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# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

**Date: May 13, 2011**

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## **US Fish and Wildlife Service Celebrating 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Desert National Wildlife Refuge**

***The public is invited to the birthday party***

**LAS VEGAS** – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is hosting a birthday bash on Saturday, May 21, 2011, as the Desert National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) turns 75. The public is welcome to join in the celebration of this milestone.

The May 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party begins at 10 a.m. and is expected to wrap up by 3 p.m. The event is being held at Corn Creek, just north of Las Vegas on U.S. 95. The day offers fun for the entire family, with wildlife games and crafts, and servings of old-fashioned peach cobbler. Participants will also have the opportunity to churn their own butter.

“May twentieth is the actual anniversary date,” said Desert NWR Manager Amy Sprunger. “It just made sense for us to move the celebration from that Friday to Saturday, the twenty-first, to give more people the opportunity to join us.”

The Service is offering another activity on that day, as the Red Rock Interpretive Association will lead a hike to the Hidden Forest Cabin. The 11-mile round-trip hike is limited to 15 participants, and pre-registration is required. Hikers are asked to call the association at (702)-515-5350 to register for the all-day excursion. Registrants will also receive instructions on when and where the group will meet in North Las Vegas to start the day.

Documents from 1938 indicate the agency was considering the Hidden Forest Cabin site for the location of the Desert Game Range headquarters. However, a privately-owned 320-acre ranch at Corn Creek was acquired in 1939, and this site ultimately became the administrative headquarters for the range.

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Desert Game Range by executive order on May 20, 1936 for “the conservation and development of natural wildlife resources.” The 2.25-million-acre game range was jointly administered by the Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The range covered most of the lands within the current Desert NWR boundary, as well as portions of the Spring Mountains including the area known today as the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Congress established the refuge’s current configuration in 1966, naming it the Desert National Wildlife Range (its official name to this day). Set at 1.588-million acres, the wildlife range was placed under the sole control of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). The approximately 660,000 acres of the Spring Mountains originally within the game range boundary were placed under control of the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Desert NWR ([www.fws.gov/desertcomplex/desertrange](http://www.fws.gov/desertcomplex/desertrange)) is approximately 23 miles north of Las Vegas on U.S. Highway 95. Signs on both sides of the highway mark the entrance to the four-mile gravel road leading to Corn Creek. At 1.6-million acres, it is the largest national wildlife refuge in the continental United States — second in size in the entire U.S. to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska (19.3-million acres). For more information, visit the wildlife refuge at the above Internet address or call the staff at (702) 879-6110.

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](http://www.fws.gov).