

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, MOUNTAIN-PRAIRIE REGION
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM
CHARLES M. RUSSELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX
P.O. Box 110, Airport Road
Lewistown, MT 59457**

February 14, 2008

For Immediate Release

Contact: Barron Crawford, (406) 539-8706
Laurie Shannon, (303) 236-4317

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO HOLD RESCHEDULED
PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE IN BOZEMAN, MONTANA
FOR COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN FOR
CHARLES M. RUSSELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

On February 21, 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold a rescheduled public open house at Bozeman, Montana to solicit public input for the development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, and for the U.L. Bend National Wildlife Refuge, a “refuge within a refuge” that lies within the boundaries of Charles M. Russell NWR.

A meeting on this topic was originally scheduled for January 28, 2008, at Bozeman but was cancelled due to inclement weather.

The rescheduled meeting date, time, and location are as follows:

- February 21, Bozeman MT, 1:00 pm -3:00 p.m. MST, Best Western Gran Tree Inn, 1325 North 7th Avenue, Bozeman

The Service encourages everyone with an interest in these significant public resources to participate in this meeting and help create the vision for future management of the refuges. In addition, the Service is accepting public comments on the initial phase of the planning process until the close of business on Friday, February 29, 2008. Comments may be submitted by written letter to:

Charles M. Russell NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Attn: Laurie Shannon, Planning Team Leader
P.O. Box 25486 Denver, CO 80225-0486

Comments may also be submitted electronically to:

www.fws.gov/cmrr/planning

The Charles M. Russell NWR was first established in 1936 as the Ft. Peck Game Range for the purpose of sustaining large numbers of sharp-tailed grouse, pronghorn, and other wildlife. In 1963, the Range was designated as the Charles M. Russell Range. In 1976 the “Range” became

a refuge and the Service was granted full management authority. The refuge is now administered as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's premier network of lands and waters managed for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

The Charles M. Russell NWR, which encompasses 1.1 million acres of land and water in north-central Montana, is the largest national wildlife refuge in Montana and the second largest in the contiguous United States.

U.L. Bend NWR, located within the boundaries of the Charles M. Russell NWR, was established in 1969. Significant portions of this refuge are protected as "Wilderness" under the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 requires that all refuges be managed in accordance with an approved CCP which, when implemented, will achieve refuge purposes; help fulfill the Refuge System mission; maintain and, where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge and the Refuge System; help achieve the goals of the Wilderness Preservation System; and meet other mandates. The CCP will guide management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies to accomplish these tasks. The Service hopes to complete the CCP for Charles M. Russell and U.L. Bend NWRs over the next 4 years.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.