

## **7. Implementation and Monitoring**

Implementation of the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan will be accomplished, in part, by means of various step-down plans (section 7.1). Each step-down plan has its own program focus, identifying and directing the implementation of strategies (actions, techniques, and tools) designed to achieve programmatic objectives outlined in the Conservation Plan (chapter 2, section 2.1). Part of the implementation process also includes identifying partnership opportunities that result in implementing strategies and that accomplish refuge objectives. Monitoring the progress of Plan implementation is currently accomplished by a variety of methods, including surveys, inventories, radio telemetry, and genetic sampling. Evaluation of monitoring results may lead to amendment or revision of the Conservation Plan (section 7.4).

### **7.1 Step-Down Plans**

Step-down management plans address specific management subjects or programs. They describe management strategies and implementation schedules and provide details necessary to implement management objectives identified in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (Service Manual 602 FW 1.5). Step-down plans for the Refuge include the following:

#### **7.1.1 Wildlife Inventory and Monitoring Plan (1986)**

The Tetlin Refuge Wildlife Inventory and Monitoring Plan (TNWR 1986) outlines strategies and methods to be used in gathering consistent baseline and management data for species of local, regional, and national significance. In the selection of species to be intensively surveyed, many factors were considered, including short and long range goals, future conflicts, habitat loss or degradation, ability to serve as indicators of habitat quality, degree of management possible, and available resources. The majority of inventory and monitoring outlined in this plan are directed toward birds.

The goals and objectives in the Wildlife Inventory and Monitoring Plan have been revised as part of this Conservation Plan (see Chapter 2, Goals and Objectives). Further revision of the Inventory and Monitoring Plan is scheduled to begin two years after the Conservation Plan's approval.

#### **7.1.2 Cultural Resource Guide (1997)**

The Tetlin Refuge Cultural Resource Guide (Corbett and Arend 1997) assists the refuge staff in meeting legal requirements to protect and manage the cultural resources of the refuge. The guide summarizes the cultural resource guidance provided by law and regulation, the Service Manual, and the Cultural Resource Management Handbook. It outlines roles and responsibilities, summarizes legislation governing management of cultural resources, and contains information of potential use to the refuge manager. It describes the current state of knowledge of the prehistory and history of the region. It includes a list of projects that would fill in gaps in knowledge or complete existing work. A more complete and detailed Cultural Resource Management Plan is scheduled to be completed in cooperation with Native groups and other local entities by 2011 (15 years after completion of the initial guide).

#### **7.1.3 Fire Management Plan (2001)**

The Tetlin Refuge Fire Management Plan (TNWR 2001) provides the planning framework for all refuge fire management decision-making and specifies the uses of fire that are consistent with and can enhance refuge habitat and wildlife management objectives. The Fire Management Plan

identifies action to be taken to preserve, protect, and enhance natural and cultural resources with specific regard to both wildland fire and prescribed fire. This plan also provides the foundation of objectives, guidelines, and planning information upon which the refuge-prescribed fire program is based. Upon final approval, the Tetlin Conservation Plan will make important adjustments to fire management within the Refuge. These changes will be reflected in a revision of the Fire Management Plan scheduled to begin within two years of the Conservation Plan's approval.

#### **7.1.4 Fisheries Management Plan (1990)**

The fisheries management plan (USFWS 1990) describes the fishery resources on Tetlin Refuge and provides management direction the Service will take to support the conservation of fishery resources and habitat. The plan is designed to remain consistent with the Service's Master Memorandum of Understanding with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (See Appendix B) and provides for continued use of fishery resources for subsistence, commercial, and recreation purposes. The plan identifies concerns and describes objectives and tasks to address these concerns. Eleven priority tasks were identified in the plan: six of the tasks are ongoing, three have been completed and two were dropped because of funding limits or changes in priorities. Revision is scheduled to begin two years after the Conservation Plan's approval.

#### **7.1.5 Land Protection Plan (2001)**

The Tetlin Refuge Land Protection Plan (USFWS 2001a) used the Alaska Priority System model to identify key resources that require protection from potential negative effects of private land development and public use. The plan also evaluated possible threats to important refuge resources and special management values such as environmental education and public access. This resulted in 19 non-refuge parcels within the administrative boundary of the refuge being identified as high priority for resource protection. Measures to mitigate threats include easements and purchase of non-refuge lands from willing sellers. The highest priority sites are near the refuge visitor center, and in the vicinity of Scottie Creek and the Alaska Highway. This plan is scheduled to be reviewed in 2015.

#### **7.1.6 Public Use Management Plan (Visitor Services Plan) (1997a)**

The Tetlin Refuge Public Use Management Plan (USFWS 1997a) sets forth specific direction for the recreation, interpretation, and education programs of the Refuge. The primary goal of the public use program at Tetlin Refuge is to provide high quality fish and wildlife-oriented recreation, interpretive, and educational opportunities consistent with the Refuge's resource oriented purposes. This plan (now called a Visitor Services Plan) is scheduled to be revised within two years of the Conservation Plan's approval.

#### **7.1.7 Station Safety Plan (2005)**

This plan focuses on providing a safe and healthful environment for employees and visitors by minimizing the potential for injury to employees and the public and by preventing property damage. The safety plan describes programs needed to train personnel in how to deal with the environment, materials, and machines that may pose hazards and has the goal of making safety and environmental health integral parts of every task. This plan is revised annually.

### **7.2 Partnership Opportunities**

Partnerships with other organizations are among the ways in which the Service fulfills its mission: "Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people." Partnership opportunities would be consistent

throughout all alternatives. The Refuge exists within a dynamic ecosystem. Many of the resources within the Refuge are of national and international importance. The Service recognizes that the public, organizations, and other governmental agencies have interests in the Refuge. Implementation of many refuge programs requires community involvement, support, and assistance. The refuge staff looks for opportunities to coordinate activities with the following (among others):

- Local village councils
- Various State agencies, primarily: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development
- Alaska Natural History Association
- Alaska Gateway School District
- Alaska Bird Observatory
- Tok Bird Rehabilitation
- Tok Lions Club
- Ducks Unlimited
- Duct Tape Radio and Humanities Forum
- Tok Choral Society
- Tok Chamber of Commerce
- Upper Tanana Development Corporation
- Local businesses, Native corporations, and Native associations
- Other Federal agencies, primarily: the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Yukon government, primarily Environment Yukon (formerly the Division of Wildlife and Parks and Department of Natural Resources)
- Universities, including the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Yukon College
- Tanana Chiefs Conference
- Museums
- Friends of Alaska Refuges
- Eastern Interior Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the Upper Tanana-Fortymile Advisory Committee

These partnerships have been fostered for many years and have resulted in a number of successful collaborative projects of mutual benefit far greater than the Refuge would have achieved independently. In some cases, the Refuge has worked with as many as four other partners who contributed time, money, and other support to make a single project successful. Without these partnerships we could not fully succeed in fulfilling the purposes for Tetlin Refuge.

### **7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring helps refuge staff track the progress of Plan implementation. Results of monitoring show how objectives are being achieved and measure progress towards accomplishing goals. Monitoring is currently conducted under direction of the Wildlife Inventory and Monitoring Plan (TNWR 1986). Additional monitoring strategies will be developed as data analyses are completed, biological and visitor service reviews are conducted, and the Public Use Management Plan (USFWS 1997a) and other step-down plans are revised.

**7.4 Plan Amendment and Revision**

Periodic review and change of this Comprehensive Conservation Plan will be necessary. As knowledge of refuge resources, users, and uses improves, changes in management may be identified. Fish and wildlife populations, user groups, adjacent land users, and other management considerations change with time, often in unforeseen ways. Challenges also may be encountered in trying to implement the Plan. Revisions are a necessary part of the adaptive management approach used by the Service. This means objectives and strategies to reach goals can be adjusted. Most of the resulting changes will fine-tune the plan. These changes will not require modification of this document because minor changes will be addressed in the more detailed refuge step-down and annual work plans. Only if a major change is required in management of the refuge will it be necessary to revise this Conservation Plan with a new environmental analysis. To enable refuge users; adjacent landowners; local, State, and Federal agencies; and other interested parties to express their views on how the Refuge is being managed, the Refuge will periodically hold meetings or use other techniques such as comment cards and surveys to solicit comments for evaluation purposes. By encouraging continuing public input, the Refuge will be better able to serve the public, to determine potential problems before they occur, and to take immediate action to resolve existing problems. Every three to five years, refuge staff will review public comments, local and State government recommendations, staff recommendations, research studies, and other sources to determine if revisions to the Plan are necessary. If major changes are proposed, public meetings may be held, and new environmental assessments and environmental impact statements may be necessary. Full review and updating of the Conservation Plan will occur every 15 years.