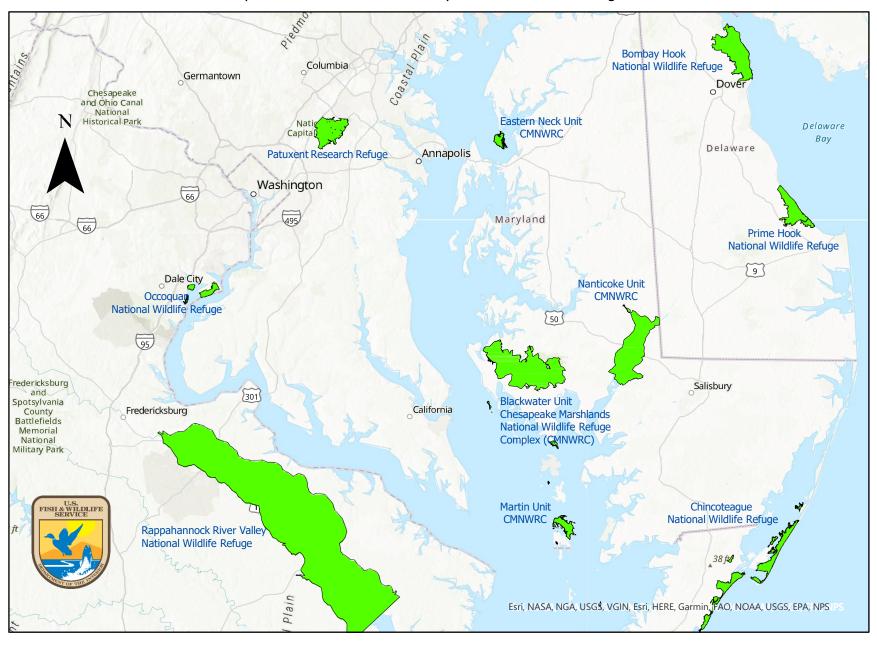


A decade-long partnership effort....

- 2010: USFWS and partners begin assembling data to assess the viability of, and justification for, a new refuge
- 2011: A Preliminary Project Proposal is approved by the Director of the USFWS (internal document)
- 2011-2014: New USFWS policy on Strategic Growth of the National Wildlife Refuge System is developed
- 2014-2018: Landscape Conservation Design completed
- 2021: Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance organizes and work continues on new refuge proposal

Chesapeake - Delaware - Coastal Bays National Wildlife Refuges



0 5 10 20 Miles

Why now? Why here?



Wood thrush

- There are 3 billion fewer birds in North America than in 1970!
 - Eastern forest birds are down nearly 20%



Scarlet tanager



Prothonotary warbler

Why now? Why here?



- Of the 8 million species estimated to exist on Earth, 12.5% may go extinct over the next several decades if we don't act!
 - 40% of amphibians
 - 10% of insects





Half Earth

• If we commit 50% of the planet's surface to nature by 2050, we will save 85% of the Earth's species – E.O. Wilson

- Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies and their partners are working to protect 30% of our lands and Oceans by 2030.
- As of 2021, 12% of the land in the U.S. was formally protected.

Proposed Refuge Conservation Design Approach

- Refuge Purposes Strategic Growth Policy
- A. Recovery of Threatened and Endangered Species.
- B. Implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.
- C. Conserving migratory birds of conservation concern.
 - 1. United States Shorebird Conservation Plan
 - 2. North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
 - 3. Associated Step-Down Management Plans
 - 4. Partners in Flight North American Landbird Conservation Plan

Proposed Refuge Conservation Design – USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (19)

Patuxent Waters Conservation Area LCD – USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (19)

Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)
American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)

Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*)
Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)
Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*)

Lesser Yellowlegs (Tringa flavipes)

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*)
Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*)
Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*)

Worm Eating Warbler (Helmitheros vermivorum)

Wood Thrush (Hylocichla mustelina)

Saltmarsh Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*)

Sedge Wren (Cistothorus platensis)

Red-headed Woodpecker (Melanerpes erythrocephalus)

Whip-poor-will (Caprimulgus vociferous)
Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus)

Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus)

Short-eared Owl (Asio flammeus)

Wintering/Migrating

Year-round Year-round Breeding

Year-round

Breeding

Wintering/Migrating

Migrating
Breeding
Breeding
Breeding
Breeding

Year-round Year-round Year-round Breeding Year-round

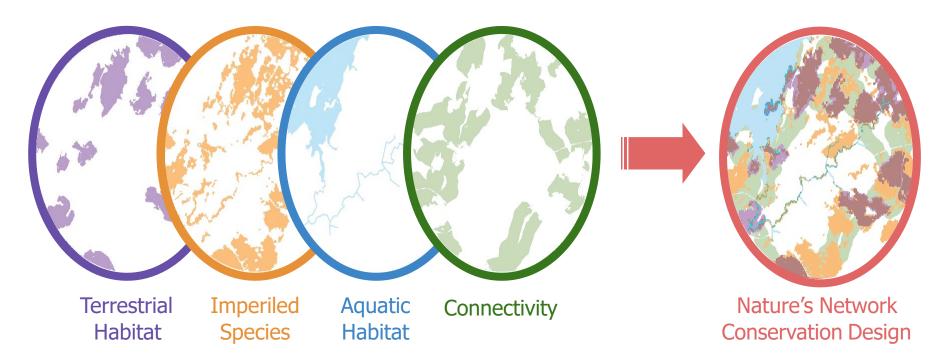
Wintering/Migrating

Wintering

Proposed Refuge LPP Conservation Design Federally-Listed Species

- Federally-listed Species
 - Dwarf wedgemussel Endangered
 - Sensitive Joint-vetch Threatened
 - Swamp Pink Threatened
 - Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle Threatened
 - Puritan Tiger Beetle Threatened
 - Atlantic Sturgeon Endangered
 - Shortnose Sturgeon Endangered
 - Long-eared Bat Threatened

www.naturesnetwork.org The conservation design

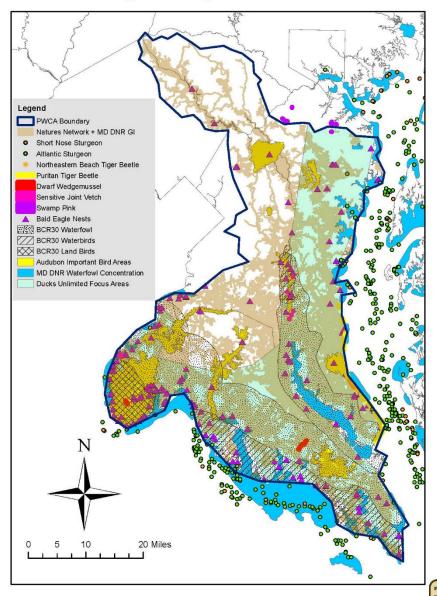


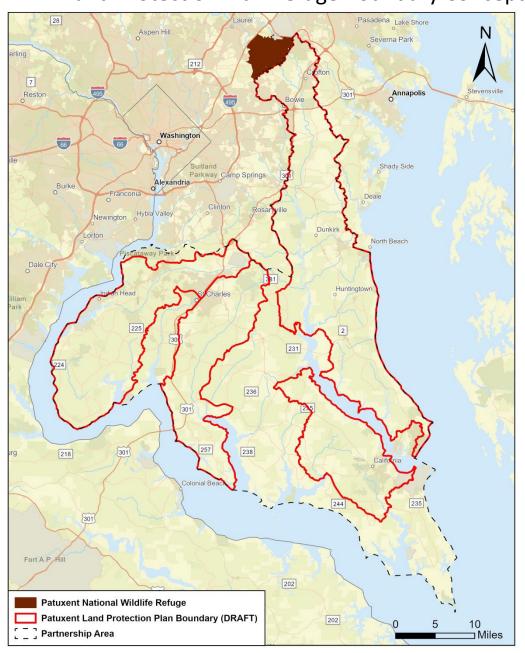
The key features of each of the four components are **integrated in one map** for Nature's Network Conservation Design, but many complementary data layers are available to support conservation planning.

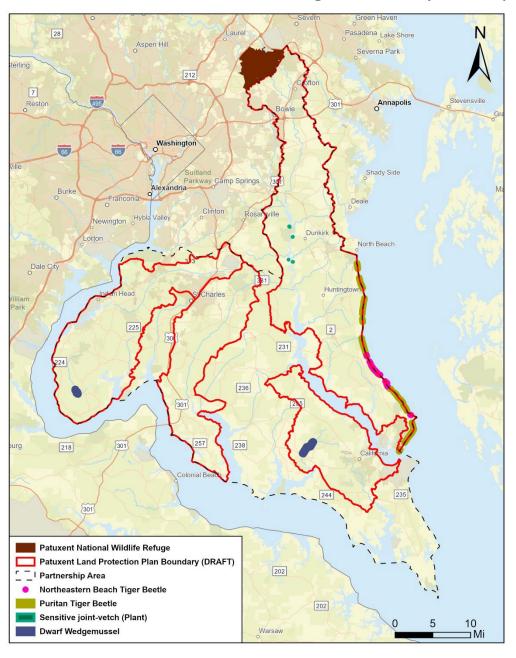
Proposed Refuge Conservation Design Approach

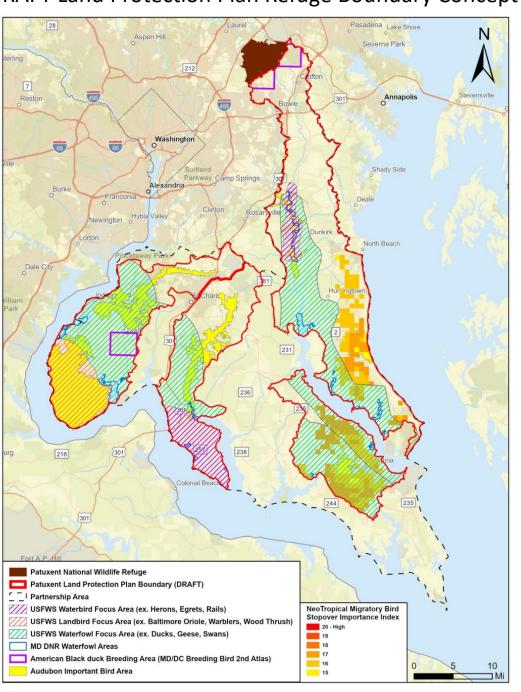
- Additional Sources of Information Total of 95 State, Local, and NGO Datasets
 - MD DNR Green Infrastructure
 - State Wildlife Action Plan
 - Targeted Ecological Areas
 - Natural Heritage Data (S1, S2, S3)
 - MD DNR BioNet Tiers
 - Audubon Important Bird Areas
 - TNC Matrix Forest Blocks
 - MD DNR Forest legacy Priorities
 - Indigenous Cultural Landscapes

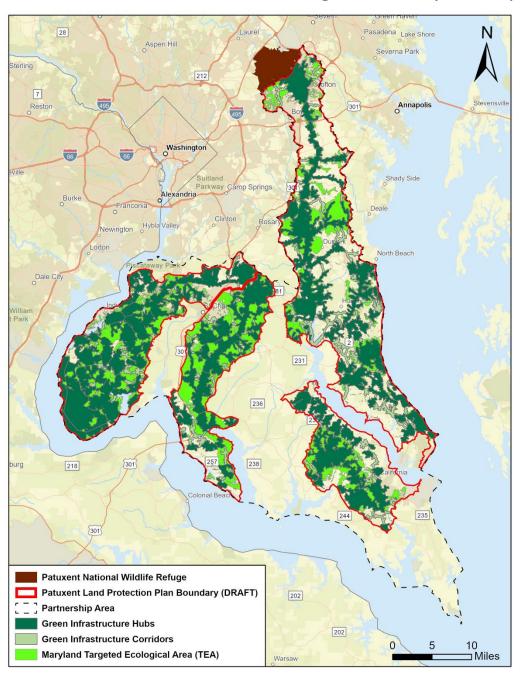
Map 23. PWCA Conservation Design and USFWS Refuges Strategic Growth Characteristics

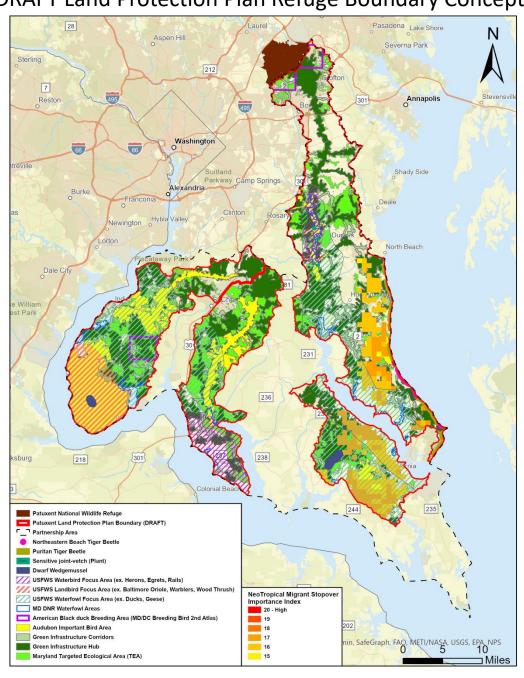












Draft Land Protection Plan (LPP) + Environmental Assessment (EA) = LPP/EA

2 documents under 1 cover (both are required by law (NEPA) and policy (Service Manual)

- Describes the purpose and need for action, including threats and opportunities
- Describes land protection strategies (fee and easement) and priorities
- Describes alternatives
- Describes the existing environment (physical, socio-economic)
- Describes coordination efforts
- Released for public review and comment
- If approved by the Director, creates a new refuge acquisition boundary allowing FWS to pursue interests in lands from willing sellers



My land is within the proposed refuge boundary. What does that mean?

Private landowner rights are not affected by the establishment of a refuge. The Service works with willing sellers to acquire lands as opportunities and funding allow. Landowners have no obligation to sell their land or otherwise participate in the proposed refuge. There is no additional regulatory burden for landowners within the refuge boundary.

What if the Service wants to buy my land, and I do not want to sell?

You don't have to sell your land as part of this proposal. You would be unaffected by the establishment of the refuge.

What types of activities are allowed on refuges?

Refuges support wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation. These activities are offered at Patuxent and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuges.

Where does the Service obtain funding to buy land?

Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). These are not derived from traditional tax revenues but collected from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps and import duties on arms and ammunition (MBCF) and from the sale of offshore oil leases (LWCF).

Next Steps

- Incorporate information gathered via public scoping
- Finalize the proposed land protection footprint
- Draft LPP/EA
- Solicit public comment on Draft LPP/EA (est. summer 2023)
- Finalize LPP/EA for Director consideration
- Publish Final LPP/EA on project website

Request Information/Share Thoughts FW5southernmarylandplan@fws.gov

Project Website https://www.fws.gov/project/proposed-new-refuge-lands-southern-maryland









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