

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement

A History of CARE





The CARE coalition is comprised of 23 wildlife, sporting, scientific, and conservation organizations that span the political spectrum, representing 16 million Americans who value outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation. CARE was created in 1995 to advocate for robust funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System – lands where wildlife and humans can thrive.

Special Thanks

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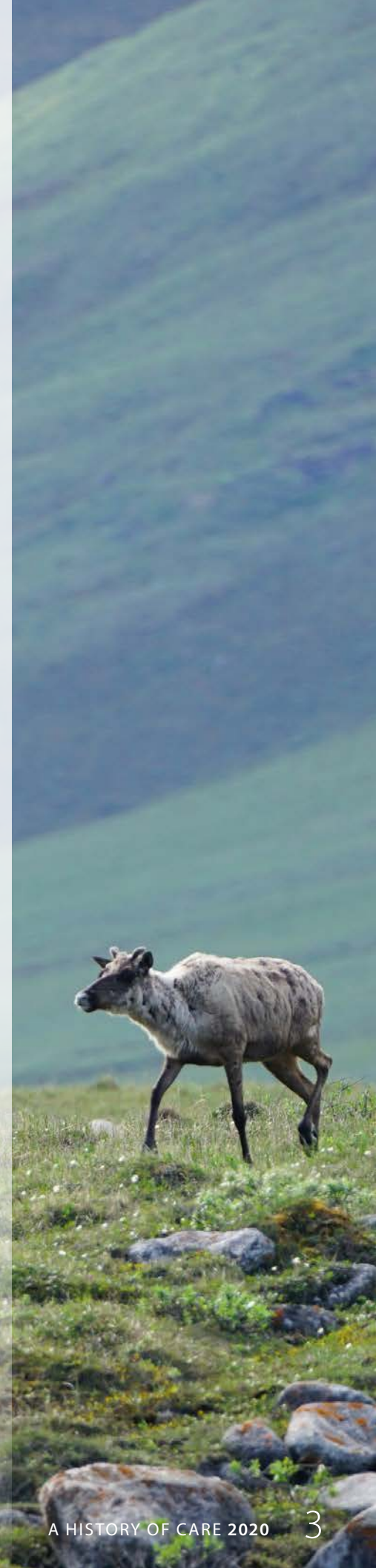
Thank you to the author of this report, Nicholas Anuzis

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the history of one of the most diverse coalitions in conservation: CARE, the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement. Formed in 1995, CARE has bridged political divides for 25 years to advocate for robust funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Although each organization within CARE has its own mission and priorities, the groups come together because a strong Refuge System is integral to help each group meet its own goals.

The National Wildlife Refuge System's primary purpose is wildlife conservation, with secondary compatible uses that include hunting and angling, birding and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. CARE is the story of organizations disagreeing over refuge management, but in the end joining forces to become a potent influence addressing the underlying problem facing all refuges: adequate funding. The theory, which has been borne out over the life of CARE, was that if refuges are adequately funded, then competition over how to prioritize funding for various uses becomes moot — there is room for all.

The concept of public land is as democratic an idea as any our nation has developed. A purposeful departure from the tradition in Europe of closed hunting grounds accessible only by the nobility, our public lands are open for anyone to enjoy. Core to this concept of public land is the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, that made enormous strides for conservation in the 20th century.

Our National Wildlife Refuge System has a long tradition of hunting and fishing, and wildlife conservation dating back to the establishment of the first unit of the System at Florida's Pelican Island. With the North American model influencing the evolution and growth of the System, and a professional staff and passionate volunteers dedicated to implementing the mission, the Refuge system has expanded and adapted to protect hundreds of species of wildlife and welcome all those who desire recreational opportunities on public lands.

CARE organizations understand that the value of wildlife refuges transcends each organizations' particular purpose. CARE brings together these disparate groups around shared values and their love of wildlife to advocate on behalf of this shared resource—The National Wildlife Refuge System.



Exploring the Moffat Basin, Wilderness in Archaic National Wildlife Refuge | Danielle Bigida / USFWS



Arctic Bird Fest, 2019 in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge | Lisa Hupp / USFWS

History

The mid-1990's

Ninety years after the formation of the first national wildlife refuge, wildlife refuges were plagued by a chronic lack of funding, understaffed, and under-maintained. Wildlife value was limited and various user groups argued about the best way to use these public lands. Consensus was elusive.

With a long history of being on opposite ends of the critical issue of the best way to utilize both public lands and the meager funds available for them, these groups went to their separate corners. Either refuges were for hunting and other consumptive recreational use, or for wildlife conservation first and foremost with uses occurring as long as they were compatible.

This is the story of how these disparate factions came together to find room for both people and animals on national wildlife refuges.

Hunters, birders, anglers, scientists, recreationists, hikers, sportsmen, and photographers: most would think that organizations representing these groups would have little in common. Yet today, 23 organizations, representing a diverse constituency of 16 million Americans who believe in wildlife conservation, are members of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, or CARE. Its sole **mission**: secure adequate funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

CARE uses the unique skill sets of its member organizations to advocate for increased funding to address the needs of the Refuge System by supporting its Operations and Maintenance budget. CARE members meet on a regular basis, testify before Congress, compile comprehensive reports on the state of the Refuge System, meet with Members of Congress and their staff, work closely with the USFWS, and hold briefings and events on Capitol Hill, all in support of its central goal of advocating for funding for the Refuge System.

It is now difficult to imagine that 25 years ago, these same 23 groups were often unable to come to any agreement about refuges. For a quarter of a century, these groups work on a regular basis to keep wildlife refuges healthy, well-maintained, and adequately funded.

Warring Factions

In the 1960's, the Refuge System began to adjust its focus from a hodgepodge of lands dedicated mainly to wildlife and waterfowl hunting and conservation, but with numerous commercial uses, to a broader system of wildlife habitats focused on wildlife population needs accommodating a shorter list of compatible recreational activities.

A Brief Timeline of Wildlife Conservation and the National Wildlife Refuge System

- ▶ **1868** President Ulysses S. Grant sets aside the first federal lands for the protection of wildlife in the **Pribilof Islands** of Alaska
- ▶ **1903** President Theodore Roosevelt designates **Pelican Island** in Florida as a National Bird Reservation – the first unit of what is now the Refuge System.
- ▶ **1918** **The Migratory Bird Treaty Act** is signed into law to implement a treaty between U.S. and Canada. The act makes it illegal to hunt, kill, capture, take, or sell any of the now 800 species of birds, or their parts, protected under the Act.
- ▶ **1929** **The Migratory Bird Conservation Act** is passed to provide a mechanism for adding additional acres of wildlife habitat to the Refuge System.
- ▶ **1934** **The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act**, also known as the Duck Stamp Act, is signed into law, requiring all waterfowl hunters 16 and older to purchase an up-to-date hunting stamp. The revenue generated from the stamps goes to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and is used to acquire and permanently protect wetlands for waterfowl.
- ▶ **1937** **The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937**, commonly known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, is signed into law, creating an excise tax on firearms and ammunition to help manage wildlife and their habitats.
- ▶ **1950** **The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act**, commonly known as the Dingell-Johnson Act, establishes excise taxes on fishing related goods, with the funds going to the states for fish and waterway management.
- ▶ **1962** **The Refuge Recreation Act** becomes law, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to allow recreational activities on units of the Refuge System when that additional use does not interfere with the primary use of the refuge.

Part of this transformation included the passage of the Refuge Recreation Act in 1962. The Act allowed for recreational activities to take place on refuges, as long as those activities did not interfere with the primary use of the refuge. However, which recreational activities were not allowed was not defined and the ambiguity left the determination of compatible uses to individual refuges, allowing for different interpretations across the Refuge System.

Following the passage of the Refuge Recreation Act, consumptive users and non-consumptive users began to disagree over which uses were compatible with refuge system lands. Between 1978 and 1992, court battles were waged in a series of compatibility lawsuits focused mainly on whether uses such as motorboating and water skiing were appropriate secondary uses on a wildlife refuge.

Although mired in rancor and controversy, these compatibility lawsuits brought about little change in the way refuges were managed. Only two cases resulted in rulings stating the Interior Department had violated compatibility provisions of previous Act. That all changed with the settlement of *Audubon v. Babbitt* in 1993.

The *Audubon* case was different from prior compatibility lawsuits because the plaintiffs were armed with a 1989 Government Accountability Office survey of refuge managers regarding harmful incompatible uses, reports from the USFWS, and information gathered directly from individual refuge managers.

That information showed that a majority of refuges had multiple uses outside of wildlife conservation, such as farming, water-skiing, and military exercises, and nearly 60% of refuges had harmful activities, such as mining, oil and gas extraction, and logging, taking place. Faced with this evidence, Department of the Interior agreed to settle the case and to complete evaluations of all recreational and commercial activities permitted on refuges at that time.

With implementation of the *Audubon* settlement, the USFWS began shifting its priorities away from recreational and commercial activities and focusing on the management and upkeep of refuges and better management of wildlife populations. As part of this change in priority, hunting, fishing, and trapping were to be scaled back across about 50 refuges, which did not sit well with hunters, anglers, and the wider sportsmen's community.

The *Audubon* settlement increased the political pressure that had been growing for years for Congress to enact comprehensive management legislation defining the mission and uses of the refuge system. Sportsmen envisioned a system that promoted hunting and fishing as a critical component of wildlife conservation, while many non-hunting groups advocated for the wildlife value of these refuge lands to take precedence over all recreational uses.

New Administration, Big Changes

Big changes in the way refuges were managed began to emerge during the Clinton Administration. A new Administration. New policy objectives. The *Audubon v. Babbitt* settlement. A large drop in funding. All of this led to the deprioritization of recreational programs, including hunting, on Refuge System lands.

The Refuge System as a whole was in disrepair in the early 1990's, with funding as the major issue. When refuge managers were unable to meet all



the funding needs of their refuge, they were forced to move money around. Recreational activities were among the first to be impacted. Habitat maintenance was deferred due to lack of staff. Roads deteriorated. To those outside the System, it appeared that refuge managers and USFWS leadership were choosing winners and losers, sometimes arbitrarily and often without consistency across the Refuge System.

People Start to Talk

In 1993, in a show of good faith, USFWS Deputy Director Ken Smith invited members of the sportsmen's community to the Department of the Interior and explained that, due to budget cuts, the USFWS would not be able to make compatibility determinations and administer hunting and fishing programs on refuges that previously allowed these activities. The USFWS continued to host frequent meetings with the sportsmen's community as a way to keep a clear line of communication on current issues and ideas flowing for solutions to their problem.

Separately from their collaboration with the USFWS, a sportsmen's ad hoc working group was meeting on a monthly basis. The topics of these meetings varied, but after the meeting with the USFWS, the working group began looking for a solution for the problem of refuge funding.

At the same time, a large group of environmental organizations was also meeting on a monthly basis, mainly to discuss and advocate for legislation to provide a management structure to the Refuge System, as well as other policy issues of the day. Driven by what they viewed as incompatible uses, the group worked on the framework for comprehensive legislation to establish management principles for the Refuge System. The groups were also increasingly concerned about low funding levels that failed to satisfy basic management needs of refuge managers.

After months of meetings, neither group was any closer to coming to an agreement on legislation specifying the management and administrative goals of the Refuge System, or on a policy for compatible refuge uses. Within both groups were organizations that would eventually found CARE — they just needed to talk to each other.

A unifying concept was, let's educate everybody about what the problem is with money, and then let's talk about how to get more. That, truthfully, became the most unifying cause of the CARE group all the way through.

ROLLIE SPARROWE

The A-ha Moment

As the sportsmen's working group continued to meet with the USFWS, participants debated the current environmental legislation and sportsmen's programs on refuges. During these talks Rollie Sparrowe, a former USFWS employee and then-President of the Wildlife Management Institute, and Rob Shallenberger, Chief of the Division of Refuges, had a moment of realization: Most organizations outside of the USFWS did not fully grasp how refuges were financed and what they had to accomplish with that funding.



▶ **1964** The **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** is created by Congress to provide up to \$900 million each year for the acquisition of lands and waters for the purpose of conservation. LWCF is one of the primary mechanisms for acquiring refuge lands.

▶ **1966** The **National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act** consolidates all units of the Refuge System under the authority of the USFWS and prioritizes the conservation of wildlife habitat within the system.

▶ **1973** The **Endangered Species Act** is passed by Congress to protect and recover imperiled species and their habitats. Dozens of refuges have been created with the primary purpose of conserving and protecting hundreds of threatened or endangered species.

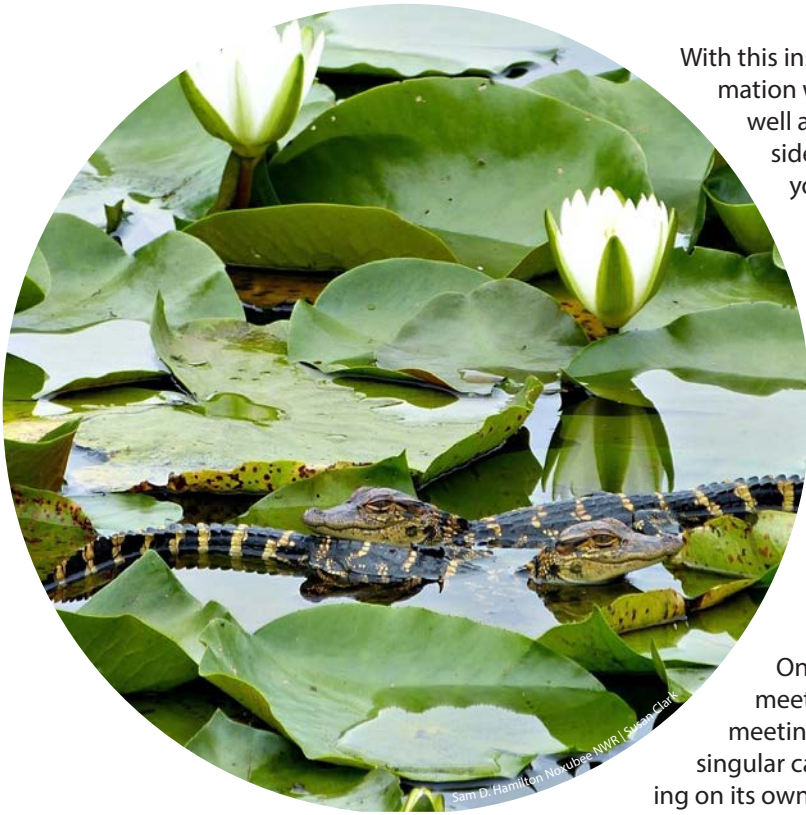
▶ **1980** The **Defenders of Wildlife v. Andrus** case sets the precedent for compatible uses on refuges.

▶ **1993** The **Audubon v Babbitt** settlement requires USFWS to evaluate all recreational and commercial activities on refuges and their connection to the purposes of the refuges, leading to the end of many recreation programs on the Refuge System.

▶ **1995** On March 10, 1995, the CARE coalition sends a letter to the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, Representative Ralph Regula, **marking the formal founding of CARE.**

▶ **1997** The **National Wildlife System Improvement Act of 1997** provides comprehensive "organic" legislation establishing a unifying mission focused singularly on wildlife conservation. The Act also identifies six priority public recreational uses: hunting, fishing, birding, photography, environmental education, and environmental interpretation.

▶ **2003** The **National Wildlife Refuge System** celebrates the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first national wildlife refuge.



With this insight, Sparrowe and Shallenberger began to share information with the sportsmen’s groups about refuge budgets, as well as refuge managers’ decision-making processes and considerations. As Sparrowe recently remarked, “all of a sudden, you had people say, ‘you mean to say they don’t even have enough money to have people stand there?’” In the face of inadequate funding, one thing became clear, a solution for refuges would need to rise above partisan lines.

Sides Convene

With agreement that rather than fighting over a shrinking pot, it was better to increase the size of the pot, no matter how it is spent, Sparrowe, Shallenberger, and a staff member at the Sportsmen’s Alliance, David Dexter, got to work. They began reaching out to environmental organizations to see if they would be willing to discuss the needs of the Refuge System.

On January 31, 1995, the U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance hosted a meeting that helped established the framework for CARE. The meeting focused on the fact that a coalition rallying around a singular cause would carry more weight than each organization acting on its own. Minutes from this initial meeting even went on to say, “it would be a powerful statement if they could put their differences aside and agree on funding.” In the meeting, Mr. Sparrowe set the ground rules for discussion:

the topic would be increasing operations and maintenance funding for the Refuge System, and all other policy issues would be left at the door.

The meeting was long, but the groups left invigorated and excited to work towards their newfound common goal. Throughout February of 1995 the group of organizations, which had begun referring to itself as “NGO’s Concerned About the Unmet Needs of the NWRs,” continued to meet to hash out their initiative’s needs, objectives, principles, and eventual name. After two months of meetings and discussions, CARE introduced itself to the political world on March 10, 1995 in a letter to Representative Ralph Regula, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

There was no doubt that everyone was in agreement of the course of action, in terms of the budget, and the impact that it had on organization’s mission, interest and membership.

SUSAN RECCE

Hitting the Ground Running

CARE and its members wasted no time. Staffers from CARE organizations attended hearings, provided testimony, met with legislators and even put together a video highlighting the needs of the Refuge System. Every group provided what resources it could, including staff time and funding, and did so strategically, sending different members to different meetings on Capitol Hill.

In one particularly notable meeting with a member of Congress, representatives from the sportsmen and environmental sides of CARE met with Congressman Mike Thompson from California. In the meeting, Rep. Thompson took the documents he was provided and tossed them across the room, exclaiming that he could never work with some of the organizations in CARE. After continuing to talk for a little while longer, he walked across the room and picked up the documents, saying that if these groups could come together and agree on this issue, then he could find a way to work with them, too. Rep. Thompson has gone on to become a passionate supporter of CARE, and was a co-founder of the current House Wildlife Refuge Caucus.

CARE endeavored to use the talents of its member organization wisely. For example, Ducks Unlimited had the staff power to get letters to every member of Congress, while the Wildlife Management Institute provided scientific expertise. Defenders of Wildlife brought experience with the Endangered Species Act, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies brought their contacts and collaboration with the states. These resources and the organization's efficiency enabled CARE to make a name for itself quickly.

By his appearance before Appropriations committee, Rollie Sparrowe was called out directly by Chairman Regula. The Chairman started his remarks noting that he was going to hear about transportation, infrastructure, and defense, and then he turned to Sparrowe and said "and you're going to talk to me about refuges."

Issues and Hurdles

It is no surprise that there was some initial distrust among the CARE organizations. For several decades these organizations had pitted themselves against each other, focusing on their differences and seemingly competing priorities. But this distrust was organizational distrust, not personal distrust. By keeping an open mind, listening to each side, and remembering the task at hand, close working relationships were formed with the understanding that they were all passionate about their work and dedicated to finding a solution for the lands they all loved.

When I think of challenges, while at NWRA or Audubon working on refuge issues, CARE is not one of them. That was the happy place.

EVAN HIRSCH

One of the bigger risks that posed a threat to CARE was policy creep. When CARE banded together, it did so with the understanding that increased operations and maintenance funding would be its one and only objective. Naturally, as issues

cropped up in Congress, CARE members wanted to discuss them at meetings, but Sparrowe and Bob Byrne, who regularly led the meetings, kept a tight lid on the topics discussed.

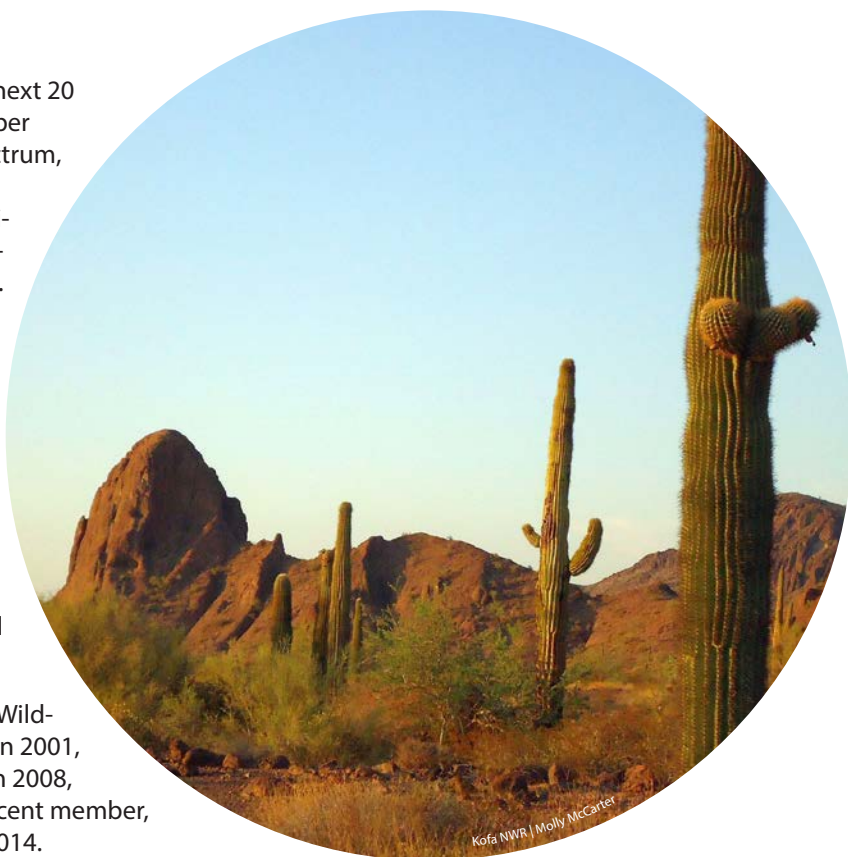
Perhaps surprisingly, the CARE coalition has held steady. Even after 25 years, none of the national organizations has left CARE. Each member organization was invested in the Refuge System before CARE, with little luck pushing its particular policy agenda. Now, our voices are stronger as one.

New Members

CARE formed with 15 original members, and over the next 20 years, added eight more member organizations. Member organizations span the conservation and political spectrum, conserving constituencies that encompass 16 million members. CARE represents birders, hunters, anglers, biologists, fish and wildlife professionals, environmentalists, scientists, professors, students, and so much more.

CARE's original membership comprised the American Fisheries Society, American Sportfishing Association, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Izaak Walton League of America, National Audubon Society, National Rifle Association, National Wildlife Refuge Association, Safari Club International, Sportsmen's Alliance, The Wilderness Society, The Wildlife Society, and Wildlife Management Institute. Shortly after its founding, in 1996, the National Wildlife Federation and Trout Unlimited joined CARE.

CARE has continued to expand over the years, adding Wildlife Forever in 1998, the American Birding Association in 2001, The Corps Network in 2002, The Nature Conservancy in 2008, Marine Conservation Institute in 2009, and, its most recent member, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership in 2014.





Today, The CARE coalition is comprised of 23 wildlife, sporting, scientific, and conservation organizations that span the political spectrum, representing 16 million Americans who value outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation:

American Birding Association
American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Izaak Walton League of America
Marine Conservation Institute
National Audubon Society
National Rifle Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
The Corps Network
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute



“Birders and birding are playing a growing role in helping highlight and support our refuges. CARE gives us a great forum and a fulcrum to participate in that process with others who love and value our wild lands and wildlife.”

JEFFERY GORDON, PRESIDENT



Jeffery Gordon

American Birding Association

Founding Date: 1968

President: Jeffrey Gordon

Mission: The ABA represents the North American birding community and promotes the cause of birding through printed and digital publications, events, partnerships, and advocacy. The ABA’s programs strive to help people enjoy and value wild birds and their habitats and to become passionate, effective advocates for conservation. We work to build a bigger, stronger, more inclusive and effective birding community and to partner with other conservation groups in meaningful ways.

History: The American Birding Association was formed in 1969 as a group for active birders and has helped to discover and share a great deal of information about finding, identifying, and enjoying all the birds of the U.S. and Canada and beyond. The early ABA developed ground rules for birding, which soon developed into the widely cited ABA Code of Birding Ethics, likely the organization’s single most successful product. Since their founding, ABA has expanded its efforts from publishing magazines and the renowned North American Birds journal, to administering a youth birder program, citizen science and conservation programs, and advocating on behalf of the birding community.

Importance of the Refuge System to ABA: The first wildlife refuge in the United States was designated by President Teddy Roosevelt to help preserve bird populations. Since then much of the NWRS is designated to help protect migratory and resident birds making the Refuge System of massive importance to the birding community. ABA has a set of conservation and community-based programs that support birders and their conservation efforts. In 2014, after years of promoting Duck Stamp, the ABA began selling it as well. The ABA hopes to help generate both funding and other support for the treasure that is our refuge system.

Importance of CARE to ABA: The American Birding Association represents a relatively new and growing community of wildlife advocates and seeks to contribute to the conservation of bird populations, habitat, and recreation opportunities. CARE gives us a great opportunity to participate in leaving a better world to our children and all those who will follow us.

Did you know? Contrary to popular belief, and popular culture depiction, birders almost never sit around and imitate bird calls.

While it is sometimes confused with the American Bar Association, the ABA holds the rights to ABA.org, much to the dismay of paralegals and attorneys across the United States.

CARE Contact: Jeffrey Gordon, president@aba.org, 800-850-2473



American Fisheries Society

Founding Date: 1870

Executive Director: Doug Austen

Mission: To improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

History: Founded in 1870, the American Fisheries Society was formed around an interest in fish culture and aquatic resources, but early AFS leaders recognized that they should work with the government to address fisheries issues across the U.S. As an organization of professionals, policy is only a small part of our work. AFS promotes scientific research, publishes five world-renowned fish journals and a monthly magazine, and encourages education and professional development for fisheries professionals. Today, AFS's membership is over 8,000 members including biologists, professors, ecologists, fisheries managers, consultants, and so much more.

Why the Refuge System is important to AFS: Refuges provide important areas for fish habitat, as well as natural settings for anglers to enjoy fishing. AFS works with several organizations on conservation policy issues such as the Waters of the United States rule and the Recovering Americas Wildlife Act. AFS provides peer-reviewed science that assists in the conservation and management of aquatic resources.

Why CARE is important to AFS: Approximately 40 percent of freshwater fish species in North America are imperiled. Invasive species, water quality, and climate change are some of the major factors, but habitat loss is by far the most widespread challenge to fisheries conservation. National wildlife refuges are vital reserves for our nation's aquatic resources and sanctuaries for many threatened and endangered species. AFS values this collaboration with CARE in protecting some of our nation's most valuable aquatic resources.

Did you know? AFS has a number of special interest sections ranging from marine fisheries, to fish habitat, fish culture, and every other aspect of fish science, within four geographic divisions, 50 local chapters, and dozens of university student subunits. As a result of this network, AFS experts can answer any question on fisheries issues.

Follow our policy work on our news feed at <https://fisheries.org/category/news/policy-news/> and peruse the latest fisheries science and set up content alerts for specific keywords at the AFS Journals Hub at <https://afspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>.

CARE Contact: Drue Winters, dwinters@fisheries.org, 301-897-8616 ext. 202

"You can't have good fisheries without good habitat. National wildlife refuges harbor aquatic biodiversity and often preserve wetlands crucial for water quality. They're also places where anglers can connect with nature through fishing. We value working with other organizations through CARE to protect these valuable natural resources."

—DOUG AUSTEN, AFS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Doug Austen



American Sportfishing Association

Founding Date: 1933

President: Glenn Hughes

Mission: The American Sportfishing Association is the sportfishing industry's trade association, committed to representing the interests of the sportfishing and boating industries as well as the entire sportfishing community.

History: Founded out of the Great Depression, the American Sportfishing Association was created in 1933 from the merger of the Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association and the Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Institute, as a trade association that oversaw the tackle industry and championed tackle manufacturers' business interests. Since its founding, ASA has shifted from representing the voices of tackle manufacturers to the entire sportfishing community and has continued to fight for policies that help encourage fishing participation, access, and conservation.

Why the Refuge System is important to ASA: National Wildlife Refuges not only provide vital habitat for thousands of species but also important access to world-class recreation, from fishing, hunting and boating to nature watching, photography and environmental education. In doing so, they support regional economies to the tune of \$2.4 billion dollars per year and support more than 35,000 jobs. Anglers and the sportfishing industry understand the importance of our refuges in the future health of our traditions and way of life.

Why CARE is important to ASA: As one of the founding members of CARE, ASA has played an integral role in the on-going success of CARE. ASA is proud to be a part of a national coalition that represents all of these interests collectively in advocating for funding for the Refuge System and looks forward, through our membership in CARE, to securing adequate funding for the continued operations and maintenance of refuges so managers can move beyond struggling to meet core management objectives and focus on continuing to improve upon our impressive system of refuges and the public's access to those resources.

Did you know? The American Sportfishing Association is the nation's leading sportfishing trade association representing over 800 sportfishing companies. Our member companies, anglers, and boaters fund the excise taxes that provide over \$600 million annually to fund the fisheries management and conservation work of state fish and wildlife agencies across the U.S.

CARE Contact: Mike Leonard, mleonard@asafishing.org, 703-519-9691, ext. 230

"ASA is proud to be a member of CARE in the effort to support our National Wildlife Refuge System. Securing adequate funding for our nation's Refuges is vital for the sportfishing industry to meet its goal of increasing participation in recreational fishing and making sure all 49 million of our nation's anglers have access to America's fisheries resources."

GLENN HUGHES, PRESIDENT



Glenn Hughes



Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Founding Date: 1902

Executive Director: Ron Regan

Mission: Our mission is to support and advocate for state, provincial and territorial authority for fish and wildlife conservation and to assist those agencies in promoting science-based resource management in collaboration with public and private partners.

History: Founded in 1902, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies is the professional organization that serves as the collective voice of North America's fish and wildlife agencies.

Why the Refuge System is important to AFWA: The National Wildlife Refuge System is critical to ensuring a future of our nation's fish and wildlife. National Wildlife Refuges are a key part of an unparalleled network of lands managed for fish and wildlife by federal agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector. True to the vision in which they were established, National Wildlife Refuges provide access to fish and wildlife for millions of hunters, anglers, birders, boaters, photographers and others who enjoy and benefit from nature. Through the stewardship of these gems by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and support by its many partners and volunteers, these treasures will be inherited untarnished for the good of the next generation.

Why CARE is important to AFWA: As envisioned 15 years ago, CARE brought together diverse organizations for the singular purpose of ensuring that the hardworking public servants who are stewards of the National Wildlife Refuge System have the resources they need to do their jobs and fulfill their public trust responsibilities. CARE provides a unified voice and more clout than any of our individual organizations can unleash to secure bi-partisan Congressional support for National Wildlife Refuges

Did you know? In addition to working in the United States, AFWA works on behalf of fish and wildlife agencies in the Canadian provinces.

CARE Contact: Mark Humpert, mhumpert@fishwildlife.org
202-838-3459

"The work of CARE is important to ensuring our National Wildlife Refuges have sufficient funding to provide vital habitat and outdoor recreation. They are a piece of the interconnected network of federal, state and private conservation lands that ensure our rich fish and wildlife legacy continues for future generations."

MARK HUMPERT, DIRECTOR OF
CONSERVATION INITIATIVES



Mark Humpert



"The National Wildlife Refuge System provides a considerable amount of opportunities for our nation's sportsmen and women to participate in hunting and fishing."

JEFF CRANE, PRESIDENT



Jeff Crane

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Founding Date: 1989

President: Jeff Crane

Mission: To work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping.

History: Since 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. The unique and collective force of the nearly 250 Members of Congress in the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, more than half of the nation's governors in the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and over 2,000 state legislators in the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, work closely with CSF to serve as an unprecedented network of elected officials who advance the interests of America's sportsmen and women.

Why the Refuge System is important to CSF: Through the American System of Conservation Funding - a user-pays, public-benefits program - which is comprised of revenue from hunting and fishing licenses, Duck Stamps and other species-specific harvest stamps, as well as federal excise taxes, hunters and anglers directly contribute to the conservation mission of the NWRs. Of the nearly 600 refuges in the U.S., more than 300 are open to hunting, and more than 275 are currently open to fishing.

Why CARE is important to CSF: CSF was a founding member of CARE, and deeply involved in shaping its strategic vision and direction. This unique coalition provides an opportunity to protect and advance our sporting heritage on public lands and waters.

Did you know? CSF is the direct link for information and education to policy makers, representing America's sportsmen and women, who cast votes on conservation issues at the federal and state level. The Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus is the largest bipartisan, bicameral caucus on Capitol Hill.

Follow CSF on social media: @congressionalsportsmen on Instagram / @congressionalsportsmen on Facebook / @HunterandAngler on Twitter.

CARE Contact: Gary Kania, Gkania@congressionalsportsmen.org, 202-543-6850 ext. 16



“Our National Wildlife Refuge System is a conservation concept unparalleled in the world, protecting hundreds of millions of acres of habitat essential to an astounding diversity of plants and animals.

It is the backbone of wildlife conservation in the United States and its protection is central to the mission of Defenders of Wildlife. In its own way, CARE is also unique – a broadly diverse coalition of interests that has stood the test of time united in one goal – securing the funding needed to keep “wildlife first” on our National Wildlife Refuge System while also ensuring public access for an array of outdoor activities.”

JAMIE RAPPAPORT CLARK, PRESIDENT & CEO



Jamie Rappaport Clark

Defenders of Wildlife

Founding Date: 1947

President & CEO: Jamie Rappaport Clark

Mission: Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities.

History: Originally incorporated as Defenders of Furbearers in 1947, and expanded to Defenders of Wildlife in 1959 with a broader biodiversity mission, we are proud of the work we have accomplished over the last seven decades. Defenders works to protect and restore imperiled species throughout North America by transforming policies and institutions and promoting innovative solutions at every level of government. This approach is making a lasting difference, collaborating with local and regional partners to develop practical, innovative programs that protect and restore key species on the ground; working with state, national and international decision-makers to advance legislation and policies that conserve wildlife and their habitats across the country; and defending and enforcing federal law to protect native flora and fauna, public lands, watersheds and our climate for current and future generations

Why Refuge System is Important to Defenders: As the only network of federal lands and waters dedicated to wildlife conservation, the National Wildlife Refuge System is essential to protecting biodiversity, migratory birds and more than 380 imperiled species of plants and animals. Defenders works to protect and provide for the Refuge System as a key component of our strategy to secure wildlife and habitat for future generations.

Why CARE is important to Defenders: Defenders of Wildlife is proud to be a founding member of CARE. Given the many benefits the Refuge System delivers for wildlife, recreationists, local communities and regional economies, it is critical that we provide the necessary resources to sustain and grow this special system of public lands and waters. CARE is our common voice on Capitol Hill to champion this cause.

Did you know? Defenders headquarters in Washington, DC, is located directly across the street from the National Geographic Society Museum. In front of our building are three bronze statues of wolves and their pups. At least once a day, tourists from the museum visit our lobby believing that we are an extension of the National Geographic Society. Our receptionist tells them who we are and what we do and provides them with a copy of our quarterly magazine, *Defenders*.

CARE Contact: Curt Chaffin, 202-772-0290, cchaffin@defenders.org



“The National Wildlife Refuge System and CARE are critically important to migratory waterfowl and all wildlife. The System provides essential nesting, migratory and wintering grounds for millions of our treasured avies. CARE provides the support desperately needed for these national treasures.”

ADAM PUTNAM, CEO



Adam Putnam

Ducks Unlimited

Founding Date: 1937

CEO: Adam H. Putnam

Mission: Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America’s waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

History: Born out of the Dust Bowl, Ducks Unlimited was established in 1937 by a small group of duck hunters concerned about the decreased population of ducks and geese in North America. Over 80 years later, DU is now the world’s premier wetlands conservation organization working in Canada, Mexico and every state in the U.S. DU has conserved more than 14.5 million acres of habitat vital to sustaining populations of waterfowl and other wildlife.

At the heart of DU’s success is the more than one million members, supporters and volunteers — hunters, conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts who live throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Each year, our volunteers host more than 4,000 fundraising events, including dinner banquets, shooting and fishing tournaments, golf outings and more, which fund direct on-the-ground conservation in North America.

Why the Refuge System is important to DU: Wildlife conservation is at the core of the mission of both the Refuge System and DU. Not only do refuges provide critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife, but refuges also provide opportunities to hunt and fish. Hunting on refuges is a tradition dating back to the early 1900s. Today, more than 330 refuges are open to the public for hunting seasonally and in accordance with state regulation. This is significant as, according to a recent poll by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a lack of suitable places to hunt and fish is the number one reason why hunter participation is declining.

Why CARE is important to DU: It is true that there is strength in numbers. While DU is the leader in wetlands conservation, collaboratively working with state, federal, and private partners has a proven track record of success. Together, we can have a greater influence on legislators and their decisions on our nation’s refuges and wildlife conservation.

Did you know? Duck hunters do a great deal for the conservation and protection of our natural resources through the purchase of hunting licenses and state and federal duck stamps. In fact, 98 cents of every duck stamp dollar is used by state and federal agencies to acquire and manage habitat for migratory birds. The purchase of firearms and ammunition also supports state wildlife agencies to manage habitat through excise taxes.

CARE Contacts: Kellis Moss, 202-347-1530, kmoss@ducks.org



“Public lands, including refuges, need advocates today more than ever. The League has been fighting for refuges since our inception and is a proud member of CARE because there’s no better voice for wildlife refuges and the conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities they offer, than this coalition.”

JARED MOTT, IWLA CONSERVATION DIRECTOR



Jared Mott

Izaak Walton League of America

Founding Date: 1922

Executive Director: Scott Kovarovics

Mission: To conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife.

History: In 1922, a group of anglers came together in Chicago to discuss their concerns about pollution and what they called “game hog” fishermen interfering with fishing. Named after Sir Izaak Walton, the 17th century English angler and conservationist, the Izaak Walton League of America was founded to ensure that fishing habitats were maintained so they could preserve fishing into the future. Initially, the organization was locally focused, helping establish the Upper Mississippi NWR, and protecting the boundary waters of Minnesota. Today, the League’s national efforts include clean water, public lands, farm policy, clean and renewable energy, fish and wildlife, and community-based conservation.

Why the Refuge System is important to the Izaak Walton

League: One of the League’s first conservation efforts was helping establish the Upper Mississippi NWR. Since then, the League’s major conservation efforts have been in clean water and farm policy. The League runs a volunteer stream monitoring program, called Save Our Streams, that helps communities monitor the health of their local waterways. In terms of conservation, the League is helping conservation on private lands across the country, as well as mobilizing grassroots efforts to push for sound conservation policy.

Why is CARE important to the Izaak Walton

League: Public lands, especially refuges, are vital to conservation and the outdoor recreation enjoyed by many Ikes, and all Americans, across the country. Advocating for the management and maintenance of these refuges is crucial and the diversity and focus of the CARE coalition are an example for the broader conservation community.

Did you know? Former Senator Willis Robertson, one of the architects of the Pittman-Robertson bill, was an early member and chapter leader of a Virginia chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Many of the ideas that he used to craft his bill that changed wildlife management and establish the North American Model of Conservation, were inspired and molded by the League.

CARE Contact: Jared Mott, jmott@iwla.org, 301-548-0150 ext. 224, and Scott Kovarovics, skovarovics@iwla.org, 301-548-1050



Marine Conservation Institute

Founding Date: 1996

President: Lance Morgan

Mission: To secure permanent, strong protection for the oceans' most important places — for us and future generations.

History: Until the mid-1990's, marine science operated mostly in narrow silos like biological and chemical oceanography and fisheries, ignoring much of the human impact on the oceans. Then Marine Conservation Institute's founder, Dr. Elliott Norse and others, began organizing the new field of marine conservation biology, taking a holistic approach to marine science and conservation. MCI worked on the science behind banning bottom trawling and advocated for reserving special areas of the ocean, protecting biodiversity and providing refuges for threatened populations. Today, we continue to advocate for special places in our oceans using sound science and policy. Our prestigious Blue Parks system awards to the best marine protected areas around the world — like Ocean Oscars™ — incentivize governments to create more and better marine parks and healthier oceans.

Why the Refuge System is important to MCI: Our primary focus is protecting special places and marine wildlife in our oceans; this mission aligns perfectly with the objectives of the Refuge System in U.S. oceans. Marine Conservation Institute has partnered with the Refuge System to clean up shipwrecks damaging coral reefs and to understand the conservation needs of the Pacific refuges and monuments. Within the last several years Marine Conservation Institute launched its Blue Parks system campaign and its Atlas of Marine Protection to bring understanding and notoriety to the kinds of places that the Refuge System conserves in US. Water. Our objective is to conserve 30% of the world's oceans by 2030 in strongly protected marine reserves to avoid ocean extinctions and provide refuges to marine life in the rapidly changing oceans.

Why CARE is important to MCI: Marine Conservation Institute joined CARE in 2006, shortly after working with the Bush Administration and other environmental organizations to create Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the N.W. Hawaiian Islands. Marine monuments are an important part of the Refuge System, accounting for nearly 90% of the acreage of the system.

Did you know? Marine Conservation Institute is small compared to the larger ocean organizations in the U.S., but has had an outsized impact on marine conservation because we combine the efforts of marine scientists and skilled policy makers to successfully advocate for habitat protections and marine protected areas.

CARE Contact: Michael Gravitz, Michael.Gravitz@Marine-Conservation.org, 206-286-145

“Effective management and research are critical to achieving real marine conservation outcomes in our Nation’s ocean refuges and monuments. Protecting seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals, sensitive coral reefs and marine life is a tough job requiring resources and skills that only the Refuge System has. That’s why we are glad to partner with CARE and the National Wildlife Refuge Association to help the Refuge System expand its visibility, better its management, and work to increase its available resources. We are proud to have helped create the largest unit—marine monuments of the Pacific—within the Refuge System.”

LANCE MORGAN, PRESIDENT



Lance Morgan



National Audubon Society

Founding Date: 1905

President & CEO: David Yarnold

Mission: The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow.

History: In the late 19th century, bird populations plummeted across the U.S., and there were few state or federal regulations to protect these imperiled species. Outraged by the plume trade that hunted and sold birds to markets by the ton, early conservationists formed Audubon Societies across the country and advocated for taking on local, state, and federal regulations to protect birds. In 1905, the National Audubon Society formed to organize these local chapters, and provide a voice in Washington D.C. Audubon and its chapters advocated for the protection of Pelican Island, the country's first National Wildlife Refuge, and the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. To this day, Audubon, along with the network of local Audubon chapters, continues to advocate for protections for birds and their habitat.

Why the Refuge System is important to Audubon: The Refuge System is integral to Audubon's conservation mission, protecting important migratory stopovers, nesting habitats, and wintering habitats along each of the flyways. Refuges provide recreational, and educational opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about birds. And they are living laboratories that allow Audubon, other organizations, and agencies to conduct research that furthers our understanding of population trends as well as the threats impacting birds and other wildlife.

Why CARE is important to Audubon: The National Audubon Society is a founding member of CARE and has helped shape and grow the organization to its current form. Audubon understands the importance of diverse partnerships and CARE's unified voice helps raise the importance of the Refuge System at the national level. Because of the vital role that a vibrant Refuge System plays in bird conservation, CARE helps achieve Audubon's own mission to protect birds and the places they need, while facilitating key partnerships and knowledge-sharing about the needs of the Refuge System.

Did you know? The National Audubon Society's history is closely intertwined with the history of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Audubon recommended that President Theodore Roosevelt protect Pelican Island, and originally provided Audubon Wardens that protected birds on these sanctuaries and refuges before the creation of the USFWS Law Enforcement.

CARE Contact: Erik Schneider, eschneider@audubon.org, 202-600-7992

"The National Wildlife Refuge System is the nation's greatest network of lands dedicated to bird conservation, and it provides amazing birding opportunities for millions of people. We're proud to work in tandem with CARE as a powerful and unified voice to help provide the resources needed to sustain and grow Refuges for birds and people."

SARAH GREENBERGER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
FOR CONSERVATION POLICY



Sarah Greenberger



National Rifle Association

Founding Date: 1871

President: Carolyn D. Meadows

Mission: To protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, especially with reference to the inalienable right of the individual American citizen guaranteed by such Constitution to acquire, possess, collect, exhibit, transport, carry, transfer ownership of, and enjoy the right to use arms... to promote hunter safety, and to promote and defend hunting as a shooting sport and as a viable and necessary method of fostering the propagation, growth, conservation, and wise use of our renewable resources.

History: The National Rifle Association of America was founded in 1871 to promote national marksmanship training following the Civil War. Nearly a century and a half later, the NRA is five million members strong and is the nation's leader in firearm safety, education, and training. NRA programs have provided millions of shooting sports enthusiasts, from backyard "plinkers" to world-class competitors, the opportunity to enjoy safe recreational and competitive shooting. The NRA considers gun ownership to be a civil right, making it America's largest and oldest civil rights organization.

Why the Refuge System is important to NRA: More than 60% of wildlife refuges are open to hunting so the Refuge System plays an integral role in providing opportunities for hunting, as well as for other experiences associated with wildlife.

Why CARE is important to the NRA: The NRA is a founding member of CARE. CARE was formed to counter a dramatic budget cut in visitor services in the early days of the Clinton Administration that would have seriously threatened the future of hunting programs on wildlife refuges. Rather than fighting over how a meager budget for the Refuge System was to be spent, the NRA, along with other hunting organizations, joined forces with nontraditional allies to increase the budget across the board. It took little effort to get national organizations, some not necessarily on friendly terms with each other, to see that this was the best approach for the Refuge System and would benefit all of our interests.

Did you know? Nine U.S. presidents have been NRA members or are members, including: Ulysses Grant, who also served as NRA president; Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Donald J. Trump.

CARE Contact: Erica Tergeson, etergeson@nrahq.org, 703-267-1180

"Hunters have been the backbone of the Refuge System since 1903 when President Roosevelt, an avid hunter, established Pelican Island as the first refuge. Hunters directly contribute to the Refuge System through the purchase of the Federal Duck Stamp, required for waterfowl hunting, which has raised more than \$750 million over the past 80 years for the purchase of critical habitat for the Refuge System."

SUSAN RECCE, FORMER DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION



Erica Tergeson,
Hunters' Leadership Forum Director,
National Rifle Association of America



Susan Recce

Susan retired from the NRA in April 2020 after 25 years of work to increase funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System. CARE would like to thank Susan for her dedication, expertise, and leadership, which has allowed this coalition to make an enormous difference for our refuge lands, innumerable wildlife species, and generations of hunters.



National Wildlife Federation

Founding Date: 1936

President & CEO: Collin O'Mara

Mission: To unite all Americans to ensure wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world.

History: Founded in 1936, the National Wildlife Federation was an effort to create an organization that represented the broad range interests that advance wildlife conservation. Pulitzer Prize winner J.N. Ding Darling encouraged President Franklin Roosevelt to convene over 2,000 conservationists around the U.S. at the first North American Wildlife Conference. From the conference emerged the General Wildlife Federation, which later changed its name to the National Wildlife Federation, representing hunters, gardeners, anglers, bird watchers, and any group interested in wildlife. Today, the National Wildlife Federation, with its 6 million members and supporters, advocates for wildlife and habitat protection, restoration, and management at all levels of government.

Why the Refuge System is important to NWF: The Refuge System is the only national system of lands that is specifically dedicated to the needs of wildlife. Its mission aligns very closely to NWF's mission to restore and maintain wildlife populations. The big six activities are extremely important to NWF, as its members come from the diverse umbrella of wildlife conservation constituencies.

Why CARE is important to NWF: Although NWF was not one of the original members of CARE, they joined within a year of CARE's formation, and have been a supportive member ever since. The National Wildlife Refuge System and CARE are critically important to migratory waterfowl and all wildlife. The System provides essential nesting, migratory and wintering grounds for millions of our treasured avian species. CARE provides the support desperately needed for these national treasures.

Did you know? The National Wildlife Federation is far more than a DC based national environmental group. NWF has affiliates in 52 states and territories, and these affiliates have local affiliates, sometimes as many as 250. This network of organizations helps NWF work at the national, state, and local level.

CARE Contact: Mike Leahy, leahym@nwf.org, 202-797-6826

"Making wildlife the top priority on some of their most important habitats was a terrific idea and National Wildlife Refuges have become a core wildlife conservation strategy. They are also among our most accessible public lands for urban and rural outdoor recreation from birdwatching to hunting and fishing to biking. It has been a pleasure to work with so many diverse groups to get them the funding the wildlife and people that depend on them deserve."

MIKE LEAHY, DIRECTOR OF WILDLIFE, HUNTING & FISHING POLICY



Mike Leahy



NATIONAL
Wildlife Refuge
ASSOCIATION

“The National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest system of public lands set aside for wildlife in the world, and funding these lands is critical. CARE has made an enormous difference over the last 25 years by highlighting funding deficiencies and working with Congress to increase that funding.”

CAROLINE BROUWER, VICE PRESIDENT
OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



Caroline Brouwer

National Wildlife Refuge Association

Founding Date: 1975

President: Geoff Haskett

Mission: To conserve America’s wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect and enhance the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries.

History: In the early 1970’s the U.S. government enacted several environmental laws, including the clean air act, clean water act, endangered species act, and NEPA, but there was no law that provided relief for the Refuge System. As a response, a group of retired U.S. FWS employees founded the National Wildlife Refuge Association in 1975 to advocate on behalf of the Refuge System. Working out of Forest Carpenter’s basement in Minnesota, the NWRA focused on local issues affecting individual refuges. In 1997, when Congress passed the Refuge Improvement Act, which defined the mission of the Refuge System, the NWRA shifted its focus to the entire system as well, advocating on national issues that have broader implications for all refuges. Today, NWRA works with friends groups, the federal government, and other conservation organizations to help raise awareness, support, and funding for the Refuge System.

Why the Refuge System is important to NWRA: The Refuge System is engrained in everything that the NWRA does — without the Refuge System, NWRA would not exist. NWRA works to educate members of Congress of the issues and needs of the Refuge System, by advocating for sound conservation policy, while pushing back on policies that would take away from the Refuge System. NWRA works with other conservation organizations to build a diverse constituency that will support and advocate for the Refuge System. And possibly most important of all, NWRA employees are in the field working with land owners, helping put their land into easements or fee titles, that will help set aside more land for the Refuge System.

Why CARE is important to NWRA: Not only was NWRA one of the founding members of CARE but has also been the chair organization of CARE since 2001. CARE is very important to the Refuge Association because it helps bring a unified voice in support of the System that is core to NWRA’s existence. The relationships that CARE has fostered has helped NWRA understand the issues impacting other members, and its partners in the federal government.

Did you know? The NWRA has always had former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees on its board, and since the mid 1990’s has always had members of the friends community on its board.

CARE Contact: Caroline Brouwer, cbrouwer@refugeassociation.org, 202-420-9625



Safari Club International

Founding Date: 1972

President/CEO: Scott Chapman/Laird Hamberlin

Mission: SCI's mission is to protect the freedom to hunt and to promote wildlife conservation worldwide.

History: Several decades ago, safari clubs comprised of groups of hunters were scattered across the United States. In 1972, one of these small clubs, based in Los Angeles, met for its monthly meeting, which was attended by a member of a similar organization in Chicago. At this meeting the group decided that it should combine its efforts with other safari clubs. In the ensuing months, the group worked to make the Chicago club an affiliated chapter. Almost a year later, the group changed its name to Safari Club International. Since joining forces, the organization continued to unite clubs into a single combined effort. Today, its ranks have grown to 50,000 members and 170 chapters around the globe, all in support of hunters' rights and wildlife conservation.

Why the Refuge system and conservation are important to

SCI: SCI understands the importance of the NWRS to conserving wildlife and protecting habitat. The NWRS also provides public lands access to millions of hunters around the country, and SCI recognizes the role that hunters have played in funding the acquisition of NWRS lands.

Why CARE is important to SCI: In addition to being one of the founding members of CARE, SCI's Tom Parsons coined the name CARE.

The CARE coalition formed to advocate for increased funding for the NWRS. By increasing funding, CARE helps ensure that the NWRS can function properly and administer hunting programs that SCI members love.

CARE Contact: Jeremy Clare, jclare@safariclub.org, 202-609-8179

"The National Wildlife Refuge System provides abundant outdoor recreation opportunities on America's public lands. The System Improvement Act specifically declared hunting as a priority form of recreation on refuges, and SCI is proud to be a founding member of CARE to ensure those opportunities continue for hunters across the country."

LAIRD HAMBERLIN, CEO



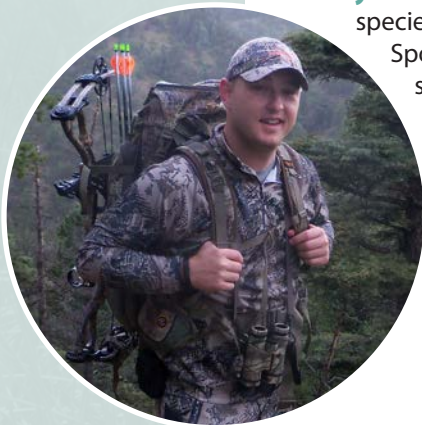
Laird Hamberlin



SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE

"The National Wildlife Refuge system serves as a vital centerpiece in America's storied history of hunting and angling, providing opportunities to generations old and young. During the passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Sportsmen's Alliance played a central role in ensuring the priority status of hunting and fishing on our nation's beautiful wildlife refuges, and for that I could not be prouder."

EVAN HEUSINKVELD, PRESIDENT AND CEO



Evan Heusinkveld

Sportsmen's Alliance

Founding Date: 1976

President/CEO: Evan Heusinkveld

Mission: To protect and advance our outdoor heritage of hunting, fishing, trapping and shooting in all 50 state legislatures, in the courts, in Congress and at the ballot box.

History: For nearly four decades, the Sportsmen's Alliance has fought to protect and advance our outdoor heritage of hunting, fishing, trapping and shooting. Through the Trailblazer Adventure Program and Families Afield program, we have reached a new generation of hunters and anglers by introducing youth and their families to an outdoor lifestyle. To support our hunting enthusiasts nationwide, we created The Sportsmen's Legal Defense Fund (SLDF), making it the only entity with the sole purpose of defending sportsmen's rights in the courts. It is still winning precedent-setting cases for sportsmen today.

Why the Refuge System is important to the Sportsmen's

alliance: While the Sportsmen's Alliance's history was born out of a need to have a voice against anti-sporting groups, they have always understood the importance of conservation and the NWRS to the sporting community. Quite simply, without pristine habitats that help support wildlife, there would be severely limited hunting, fishing, and trapping for the sporting community. The Sportsmen's Alliance has focused some of their efforts on improving conservation to make sure the refuge system is not just maintaining access, but also providing access to quality lands and habitats where there are excellent sporting opportunities for the American public.

Why CARE is important to the Sportsmen's Alliance: The Sportsmen's Alliance's employees Bill Horn and David Dexter were two of the leaders in creating and defining the direction of CARE.

Did you know? While most wildlife conservation groups are focused on one species, and most sporting groups are focused on their methodology, the Sportsmen's Alliance was formed to be the front line against those who seek to end hunting.

CARE Contacts: James H. Lister, jlister@dc.bhb.com, 202-659-5800 (primary contact) and Bill Horn, whorn@dc.bhb.com, 202-862-8357



The Corps Network

Founding Date: 1985

President & CEO: Mary Ellen Sprenkel

Mission: The Corps Network advances programs that transform young people's lives and communities through career development, conservation, and civic engagement.

History: Formerly known as the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, The Corps Network was founded in 1985 to support Corps by advocating on their behalf, providing access to project and funding opportunities, and by offering expertise in Corps operations and programming. Modern Corps descend from the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal program that put 3 million young men to work on America's public lands and waters during the Great Depression and was disbanded at the onset of WWII. Since the 1950s, Corps have expanded across the country, annually engaging thousands of young adults and post-9/11 veterans in meaningful conservation and community development projects in America's rural, suburban and urban areas. Every year, The Corps Network's membership of 130 Corps provide service opportunities, education, and hands-on job training to more than 25,000 young adults and veterans.

Why the Refuge System is important to The Corp Network:

Through public-private partnerships, Corps work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as numerous nonprofit and private organizations, to engage Corps members in meaningful projects to conserve and maintain USFWS properties and other vital habitats across all 50 states, DC, and the U.S. territories.

Why CARE is important to The Corps Network: The Corps Network believes strong public-private partnerships are the key to sustainable public lands management. We support CARE and its efforts to unite organizations representing a range of different interests, insights and expertise for the common goal of conserving and enhancing America's Refuge System.

Did you know? Every year, Service and Conservation Corps across the country enroll more than 25,000 young adults and post-9/11 veterans. Over the past three years, Corps restored over 2.4 million acres of habitat. In this timeframe, Corps completed over \$16 million worth of maintenance and improvement projects with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

CARE Contact: Josh Tuohy, jtuohy@corpsnetwork.org, 202-737-6272

"America's Refuge System represents some of our country's most unique and important habitats and species. The 130 Service and Conservation Corps that comprise The Corps Network are proud to annually engage thousands of diverse young adults and post-9/11 veterans in priority projects to maintain and improve refuges and other public lands and waters. The Corps Network, and our member Corps, are committed to sustaining these irreplaceable resources and training a new generation of wildlife and habitat stewards."

MARY ELLEN SPRENKEL, PRESIDENT & CEO,
THE CORPS NETWORK



Mary Ellen Sprenkel

The Nature Conservancy

Founding Date: 1951

President/CEO: Sally Jewell (Acting)

Mission: To conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

History: The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was founded in 1951 by scientists determined to act to save threatened natural areas. TNC launched a network of chapters and field offices in 1954, with its first chapter in eastern New York and began work on projects across the United States ranging from land acquisition to prescribed burns. In 1980, TNC launched its International Conservation Program to aid conservation organizations in Latin America. Since then, TNC has continued to work with all levels of government, and all types of organizations to advance conservation projects in the United States and around the world.

Why the Refuge System is important to TNC: Central to both the NWRS and TNC's mission is the notion of conserving habitats for the benefit of fish and wildlife. Through conservation science, advocacy, partnering with the private sector, and innovative conservation finance, TNC helps fight on the tough issues that impact conservation. Science matters to TNC, especially at this critical turning point for nature. TNC supports innovation, leadership, and communication for conservation success. TNC works closely with the federal government and partner organizations on land acquisitions, conservation projects and management of wildlife refuges across the country to protect the valuable habitat and ecosystems in the refuge system.

Why CARE is important to TNC: Demands on land and water continue to increase, so we must do more, faster. Funding for conservation has seen a steady decline in recent years despite the economic and other benefits of outdoor recreation, conservation and historic preservation. To protect the funding for these efforts, it is critical for TNC to work with partners and coalitions like CARE to advocate for a federal budget that sustains the conservation and science investments necessary for a strong economy, thriving communities and healthy lands, waters and wildlife.

Did you know? After the island fox population fell catastrophically, TNC — together with the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Institute for Wildland Studies — launched an intensive, science-based recovery effort in 2000. Because of this initiative, the population quickly rose from 100 to 2,150 by 2015.

CARE Contacts: Michelle Dietz, michelle.dietz@tnc.org, 703-841-2075 and Christie McGregor, cmcgregor@tnc.org, 703-841-4527

“Found in every state and territory, national wildlife refuges conserve a diversity of America’s environmentally sensitive and economically vital ecosystems. Along with our partners at CARE, we continue to advocate for strong funding for a refuge system that protects lands, builds local economies, and provides places for communities to enjoy.”

LYNN SCARLETT,
CHIEF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER,
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY



The Island Fox is only found on six of the eight Channel Islands in California.
© Ian Shive



The Wilderness Society

Founding Date: 1935

President: Jamie Williams

Mission: To protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places.

History: The Wilderness Society was formed in 1935 by a group of eight people who felt parts of wildlife and wilderness that should be left untrammelled by humans. The Wilderness Society has led the effort to protect permanently nearly 110 million acres of wilderness in 44 states. From the revolutionary 1964 Wilderness Act to the landmark 2009 bill that protected more than two million acres of wilderness across the country, The Wilderness Society has helped preserve public wild lands, including: Rich hardwood forests in the East; Stunning deserts in the Southwest; Snowcapped peaks in the Rockies; Old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest; Tundra in Alaska. The Wilderness Society remains true to our founders' principles and dedicated to the concept that careful, credible science, bold advocacy and unswerving vision are essential underpinnings of wilderness conservation policy.

Why the Refuge System is important to The Wilderness Society:

Conservation is at the core of The Wilderness Society's work and mission. Our National Wildlife Refuges not only conserve wild-places in remote areas, literally providing refuge and habitat for iconic American species of wildlife, they also provide outdoor opportunities in and near more populated areas, ensuring access to nature and wildlife, and the awe and inspiration to people from many diverse geographies, backgrounds, and opportunities.

Why CARE is important to The Wilderness Society: As a founding member of CARE, The Wilderness Society shaped the vision for CARE's conservation efforts. CARE provides a valuable set of knowledge, focus, network and organization for The Wilderness Society and all CARE partner organizations with respect to our National Wildlife Refuges.

Did you know? Renowned landscape photographer Ansel Adams was deeply involved with The Wilderness Society. Before his death in 1984, Adams selected 75 of his iconic images as a gift to us. Our national headquarters building in Washington, D.C., now houses our collection of original, signed Ansel Adams photographs.

CARE Contact: Jonathan Asher, jonathan_asher@tws.org, 202-429-2643

"From the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to Patuxent Research Reserve outside our nation's capital, our National Wildlife Refuge System is made of exceptional places where we admire the majesty of nature's wildness, whether a far away crown jewel or an accessible weekend escape. These critical places and the wildlife and communities who hold them dear need a good advocate in Washington, and that is exactly what the CARE coalition is."

JAMIE WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT



Jamie Williams



The Wildlife Society

Founding Date: 1937

CEO: Ed Thompson

Mission: To inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation.

History: The Wildlife Society formed in 1937, when leading wildlife professionals called a meeting to discuss shared challenges to achieving science-based conservation. That group recognized the need for an organization to establish professional and ethical standards, and to facilitate communication among wildlife professionals. Today, TWS serves >11,000 leaders in wildlife science, management and conservation. The organization publishes scientific and management-focused research, provides networking opportunities, advocates science-based policies, and offers professional development opportunities that inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and their habitats through science-based management and conservation.

Why the Refuge System is important to The Wildlife Society:

The Wildlife Society's membership includes the full spectrum of wildlife professionals — including those that serve as refuge biologists and managers, and partners from state agencies and universities that depend upon the continued function of the Refuge System to carry out their wildlife conservation and management work. The Refuge System's unique mission empowers wildlife professionals to carry out wildlife research, management, conservation, and education for the benefit of all Americans and international wildlife conservation.

Why CARE is important to The Wildlife Society: The Wildlife Society is a founding member of CARE that helped shape its vision for years to come. Working alongside other scientific and conservation organizations in CARE helps raise the profile of the important work wildlife professionals do in the Refuge System and the need for funding that work, to the benefit of the species these professionals manage and conserve.

Did you know? The Wildlife Society's unique emblem features Egyptian hieroglyphics and depicts the organization's broad interests. The literal translation of the hieroglyphics, from top to bottom, is: beasts (mammals), birds, fishes, and flowering plants (vegetation).

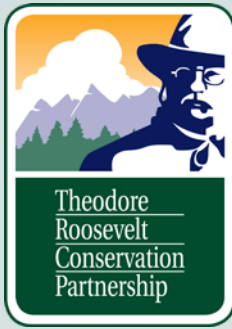
CARE Contact: Caroline Murphy, cmurphy@wildlife.org, 301-897-9770

"The Wildlife Society is proud to stand alongside the many diverse interests that join together in CARE. This coalition recognizes the vitally important need to increase the resources available to the National Wildlife Refuge System – which will empower and enable wildlife professionals that work in and partner with the System to achieve the mission of sustaining our wildlife populations and their habitats."

KEITH NORRIS, AWB®, DIRECTOR OF WILDLIFE POLICY & PROGRAMS



Keith Norris, AWB®



Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Founding Date: 2002

President & CEO: Whit Fosburgh

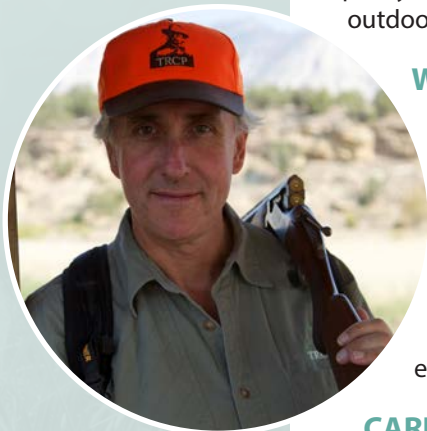
Mission: To guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish.

History: In 2002, Jim Range, a D.C.-area lawyer with a long history on Capitol Hill, saw that the sportsmen's community, while well-intentioned, was often uncoordinated in their efforts to advance meaningful changes to conservation policy. He felt that the community needed a forum where a coalition of the willing could identify top conservation priorities and bring a unified voice to the Hill. From this idea, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership was formed. The TRCP is now a leading voice for sportsmen and women with decision-makers across the country and in Washington, D.C., championing habitat, clean water, hunting and fishing access, and the outdoor recreation economy.

"BLM lands may get a lot of the glory in the West, but National Wildlife Refuges provide outdoor recreation opportunities within driving distance of America's urban centers and in many eastern states where access challenges keep people from taking up hunting and fishing. Refuges are the unsung heroes of our public lands system."

WHIT FOSBURGH, PRESIDENT & CEO

Why the Refuge System is important to TRCP: Each year, thousands of hunters and anglers rely on national wildlife refuges for their hunting and fishing access. The refuge system also comprises more than 150 million acres of crucial fish and wildlife habitat, including key stopover areas for migrating waterfowl. Much of the TRCP's work to support federal policy, funding, and access initiatives helps the refuge system to maintain outdoor recreation opportunities and habitat connectivity.



Whit Fosburgh

Why CARE is important to TRCP: The TRCP is the most recent addition to the CARE coalition. Considering that "partnership" is in our name, the TRCP staff is in a unique position to value the CARE forum and overall support for the refuge system.

Did you know? The TRCP's 30-person staff is distributed between its headquarters in Washington, D.C., a satellite office in Missoula, Mont., and individual home offices in 12 states across the country. Staff are given an extra vacation day each year to either mentor or learn from each other in the outdoors.

CARE Contact: Andrew Wilkins, awilkins@trcp.org and Christy Plumer, cplumer@trcp.org, 202-639-8727 x24



Trout Unlimited

Founding Date: 1959

President/CEO: Chris Wood

Mission: To conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

History: Fifty years ago, a group of 16 fishermen in Michigan met over concerns about the trout that were being stocked in their rivers. The group felt that state was stocking its waters with what they considered to be "cookie cutter trout," or more simply catchable-sized hatchery fish. The group felt that Michigan's waterways, in unobstructed, would turn our higher quality fish. And so, Trout Unlimited was formed to ensure that trout populations would thrive. Since its formation, TU has taken on policy issues, restoration projects, and conservation work. The group is now 300,000 members strong, with 400 chapters across the United States.

Why the Refuge System is important to TU: TU feels that true conservation requires collaborative work between a diverse set of stakeholders, and the NWRS provides the community required for comprehensive conservation. TU works tirelessly to provide the best science available for conservation, and even created the Conservation Success Index to measure the health coldwater fish in their native habitats.

Why CARE is important to TU: Trout Unlimited is grateful to CARE for its singular, unrelenting focus on making the Refuge System better. The diversity of groups involved, combined with a laser focus on Refuge System, makes CARE an effective group.

CARE Contact: Steve Moyer, smoyer@tu.org, 703-284-9406

"The Refuge System is important to Trout Unlimited because it contains some fabulous trout and salmon habitat, and many places to go fishing! From Cherry Valley in Pennsylvania, to Umbagog in New Hampshire, to the Kenai in Alaska, Refuges are great places to go trout and salmon fishing."

STEVE MOYER, VICE PRESIDENT FOR
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



Steve Moyer



“The NWRS embodies the foundation for our country’s cherished natural resource heritage. At Wildlife Forever, ensuring this legacy is critical for abundant fish and wildlife, biodiversity and for future generations.”

PAT CONZEMIUS, PRESIDENT & CEO



Pat Conzemius

Wildlife Forever

Founding Date: 1987

President & CEO: Pat Conzemius

Mission: To conserve America’s wildlife heritage through conservation education, preservation of habitat, and management of fish and wildlife.

History: Wildlife Forever was founded in 1987 as the conservation arm of the North American Hunting Club and North American Fishing Club. Today, signature programs include the *Clean Drain Dry Initiative*, a national public service and awareness campaign to educate and inform hunters, anglers and outdoor recreationalists how prevent the spread of invasive species, the *State-Fish Art Contest*, an award-winning recruitment program to engage America’s youth into the outdoors through an art contest teaching aquatic conservation education, and *Prairie to the People*, a program that supports “Building Stronger Communities Through Integrated Prairie Habitat Projects, Conservation Practices in tandem with Civic and Public Engagement.”

Why the Refuge System is important to Wildlife Forever:

Wildlife Forever and our members believe that conservation of America’s wildlife heritage is paramount for the future of our country. The Refuge System is the cornerstone for modern conservation of both game and non-game species dependent on healthy and intact landscapes. Many of the landscapes within the Refuge System are ecologically rare and serve as critical habitat for migratory wildlife and support access for public enjoyment and use of the resource. Scientific management and sustainable use have allowed the Refuge system to thrive, serving as an important asset to mitigate impacts from development and changing environmental conditions.

Why CARE is important to Wildlife Forever: Wildlife Forever strongly supports efforts to ensure our nation’s prized refuges are maintained for future generations and that adequate funding enable the management of resources to ensure resiliency from invasive species and natural disasters.

Did you know? Wildlife Forever has conducted 1000’s of on-the-ground conservation projects including reintroduction of elk in Wisconsin, acquisition of key salmon spawning habitat in Alaska, and artificial reef development in Florida. Ninety-four percent of all dollars received go to mission support.

CARE Contact: Pat Conzemius, pconzemius@wildlife forever.org, 763-253-0222



Wildlife Management Institute

Founding Date: 1911

President: Steve Williams

Mission: WMI is a professional conservation organization that works to improve the professional foundation of wildlife management.

History: The Wildlife Management Institute was founded in 1911 by sportsmen concerned about declining wildlife populations, who saw an opportunity for wildlife conservation to help restore wildlife habitat. WMI uses science and education to promote conservation, in partnership with working governments ranging from local to federal, high education institutions, and other conservation organizations. Working from field offices located across the country, WMI advocates on a number of policy issues, conducts research, and undertakes educational efforts to support sound wildlife management.

Why the Refuge System is important to WMI: WMI's mission includes advancing the scientific management of wildlife resources. The Refuge System has been and continues to be a living laboratory for fish and wildlife biologists. Basic and applied research conducted within the Refuge System has produced effective and efficient means to monitor, survey, conduct natural history research, and wisely manage habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Why CARE is important to WMI: Not only was WMI one of the founding members of CARE, but WMI employees Rollie Sparrowe and Bob Byrne chaired the coalition from 1995 to 2001. WMI understands that fish and wildlife management require dedicated and knowledgeable staff, adequate resources, and sufficient funding to maintain suitable habitats, informed citizens, and an understanding of our natural world. Through the years, CARE has been the predominant force, on the front lines, working together with Members of Congress and their staff to assure that the Refuge System receives the funding necessary to maintain and improve the System's ability to conserve wildlife and provide a means for the public to understand and enjoy our nation's natural treasures and heritage.

Did you know? In 1940, Ira Gabrielson served as the first Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and added millions of acres to the NWRS. Upon retirement from federal service, Ira became President of WMI.

CARE Contact: Steve Williams, swilliams@wildlifemgt.org, 717-677-4480

"The National Wildlife Refuge System provides evidence that our nation respects and conserves fish and wildlife and the habitats that are critical for their survival.

Through the years, CARE and its member organizations have provided to be a powerful and effective political and social ally for this incredible system of wild lands. CARE recognizes the role that the National Wildlife Refuge System plays in the health and well-being not just of wildlife, but of the people who share their love of these special lands."

— STEVE WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT



Steve Williams



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Founding Date: 1940

Director: Director Aurelia Skipwith

Mission: The mission of the USFWS is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people

History: The USFWS was formed during a 1940 Department of the Interior reorganization, merging the Bureau of Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries into the USFWS. The Service has three primary functions: assisting in the development of environmental stewardship, guiding conservation of the nation's fish and wildlife resources, and administering programs to help the public enjoy our fish and wildlife resources. The USFWS accomplishes these objectives using sound conservation and wildlife management, enforcing federal law, and distributing federal dollars for wildlife management, among others. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the USFWS has 9,000 staff members, spread across the country in regional and field offices.

There are 568 units in the National Wildlife Refuge System, 38 Wetland Management Districts and over 100 national wildlife refuges within easy reach of the nation's most densely populated cities and communities. There is at least one national wildlife refuge in every state and U.S. Territory. The Refuge System offers public access to a range of popular recreation that depends on thriving fish and wildlife resources.

Why the Refuge System is important to USFWS: Conservation is the mission of the USFWS. The Service manages the National Wildlife Refuge System, which spans 95 million land acres and thousands of wetlands. The USFWS also runs partnership programs, like the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, to work with private landowners on conservation.

Why CARE is important to USFWS: While the USFWS is not a member of the CARE coalition, it is an integral partner and a major reason for the success of CARE. The USFWS works with CARE to respond to their information requests and attend meetings as a way to keep an open line of communication between the Service and the conservation community.

Did you know? The Refuge System generates about \$3 billion in economic output each year from recreation visits and supports 43,000 jobs.

“CARE is incredibly important because it’s monumental when organizations that are so fundamentally opposed on some policy issues are very focused and stand shoulder-to-shoulder on one issue. I think that says a lot about each of the organizations represented by CARE. That says a lot about what each organization really, truly believes in and that they’re willing to put aside policy differences in order to further issues that are important to them, working with somebody that they oppose on other things. I think that it is an amazing story, it is an amazing relationship and I feel lucky that the NWRS and the USFWS are beneficiaries of those relationships.”

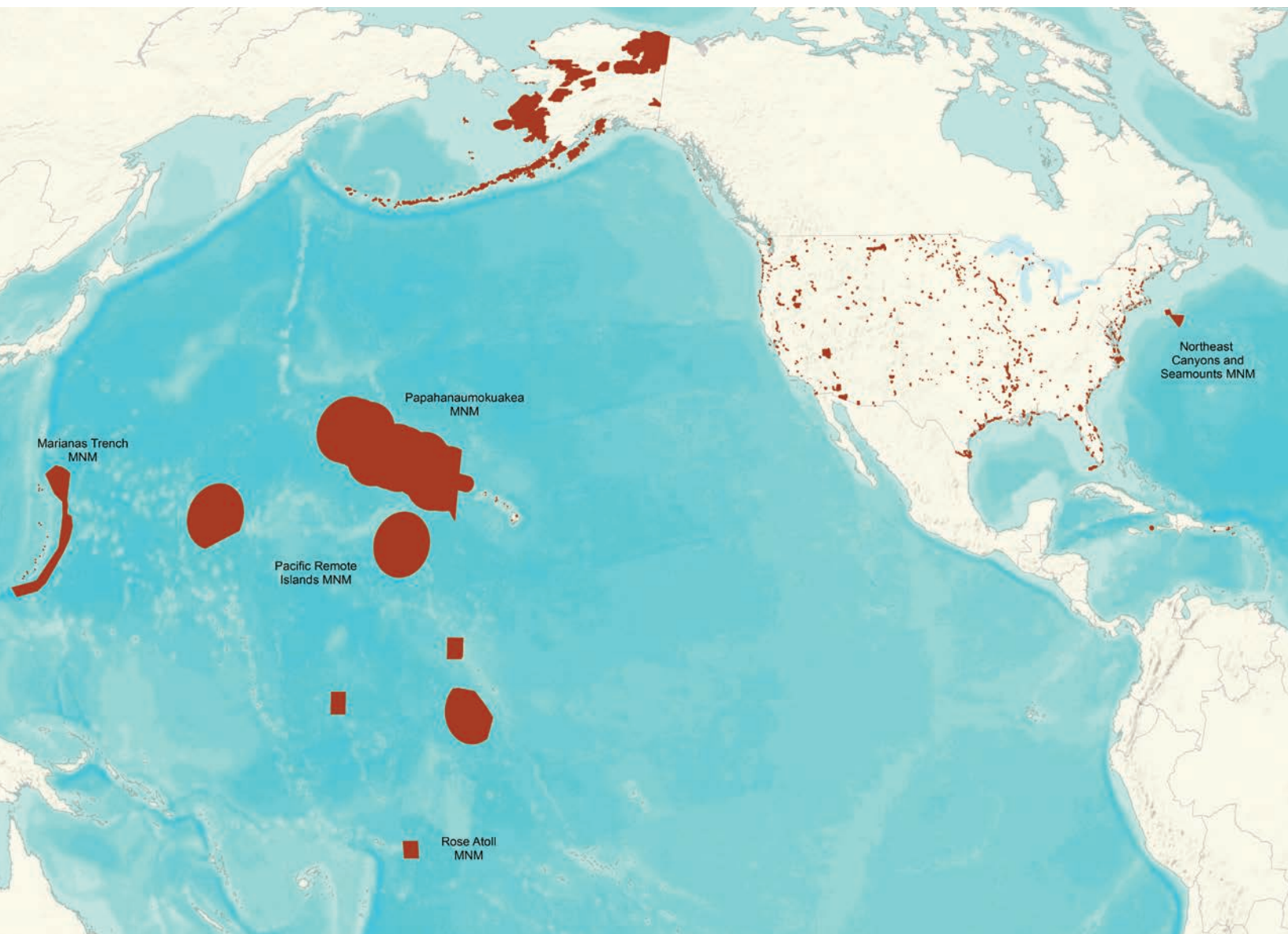
CYNTHIA MARTINEZ,
NATIONAL WILDLIFE SYSTEM CHIEF



Cynthia Martinez



The National Wildlife Refuge System



Where are we now?

The National Wildlife Refuge System at Glance

Mission

The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Management

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, within the Department of the Interior

Size

The Refuge System protects more than 850 million acres of lands and waters, including:

- 568 refuges, with at least one in every state and several U.S. territories
- 38 wetland management districts, covering 3.6 million acres of waterfowl production areas
- 5 marine national monuments encompassing 750 million acres of water, along with more than 100 million acres of public lands in Alaska, Hawai'i, and across the continental United States

Conservation

The Refuge System provides safe haven to over 8,000 species, including:

- 700 species of birds
- 220 species of mammals
- 250 species of reptiles and amphibians
- More than 1,000 species of fish
- Countless invertebrates and plants
- More than 280 threatened or endangered plants and animals

Economics

The Refuge System is a boon for the U.S. economy, and provides a sound return on investment:

- Refuge recreational spending generated about \$229 million in tax revenue at the local, county, and state
- 41,000 private sector U.S. jobs and \$1.1 billion in employment income
- Outdoor recreationists today generate \$887 billion a year in economic activities

Recreation

The Refuge System hosts 59 million visits each year that take part in a range of recreation activities, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and environmental interpretation.





The National Wildlife Refuge System's Big Six

For nearly a century, the Refuge System lacked a mission that dictated refuge management. In 1997, after a string of compatibility lawsuits and years of negotiations, Congress overwhelmingly passed the bipartisan National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act to establish how the USFWS and the American public would use the Refuge System. The Improvement Act designated six activities that receive priority consideration on refuges, provided they are deemed compatible with wildlife conservation. The big six recreational activities are hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and environmental interpretation.

Hunting & Fishing

- More than 370 refuges are open to hunting, offering a range of hunting opportunities including big game, small game, deer, turkey, upland birds, and waterfowl hunting.
- 270 refuges and 29 national fish hatcheries are open to fishing, representing a number of water sports including fly-fishing, saltwater fishing, and ice fishing.
- According to a 2016 report by the USFWS, hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation annually contribute more than \$887 billion in economic activity in communities across the U.S.

Wildlife Observation & Photography

- Hosts 59 million visits from around the globe.
- With over 700 species of birds, birding is a major draw of the NWRS. Over 200 refuges were created to protect migratory birds, providing endless opportunities to spot a new species for the enthusiast.

Environmental Education & Interpretation

- Environmental education programs teach visitors about the fish and wildlife on refuges, and of the local, regional and national conservation issues impacting the refuge
- Interpretation aims to immerse visitors to build an emotional and intellectual connection to the refuge.
- Seventy percent of refuges offer environmental education programming, although without adequate funding, that number will continue to shrink.



Measuring Success

CARE was formed to address the needs of the operations and maintenance (O & M) budget for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). CARE members came together under the realization that it was better to raise the level of funding no matter how it was managed, rather than fight over what was an ever-shrinking source of funding. In 1995, at a little over 90 million acres, and an operations and maintenance need of more than \$700 million, the NWRS' annual appropriation of \$168 million fell short of addressing its needs.

After CARE was formed, the O&M budget increased every year, hitting about \$391 million in 2004 and then reaching its high-water mark in 2010 at \$503 million, as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. While it is impossible to say that all of these increases in funding were a direct result of CARE's work, it is clear that CARE was a major player in the increases to refuge funding. CARE told the story that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) could not, it raised the visibility of the Refuge System, worked with

Members of Congress to understand the needs and concerns, and worked with the Office of Management and Budget to ensure that sound budget proposals were sent to Capitol Hill.

The strides that CARE and the NWRS made over the past 25 years are nothing short of remarkable. Refuge O & M and Maintenance funding increased from 24% of the System's need in 1995 up to 52% of its need in 2018. This progress is fantastic, but it is not enough.

Funding for the Refuge System's O & M budget has dropped precipitously from \$503 million in FY2010 to \$488 million in FY2019. This puts current funding \$92 million below the level the Refuge System would need simply to keep pace with inflation and salary increases.

These decreases in funding mean that the Refuge System is unable to provide visitors the best possible outdoor recreation experience or to fulfill its potential for wildlife management and conservation. With decreases in staffing, refuge managers have to make hard decisions about which habitat to leave unrestored, which refuge roads to leave unrepaired, and which visitor centers to shutter.





Arctic NWR | USFWS

Moving Forward

As CARE moves into the future, it cannot forget the past. Public lands are an inherent part of the American psyche. The National Wildlife Refuge System is the cornerstone for wildlife conservation in the United States. CARE made significant gains for the Refuge System, raised its visibility on Capitol Hill, and ensured that the system did not fall into a state of deep disrepair. These are incredible advances, but it is important, now more than ever, that CARE continues to advocate for the NWRS.

While every member organization of CARE has a different interest in the Refuge System, whether it's science, recreation, or conservation, each organization relies on the habitat and wildlife that make the Refuge System unique. As the world wades into the unknowns of climate change, a new wave of mass extinction, and changing societies and habitats the National Wildlife Refuge System is more important than ever.

In the current political climate, it is easy to focus on our difference and what drives us apart — this is why it is crucial that CARE continues to carry its banner. CARE proves time and time again that when we put aside our differences and have conversations, there is much that we can agree on. Once we find that common ground, the possibilities are endless.

CARE has one goal — full funding of the National Wildlife Refuge System. CARE supports annual funding of \$900 million for the National Wildlife Refuge System, so that the USFWS can appropriately manage this vast array of resources and provide visitors the type of experiences they expect — and deserve — on refuges.

Statement of Support

We, the 23 member organizations of CARE, reiterate our support of the National Wildlife Refuge System and its O & M needs. We pledge to advocate not just for increased funding of the NWRS, but full funding of \$900 million. We will be a champion for the National Wildlife Refuge System, we will advocate to our constituents, we will fight in the Halls of Congress, and we will work tirelessly to raise up the NWRS to its full potential.



Izembek NWR | Kristine Sowa/USFWS



Kodiak | Lisa Huppert/USFS

CARE's member organizations are available to provide further information about their programs and their ongoing commitment to protecting and funding refuges.

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American Fisheries Society

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American Sportfishing Association

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Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

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