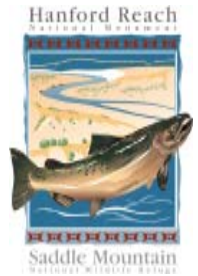




# Hanford Reach National Monument

## Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Planning Update 2, July 2003



### Greetings!

Much has happened since the first planning update was distributed in August of 2002. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) process is moving forward. Identification of CCP issues was completed. A Vision and the Management Goals for the Monument were drafted with input from the Federal Advisory Committee and the public. This planning update will explain these milestones and the next step in the process.

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### Your comments are important.

Your comments help shape the future of the Monument. To learn more visit our website at:

<http://hanfordreach.fws.gov/>

E-mail your comments to:  
[hanfordreach@fws.gov](mailto:hanfordreach@fws.gov)

Call or fax Monument staff at:

**Phone: (509) 371-1801**

**Fax: (509) 375-0196**

Or mail comments to the address on the back.



*A stunning view of the Hanford Reach.*

### What Issues Will be Addressed in the CCP?

Your comments during public scoping helped the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) identify a range of issues. Of those identified, the following critical issues at the Monument will be addressed in the CCP

- How will biological resources be managed, protected, enhanced and restored?
- What actions can be taken to protect fisheries?
- How will cultural resources be protected?
- How will geological and paleontological resources be protected?
- How will the safety of Monument visitors be ensured?
- What visitor activities and programs are appropriate and where should they occur?
- How will transportation be managed to provide access for public uses, management needs and valid existing rights?
- What facilities and infrastructure are needed and where?

Issues not addressed in the CCP will be analyzed in step-down plans. Step-down plans could cover issues such as: integrated pest management (Invasive Species Control); wildlife, habitat, and public use monitoring; landscape design standards and aesthetics; elk management; cultural resources; visitor services and recreation; fire management; and emergency response.

## ***Planning Schedule***

The first milestones in the planning process are described on this page and a schedule of the remaining steps in the process follows. The schedule may change as the process unfolds. Changes will be announced in future updates and on the Monument's website.

### **Key Steps Involving Public Review and Comment**

	Completed
Public Scoping	June-October 2002
Vision and Goals Drafted	Completed Winter 2002
Preliminary Alternatives	Summer 2003
Draft CCP/EIS	Fall 2004
Final CCP/Record of Decision	2005

## ***First Step—Public Scoping***

Over a three-month period, the Service met with the public, conducted open houses, solicited letters and e-mails, and distributed an issues workbook to seek advice, ideas, and suggestions on managing the Monument. The Service conducted an open house in Richland and scoping meetings in Seattle, Mattawa, Richland, and Yakima. Participants provided topics to discuss and ideas to share. Access to the Monument, wildlife management, fire control, geological and paleontological resources, cultural site management, environmental education and visitor services, and a variety of other topics were discussed. A sampling of public comments is on page 3. After public scoping, the Service focused on reviewing public comments, defining the scope of the CCP, and drafting a Vision and Goals.

## ***Second Step—Drafting the Vision and Goals***

Drafting a Vision for the future of the Monument and Goals defining the desired future conditions was facilitated by a public workshop and meetings of the Hanford Reach National Monument Federal Advisory Committee (FAC). In early November 2002, fifty-one participants, including private landowners; recreation, environmental and economic development interests; and agencies from all levels of government came together to draft recommendations for the Vision and Goals, which were then submitted to the FAC for further consideration. The FAC developed advice regarding the vision and goals for the Service in January. The Service added the final touches to the draft vision statement presented on page 6. The Goals will be presented in the next planning update with the Preliminary Alternatives.

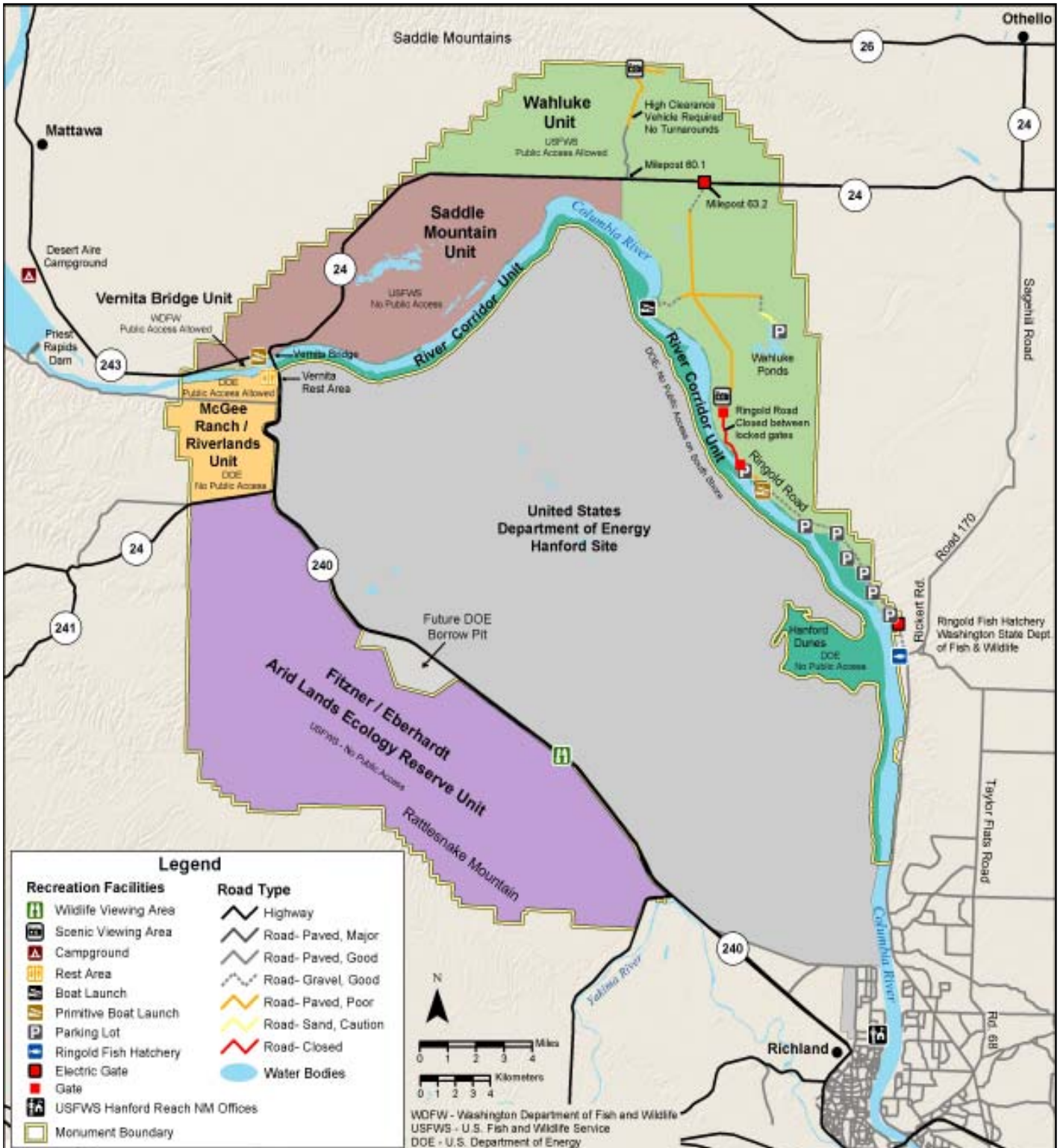
## ***Next Step—Developing Alternatives***

Exploring options for achieving the Vision and Goals comes next. Several alternative management themes are being developed, including a “no action” alternative, which maintains the existing management and provides a baseline from which other alternatives can be compared. Preliminary Alternatives will be presented for review and comment in the next update. Each alternative will be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement accompanying the CCP.

## ***End Result—A Comprehensive Conservation Plan***

As the schedule above shows, there are additional steps in the CCP planning process with more opportunities for public input. At the end of the process, a CCP will be in place with landscape level details as well as specific objectives and strategies for managing the Monument's units and activities. To envision the CCP, imagine looking at the Monument from one mile up (see map). The entire Monument, how it's managed and used, its habitats, road system, and larger infrastructure would be visible. How it fits into the surrounding area could also be observed. It is these elements of landscape management that will be planned in the CCP, as well as specific activities and public uses. The end result will be a 15-year plan to improve the Monument's habitat and infrastructure for resource protection and enhancement; public use and access; and health and safety.





**Map of the Hanford Reach National Monument.**

The Monument’s six Units and some of its facilities are displayed on this map. The Units are in color. Lands outside the Monument’s boundaries are in gray. The Units protect a variety of habitats for migrating birds, a premier fishery, endangered species, and numerous plants and animals. The Preliminary Alternatives will layout management options for each Unit. The Units were established for administrative purposes and Unit boundaries may change in the final CCP.



*The 24 Command Fire of June 2000, burned native sagebrush habitat.*



*Planting sagebrush seedlings was required to restore burned areas.*



*Restored areas will provide habitat for wildlife species such as sage grouse.*

## ***After the Fire—Restoration on the Fitzner/Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve***

On June 27, 2000, a tragic motor vehicle accident on State Route 24 ignited a major wildland fire that quickly spread through the Hanford area. The *24 Command Fire* significantly impacted the ecology and landscape by removing native grasses and shrubs. Since then, Monument staff have actively engaged in restoring burned areas including: 10,000 acres of native grasses and shrubs on the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecological (ALE) Reserve within Benton County, burned in the 24 Command Fire; and another 280 acres on the Wahluke Unit in Franklin County, that burned in a 2002 fire.

In consultation with Tribes, the Department of Energy, and local academic and technical experts, the Service developed a Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan (BAER) to address short and long-term rehabilitation needs. During November and December 2002, rehabilitation treatments identified in the BAER plan were implemented. Treatment goals included stabilizing erosive soils, preventing spread of non-native invasive plant species such as cheatgrass, and restoring native plant communities. Approximately \$4,000,000 of this effort was accomplished by contracting with local business owners for services, materials and supplies. Local support enabled the Monument to implement four major rehabilitation projects:

- Replacing 30 miles of boundary fence along SR 240.
- Planting 700,000 sagebrush plants on 1,600 acres.
- Aerial spraying 10,000 acres for non-native species control.
- Aerial seeding native species on 10,000 acres.

Sagebrush does not re-sprout following fire, and the fire's heat destroyed seed in the ground. Planting sagebrush seedlings restores shrubs within large burned areas. It also creates islands of shrubs within high-quality native grasslands to provide a seed source over the larger burned area and habitat for wildlife dependent on sagebrush such as sage grouse. Planting was conducted by professional reforestation crews. Previous studies suggest that a 20% survival rate of sagebrush seedlings after five years is a reasonable expectation. The first surveys of 2003 indicate an impressive 69% survival rate on rehabilitated lands on the ALE.



## *Sampling of Public Comments Received*

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Public Comments</i>
<b>Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase hunting and fishing access and opportunities.</li> <li>• Leave access as it is.</li> <li>• Do not restrict access.</li> <li>• Do not allow public access and uses that are incompatible with the Service's primary mission.</li> </ul>
<b>Arid Lands Ecology Reserve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open the ALE to guided tours, a permit system hiking trail with carry-out camping at defined locations.</li> <li>• Access to the ALE should be by guided trips and special permit only with timing, group size, and area restrictions.</li> </ul>
<b>Boating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motorboat use on the Reach by concessionaires or private individuals is inappropriate.</li> <li>• Allow boats to move freely except jet skis which cause excess pollution.</li> <li>• Develop a boat launch ramp, with docks, parking area, picnic areas, playground, and flush toilets.</li> <li>• No jet skis on the Reach.</li> <li>• Do not restrict boating on the Columbia River and continue to allow small personal watercraft.</li> <li>• The Reach is a priceless treasure that should not be developed or used for unnecessary recreation.</li> </ul>
<b>Boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind turbines should not be sited on the Monument.</li> </ul>
<b>Camping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourage campground construction along the Reach as recreational disturbances are incompatible with shoreline, wildlife, and aquatic resource protection.</li> <li>• Allow overnight camping in limited areas along the river and near the highway. Provide primitive campsites for canoeists and kayakers not accessible to automobiles.</li> <li>• Four to five developed campgrounds in the Monument would be wonderful.</li> <li>• There are several locations with springs and wells that would make wonderful campsites.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't provide garbage service at the parking sites.</li> <li>• Keep the Columbia free of recreational ramps, docks, campgrounds, and concession stands.</li> <li>• Develop more signs, parking lots, and restrooms.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the natural fire cycle and adopt a fire plan that allows natural fires to burn as much as possible. Using large equipment that disturbs soil and introduces weeds should be discouraged.</li> <li>• Use heavy equipment immediately not later; and controlled burns.</li> <li>• Let fire burn where buildings and private property are not in danger.</li> <li>• Plan for fire fighting, as fires will occur.</li> </ul>



## *What is a Vision Statement?*

A vision statement is a concise statement of what the planning unit should be, or what we hope to do, based on the Refuge System mission, specific refuge purposes, and other mandates. The Monument's vision is a broad statement of desired future conditions.

### ***The Hanford Reach National Monument Draft Vision Statement***

The Hanford Reach National Monument is a biologically diverse landscape, embracing a remarkable natural and historic legacy. The Hanford Reach, the last free-flowing non-tidal stretch of the Columbia River, is the ribbon that weaves shrub-steppe and riverine communities together, defining an irreplaceable landscape—a place to discover the richness of life, to reflect upon history, and to experience nature in solitude.

The Monument's diversity of plants and wildlife are critical to the biological integrity of the Columbia Basin. The unique combination of an expansive and increasingly rare shrub-steppe ecosystem, the free-flowing river, and the last major salmon spawning grounds in the Columbia River create a diverse and precious mosaic of habitats. The Monument is a refuge for a multitude of species, many new to science.

The Monument is a natural gathering place to learn, to experience and celebrate cultures, where stories are protected and passed on. Its history of immigrant settlement and the dawning of the atomic era is acknowledged, as well as its continuing physical and spiritual sustenance of the Native Americans who have used the area and those who came later.

The Monument is a testimonial to the past and the sacrifices of our ancestors. The Monument is also a vision into the future where visitors, neighbors and partners are valued and respected; where natural and historic resources are protected; and where all may come to experience the Monument and its magnificent resources.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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*Address correction service*



Copies of the Hanford Reach National Monument brochure are available for free. Contact us to request one.

*Visit our website at <http://hanfordreach.fws.gov/>*