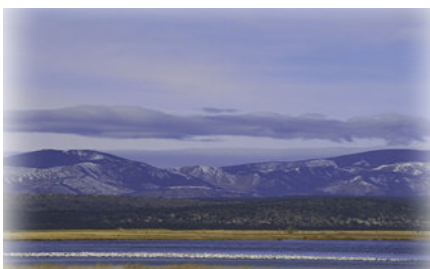
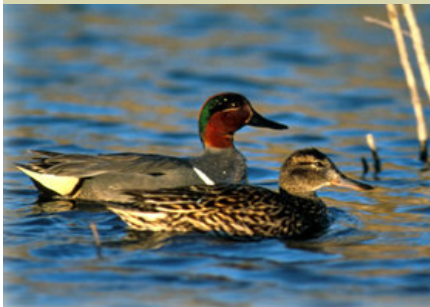


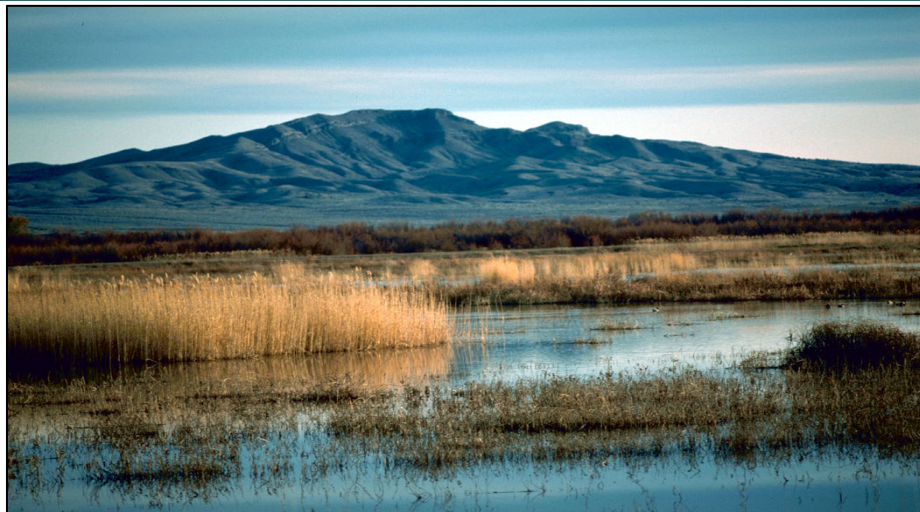
Restoring Our Refuges: A Plan for New Mexico



More than 80 percent of **Sevilleta Refuge's** natural springs have been altered by impoundments or non-native species. The springs are critical for wildlife. The refuge hopes to remove the artificial impoundments to let the water flow freely, just as envisioned in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan. But the refuge's work on behalf of wildlife would not stop there. The refuge is seeking to improve water management and control non-native vegetation on 250 acres of seasonal wetlands that are important wintering areas for waterbirds, including the federally endangered southwest willow flycatcher. All of the waterfowl and dove hunting takes place on these 250 acres.



Bitter Lake Refuge provides habitat for some of the rarest wildlife in New Mexico. Staffing and budget cuts will curtail management of migratory Sandhill cranes, Snow geese, and Green-winged teal (pictured) that depend on this desert wetland.



Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

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

In New Mexico alone, 35 mission-critical projects sit on the shelf.

New Mexico is home to spectacular natural resources, including seven national wildlife refuges which protect some of the state's wetlands, canyon valleys, grasslands, and deserts. The refuges are also an important habitat for countless species of birds, mammals, fish, and reptiles.

In 2008, more than 234 thousand visitors enjoyed hiking, birding, wildlife photography, environmental education, and hunting and fishing on New Mexico refuges.

Yet, national wildlife refuges in New Mexico may not be able to continue protecting wildlife and offering world-class recreation. New Mexico wildlife refuges are saddled with deferred operations and maintenance projects that exceed \$16.4 million.

Today, the state's wildlife refuges need at least 28 additional positions. Those include 9 wildlife biologists, 5 guides and educators, and 11 essential maintenance and enforcement personnel. Without these people, New Mexico 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 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

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Defenders of Wildlife

Ducks Unlimited

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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

Wildlife Management Institute

1901 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,
Suite 407

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202.333.9075

Fax: 202.333.9077

[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 **Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge** in New Mexico, for every dollar spent on the refuge's budget, nearly \$8 are generated in recreational expenditures to the local economy. Visitors generate nearly \$4.3 million dollars in local tax revenues.

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.