

RESTORING AMERICA'S Wildlife Refuges 2010

Maintaining Momentum to Solve the Refuge System Funding Crisis



America's Shared Commitment to the National Wildlife Refuge System



On the occasion of our 15th anniversary, the 22 organizations of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) hereby reaffirm our commitment to the National Wildlife Refuge System. Representing over 15 million Americans who enjoy refuges for wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, recreational pursuits and conservation, we remain dedicated to working together to ensure that Congress provides the Refuge System with adequate funding for the responsible management, operations and maintenance of the world's largest network of wildlife conservation lands for the benefit of the fish and wildlife it sustains and for future generations of Americans.

Signed February 3, 2010

Robert Robinson, *President, American Birding Association*

Larry Schweiger, *President & CEO, National Wildlife Federation*

Ghassam Rassam, *Executive Director, American Fisheries Society*

Evan Hirsche, *President, National Wildlife Refuge Association*

Mike Nussman, *President & CEO, American Sportfishing Association*

Lawrence Rudolph, *President, Safari Club International*

Jeff Crane, *President, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation*

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Mark Tercek, *President & CEO, The Nature Conservancy*

Randy Graves, *CEO, Ducks Unlimited*

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Chris Wood, *President, Trout Unlimited*

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Frank Gill, *President, National Audubon Society*

Douglas H. Grann, *President & CEO, Wildlife Forever*

Wayne LaPierre, *Executive Vice President, National Rifle Association*

Steve Williams, *President, Wildlife Management Institute*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than one hundred years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt set aside the first national wildlife refuge, a visionary act that marked the beginning of the only federal land system dedicated first and foremost to wildlife conservation. Today, the National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses more than 550 wildlife refuges and monuments and thousands of prairie wetlands, totaling approximately 150 million acres across the nation's states and territories. These lands and waters provide essential habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, a safe haven for endangered species, \$1.7 billion annually to local economies, and compatible recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, and environmental education for more than 41 million visitors each year.

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement urges Congress to increase Refuge System operations and maintenance funding to \$578 million in FY 2011.

Our national wildlife refuges have been underfunded since their inception. After a period of budget stagnation, however, Congress has in recent years demonstrated a powerful commitment to boost funding for this extraordinary system. These increases have allowed for the temporary suspension of workforce downsizing plans, the development of youth programs, the completion of urgent habitat restoration projects on the ground, and the beginning of a robust inventory and monitoring program.

In spite of recent increases by Congress, the Refuge System is still funded far below the level needed to fulfill some of its most basic functions. A severe shortage of law enforcement officers leaves the Refuge System unable to adequately cope with increased instances of drug production and trafficking, wildlife poaching, illegal border activity, and assaults. Millions of refuge acres are overrun with invasive plants and animals,

including Burmese pythons, non-native rats, and Asian carp. More than 10,000 refuge

facilities are in need of some repair. In total, the Refuge System faces an operations and maintenance backlog of more than \$3.7 billion, a consequence of the inadequate budgets of the past.

While Congress has created momentum to begin addressing these daunting challenges, CARE is concerned that the Obama Administration's proposal to cut the Refuge System budget in FY 2011 will undermine progress. The Administration proposes to cut the budget by nearly \$3.3 million below the amount provided by Congress for FY 2010. However, the impact on the Refuge System is greater than this reduction alone because the budget does not cover rising costs that erode the System's budget by at least \$15 million annually. **As a result, if the Administration's proposal is not reversed by Congress, the System will face an effective budget cut of at least \$18.3 million.**

To protect America's wildlife and move toward achieving the conservation vision that began more than a century ago, we must make steady progress toward funding the Refuge System at \$900 million annually. CARE recommends that Congress take a step toward this long-term goal by increasing Refuge System operations and maintenance funding to \$578 million in FY 2011. These funds are critically needed to properly patrol and enforce laws on 150 million acres, including the recently designated Pacific monuments, provide nature programs to the public, maintain high water quality, complete habitat restoration projects, respond to the impacts of changing habitat conditions, and address scores of mothballed mission critical projects. It is up to Congress to lead America in strengthening and restoring America's national wildlife refuges.





Running Elk, Ouray NWR, UT | Larry Peterson

REFUGE SYSTEM FUNDING NEEDS

For a number of years following the Refuge System’s centennial in 2003, budget cuts shrank the workforce and stalled efforts to improve habitat and bolster wildlife populations. Only since FY 2008 has Congress begun to reverse this trend with increases in operations and maintenance funding. We must maintain this momentum by continuing to invest in these special places at a level commensurate with their importance to a diverse array of Americans, including wildlife watchers, hunters, anglers, photographers, and schoolchildren.

Based on a thorough analysis of the needs, opportunities, and challenges facing the Refuge System, CARE has determined that sizeable increases in annual funding are necessary. Meaningful increases in the coming years are essential to enable the Refuge System to fulfill its mission of protecting wildlife and providing wildlife-dependent recreation.

Over the long term, CARE recommends reaching the following annual funding level for the Refuge System:

<i>Operations</i>	\$ 500 million
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$ 400 million
<i>Total</i>	\$ 900 million annually

This \$900 million calculation does not account for rising costs. For many years prior to FY 2008, appropriations failed to even cover increases in fixed costs, which led to a

serious erosion of purchasing power. To simply keep fuel in the trucks, pay for rising utilities and building rent, allow for salary adjustments and other fixed costs, the Refuge System needs at least a \$15 million annual increase specifically for refuge operations and maintenance.

These increases are urgently needed for many reasons: *(Note: the following bullets do not sum to \$900 million due to overlap among some of the identified needs.)*

✦ The Refuge System cannot fulfill its conservation mission unless certain essential projects are completed, including habitat management, visitor services, and law enforcement. **Funding projects and hiring refuge professionals identified as ‘mission critical’ in the Refuge Operations Needs System (RONS) database will cost more than \$355 million annually.**

✦ Industry experts recommend that businesses invest 2-6% of a facility’s total value in annual maintenance. The Refuge System manages approximately \$22.1 billion in facilities, but invests less than one-third of one percent for annual and deferred maintenance. The Refuge System would need \$221 million each year just to invest 1% in annual maintenance.

✦ A 2005 analysis by the International Association of

Chiefs of Police (IACP) detailed the need for 845 full-time law enforcement (LE) officers to protect visitors and respond to drug production and smuggling, wildlife poaching, illegal border activity, assaults, and a variety of natural resource violations. In 2010, however, the Refuge System has only 213 LE officers on patrol. To begin to close this gap, CARE conservatively recommends funding approximately 50% of IACP's recommended positions. **To provide at least adequate coverage and improve officer safety, an additional 209 law enforcement officers are needed at an additional annual cost of \$31.4 million.**

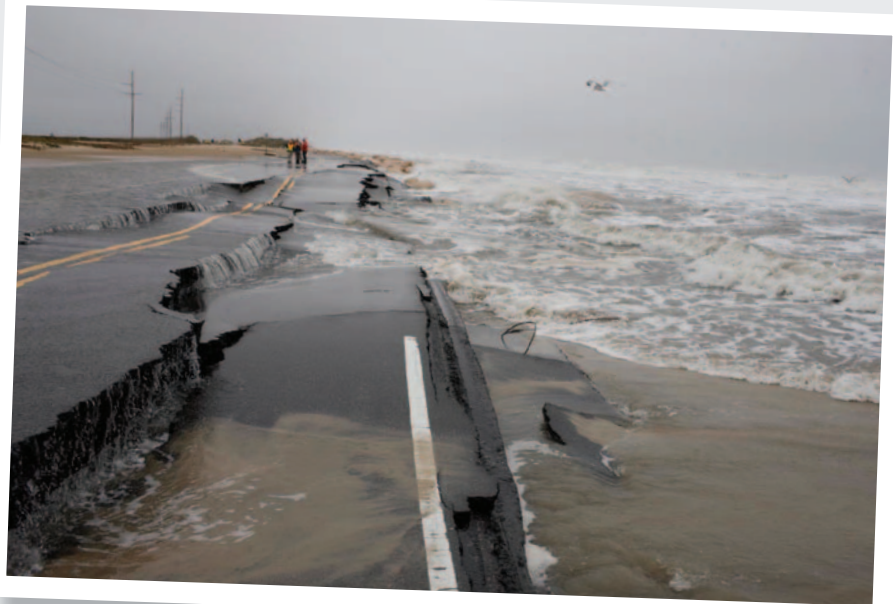
The Refuge System has been understaffed for decades, and since 2004, more than 10% of the professional workforce has been eliminated. In response to funding shortfalls, the Refuge System created a detailed staffing model that quantifies the need for more administrative, IT, realty, planning, and maintenance employees, as well as refuge managers, wildlife biologists, and communications professionals. **This 2008 model identified the need for 2,740 additional mission critical, non-law enforcement positions at an annual cost of \$246.5 million.**

Approximately 2.3 million acres of refuge lands are now overrun with non-native, invasive plants, while more than 4,400 invasive animal populations ravage millions more acres. Of the total 2.3 million plant-infested acres, the Refuge System was able to treat only 14.6% in 2008. **To treat only one-third of its infested plant acreage and to begin merely low-level control of harmful invasive animal populations, the Refuge System needs at least \$25 million per year.**

Since 2003, when a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report shined the light on the inability of the Service to effectively manage oil and gas activities on 155 of its wildlife refuges, there has been a dramatic increase in oil and gas exploration and drilling. The Refuge System urgently needs funds to implement the GAO recommendations, which include increased staffing and more training and oversight of drilling activities. **To adequately manage oil and gas activities on wildlife refuges, including cleanup of degraded sites, \$15 million per year is needed.**

The challenges of climate change are broad and complex. Funds are needed to confront the risks of

This section of Highway 12 that passes through Pea Island Refuge in North Carolina was washed out during a 2009 storm. As climate conditions continue to change, the risks of infrastructure damage and loss, as well as the associated costs for restoration and repairs, are growing concerns.



Sidney Maddock



Owls, Minidoka NWR, ID | Gunther Matschke

sea-level rise, worsening storms, more intense fire regimes, and similar climate-driven factors. **An initial response to prevent higher future costs entails annual expenditures of at least \$12 million to conduct inventories and vulnerability assessments, build capacity, plan for infrastructure protection, and carry out research to inform downscaled climate models, sequestration, and similar climate-response actions.**

✦ Since 2000, Congress has approved the establishment of almost 30 new refuges, the majority of which were established without additional appropriations. **The backlog of mission critical annual operations and maintenance costs for these new refuges is approximately \$23.8 million.**

✦ With the recent designation of four vast marine monuments in the Pacific Ocean, the Refuge System grew by more than 50 million acres. It is now tasked with increased management, coordination, restoration, and law enforcement activities on these expansive lands and waters. Current capacities cannot meet these new responsibilities. **Addressing threats, pur-**

chasing needed patrol and research vessels, supporting critical partnerships, and creating management plans and staff positions to oversee the monuments will cost in the range of \$18 million to \$35.5 million annually.

✦ Of the national wildlife refuges established since 2000, seven are former military sites. Along with acquiring such sites comes an enormous cost for demolition, management, and public safety. **The current backlog of maintenance and demolition costs for projects on former military land is \$80.7 million.**

✦ The Refuge System is required to complete a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for each of its more than 550 units by 2012. As of October 2009, 350 CCPs had been completed, 136 were underway and 68 remained to be started. **Each CCP costs an average of \$220,000, which does not include the salaries of the refuge staff that research and write each CCP. At this rate, the Refuge System needs approximately \$13 million per year to complete the CCP process on time.**

A CRIPPLING \$3.7 BILLION BACKLOG

\$2.7 Billion Maintenance Backlog

The Refuge System's deferred maintenance backlog is tracked in a database called Service Asset and Maintenance Management System (SAMMS). Due to insufficient annual maintenance funding, the Refuge System's list of deferred maintenance projects continues to grow, and SAMMS now identifies a total maintenance backlog of more than \$2.7 billion (see Figure 1). This exorbitant backlog has created a logjam of deferred maintenance projects and has greatly limited staff in their dual pursuit to protect wildlife and serve the public. Washed-out trails, leaking roofs, closed roads, and broken equipment plague the Refuge System, which now has more than 11,000 facilities in need of some repair. The longer they are allowed to deteriorate, the more repairs will ultimately cost. Without sufficiently maintained facility and equipment assets, the Refuge System cannot properly accomplish its habitat management, refuge operations, and visitor services goals.

\$1 Billion Operations Backlog

The Refuge System tracks its backlog of operational needs through the Refuge Operations Needs System (RONS). RONS identifies the staff and equipment necessary to perform routine and mission critical activities. Most of the operations budget supports the refuge personnel necessary to perform essential habitat management and restoration, wildlife research and monitoring, planning, public use activities, and maintenance. RONS is currently being revised to improve its software and update its information, including results from a June 2008 detailed staffing model that used measurable and objective workload drivers to predict the number and location of permanent staffing needs. Although the RONS revisions are not complete at this time, it appears that the total operational backlog will remain at least at \$1 billion. Having hovered near this level for several years, scores of promising opportunities have been missed and countless challenges unmet.

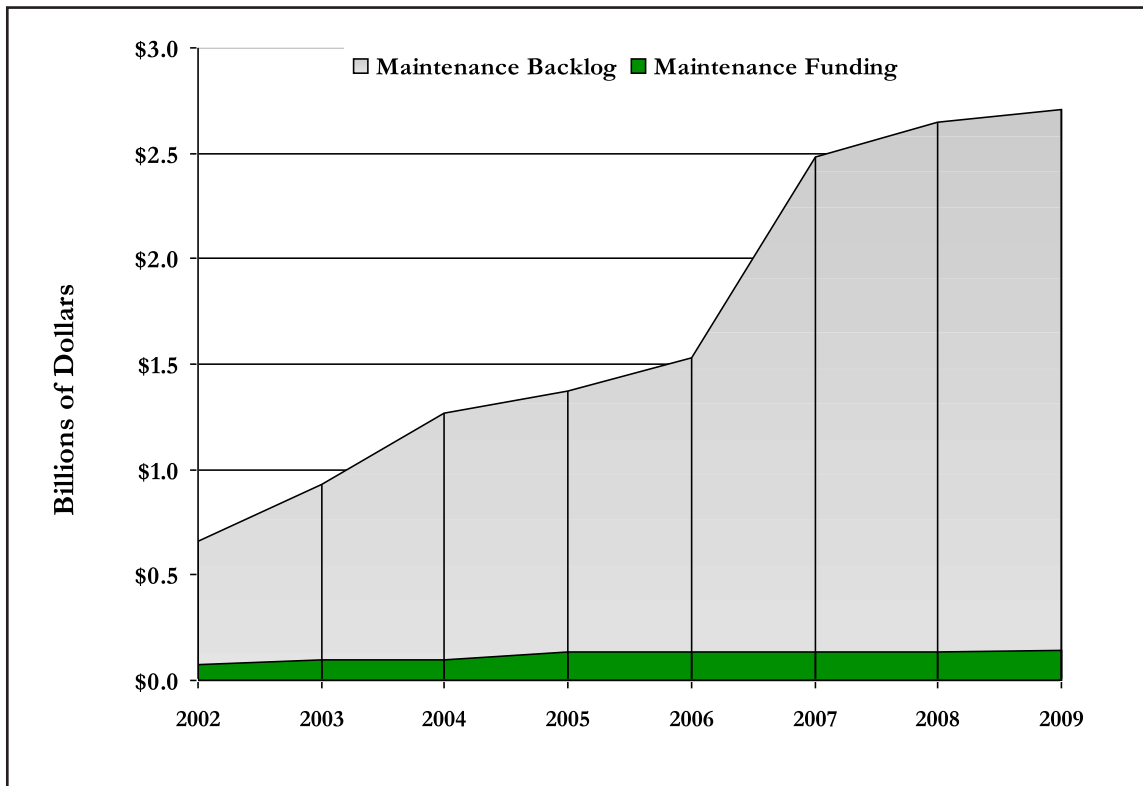


Figure 1. As annual funding for important maintenance projects has remained essentially flat in recent years, the size of the overall maintenance backlog has ballooned to more than \$2.7 billion.



AMERICA'S NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

In 1903, when President Theodore Roosevelt chose to protect the pelicans, herons, and egrets on Florida's Pelican Island from wanton destruction for the fashion industry, he set aside the first national wildlife refuge and America began its lasting commitment to wildlife protection. The National Wildlife Refuge System has matured into one of the world's premier land conservation networks, boasting more than 550 wildlife refuges and hosting more than 41 million visitors annually. On 150 million acres, these visitors are treated to some of the most visually stunning and biologically rich lands and waters in North America.

National wildlife refuges encompass a vast array of ecosystems from Arctic tundra and boreal forest to prairie grasslands and wetlands, arid desert, and tropical lagoons. They protect wildlife, water quality, and land on parcels ranging from the half-acre Mille Lacs Refuge in Minnesota to the 19-million-acre Yukon Delta Refuge in Alaska, to the world's second-largest marine protected area, the 89-million-acre Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Pacific. Refuge lands include 21 million acres of designated wilderness, located in rural locales such as Cabeza Prieta Refuge in Arizona and Charles M. Russell Refuge in Montana. But wildlife refuges are also found in highly urban areas, including Don Edwards San Francisco

Bay Refuge and Philadelphia's John Heinz Refuge, which provide unparalleled opportunities for people to learn about the wonder, beauty, and complexity of nature.

The Refuge System also manages a network of approximately 3,000 waterfowl production areas, found mostly in the Dakotas, which span 3.1 million acres and protect increasingly scarce but vital wetlands and prairie grasslands. Finally, the recent addition of vast marine monuments in the Pacific Ocean added more than 50 million acres to the Refuge System. These welcomed additions include pristine reefs, waters teeming with wildlife, and unique geologic features such as the Marianas Trench, which is the Earth's deepest point at more than 36,000 feet below sea level.

This stunning array of geographically and biologically diverse lands abounds with wildlife. The species and habitats these areas protect are especially vital, as refuges are the only public lands and waters established explicitly to safeguard wildlife and their habitats. National wildlife refuges provide habitat for more than 700 bird species, 220 mammals, 250 reptiles and amphibians, more than 1,000 fish, and an astonishing variety of invertebrate and plant species. And while the new marine monuments harbor an unknown number of species, the most biologically diverse refuge for which inventories have been attempted, the Hawaiian Islands Refuge, is home to 7,000 species alone.

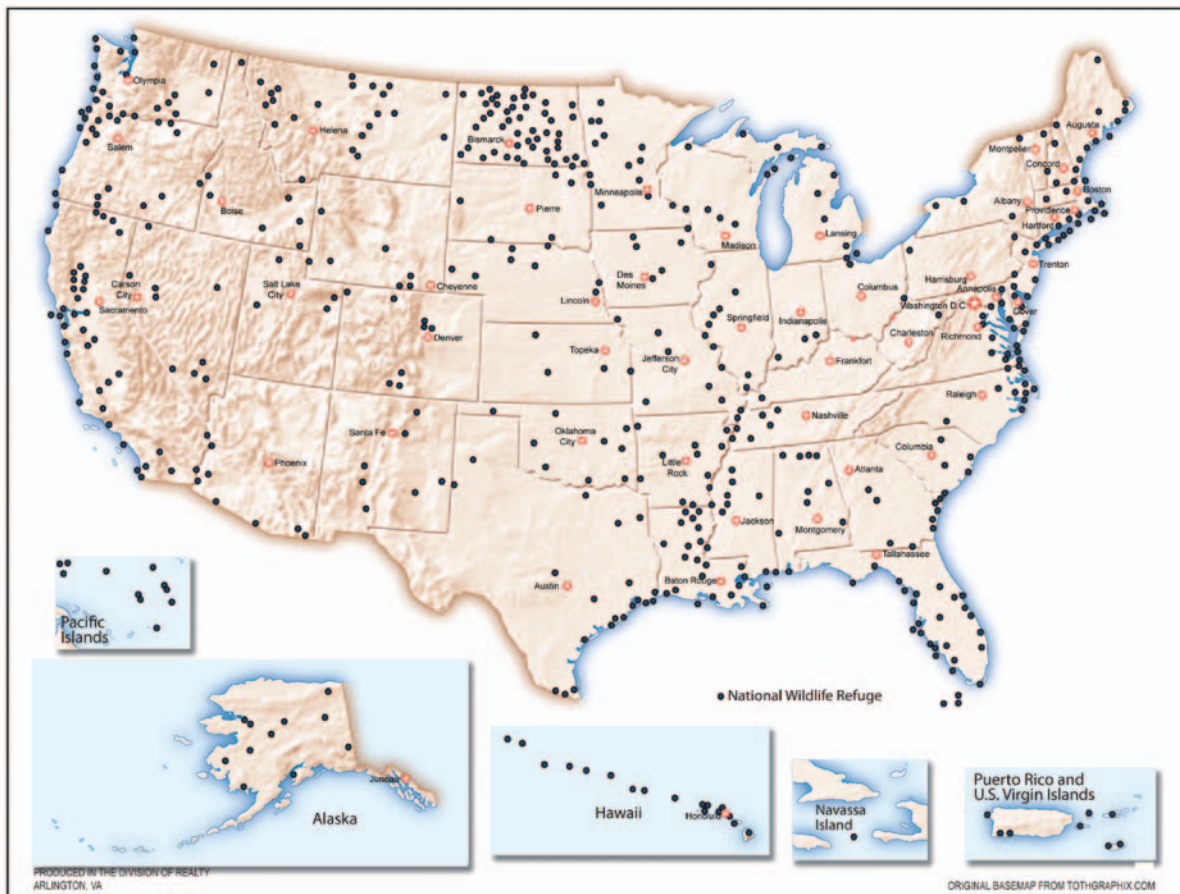


Whooping cranes and ultralight, Necedah NWR, WI | Mark Chenoweth

Wildlife refuges offer protection for 260 endangered or threatened species, and are often directly responsible for their continued existence or recovery. In fact, more than 60 wildlife refuges have been specifically established to protect 124 endangered or threatened species. Whooping cranes are recovering from the brink of extinction due to conservation efforts at Necedah Refuge in Wisconsin, Chassahowitzka Refuge in Florida, and Aransas Refuge in Texas. San Joaquin River Refuge in California protects the endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard and San Joaquin kit fox. Refuges outside

Las Vegas, whose development is rapidly depleting critical water supplies, are home to endemic species found nowhere else. In South Carolina, threatened and endangered species, including red-cockaded woodpeckers and Pine Barrens tree frogs, find sanctuary at Carolina Sandhills Refuge. And each year, up to 20,000 sea turtles rely on undisturbed beaches at Archie Carr Refuge in Florida to lay their eggs.

Of course, America's wildlife refuges also provide innumerable assets beyond those felt by wildlife and enjoyed by humans through recreation. These protected landscapes provide many environmental resources and benefits. Wildlife refuges filter groundwater and rainwater before it runs downstream to municipal water supplies and, in many areas, reduce flooding by capturing excess rainwater and attenuating coastal storm surges. The native vegetation on many of America's wildlife refuges helps absorb pollution and greenhouse gases from the air, while natural filtration and sound water management promotes healthy fisheries. Within and beyond refuge boundaries, communities of native wildlife and plants as well as humans rely on the protected landscapes and services provided by the National Wildlife Refuge System.



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Fishermen at Lacassine NWR, LA | Steve Hillebrand, FWS

Enhancing Recreation for Outdoor Enthusiasts

Wildlife refuges not only play a vital role in protecting lands and waters for rare plant communities, migratory birds, fish, and other wildlife, but also offer an impressive variety of recreational and educational opportunities. With at least one national wildlife refuge in every state and within an hour's drive of every metropolitan area, people can experience wildlife and wildlife-related recreation without traveling far from home. In keeping with America's centuries-old sporting traditions, more than 270 wildlife refuges

are open to anglers, while waterfowl, big game, and other hunters enjoy access to more than 315 refuges and 3,000 waterfowl production areas. Other outdoor enthusiasts visit refuges to see new species of birds and butterflies, take photos and learn about plants and wildlife, or simply enjoy the quiet solitude of these increasingly scarce natural places.

Visitor education programs are an important contribution that refuges make to local communities. In fact, demand continues to grow for the environmental education programs maintained at more than 350 wildlife refuges, with 814,000 participants in 2009. By using innovative science-based programs and working in partnership with



2009/2010 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, FWS

Revenue from the purchase of Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as Duck Stamps, by waterfowl hunters, bird watchers, and others, is used to acquire and protect critical wildlife habitat. To date, more than 5 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat have been added to the System with Duck Stamp funding. The hunting and wildlife watching community expects its investment in America's Refuge System to be protected. There is no better way to acknowledge and respect this level of citizen-based conservation funding than to ensure funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System that can sustain and enhance the wildlife and habitat put under its charge.

As of January 2010, projects completed or underway with Recovery Act funds supported approximately 10,300 jobs. When additional projects are completed throughout 2010, the Refuge System estimates that stimulus investments will support about 23,000 jobs in local communities.



Levee restoration, Tennessee NWR, TN | FWS

area schools, wildlife refuges offer education programs that benefit teachers and students. Facilities such as the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Minnesota and the environmental education center at Savannah Refuge in Georgia stimulate much-needed interest in wildlife and the natural world. Unfortunately, limited funds and staffing, the lack of appropriate visitor facilities and inadequate support for crucial local partnerships seriously reduce the scope of outreach programs and hinder the Refuge System's ability to respond to America's growing interest in many forms of wildlife-dependent recreation.

Economic Engines of Local Communities

With more than 41 million visitors each year, the Refuge System provides impressive economic and environmental benefits for many local communities. According to a FWS economic analysis, *Banking on Nature 2006: The Economic Benefits to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation*, those visitors generated \$1.7 billion of annual sales to local economies, of which 87% was spent by travelers from outside the local area. This spending created almost 27,000 jobs and generated approximately \$543 million in employment income.

As part of the broader effort in 2009 to stimulate economic growth and job creation, Congress appropriated approximately \$230 million for the Refuge System in the American

Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These funds are advancing a range of projects at refuges that can quickly put people to work and also address pressing habitat, maintenance, and operations needs. The Refuge System is targeting this investment toward high-priority projects, including:

- **Energy Efficiency**—The Refuge System is directing approximately \$8.1 million to improve energy efficiency of refuge facilities by employing contractors to replace heating and cooling systems, install renewable and alternative energy power supplies, and undertake other projects that improve energy efficiency.
- **Habitat Restoration**—\$18.2 million is being allocated to restore essential habitat. Projects range from those that a local landscape company can tackle with hand tools to large-scale efforts that employ construction companies using excavators, bulldozers, and other heavy machinery.
- **Youth Employment**—Between 2009 and 2010, the Refuge System estimates that it will direct \$4.8 million of Recovery Act funding to hire approximately 840 young people in seasonal jobs focusing on habitat restoration, trail maintenance and construction, and environmental education.

These figures are undeniably significant, but the Refuge System's potential to stimulate local economies remains largely untapped. Although stimulus funding is positive for local economies and individual refuges, this one-time investment does not diminish the need for consistent, long-term increases in annual Refuge System operations and maintenance funding.



Chris Jordan, www.chrisjordan.com

A polluted ocean compromises the food supply of many species. This albatross chick, like numerous others at Midway Atoll Refuge, was fed a diet of plastic by its parents, who mistook this trash for food. Severe underfunding impedes efforts to remove and control marine debris and address the many challenges facing Midway and the other units of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, of which Midway is a part.

Recovering a System in Budgetary Crisis

The Refuge System is tasked with the tremendous responsibility of protecting 150 million acres of some of the most remarkable lands and waters in America for present and future generations to enjoy. The obstacles to its success, however, remain great. Years of persistent budget shortfalls have been truly devastating to our nation's wildlife refuges. The loss of more than 10% of the professional workforce since 2004 has forced refuge managers nationwide to make impossible choices: which school groups to turn away; which invasive species to let spread unchecked; which oil rigs to ignore, though leaks and violations are common. Refuge employees are also unable to devote sufficient attention to threats beyond refuge boundaries, such as water rights disputes, upstream contamination, missed land acquisition or easement opportunities, or encroaching developments. Many refuges are staffed by only one or a few people, and more than 35% of refuges have no on-site staff at all.

In June 2008, the FWS released an objective analysis conducted by Management Systems International (MSI), *An Independent Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System*. MSI

made strong and specific recommendations for achieving many of the Refuge System's most essential habitat, wildlife, and visitor services goals. Because of a \$105 million increase in operations and maintenance funding over the last 3 years, the Refuge System has been able to address some of the challenges identified in the MSI report, including:

- Implementing a national Inventory and Monitoring Program as a priority under the FWS's FY 2010 Climate Change Initiative,
- Developing and finalizing a strategic plan for water resources,
- Forming a national workgroup and developing recommendations for a national system of geospatial data, and
- Integrating citizen science program sessions into national and regional training programs for refuge Friends groups.

Funding increases have led to on-the-ground successes as well. Six times as many upland acres were restored in FY 2009 as compared with FY 2008, and more than twice as many wetland acres were restored in that same time. The San Luis Refuge in California was able to restore a more natural hydrology to an important natural riparian slough, which provides scarce permanent wetland habitat to wetland-dependent species and permanent water to the refuge

elk enclosure. On Mingo Refuge in Missouri, approximately 300 alligator gar were released and radio-tagged to restore this rare native fish to the Mingo Basin. And Wichita Mountains Refuge in Oklahoma hosted the second youth forum event, Nature Quest, where 12 high school environmental leaders were challenged with mentoring 60 local fifth and sixth graders through activities such as archery, fishing, aquatic studies, and virtual geocaching for natural resources such as bison.

These achievements demonstrate the great potential of the Refuge System to fulfill its mission, as well as the efficiency with which its workforce is able to carry out its programs. The recent increases by Congress have allowed for the temporary suspension of workforce downsizing plans and for urgent projects to be completed, but progress will be jeopardized if budgets stagnate. We must continue to build on the funding increases of the past 3 years in order for these success stories to continue. Only then can the Refuge System return to what it does best: protecting and restoring America's wildlife and habitat, providing a haven for a growing list of threatened and endangered species, and guaranteeing a positive experience for more than 41 million visitors each year.



Snow Geese, Bosque del Apache NWR, NM | Tom Dusbabek

With recent funding increases, the San Luis Refuge Complex in California was able to rent equipment to remove dirt and sediment that had accumulated within an important waterway. This waterway provides essential riparian habitat for wetland species, as well as permanent water for an elk enclosure on the refuge. The refuge maintains 50 to 80 tule elk, which are important stock for re-establishing this rare subspecies in California.



FWS

CONGRESS MUST MAINTAIN MOMENTUM TO RESTORE AMERICA'S WILDLIFE REFUGES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The National Wildlife Refuge System stands alone as the only land and water system in the world with a mission that prioritizes wildlife conservation over all other activities. For 15 years, CARE has worked to showcase the needs of the Refuge System and to secure a strong Congressional commitment for this remarkable network of oceans, wetlands, deserts, prairies, tundra, and forests. The investments by Congress over the past 3 years reflect a passion among Americans for preserving and enjoying the nation's wildlife, lands, and waters. This passion was shared by President Theodore Roosevelt more than a century ago, when he created a new vision for protecting our wildlife and natural areas for future generations.

Yet the Administration's proposal to cut Refuge System funding in FY 2011 is cause for concern. These budget cuts threaten to halt or even reverse recent progress. A budget cut in FY 2011 would stall momentum, while reductions over multiple years would negatively impact visitor services, habitat restoration, law enforcement, workforce stability, and local economies.

Congress has the opportunity once again to lead on be-

half of the tens of millions of hunters, anglers, birdwatchers, hikers, and other Americans who enjoy national wildlife refuges. **Building on this record of leadership, CARE urges Congress to increase operations and maintenance funding to \$578 million in FY 2011.** Reaching this level is an essential step along the path to the \$900 million annual goal that will allow the System to adequately protect wildlife and their habitats, and ensure a positive experience for millions of visitors each year.

Roosevelt once said that "our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method." From these ideals, the National Wildlife Refuge System was born and is today leading the effort to conserve and restore America's diverse wildlife heritage. CARE stands ready to work with Congress and the Administration to ensure that this valued system of lands and waters achieves its highest potential.



Girl with carp, Bosque del Apache NWR, NM | Sheri Melanson



CELEBRATING

our shared commitment to the National Wildlife Refuge System

SINCE 1995

Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE)

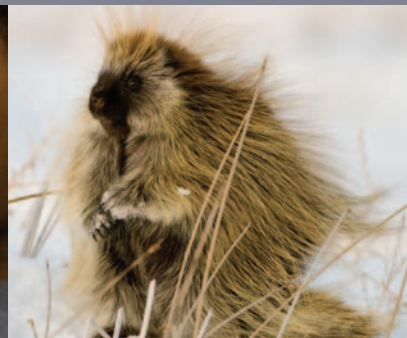
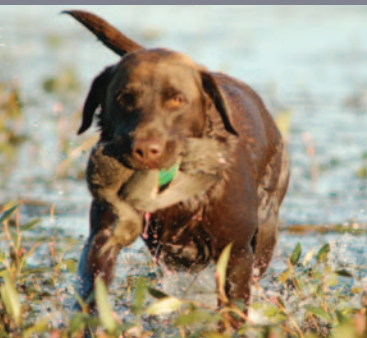
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Trout Unlimited
U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute

CARE is a national coalition of 22 wildlife, sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations that represent a national constituency numbering more than 15 million Americans. Working together and with the support of more than 200 refuge Friends groups, CARE educates Congress, the Administration and the public about America's magnificent National Wildlife Refuge System. CARE also works closely with the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus, a diverse group of 139 members from 42 states in the U.S. House of Representatives who recognize the intrinsic and economic importance of refuges and work to secure strong federal investments to protect, conserve, and pass down these irreplaceable landscapes.

In 2010, CARE celebrates its 15th anniversary and reaffirms its commitment to helping the National Wildlife Refuge System reach its full potential.

For a copy of this report, please visit
www.FundRefuges.org/CARE/CareHome.html
or contact CARE at:
1250 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202.292.3961

Below: Hunting dog, Misisquoi NWR, VT | Steven Riley • Boy with crayfish, National Conservation Training Center, WV | Steve Hillebrand, FWS • Porcupine, Camas NWR, ID | Mike McBride • Northern Paraula, Pee Dee NWR, NC | Will Stuart. Top: Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes, Bosque NWR, NM | Gail Diane Yovanovich





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