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FREE ENTRY TO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES  
ON NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Saturday, September 18 is National Public Lands Day (NPLD). National Wildlife Refuges that normally charge an entrance fee will be free.

“We invite all to enjoy refuges on National Public Lands Day,” Service Director Steve Williams said. “National Wildlife Refuges are great places to get away and enjoy wildlife and the outdoors.”

The National Wildlife Refuge System has more than 890 trails covering approximately 2,500 miles, open to the public for wildlife observation and photography. Hunting is offered on 300 refuges; fishing opportunities are available on 270 refuges. Additionally, hundreds of environmental education programs are offered across the country.

NPLD encourages volunteerism and is an excellent chance for visitors to explore volunteer opportunities on refuges.

“National Wildlife Refuges belong to all Americans,” Williams said. “Thousands of volunteers who work on refuges make these unique places even better. By lending a hand, volunteers lead tours, provide information, clean trails and monitor wildlife. Together we must conserve our natural resources so that we can all enjoy them now and our children and grandchildren can enjoy them in the future.”

On NPLD, 19 refuges will have special volunteer opportunities. To see a list of all NPLD volunteer opportunities on refuges and other public lands, please see <[http://www.npld.com/pdf/site\\_list\\_2004.pdf](http://www.npld.com/pdf/site_list_2004.pdf)>.

Last year, NPLD became one of the first officially sanctioned volunteer programs under the “Take Pride in America” initiative, a component of President Bush’s USA Freedom Corps. Take Pride encourages citizens to work in partnership with governments to improve our public lands—recreation areas, cultural and historic sites, wildlife habitat, and other places in need of hard work and care.

Last year, 80,000 volunteers worked on 550 National Public Lands Day projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam and contributed millions of dollars of improvements to the public lands.

For more information on volunteering on public lands, please see <[www.takepride.gov](http://www.takepride.gov)>, <<http://www.volunteer.gov/gov/>> or <[www.npld.com](http://www.npld.com)>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of

the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.