOR SERVICES ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Visitor Services Annual Work Plan – Fiscal Year 2014															
Category	Event	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	Comments	
Annual Event	Winter Film Festival		X												
	Curtis Winter Festival		X												
	Sharp-tailed Grouse Citizen Science Survey				X										
	Twilight Bus Tour					X								Formerly “Yellow Rail Tour” and “Nighttime Marshbird Tour”	
	Children’s Fishing Day						X								
	Jr. Duck Stamp Art Exhibit							X						Exhibit time is based on availability of exhibit	
	Summer Nature Programs					X	X	X	X	X				Topics are determined each summer. Heaviest program months are June, July and August.	
	4 th of July Parades							X	X						
	Science and Seney Evening Presentations					X	X	X	X	X					
	Whitefish Point Spring Fling				X										International Migratory Bird Day Celebration for the Refuge.
	Whitefish Point Unit Summer Nature Programs					X	X	X	X	X					Topics will focus on the Endangered piping plover, migrating birds and possibly beach ecosystem.
	Critter Camp								X						Provide programming for one day with Three Lakes Academy
Art on the Lake										X					

Visitor Services Annual Work Plan – Fiscal Year 2014

Category	Event	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	Comments
	Amateur Photo Contest								X	X	X			
	Wildlife Wednesdays						X	X	X					
	Youth in the Outdoors (formerly Scout Day)									X				“Scout Day” will undergo a name change in 2012 and will focus on all youth in the community, not only scouts.
	Morning Bus Tours									X	X			
	National Wildlife Refuge Week										X			
Required Reporting	FWS Journal													Worthy events and activities throughout the year.
	RAPP								X					
	Monthly Report	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	SAMMS								X					Report maintenance volunteer hours.
	RSVP (monthly numbers and in kind reports for food and gift events)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Required Training	Orientation to the Privacy Act							X						
	Record Management Awareness							X						
	CPR/AED/First Aid						X						X	Every two years.
Annual Meetings	Friends Group Meeting					X								
	Volunteer Recognition Dinner										X			
Routine Activities	Articles for Friends Group Newsletter				X			X			X			
	Visitor Center Operations					X	X	X	X	X	X			
	Social Media (Facebook & Flickr)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	School programs			X	X	X				X	X	X		
	Community programs													Upon Request.
	Weekly Radio Spots	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Monthly Calendar of Activity		X				X	X	X	X	X			
Intern Recruitment and Hiring	X	X	X	X										

Visitor Services Annual Work Plan – Fiscal Year 2014

Category	Event	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	Comments
	Superior Wildlands Interagency Publication	X											X	
	Friends Group Meetings	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Car/people counter data collected	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Vehicle Log Books	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Keep Website Up to Date	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Special Projects	Interagency Interpretation Workshop for Interns (Park Service, Forest Service, Refuge)						X							
	WFP addition celebration and addition signage				X									
	Sign Plan				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	Herbarium management				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	Multi-cultural urban families project				X			X	X					

VI. Visitor Services Annual Partnership Planning

This table tracks the Refuge's formal and informal partnerships. This table could also cross reference with the Project Cost Table to help identify potential project funding opportunities.

TABLE 11. VISITOR SERVICES ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP PLANNING

Visitor Services Annual Partnership Planning - Fiscal Year 2012							
Name of Partnership	Type of Partnership (Academia, Non-profit, Agency, etc.)	Agreement Type (Grant, Challenge Cost Share, Cooperative, MOU, Donation, Programmatic, etc.)	Partnership's Goal for Refuge	Type of Contribution		Time Frame of Project	Comments
				In-kind (materials, labor)	Monetary		
Seney Natural History Association	Non-Profit	Cooperative	Support the needs of the Refuge – special events, programs, intern stipend	Labor, Materials, Financial Support	Budgeted \$37,000 in 2012 + Labor	Since 1987	Sara Giles and Jennifer McDonough serve as the Refuge liaisons.
Three Lakes Academy	Charter School	MOU	Increased Environmental Education			Since 2010	Sara Giles and Jennifer McDonough work with the school to provide programming.
Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society	Non-profit	Programmatic	Increased Environmental Education and Interpretation			Since 1997	Currently Sara Giles is working with the partners to attract and educate the public using the Whitefish Point Unit.
Whitefish Point Bird Observatory	Non-profit	Programmatic	Increased Environmental Education and Interpretation	Labor		Since 1997	Currently Sara Giles is working with the partners to attract and educate the public using the Whitefish Point Unit.

Visitor Services Annual Partnership Planning - Fiscal Year 2012

Name of Partnership	Type of Partnership (Academia, Non-profit, Agency, etc.)	Agreement Type (Grant, Challenge Cost Share, Cooperative, MOU, Donation, Programmatic, etc.)	Partnership's Goal for Refuge	Type of Contribution		Time Frame of Project	Comments
				In-kind (materials, labor)	Monetary		
Hiawatha National Forest	Interagency	Cooperative	Publish Superior Wildlands Publication and Educate Interns	Labor	\$2,000 for the publication of Superior Wildlands	Annual	Each year Hiawatha National Forest, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and Seney Natural History Association contribute approximately \$2,000 to publish the Superior Wildlands newspaper. Also, the agencies partner together to provide training for new interns.
RSVP	Public	MOU	Volunteer recruitment and support	insurance		annual	Used to provide mileage for volunteers before budget cuts.
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore	Interagency	Cooperative	Publish Superior Wildlands Publication and Educate Interns	Labor	\$2,000 for the publication of Superior Wildlands	Annual	Each year Hiawatha National Forest, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and Seney Natural History Association contribute approximately \$2,000 to publish the Superior Wildlands newspaper. Also, the agencies partner together to provide training for new interns.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PREPARERS

Names and titles of individuals involved in preparing the VSP.

Sara Giles	Visitor Services Manager	Seney NWR
Jennifer McDonough	Park Ranger	Seney NWR
Mark Vaniman	Project Leader	Seney NWR
Greg McClellan	Refuge Operations Specialist	Seney NWR
Laural Tansy	Administrative Officer	Seney NWR
Greg Corace	Forester and Acting Biologist	Seney NWR
Gray Lindsey	Fire Management Officer	Seney NWR
Richard Wilson	Maintenance	Seney NWR
Don Gardner	Maintenance	Seney NWR
Matthew Canfield	Maintenance	Seney NWR

APPENDIX B: LIST OF OTHER VISITOR SERVICES RELATED DOCUMENTS

Below is a list of related visitor services documents and their locations.

Carnes, Rachael. 2011. FWS National Wildlife Refuge System Wilderness Fellows Report on Wilderness Character Monitoring. Seney, NWR.

Rea, Peter. 2011. Surveying Recreational Use at Seney National Wildlife Refuge.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge – Visitor Services Plan Draft, November, 2011.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. Mingo National Wildlife Refuge – Visitor Services Plan, March 2011.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2009. Seney National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, February 2009.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1980. Seney National Wildlife Refuge Interpretation and Recreation Prospectus Approval, August 1980.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1989. Fishing Plan – Seney National Wildlife Refuge.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1989. Hunt Plan – Seney National Wildlife Refuge.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2006. Visitor Services Review Report – Seney National Wildlife Refuge, October 2006.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Circa 1964. Huron Islands and Seney Wilderness Areas. Booklet.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

-
- National Wildlife Refuge System Designated Wilderness Areas. Exhibit 1, 610 FW 1. <http://www.fws.gov/policy/e1610fw1.html>
 - Wilderness Administration and Resource Stewardship. 610 FW 2. <http://www.fws.gov/policy/610fw2.html>
 - General Overview of Wilderness Policy Stewardship Policy. 610 FW 1. <http://www.fws.gov/policy/610fw1.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. April 2010. DRAFT Visitor Services Standards, A Handbook for Evaluating Visitor Services Programs, April 2010.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region 2009. Developing a Visitor Services Step-down Plan. 2009.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Rhythms of the Refuge Guidebook: For Developing an Environmental Education Strategy and Environmental Education Programs and Products for National Wildlife Refuges and Wetland Management Districts.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge. 2011 Memorandum of Understanding with Seney Natural History Association. 2011

Seney National Wildlife Refuge. 2010. Memorandum of Understanding with Three Lake Academy. 2010

Seney National Wildlife Refuge. 1937 – 2009. Annual Narratives.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge. 2007 – 2011. RAPP Numbers.

Code of Federal Regulations. 2011

APPENDIX C: COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Below is a list of approved compatibility determinations on the Refuge. Additional information related to the compatibility determinations can be found in the CCP.

Compatibility Determinations finalized for Seney NWR include:

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Wildlife observation and photography
 - Hiking, biking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, canoeing and kayaking fall under this compatibility determination as “means of access”.
- Environmental education and interpretation
- Mushroom and Berry Picking

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

1. HUNTING

Refuge Name: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities: Migratory Bird Conservation Act 16 U.S.C & 7 15d

Refuge Purpose(s): Seney National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1935... "...as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Executive Order 7246, dated Dec. 10,1935

"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. 71 5d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

"... conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans ..." 16 U.S.C. n 668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act)

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

a. Description of Use:

What is the use? The use is the hunting of game as an activity conducted by the general public under regulation authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act and the National Wildlife Refuge System. Hunting is currently allowed for Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, snowshoe hare, black bear and white-tailed deer on Seney NWR. These hunts are conducted in accordance with State of Michigan regulations. Approximately 300 people hunt deer on the Refuge and an equal number pursue Ruffed Grouse. One hundred hunters pursue snowshoe hare, but few hunt black bear because of Refuge specific restrictions. Most hunting for American Woodcock is incidental to grouse hunting.

Where is the use conducted? The Refuge's Hunt Plan divides the Refuge into two zones and a closed area. Zone A, which encompasses 49,522 acres is located in the center of the Refuge. Zone B covers the western third and bands along the north and southeast boundary of the Refuge for a total of 36,200 acres. The remaining area, 9,490 acres, which surrounds the Refuge buildings and public use facilities are closed to hunting.

When is the use conducted? Hunting season traditionally begins in mid-September for all species hunted on Seney NWR, except for white-tailed deer hunting which does not begin until October 1st. Black bear season closes by the end of October and Woodcock season typically closes the first week of November. Snowshoe hare is the longest season, ending March 31st followed by grouse which ends on January first. White-tailed deer hunting seasons are defined by method of take; early Archery -October 1- November 14, Regular Firearms -November 15-30, Muzzleloader December 1-16.

How is the use conducted? Hunting is conducted under State of Michigan and Refuge-specific Regulations. Refuge-specific regulations include: no baiting and no use of dogs to pursue black bear. Hunting in Zone A is closed to Grouse, Woodcock, bear and early archery deer hunting seasons. It is also closed to hare hunting until December 1st. Zone B is open throughout the state season for all species. All hunters, except those pursuing white-tailed deer and bear, must use non-toxic shot. Camping is allowed to facilitate deer hunting; all campers must obtain a free permit from the headquarters.

Why is the use being proposed? Hunting is identified as a priority public use identified in the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 and it has traditionally occurred at Seney NWR without adverse impacts to the purpose for which the Refuge was established. The hunt program is administered in accordance with sound wildlife management principles and the utmost concern for public safety.

Availability of Resources: Approximately \$25,000 is required annually to administer the hunting program. Staff support of this program cost \$20,000, half of which is for Law Enforcement patrol to insure compliance with hunting regulations. The remaining \$5,000 covers the cost of signs, equipment and informational brochures. Based on a review of the current Refuge budget, there is enough funding to ensure administration of this program is compatible with the purpose for which Seney NWR was established.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Hunting has not caused any adverse impacts to the Refuge, its habitats, visitors or wildlife. Concerns over impacts to non-target wildlife are minimized by the seasonality of the hunts and the large size of Seney relative to the number of people who hunt it. Hunting occurs after the nesting season and is not allowed near the impoundments until after most migratory species have left the Refuge. Visitor safety concerns are addressed by restrictions on when and where hunters can pursue quarry. Law enforcement patrols are conducted regularly to ensure compliance with regulations. The hunting program follows all applicable laws, regulations and policies; including, 50 CFR, National Wildlife Refuge System Manual, National Wildlife Refuge System goals and objectives, and Seney NWR goals and objectives. This activity is also compliant with the purpose of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System Mission. Conducting this program does not alter the Refuge's ability to meet habitat goals, provides for public safety and supports several primary objectives of the Refuge.

Public Review and Comment: This compatibility determination was part of the Draft Seney National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment, which was announced in the Federal register and available for public comment for 30 days.

b. Determination:

Use is not compatible.

Use is compatible with the following stipulations.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: To ensure compatibility with National Wildlife Refuge System and Seney NWR goals and objectives the activity can only occur under the following stipulations:

1. State and/or Tribal hunting requirements apply to all hunting on the Refuge.
2. The following Refuge-specific regulations and restrictions apply:
 - a) Baiting is prohibited,
 - b) The use of dogs to hunt bear is prohibited,
 - c) ATV's are not permitted on Seney NWR,
 - d) Non-toxic shot must be used to hunt grouse, woodcock and hare,
 - e) Camping is only allowed during the deer season and requires a Refuge permit.
3. Annually review all hunting activities and operations to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies.

Justification: This use has been determined compatible provided the above stipulations are implemented. This use is being permitted as it is a priority public use and will not diminish the primary purposes of the Refuge. This use will meet the mission of the NWRS by providing renewable resources for the benefit of the American public while conserving fish, wildlife and plant resources on these lands.

Signature: Refuge Manager

Concurrence: Regional Chief:

Mandatory 10 or 15 year Re-evaluation Date: 2023

2. FISHING

Refuge Name: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities: Migratory Bird Conservation Act 16 U.S.C & 7 15d

Refuge Purpose(s): Seney National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1935... "...as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Executive Order 7246, dated Dec. 10,1935

"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. 71 5d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

"... conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans ..." 16 U.S.C. n 668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act)

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

a. Description of Use:

What is the use? Recreational Fishing

Where is the use conducted? The Refuge allows fishing on the Manistique River, along the Driggs River and from the banks along 12 of its 21 impoundments. There is a "fishing loop" off of the Marshland Wildlife Drive to facilitate fishing and minimize conflicts. The total area impacted by fishing activities is less than 10% of the Refuge.

When is the use conducted? Fishing is conducted in accordance with State regulations on the Driggs and Manistique Rivers. Some of the impoundments are open for fishing on May 15th, while others remain closed until Labor Day. All impoundments are closed for fishing on September 30th.

How is the use conducted? Fishing is conducted in accordance with the State's General Hook and Line regulations and Refuge-specific regulations. Refuge-specific regulations prohibit the use of tackle containing lead and fishing at night.

Why is the use being proposed? Recreational fishing is identified as a priority public use identified in the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 and it has traditionally occurred at Seney NWR without adverse impacts to the purpose for which the Refuge was established. The fishing program is administered to provide recreational opportunities to visitors while avoiding negative impacts wildlife and their habitat.

Availability of Resources: The cost of administering this program is approximately \$1,000,000 annually. Seventy percent of this cost is for staff salary, primarily law enforcement patrols to insure compliance with regulations. The remaining expense is incurred by providing and maintaining brochures, signs and facilities. Based on a review of the current Refuge budget, there is enough funding to ensure administration of this program is compatible with the purpose for which Seney NWR was established.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Fishing has not caused adverse impacts to the Refuge, its habitats, visitors or wildlife. Concerns over impacts to non-target wildlife are minimized by restricting fishing to the banks of impoundments, prohibiting lead tackle and limiting fishing to daylight hours. Other concerns, such as litter and fishing line entanglement are addressed through public education and regular patrols. The fishing program follows all applicable laws, regulations and policies; including, 50 CFR, National Wildlife Refuge System Manual, National Wildlife Refuge System goals and objectives, and Seney NWR goals and objectives. This activity is also compliant with the purpose of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System Mission. Conducting this program does not alter the Refuge's ability to meet habitat goals, provides for public safety and supports several primary objectives of the Refuge.

Public Review and Comment: This compatibility determination was part of the Draft Seney National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment, which was announced in the Federal register and available for public comment for 30 days.

b. Determination:

Use is not compatible.

Use is compatible with the following stipulations.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: To ensure compatibility with National Wildlife Refuge System and Seney NWR goals and objectives the activity can only occur under the following stipulations:

1. State and/or Tribal fishing requirements apply on the Refuge,
2. The following Refuge-specific regulations and restrictions apply:
 - a) The use of lead tackle is prohibited,
 - b) Bank fishing only along designated impoundments,
 - c) Fishing during daylight hours only.
3. Annually review all fishing activities and operations to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies.

Signature: Refuge Manager

Concurrence: Regional Chief:

Mandatory 10 or 15 year Re-evaluation Date: 2023

3. WILDLIFE OBSERVATION and PHOTOGRAPHY (including means of access)

Refuge Name: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities: Migratory Bird Conservation Act 16 U.S.C & 7 15d
Refuge Purpose(s): Seney National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1935... "...as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Executive Order 7246, dated Dec. 10,1935

"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds."
16 U.S.C. 71 5d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

"... conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans ..." 16 U.S.C. n 668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act)

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

a. Description of Use:

What is the use? General public access to observe and/or photograph wildlife and Refuge habitats including the means of access such as automobile, hiking, bicycling, canoeing, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Under the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act, of 1997, wildlife observation and photography are priority public uses.

Where is the use conducted? These activities could take place anywhere on the Refuge but most often occur in the vicinity of roads and visitor use facilities. The Refuge contains nearly 100 miles of roads and dikes that are open to hiking, biking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, a 7 mile wildlife drive, a 1.4 mile hiking trail and 10miles of groomed ski trails. Canoeing is allowed on the Manistique River and the Refuge maintains one wildlife observation/photo blind.

When is the use conducted? The Refuge's visitor use facilities are open from May 15th to October 1 5fi. This is when wildlife observation and photography are most likely to occur; however, they could occur at any time of the year, but only during daylight hours.

How is the use conducted? All wildlife observation and photography activities will be conducted with the Refuge's goals, objectives and management plans as the guiding principles. Activities pursued under these restrictions allow the Refuge to accomplish its objectives and provide for the safety of visitors. Entry on all or portions of individual areas may be temporarily suspended due to unusual or critical conditions affecting land, water, vegetation, wildlife or public safety.

Why is the use being proposed? Wildlife observation and photography are priority public uses on National Wildlife Refuge System Lands as identified in the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997. Allowing access to the Refuge for wildlife observation and photography is consistent with goals of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Availability of Resources: Approximately \$50,000 is required to maintain Refuge roads, trails and facilities used by the public engaged in wildlife observation and photography. Currently, with the assistance of the volunteers and the Seney Natural History Association, there is enough staffing and funding available to administer these activities.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Wildlife observation and photography cause minor disturbance to wildlife. Wildlife quickly become accustomed to vehicles along the wildlife drive and non-motorized access typically occurs along established trails or roads. Overall, the disturbance is limited to a small portion of the entire Refuge. In areas where people travel off trails, the impact is minimal and temporary. The Manistique River runs through a small portion of the Refuge's southeast corner, therefore canoeist pose no threat.

Wildlife observation and photography are priority public uses listed in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. By facilitating these uses on the refuge, we will increase visitors' knowledge and appreciation of fish and wildlife, which will lead to increased public stewardship of fish and wildlife and their habitats on the Refuge and beyond. Increased public stewardship will support and complement Service actions in achieving Refuge purposes and the mission of the NWR System.

Public Review and Comment: This compatibility determination was part of the Draft Seney National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment, which was announced in the Federal register and available for public comment for 30 days.

b. Determination:

Use is not compatible.

Use is compatible with the following stipulations.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: To ensure compatibility with National Wildlife Refuge System and Seney NWR goals and objectives, wildlife observation and photography can only occur under the following stipulation:

1. The Refuge is closed from sunset until sunrise,
2. Visitors may not enter the water,
3. Motorized vehicles are restricted to designated roadways.
4. All-Terrain Vehicles are prohibited.

Justification: This use has been determined compatible provided the above stipulations are implemented. It promotes public stewardship of natural resources and help the Refuge meet its goals and objectives. It does not materially interfere with or detract from the Services ability to meet the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The activities follow all applicable laws, regulations and policies, including: Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, National Wildlife Refuge System Manual, National Wildlife Refuge System goals and objectives, and refuge goals and objectives. These activities are compliant with the purpose of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System Mission. Operating this activity does not alter the Refuge's ability to meet habitat goals and it helps support several of the primary objectives of the Refuge.

Signature: Refuge Manager

Concurrence: Regional Chief:

(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10 or 15 year Re-evaluation Date: 2023

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION and INTERPRETATION

Refuge Name: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities: Migratory Bird Conservation Act 16 U.S.C & 7 15d

Refuge Purpose(s): Seney National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1935... "...as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Executive Order 7246, dated Dec. 10,1935

"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. 71 5d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

"... conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans ..." 16 U.S.C. n 668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act)

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

a. Description of Use:

What is the use? Environmental education consists of public outreach and onsite activities conducted by Refuge staff, volunteers, teachers, and university professors. Interpretation occurs in less formal activities with Refuge staff and volunteers or through exhibits, signs, and brochures.

Where is the use conducted? Environmental education and interpretation activities may occur throughout the Refuge, but are most likely to occur in the vicinity of the headquarters, Visitor Center, wildlife drive, trails and roads. The Visitor Center is staffed daily from May 15 through October 20th and hosts 45,000 visitors annually. Visitors are greeted with a variety of interpretive displays and signs as they traverse the trails, wildlife drive, fishing loop or explore the Visitor Center. The Refuge also maintains a website that provides interpretive information.

Environmental education and interpretation may occur on the Refuge or off site. Programs are given upon request to school and other groups visiting the Refuge. Back-country tours and interpretive programs are offered weekly during summer months. Special events are conducted throughout the year. Off-site activities consist of teacher workshops, participation in special events, and the sharing of wildlife education trunks.

When is the use conducted? Interpretation occurs throughout the year, whenever a visitor reads a sign, brochure or the Refuge website. Environmental education activities are concentrated in the summer months, but can occur at any time. Most activities occur during daylight hours.

How is the use conducted? All environmental education and interpretation activities are conducted with the Refuge's primary goals, objectives, and habitat management requirements as the guiding principles. Activities done under these restrictions allow the Refuge to accomplish its management goals and provide for the safety of visitors. All programs include a description of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Refuge System. All of the programs address at least one of a number of wildlife conservation issues such as management, watershed, habitat, wildlife, endangered species, invasive species, etc.

Why is the use being proposed? Permitting this activity is consistent with the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, helps accomplish Refuge goals, and promotes understanding, appreciation and support for its mission.

Availability of Resources: Approximately \$250,000 is required to properly administer this program. This includes a full time public use specialist, a visitor center manager and staff time required to maintain the public use infrastructure.

Trained volunteers and interns provide an integral part of the Refuge's environmental education and interpretation program. They staff the Visitor Center daily, put on special events and assist Refuge staff with a variety of other needs. In some cases interns and volunteers conduct programs with minimal staff oversight.

Every effort is made to meet each request for environmental education and interpretive programs; however, staff and funding shortages have curtailed programs and the number of requests often exceeds resources. Based on a review of the current Refuge budget, there is sufficient funding to administer this program at its current level and ensure compatibility with the purpose for which Seney NWR was established.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Environmental education and interpretation are not expected to have measurable environmental impacts on the Refuge, its habitats, or wildlife species. Disturbance to wildlife is limited to occasional incidents such as flushing wildlife. Restrictions on locations for environmental education and interpretation and the numbers of users will assure minimal disturbance to wildlife and other public use activities.

The activities follow all applicable laws, regulations and policies; including Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, National Wildlife Refuge System Manual, National Wildlife Refuge System goals and objectives, and Seney NWR goals and objectives. These activities comply with the purpose of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System Mission. Operating these activities does not alter the Refuge's ability to meet habitat goals and it helps support several of the primary objectives of the Refuge.

Public Review and Comment: this compatibility determination was part of the Draft Seney National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment, which was announced in the Federal register and available for public comment for 30 days.

b. Determination:

Use is not compatible.

Use is compatible with the following stipulations.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: To ensure compatibility with National Wildlife Refuge System and Seney NWR goals and objectives, environmental education and interpretation can only occur under the following stipulation:

Environmental education and interpretation activities will occur only when and where they pose little or no threat to wildlife. The impacts of any activity that occurs outside of designated public use areas will be evaluated for its impacts on wildlife. All activities will occur under the guidance of a Refuge staff member, volunteer or trained teacher to assure minimal disturbance to wildlife, minimal vegetation damage, and minimal user conflict between other public uses.

Justification: Environmental education and interpretation are priority public uses for the National Wildlife Refuge System as outlined in the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997. By facilitating these uses on the Refuge, we will increase visitors' knowledge and appreciation of fish and wildlife, which will lead to increased public stewardship of fish and wildlife and their habitats on the Refuge and in general. Increased public stewardship will support and complement the Service's actions in achieving the Refuge's purposes and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. ---

Signature: Refuge Manager

Concurrence: Regional Chief:

Mandatory 10 or 15 year Re-evaluation Date: 2023

4. **MUSHROOM and BERRY PICKING**

Refuge Name: Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities: Migratory Bird Conservation Act 16 U.S.C & 7 15d

Refuge Purpose(s): Seney National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1935... "...as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife: ..." Executive Order 7246, dated Dec. 10,1935

"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 U.S.C. 71 5d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

"... conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans ..." 16 U.S.C. n 668dd(a)(2) (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act)

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

a. Description of Use:

What is the use? Non-commercial harvest of berries and mushrooms for human consumption, primarily blueberries and occasionally morel mushrooms.

Where is the use conducted? These activities may occur throughout the 95,2 12 acres of Seney NWR. Approximately 100 people participate in this activity annually. Most access points are adjacent to existing roads and trails.

When is the use conducted? Mushroom and berry picking can occur throughout the spring, summer, and fall. However most of the activity is concentrated during the few weeks when fruits ripen.

How is the use conducted? This is an activity that is often done in conjunction with other wildlife dependent activities such as wildlife observation and photography. People typically walk, bike or drive along the Refuge roads and trails and then venture off-road. During the harvest seasons, only 10 miles of roads are open to motorized vehicles and all harvesting is done by hand.

Why is the use being proposed? Mushroom and berry picking are traditional outdoor activities that bring families to the Refuge. It allows them to collect wholesome foods while enjoying the natural environment.

Availability of Resources: There is little or no cost to administer this program. It occurs in conjunction with other public uses and participation is low.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Historically, public participation in mushroom and berry picking has been low and future participation is also expected to be low. Most activity occurs adjacent to existing roads and trails; therefore, disturbance to wildlife will be minimal. The relatively few mushrooms and berries harvested will not significantly reduce food sources for wildlife,

Public Review and Comment: This compatibility determination was part of the Draft Seneey National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment, which was announced in the Federal register and available for public comment for 30 days.

a. Determination:

Use is not compatible.

Use is compatible with the following stipulations.

This use has little impact to wildlife or habitat since it is recreational in nature and few people participate. In addition, a relatively small portion of the Refuge is accessed by mushroom and berry pickers, because most roads are not open to motorized vehicles. Ocular estimates of picked over areas reveal a very low percentage of total fruit picked. No appreciable effect on wildlife mast is anticipated. This activity provides hours of enjoyable recreation and promotes a positive image of the Refuge.

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: All users must comply with Refuge specific regulations.

Justification:

Signature: Refuge Manager

Concurrence: Regional Chief:

Mandatory 10 or 15 year Re-evaluation Date: 2018

Appendix D: NATIONAL VISITOR SERVICES' STANDARDS

TABLE 12. National Visitor Services' Standards from USFWS Policy 605FW1 and 610FW2

NATIONAL VISITOR SERVICES' STANDARDS	POLICY DIRECTIVES
Standard 1. Develop a Visitor Services Plan	Refuge managers will develop a VSP that addresses all compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses on their refuge. Managers should familiarize themselves with Exhibit 1 and, when it becomes available, the Visitor Services Requirements Handbook .
Standard 2. Welcome and orient visitors.	We will assure that Refuges are welcoming, safe, and accessible. We will provide visitors with clear information so they can easily determine where they can go, what they can do, and how to safely and ethically engage in recreational and educational activities. Facilities will meet the quality criteria defined in section 1.6 of this chapter. We will treat visitors with courtesy and in a professional manner.
Standard 3. Provide quality hunting opportunities.	Provide quality hunting opportunities. Hunting is a wildlife-dependent recreational use and, when compatible, an appropriate use of resources in the Refuge System. Hunting programs will meet the quality criteria defined in section 1.6 and, to the extent practicable, be carried out consistent with State laws, regulations, and management plans (see 605 FW 2).
Standard 4. Provide quality fishing opportunities.	Fishing is a wildlife-dependent recreational use and, when compatible, an appropriate use of resources in the Refuge System. Fishing programs will meet the quality criteria defined in section 1.6 and, to the extent practicable, be carried out consistent with State laws, regulations, and management plans (see 605 FW 3).
Standard 5. Provide quality wildlife observation and photography opportunities.	Visitors of all ages and abilities will have an opportunity to observe and photograph key wildlife and habitat on the Refuge when it is compatible with Refuge purpose(s). Viewing and photographing wildlife in natural or managed environments should foster a connection between visitors and natural resources (see 605 FW 4 and 605 FW 5 , respectively). Wildlife observation and photography programs will meet the quality criteria defined in section 1.6 .
Standard 6. Develop and implement a quality environmental education program.	Through curriculum-based environmental education packages based on national and State education standards, we will advance public awareness, understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of key fish, wildlife, plant, and resource issues. Each refuge will assess its potential to work with schools to provide an appropriate level of environmental education. We may support environmental education through the use of facilities, equipment, educational materials, teacher workshops, and study sites that are safe, accessible, and conducive to learning (see 605 FW 6). Environmental education programs will meet the quality criteria defined in section 1.6 .
Standard 7. Provide quality interpretation of key resources and issues.	We will communicate fish, wildlife, habitat, and other resource issues to visitors of all ages and abilities through effective interpretation. We will tailor core messages and delivery methods to provide interpretation to refuge visitors and present them in appropriate locations. Interpretive programs will meet the quality criteria defined in section 1.6 .
Standard 8. Manage for other recreational use opportunities.	We may allow other recreational uses that support or enhance one of the wildlife-dependent recreational uses or minimally conflict with any of the wildlife-dependent recreational uses when we determine they are both appropriate and compatible. We will allow uses that are either legally mandated or occur due to special circumstances.
Standard 9. Communicate key issues with off-site audiences.	Effective outreach depends on open and continuing communication and collaboration between the Refuge and its many publics. Effective outreach involves determining and understanding the issues, identifying audiences, listening to stakeholders, crafting messages, selecting the most effective delivery techniques, and evaluating effectiveness. If conducted successfully, the results we achieve will further refuge purpose(s) and the Refuge System mission.

Standard 10. Build volunteer programs and partnerships with Friends organizations.

Volunteer and Friends organizations fortify refuge staffs with their gifts of time, skills, and energy. They are integral to the future of the Refuge System. Where appropriate, refuge staff will initiate and nurture relationships with volunteers and Friends organizations and will continually support, monitor, and evaluate these groups with the goal of fortifying important refuge activities. The National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998 strengthens the Refuge System’s role in developing effective partnerships with various community groups. Whether through volunteers, Friends organizations, or other important partnerships in the community, refuge personnel will seek to make the refuge an active community member, giving rise to a stronger Refuge System.

Standard 11. Recreation Fee Program

“The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (FLREA) allows land management agencies, such as the National Wildlife Refuge System, to charge fees for entry and certain amenities (user fees). The charging of entrance and user fees at national wildlife refuges can be a helpful management tool if the program is well-managed and implemented.”

Standard 12. Concessions Program

Concession Contracts, discusses the Service’s current policy for concession management and provides guidance for permitting and administering concession operations on Service lands. We use concessions to assist us in providing wildlife-dependent recreation activities to the visiting public. The concessions are managed through contracts between the Service and a private entity, where the private entity is allowed to charge a fee for services provided at a field station to the visiting public.

Standard 13. Commercial Recreation Uses

A commercial recreational use is a use that generates revenue or that results in a commodity which is or can be sold for income or revenue. Before considering compatibility, the use must be determined to contribute to the achievement of the refuge purpose or the mission of the Refuge System, as outlined in Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, 29.1.

To be allowed on a refuge, a commercial use must go beyond the “not materially interfere with...” requirement and must contribute to the achievement of the refuge purpose or mission of the Refuge System. The contribution must be clearly defined in the justification section of the compatibility determination for any commercial use.

Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, 27.97, Private Operations, prohibits an unauthorized commercial enterprise on any national wildlife refuge. Thus, commercial tours are required to apply for a special use permit (SUP) from the Refuge Manager. By establishing a SUP system, the refuge staff is able to set sustainable limits on the number of permits issued.

In determining if a commercial recreational use is compatible, one way to connect it to the mission of the System is to determine if the commercial recreation use will facilitate one of the wildlife-dependent priority public use activities which are “directly related to the mission of the System.” (Refuge Improvement Act – 1997)

Standard 14: Wilderness

We provide opportunities for appropriate and compatible use and enjoyment of Wilderness areas in a manner that will preserve their Wilderness character and that will “leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as Wilderness” (Wilderness Act, section 2 (a)). Refuges are generally closed to public access and use unless opened, following an appropriateness finding and a compatibility determination, through the applicable process (e.g., compatibility determination, NEPA and planning process, special use permit, regulation, etc.) (see [50 CFR 25.21](#)). If we open a refuge, we may impose conditions or restrictions on any activity to ensure that it is appropriate and compatible and, for Wilderness areas, preserves Wilderness character and values. We emphasize providing “opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation” (Wilderness Act, section 2(c)).

APPENDIX E: MONITOR AND EVALUATION TABLES

These tables can be used to assist in monitoring and evaluation all visitor services programs.

Table F - 1. Welcome and Orient Visitors Evaluation

Welcome and Orient Visitors		Activity: (example – Overall Welcome and Orient)
1	Are all entrance signs well-maintained, properly located, and in accordance with the <i>Service Sign Manual</i> or current Director’s Orders?	
2	Do the kiosks contain appropriate welcoming and orienting media such as an up-to-date orientation sign with a refuge map and current refuge publications?	
3	Are the kiosks placed in appropriate locations to serve the purpose of welcoming and orienting?	
4	Are the kiosks universally accessible?	
5	Are refuge boundaries properly marked and are the boundary signs maintained?	
6	Is the use of alternate boundary signs, such as open and closed area signs, appropriate and correct?	
7	Are directional signs found on the refuge logically located, providing visitors adequate time to make decisions while driving at recommended speeds?	
8	Do the directional signs provide clear information, enabling visitors to find their destinations on the refuge?	
9	Are the signs produced per the <i>Service Sign Manual</i> standards?	
10	Are the regulations simple, easy to understand, and worded in a positive manner?	
11	Is it clear where visitors can go or who they can contact to ask regulatory questions or to report problems or violations?	
12	Are all visitor facilities, including rest rooms, clean and properly maintained, providing positive first impressions?	
13	Are all public roads well-maintained and properly marked with traffic control signs?	
14	Are parking lots properly sized and located for the appropriate visitor service and recreation activities and needs?	
15	Is accessible parking provided at sites where there are accessible facilities?	

Welcome and Orient Visitors		Activity: (example – Overall Welcome and Orient)
16	Is the Service logo prevalent throughout the facility and found on all field station publications?	
17	Are refuge visitor and headquarters hours posted in the refuge general leaflet, on the welcoming and orienting kiosk sign, and at the headquarters and other appropriate locations?	
Final Rating		

Table F - 2. Hunting Evaluation

Hunting		Activity: (example – Youth Turkey Hunt)
1	Maximizes safety for hunters and other visitors	
2	Encourages the highest standards of ethical behavior in taking or attempting to take wildlife	
3	Is available to a broad spectrum of the hunting public, no matter what their physical or mental abilities	
4	Contributes positively to or has no adverse effect on population management of resident or migratory species	
5	Reflects positively on the individual refuge, the Refuge System, and the Service	
6	Provides hunters uncrowded conditions by minimizing conflicts and competition among hunters	
7	Provides reasonable challenges and opportunities for taking targeted species under the described harvest objectives established by the hunting program. It also minimizes the reliance on motorized vehicles and technology designed to increase the advantage of the hunter over wildlife	
8	Minimizes habitat impacts	
9	Creates minimal conflict with other priority	

Hunting		Activity: (example – Youth Turkey Hunt)
	wildlife-dependent recreational uses or with refuge operations	
10	Incorporates a message of stewardship and conservation in hunting opportunities	
11	Compatible with refuge purposes, goals, and objectives	
12	If the activity is not appropriate, a plan been developed to terminate or phase out the use as expeditiously as practicable	
Final Rating		

Table F - 3. Fishing Evaluation

Fishing		Activity: (example – Annual Youth Fishing Clinic)
1	Maximizes safety for anglers and other visitors	
2	Causes no adverse impact on populations of resident or migratory species, native species, threatened and endangered species, or habitat	
3	Encourages the highest standards of ethical behavior in regard to catching, attempting to catch, and releasing fish	
4	Is available to a broad spectrum of the public that visits, or potentially would visit the refuge	
5	Provides reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities to participate in refuge fishing activities	
6	Reflects positively on the Refuge System	
7	Provides uncrowded conditions	
8	Creates minimal conflict with other priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses or refuge	

Fishing		Activity: (example – Annual Youth Fishing Clinic)
	operations	
9	Provides reasonable challenges and harvest opportunities	
10	Increases the visitor’s understanding and appreciation for the fishery resource	
Final Rating		

Table F - 4. Wildlife Observation and Wildlife Photography Evaluation

Wildlife Observation and Wildlife Photography		Activity: (example – Auto Tour throughout Refuge)
1	Limits disturbances of wildlife and habitat	
2	Routes allow visitors to visit a representative sample of refuge habitats	
3	Facilities strategically placed to provide good wildlife observation and photography opportunities while limiting disturbance to wildlife and habitat	
4	Facilities are safe, well-maintained, and universally accessible	
5	Wildlife observation opportunities, best viewing times, viewer etiquette, ways to minimize impact on wildlife and habitat, access point information, regulations, and management concerns are clearly communicated	
Final Rating		

Table F - 5. Environmental Education Evaluation

Environmental Education		Activity: (example – Sixth Grade Curricula on Fire Management)
1	Provide appropriate materials, equipment, facilities, and study locations to support environmental education, where compatible	
2	Allow program participants to demonstrate learning through refuge-specific stewardship tasks as well as projects that they can carry over into their everyday lives	
3	Establish partnerships to support environmental education on refuges open to the public	
4	Incorporate local, state, and national education standards in our programs with an emphasis on wildlife conservation	
5	Assist refuge staff and volunteers to attain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to support environmental education at the minimum or higher levels as defined in <i>Fish and Wildlife Service Manual Chapter 605 FW 6, Environmental Education (Section 6.7C(1))</i>	
6	Teach awareness, understanding, and appreciation of our trust resources	
7	Serve as a means by which refuge employees are seen as role models for environmental stewardship through a continually developing positive relationship with the community	
Final Rating		

Table F - 6. Interpretation Evaluation

Interpretation		Activity: (example – XYZ trail and trail head kiosk)
1	Increase public understanding and support of the Refuge System	
2	Develop a sense of stewardship leading to actions and attitudes that reflect concern and respect for wildlife resources, cultural resources, and the environment	
3	Provide an understanding of the management of our natural and cultural resources	
4	Provide safe, enjoyable, accessible, meaningful, and high quality experiences for visitors, increasing their awareness, understanding, and appreciation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats	
Final Rating		

Table F - 7. Other Recreational Use Opportunities Evaluation

Other Recreational Use Opportunities		Activity: (example – Horseback riding)
1	Evaluated for appropriateness	
2	Determined to be one of the six priority public uses, to support one of the priority public uses, or that it is wildlife-dependent	
3	Compatible with refuge purposes, goals, and objectives	
4	If the activity is not appropriate, a plan been developed to terminate or phase out the use as expeditiously as practicable	
5	Adequate areas and facilities have been developed, allowing visitors to participate in all appropriate visitor services activities in a safe manner, but also minimizing disturbance to critical wildlife areas	
6	Existing facilities universally accessible to	

Other Recreational Use Opportunities		Activity: (example – Horseback riding)
	meet the needs of all users	
7	Alternate facilities or sites have been developed for individuals or groups with disabilities, or are “similar experiences” provided if the facilities are not accessible	
Final Rating		

Table F - 8. Outreach Evaluation

Outreach		Activity: (example – Booth at the State Fair)
1	Outreach program(s) developed for important individual resource issues or for addressing long-term resource issues	
2	Existing outreach program(s) address the important resources issues at the refuge	
3	Outreach program(s) incorporate Service and Refuge System messages	
4	Outreach event in line with refuge purpose and mission	
Final Rating		

Table F - 9. Volunteer and Friends Evaluation

Volunteers and Friends		Activity: (example – Overall Volunteer Program)
1	If a volunteer program does not exist, has a volunteer program needs assessment been conducted?	
2	Each volunteer or potential volunteer position have a position description adequately describing his or her duties	

Volunteers and Friends		Activity: (example – Overall Volunteer Program)
3	Proper workspace, materials, and equipment is provided to the volunteers so that they can safely and properly do their jobs	
4	Existing housing facilities clean, well-maintained, and universally accessible	
5	A volunteer Agreement is on file for every volunteer	
6	HSPD 12 Compliant	
7	The mission of the Friends Group matches the needs of the refuge	
8	A Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement exists between current partners and the Service, and they are periodically reviewed and updated	
9	Specific roles and responsibilities for both the Service and the cooperating association outlined in these agreements	
Final Rating		

Table F - 10. Wilderness Evaluation

Wilderness		Activity: (example – John Doe Wilderness Area)
1	Are the uses and the way they are conducted compatible with Wilderness policy?	
2	Wilderness information is included in your communication tools provided to the public.	
3	Wilderness areas are identified on your refuge map located in your kiosks and publications.	
4	<i>Leave No Trace</i> materials are available to visitors.	
5	Steps have been taken to ensure that visitors have the opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined Wilderness experience.	
Final Rating		