

**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**

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For Immediate Release

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**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO HOLD A PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE
FOR COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN FOR
CHARLES M. RUSSELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will hold a series of public open houses during September, 2008 at various locations in Montana to solicit public input on draft alternatives for the development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), and for the UL Bend National Wildlife Refuge, a “refuge within a refuge” that lies within the boundaries of Charles M. Russell NWR.

The Service has developed four draft alternatives based on the Service’s mission and purpose and the comments received during the scoping period earlier in 2008. More information on the project can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/cmr/planning>.

Meeting dates, times, and locations are:

- Lewistown, September 2, 2008, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Yogo Inn, 211 East Main Street
- Glasgow, September 3 1:00-3:00 p.m., Cottonwood Inn, 45 1st Ave. NE
- Malta, September 3, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Malta High School Cafeteria, 12 S 9th St. W
- Jordan, September 4 2:00-4:00 p.m., VFW Post, 11 South Main Street
- Billings, September 15, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Student Union Office, Lewis and Clark Room, 1500 University Drive
- Bozeman, September 16, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Best Western Gran Tree Inn, 1325 North 7th Avenue
- Great Falls, September 17, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Park Drive South

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.

UL 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 UL 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. The Service is both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for its scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on the Service’s work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.