Summary
Comprehensive Conservation Plan
April 2007

Introduction
A planning effort that involved neighbors, non-government organizations, local officials and many interested citizens has concluded with the completion of a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for Horicon National Wildlife Refuge and Fox River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service approved the plan and is making it available online at: http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/horicon.html

Paper copies and compact disks with an electronic version of the CCP are also available. Please call the Refuge at 920/397-2658 to request a copy or CD-Rom. Copies of the CCP are also available for review at Horicon NWR and at libraries in Beaver Dam, Fox Lake, Mayville, Iron Ridge, Juneau, Oakfield, Waupun, and Horicon.

The comprehensive conservation plan is intended to outline how the Refuge will fulfill its legal purpose and contribute to the National Wildlife Refuge System’s wildlife, habitat and public use goals. The plan articulates management goals for the next 15 years and specifies the objectives and strategies needed to accomplish these goals. While the planned future condition is long-term, we anticipate that the plan will be reviewed and, if needed, updated every 5 to 10 years based on information gained through monitoring habitat and wildlife, as well as recreational usage.

While comprehensive conservation plans outline management direction, they do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.

Vital Statistics
Horicon NWR

Horicon Marsh is the largest freshwater cattail marsh in the United States, consisting of some 32,000 acres. The marsh is 14 miles long and 3 to 5 miles wide and has been classified as a palustrine system dominated by persistent emergent vegetation and floating vascular aquatic beds. The southern one-third of the marsh is managed by the
Planned Refuge Program Highlights at Horicon NWR

Marsh Management: Management strategies will try to re-establish a meandering river system flowing through the north end of the Horicon Marsh. Rotational water management will continue on the Main Pool and 16 sub-impoundments to benefit specific Regional Resource Species of Concern.

Upland Habitat Restoration: The Refuge will restore historic vegetation and create habitats that are lacking in the area. Up to 100 acres of oak savanna will be restored to benefit regional habitat diversity and grassland-dependent wildlife species. Between 500 to 1,000 acres of upland grasslands, primarily native dry tallgrass prairie, will be restored and managed to benefit declining wildlife species that depend on this habitat type, including Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow’s Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark.

Reduced Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions on State Highway 49: The CCP outlines physical and educational strategies to reduce the loss of wildlife along State Highway 49, which is a major high speed roadway bisecting the northern section of the Horicon Marsh for 2.5 miles.

Increased Conservation Projects with Landowners in the Upper Rock River Watershed: Refuge staff will work closely with the federal Partners for Fish and Wildlife staff, Wisconsin DNR, counties, and non-profit groups to encourage understanding, and action, of private landowners in the upper watershed. Landowners and the public will be informed of the critical issue of soil erosion and contaminants impacting the Horicon Marsh.

Expanded Recreational Opportunities: Opportunities for quality wildlife-dependent recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation, will increase over the course of the CCP through the expansion and enhancement of new and existing facilities and programs, seasons, and opportunities for access.

Opportunities include expansion of the deer and small game hunting season to match the state seasons, ice fishing, increased access and new facilities for education, wildlife observation and photography.

Goal 3. People – Provide quality wildlife-dependent recreational and environmental education opportunities to a diverse audience. These activities will promote understanding, appreciation, and support for Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and wildlife conservation.

Fox River NWR

Goal 1. Wildlife – Protect, restore, and maintain a diversity of wildlife species native to habitats historically found in the Upper Fox River Watershed, with special emphasis on Service priority species, through habitat preservation, restoration, and management.

Goal 2. Habitat – Protect, restore, and enhance the wetland and adjacent upland habitat on the Refuge to emulate a naturally functioning, dynamic ecosystem containing a variety of habitat conditions that were present prior to European settlement, namely dry tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, fens, sedge meadow, and shallow emergent marsh wetlands.

Goal 3. People – Provide quality visitor services compatible with the purposes for which the Refuge was established and/or the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. These wildlife-dependent activities will promote an understanding and appreciation of the naturally functioning landscape and the Service’s management efforts on the Refuge.
PROGRAMS UTILIZED IN THE UPPER ROCK RIVER WATER QUALITY PROJECT

MALWIG ( MULTI-AGENCY LAND AND WATER EDUCATION GRANT )

PARTNERS FOR WILDLIFE ( USFWS )

EQIP ( USDA )

WRP ( USDA )

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

CONTINUOUS CRP

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

SAFE ( STATE ACRES FOR WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT )

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM/WORKING LANDS INITIATIVE

NATIONAL FISH & WILDLIFE GRANT

CITIZEN-BASED MONITORING PROGRAM ( WAY )

WINGS OVER WISCONSIN

NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

PEASANTS FOREVER

CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM ( CSP )

FRIENDS OF HORICON

LAND & WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GRANT ( LWCD )

WELL ABANDONMENT

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION
PARTNERS IN THE UPPER ROCK RIVER WATER QUALITY PROJECT

U S FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

USDA - NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

USDA - FARM SERVICES AGENCY

DNR - WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT/FORESTRY/WATER MANAGEMENT

CITY OF FOND DU LAC - WASTEWATER TREATMENT

FOND DU LAC COUNTY LWCD

DODGE COUNTY LWCD

VOLUNTEERS - TROUT UNLIMITED (CENTRAL WISCONSIN CHAPTER)

PARK WATCH 2010

WINGS OVER WISCONSIN

NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

PEASANTS FOREVER

FRIENDS OF HORICON

ROCK RIVER COALITION

U S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION

WAUPUN SCHOOL DISTRICT/CITY OF WAUPUN
8.725 linear feet (32.2 acres) of grassed buffer (yellow) composed of native grasses and forbs, installed by landowner along and adjacent to Oak Center Creek provides for water quality protection and adds upland wildlife nesting cover. Oak Center Creek flows directly into the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. Conservation Reserve Program acreage installed (red) provides new wetlands and upland nesting cover adjacent to wetlands utilized by waterfowl and upland game birds. All identified acreage complements acreage owned and managed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service to the east for waterfowl production.
5,175 linear feet of grassed buffer (yellow) composed of native grasses and forbs, installed by landowner along and adjacent to the South Branch of the Rock River and adjacent wetlands provide for water quality protection (sediment and nutrients); and, provide upland wildlife habitat.
Three adjacent landowners utilized the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (buffers) (yellow), the Conservation Reserve Program (native grass/forb upland habitat) (red), and the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program (native grass/forb upland habitat) (orange) to provide water quality improvement to Ladoga Creek (tributary to the West Branch of the Rock River). Acreage includes 2,650 linear feet of buffers, 41 acres of CRP, and, 62 acres of SAFE. All acreages contracted and installed from 2008 through 2010.
Ground view of grass buffer established along the South Branch of the Rock River immediately adjacent to one of the monthly monitoring sites for water quality in the Upper Rock River Watershed Water Quality Project area.
Severe streambank erosion problem adjacent to City of Waupun Middle School and adjacent city park. Site was losing 100 to 120 tons of sediment per rainfall event. Site was also a significant danger to student and public use for the school and the park. Site being treated with streambank erosion control riprap project through monetary and staff assistance from the school district, the City of Waupun, the local Land and Water Conservation Department, the USDA-NRCS, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Funding to complete this project comes from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, State of Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. Stream is the South Branch of the Rock River just upstream from the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge.
## Accomplishments - Upper Rock River Watershed Water Quality Project

### Expanded Watershed Project Area Including Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties (August 1, 2006 - March 31, 2011)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fond du Lac County</th>
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<th>Dodge County</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/1/06 - 7/1/09</td>
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<td>8/1/06 - 3/31/2011</td>
<td>8/1/06 - 7/1/09</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contacts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>345</td>
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<td>Multiples (2+ Contacts)</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>227</td>
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<td><strong>Tracts Evaluated</strong></td>
<td>726</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>238</td>
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<td><strong>Buffers</strong></td>
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<td>Discussed</td>
<td>213,790'/40.5mi.</td>
<td>234,640'/44.4mi.</td>
<td>253,933'/48.1mi.</td>
<td>37,800'/7.2mi.</td>
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<td>Planned</td>
<td>213,790'/40.5mi.</td>
<td>234,640'/44.4mi.</td>
<td>253,933'/48.1mi.</td>
<td>37,800'/7.2mi.</td>
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<td>Contracted</td>
<td>85,125'/16.1mi.</td>
<td>87,375'/16.5mi.</td>
<td>92,305'/17.5mi.</td>
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<td>Installed</td>
<td>85,125'/16.1mi.</td>
<td>85,125'/16.1mi.</td>
<td>85,125'/16.1mi.</td>
<td>85,125'/16.1mi.</td>
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<td>Committed to Contract</td>
<td>15,700'/3.0mi.</td>
<td>15,700'/3.0mi.</td>
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<td><strong>Nutrient Mgmt. Plans</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>20,652 ac.</td>
<td>22,786 ac.</td>
<td>26,776 ac</td>
<td>1,589 ac.</td>
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<td>20,454 ac.</td>
<td>21,625 ac.</td>
<td>24,275 ac</td>
<td>1,589 ac.</td>
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<td><strong>Conservation Plans/Revisions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Cropland)</td>
<td>26,573 ac.</td>
<td>28,396 ac.</td>
<td>33,319 ac</td>
<td>1,824 ac.</td>
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<td>(Pasture)</td>
<td>1,317 ac.</td>
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<td>1,317 ac.</td>
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<td><strong>Shallow Water Areas</strong></td>
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<td>Planned</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Installed</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td><strong>Upland Wildlife Nesting Cover</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>29/45/ac.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Installed</td>
<td>26/410 ac.</td>
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