

America's

extraordinary places...

National Wildlife Refuges



...buried in bureaucracy

"Nearly a century old, it's time the National Wildlife Refuge System attains the organizational stature necessary to fulfill its promises for wildlife and people."

The National Wildlife Refuge System is an extraordinary collection of wildlands.

From Arctic tundra to the tropics, from islands and atolls in the Pacific to the mountains, prairies, deserts, forests, rivers, lakes, seashores, and swamps ... the National Wildlife Refuge System comprises a remarkable system of lands and waters essential to wildlife and important for people.

Yet, the Refuge System has been called "America's Hidden Lands" – due to its obscure position within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the lack of public awareness of our National Wildlife Refuges. The National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses:

- More than 95 million acres - an area roughly the size of Montana;
- 540 individual Refuges - Refuges in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Pacific Ocean territories and islands;
- Some 3000 waterfowl production areas in the prairie pothole region of the Northern Plains;
- A true "refuge" for over 2000 species of wildlife and 25% of the Threatened and endangered species in the United States;
- A unique wildlife/wildlands experience for nearly forty million visitors annually.



...buried in bureaucracy

Looks are deceiving. Behind the beautiful scenery of Refuges there are major blemishes on the organizational structure for administering and managing these lands; serious flaws which diminish the potential of the National Wildlife Refuge System to fulfill its mission.

The Refuge System is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency within the Department of the Interior. Over the years, the Fish and Wildlife Service has grown until it is now overwhelmed by diverse and competing responsibilities.



time for action...

The Blue Goose Alliance, a national nonprofit conservation organization, was formed to promote the establishment of the National Wildlife Refuge Service as a separate agency within the U.S. Department of Interior. Only through agency status will the Refuge System, and the lands and wildlife it conserves, reach their full potential.

Like other federal land management agencies, Refuges need an organizational structure that enables them to meet their promise for the future.

✓ Add your voice to the growing number of people who are advocating a National Wildlife Refuge Service. Learn more about the issues affecting the National Wildlife Refuge System.

✓ Express your support for effective management of National Wildlife Refuges to your Senators and Representatives.

✓ Join the Blue Goose Alliance!

studied for decades...

The Blue Goose Alliance is not the first organization to recognize the obstacles to success for the Refuge System. Over the years, environmental organizations and distinguished special committees have studied the Refuge organization and proposed reform for our Refuge System.



Some forty studies and reports have all emphasized the plight of the Refuge System.

1999 - Audubon National Wildlife Refuge Campaign, *America's Hidden Lands*, recommends:

"Create the National Wildlife Refuge Service, a bureau within the Department of the Interior that would have as its sole responsibility the promotion and administration of the National Wildlife Refuge System."

1996 - The book *Staking out the Terrain*, by Jeanne Clark and Daniel McCool states:

"The Fish and Wildlife Service has the most chaotic organization history of seven federal resource organizations studied."

1992 - Defenders of Wildlife commissioned a report titled *"Putting Wildlife First."* In the report, one option for reforming the Refuge System was:

"to remove refuges from the Fish and Wildlife Service, establishing a new Wildlife Refuge Service."

1978 - Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Robert Herbst appointed the National Wildlife Refuge Study Task Force. Their report stated:

"Its (Refuges) current lack of recognition is intolerable. The world's foremost collection of wildlife habitat and wildlands deserves higher public visibility."

1968 - J. Starker Leopold says in the Advisory Board on Wildlife Management report:

"There must be substantial strengthening of central administrative authority in the Division of Wildlife Refuges."



The Withering Fruits of Neglect

The Refuge System has suffered in many ways from being one of numerous competing and controversial programs in the Fish and Wildlife Service. Refuges are understaffed and lack the basic needs for management protection.

Concerned nonprofit organizations have recently become champions for funding for the Refuge System. Though funding is vital, it is not the fundamental issue. Additional dollars alone will not bring Refuges up to the standards of management and leadership of the National Park Service or the U.S. Forest Service. The systemic problems of inadequate organizational stature, lack of a director with only Refuges to focus on, and continued absence of public visibility constantly plague the Refuge System - problems only solved by separate agency status.

Over the past century, the National Wildlife Refuge System has clearly outgrown its position as a mere "program," one of the many "programs" of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The time is now for the National Wildlife Refuge System to stand on its own, and to be recognized as the most significant system of lands and waters in the world dedicated exclusively for wildlife.



The blue goose icon has become the symbol for the Refuge System.



The Blue Goose Alliance

The Blue Goose Alliance is a national, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded by concerned citizens, Friends of Refuges and former Fish and Wildlife Service employees. The purpose of the Blue Goose Alliance is to educate the American public - stakeholders in the National Wildlife Refuge System - about the organizational and physical needs of the Refuge System. These include the need to:

- elevate the leadership and organizational stature of the National Wildlife Refuge System,
- strengthen the infrastructure, management and integrity of the National Wildlife Refuge System,
- establish maximum autonomy for the National Wildlife Refuge System, which is essential to enabling Refuges to effectively and efficiently conserve and manage precious wildlife and wildlands, and provide the public with the educational and recreational purposes defined for Refuges.

The **Blue Goose Alliance** welcomes new members to its internet based organization. To join, send a blank email to BlueGooseAlliance-subscribe@yahoo.com.

The Alliance does not share its member list.

Learn about Refuge issues and Alliance activities at our website: <http://www.bluegoosealliance.org>.

There are no membership dues. However, tax deductible financial contributions can be sent to: **Blue Goose Alliance, 1305 Highland Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32317**



National Wildlife Refuges...Where the Extrordinary is Every Day.