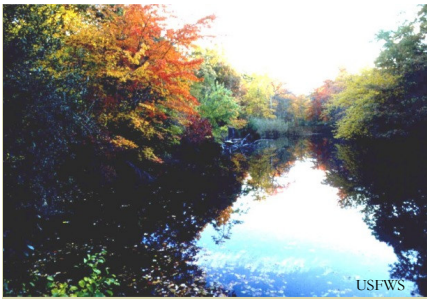


# Restoring Our Refuges: A Plan for New York



Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge supports one of the last native brook trout streams on Long Island as well as spawning habitat for American eel and river herring. Fish passage is impeded by the Long Island Railroad right-of-way. The refuge plans to survey the stream and come up with alternatives to improve fish passage and restore native brook trout.



Due to budget cuts, **Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge** has lost all staff, eliminating public use and environmental education. The inability to stop illegal hunting and ATV use prevents the refuge from properly conserving wildlife, such as this at-risk Bobolink.



Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, New York

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

### **In New York alone, 34 mission-critical projects sit on the shelf.**

New York is home to spectacular natural resources including 11 national wildlife refuges. These wildlife refuges are national treasures that protect native grasslands, coastal marshes, and forests, and provide habitat for millions of migratory birds and other wildlife.

In 2008, more than 200 thousand visitors enjoyed hiking, birding, wildlife photography, environmental education, and hunting and fishing on New York refuges.

**Yet, national wildlife refuges in New York may not be able to continue protecting wildlife and offering world-class recreation.** New York wildlife refuges are saddled with deferred operations and maintenance projects that exceed \$18.8 million.

**Today, the state's wildlife refuges need at least 29 additional positions.** Those include 11 wildlife biologists, 6 guides and educators, and 9 essential maintenance and enforcement personnel. Without these people, New York 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  
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  
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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 **Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge** in New York, visitor spending generated 23 local jobs and nearly \$650,000 in employment income. Nearly \$280,000 of local tax revenues were generated through visitor expenditures.

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.