

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge

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Trempealeau, WI 54661

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week!

Crisp fall days, warm apple pie, and a visit to *your* national wildlife refuge is a recipe for great Fall fun! This week (October 12 – 18, 2009), America celebrates over 548 national wildlife refuges and the rich, diverse resources they behold. National wildlife refuges are dedicated to the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats. They also offer a wide range of wildlife-dependent recreation--from hunting and fishing to wildlife observation, wildlife photography, nature interpretation and environmental education. Today, there is at least one national wildlife refuge in every state and one within an hour's drive of most major cities.

This year, Refuge Week focuses on the health of the world's birds — especially those that depend on refuge lands and waters for nesting, foraging, wintering or as rest stops during their migrations. This past spring, a national report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners under the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative, credited conservation efforts over the past four decades with averting the extinctions of some previously threatened bird species, including the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon. However, the *U.S. State of the Birds* report noted major population drops for several other bird species, particularly those along the coasts and in the Hawaiian Islands. In the North, 38 percent of Arctic nesting birds are thought to be in decline. Threats to birds include climate change, loss of habitat and disease.

Protecting our natural lands and the abundant wildlife that are dependent on them is essential to the quality of American life - and Refuge Week is a perfect time to visit some of those wild lands. Two special programs are being offered to kick off the Refuge Week celebration and YOU are invited! Saturday, October 10th, park rangers will offer guided bike tours along Refuge dikes. Tours will start at 9:00 am and will be offered on the hour. Tours will last approximately 1 hour and the last tour leaves at 2:00 pm. Meet at the Refuge office adjacent to the observation deck to begin the tour – no pre-registration is required. In addition, a special canoe paddle tour is being offered on Sunday, October 11th at 5:30 pm. Pre-Registration is required by calling 608-539-2311 ext. 16. Canoe tours will last approximately 1 ½ hours and will begin promptly at 5:30pm. Please arrive fifteen minutes prior to launch at the Kiep's Island Boat ramp.

Visitors of all ages are encouraged to join us and both activities are free of charge. Lifejackets will be provided, but parties with children must bring a lifejacket for their child and all children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Both tours offer an excellent opportunity to view wildlife from a different perspective.

Let the celebration begin by visiting Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge sometime during the week! Beautiful commemorative posters are available at no charge at the Refuge office where a variety of nature items and books are also available at the bookstore. Enjoy a stop at the observation deck to get a sneak peak of many birds beginning their journey south for fall migration. The Refuge is open from sunrise to sunset and offers some of the best wildlife observation around.

To get to the Refuge from La Crosse area, take Rt. 53 north to Rt. 54 west. Follow 54 west to Centerville and continue 3.1 miles to West Prairie Road. Turn left on West Prairie Road and drive one mile to the Refuge entrance. From Winona, take Rt. 43 across the Mississippi River into Wisconsin. Turn right onto Rt. 54 east. Travel 5.7 miles to West Prairie Road. Turn right onto West Prairie Rd. and drive one mile to the Refuge entrance. If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact the refuge by calling 608/539-2311, ext. 16.

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1936, lies within the Mississippi River flyway. This 6,226-acre Refuge contains rolling prairies, rich wetlands and bottomland forests which support a variety of wildlife species. It is an isolated backwater, providing needed resting and feeding areas for waterfowl and other birds. 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.

For more information, contact the Refuge at (608) 539-2311, ext. 16 or stop in at the Refuge office M-F, from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.