

Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

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Alliance Issues Vision Statement

Recently, the Blue Goose Alliance issued a Vision Statement which describes its view of the National Wildlife Refuge System as a separate agency within the Department of Interior. That statement is presented below:

VISION STATEMENT

The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) encompasses more than 95 million acres of land and waters dedicated to the conservation of America's wildlife heritage.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) administers 545 individual wildlife refuges, as well as several disparate programs.

The first refuge was established as a bird sanctuary on Pelican Island in Florida on March 14, 1903, but it was not until 1997 that Congress passed the NWRS Improvement Act, which assigned statutory authority for future management of the system.

The 21st century is a demanding age. Enlightened land resource management will require the talents of the best-trained land resource managers, and the application of scientific resource management techniques, to assure that wildlife refuges will serve the needs of both wildlife and the American public.

The public deserves imagination, innovation and dedication from refuge managers to sustain the productivity of refuge lands for diversity of biological flora and fauna. Integrity of the management processes is necessary to protect the lands from pollution of air and water, invasion of exotic species, and incompatible uses.

The NWRS is a work in progress. Employees of the NWRS are professionals, capable and eager to meet the challenges and demands of the 21st century. The potential benefits for wildlife and the public are almost without limits, but only if Congress will:

- * Designate the NWRS to be the National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Service as a separate agency in the Department of Interior.
- * Recognize in legislation that both management and organizational integrity is required for continuity of planning and long-term management programs.
- * Require the Chief of the NWR Service to be a professional hands-on manager with field experience from within the NWR Service.
- * Demand that management determinations be based upon the best available science, the principles of ecology, and the purposes for which individual refuges or the system were established.

* Support innovative techniques and cooperation to expand interpretation, education, and research of biological, cultural, and historical resources of each refuge.

* Provide the political and budgetary support for the NWR Service to serve as a model for state-of-the-art land management to protect wildlife, wildlands, and healthy environments for present and future generations of Americans.