



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Cherry Valley, Pennsylvania

*Studying its potential as a national wildlife refuge*

### Chronology of the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study

**2000** The Nature Conservancy (TNC) began discussions with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) staff in Pennsylvania regarding protection and management of Cherry Valley's significant population of threatened bog turtles.

**2001** The concept of protecting lands within the valley as a national wildlife refuge was introduced. Service managers were unable to support the proposal due to other land acquisition priorities within the Northeast Region.

**2004** The Friends of Cherry Valley, with support from TNC, the National Wildlife Federation, and local governments, forward the refuge proposal to Representative Paul Kanjorski (D-11th PA).

**2005** With eight co-sponsors, Representative Kanjorski introduced a bill before Congress to study the feasibility of creating a national wildlife refuge within Cherry Valley.

**2006** Congress passed and the President signed into law the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act of 2006, directing the Service to evaluate the valley for potential inclusion as a future national wildlife refuge, and report back to the House and Senate within 12 months.

**February 2007** The Service and The Nature Conservancy convened a meeting in Pennsylvania to discuss a Cooperative Agreement and preparations for completing the Act's purpose. Regional Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) briefed local Congressional offices, Pennsylvania Game Commission, and the Pennsylvania Boat Commission.

**April 2007** Following site visits and several planning meetings, the Service determined that the study report should be in the form of an environmental assessment meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and it should include a draft Land Protection Plan. Regional Chief (NWRS) briefed Representative Kanjorski's Chief of Staff.

**October 2007** The first Cherry Valley Study Team (CVST) meeting was held to begin collecting information about the area. The CVST includes members from the Service, TNC, National Park Service, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Monroe County Conservation District, Monroe County Planning Commission, and local academic institutions.

**December 2007** A second CVST meeting was held. This meeting used the information already gathered to start drafting a description of the affected environment for the study.

**March 2008** The Service, in cooperation with TNC, held two public meetings in accordance with the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act, which stipulates that the Service must provide opportunities for public involvement. The Service also solicited additional public comment through April 30, 2008, during which written comments could be submitted. Over 200 people attended the public meetings. Support for establishing a refuge was enthusiastic and nearly unanimous.

**September 2008** The draft of the Cherry Valley Study Report was completed. The Regional Director was briefed on the status and progress of the study report.

**October 2008** The Regional Director and Regional Chief brief the Director on the status and content of the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Report.