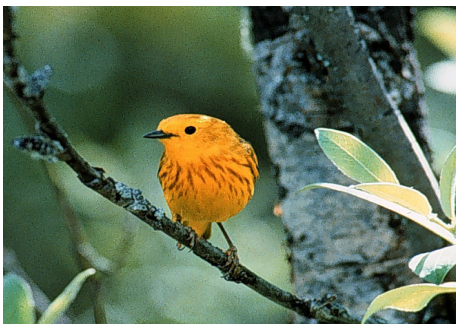


# Restoring Our Refuges: A Plan for Kansas



The creeks, canals, meadows and marshes of Quivira National Wildlife Refuge have been invaded by salt cedar. This invasive plant uses vital water supplies that would otherwise provide wetland habitat. Many areas can only be removed with an excavator. The refuge hopes to remove or control salt cedar on 600 acres and along 27 miles of river, including Rattlesnake and Salt Creeks, and Dead Horse Slough.



Black-tailed prairie dog, Kirwin NWR.

Only a continued increase in funding will prevent Kansas' refuges from laying off even more staff, which adversely affects not only the wildlife but also the hundreds of thousands of visitors to Kansas refuges.



Quivira Refuge, Kansas

## **The National Wildlife Refuge System struggles to meet its wildlife conservation mission**

### **In Kansas alone, 25 mission-critical projects sit on the shelf.**

Kansas is home to spectacular natural resources including 4 National Wildlife Refuges. Its refuges, including Kirwin, which was named as a "Globally Important Bird Area," provide essential habitat for hundreds of migratory bird species and a variety of other wildlife. These refuges protect the few scraps of native tall, mixed, and short grass prairie left in Kansas, as well as seasonal and permanent wetlands, bottomland hardwood forests, and unique inland salt marshes.

In 2008, more than 230 thousand visitors enjoyed hiking, birding, wildlife photography, environmental education, and hunting and fishing on Kansas refuges.

**Yet, national wildlife refuges in Kansas may not be able to continue protecting wildlife and offering world-class recreation.** Kansas wildlife refuges are saddled with deferred operations and maintenance projects that exceed \$5.8 million.

**Today, the state's wildlife refuges need at least 21 additional positions.** Those include 9 wildlife biologists, 3 guides and educators, and 8 essential maintenance and enforcement personnel. Without these people, Kansas refuges will fall further behind in meeting the demand.

**What's the solution?** CARE recommends \$514 million for the Refuge System's FY 2010 Operations and Maintenance budget and an increase to at least \$765 million by FY 2013

## About C.A.R.E.

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement is a diverse coalition of 22 conservation, recreation, sporting, and scientific organizations with more than 14 million members and supporters across the United States. CARE has been working since 1995 to help the National Wildlife Refuge System fight a serious funding crisis.

*American Birding Association*  
*American Fisheries Society*  
*American Sportfishing Association*  
*Assateague Coastal Trust*  
*Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*  
*Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation*  
*Defenders of Wildlife*  
*Ducks Unlimited*  
*Izaak Walton League of America*  
*National Audubon Society*  
*National Rifle Association of America*  
*National Wildlife Federation*  
*National Wildlife Refuge Association*  
*Safari Club International*  
*The Corps Network*  
*The Nature Conservancy*  
*The Wilderness Society*  
*The Wildlife Society*  
*Trout Unlimited*  
*U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance*  
*Wildlife Forever*  
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[www.FundRefuges.org/CARE/  
CareHome.html](http://www.FundRefuges.org/CARE/CareHome.html)



### **Saddled with declining purchasing power and a \$3.5 billion backlog of deferred operations and maintenance projects, the National Wildlife Refuge System is in a financial vise.**

The Refuge System needs an annual increase of \$15 million in its operations budget just to keep pace with inflation and demand. The Refuge System welcomed more than 41.2 million visitors in 2008, up from 33 million in 1998.

National Wildlife Refuges are undeniable economic engines.

According to the *Banking on Nature* report from the FWS:

- Spending by visitors to refuges generated more than \$1.7 billion of sales nationwide, created 27,000 jobs in local communities and added \$543 million in employment income. These economic data do not include Alaska or Pacific island refuges, which together generate millions of annual visitors.
- At *Quivira National Wildlife Refuge*, for every dollar appropriated to the refuge budget, nearly \$4 are generated in expenditures to the local economy. Visitor spending totaled over \$3.7 million, generating 74 jobs, \$1.6 million in employment income and \$737,000 in tax revenue.

Yet, according to Management Systems International, a respected business consultant, the Refuge System has seen its real purchasing power decline by 11 percent between fiscal years 2003 and 2008.

The Government Accountability Office found that with continuing funding constraints and an expanding list of challenges, it may be difficult to maintain the Refuge System as envisioned in law – “where the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge System are maintained; priority visitor services are provided; and the strategic growth of the system is continued.”

There is a solution to safeguard the world’s finest network of public lands dedicated to wildlife conservation: \$514 million in FY 2010 for the National Wildlife Refuge System and an increase to at least \$765 million by FY 2013 – steps that will restore operational quality and begin to chip away at the deferred operations and maintenance backlog.