

News Release



Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge
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The Centennial Trail Named a National Recreation Trail

This summer, *The Centennial Trail* at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge was named a National Recreation Trail by Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne. In celebration of this national honor, the Refuge will be holding an official designation event for the Trail on Saturday, October 6 and is inviting the public to attend.

Secretary Kempthorne named 40 additions to the National Trails System this year, including *The Centennial Trail*, which joins a network that contains more than 11,000 miles of trails. There are now over 1,000 trails in the U.S. that have been designated as National Recreation Trails on federal, state, municipal, and privately owned lands. *The Centennial Trail* is one of sixteen National Recreation Trails in Florida, the only one of which is on a national wildlife refuge. These designations recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance and currently range from less than a mile to 485 miles in length.

National Recreation Trails are components of the National Trails System and recognize already existing trails that connect people to resources and improve their quality of life. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program and the U.S. Forest Service in conjunction with other federal and nonprofit partners, notably American Trails.

This new national trail designation along with the existing designation as a National Scenic Byway site further promotes Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge to travelers seeking to explore the natural world along the Indian River Lagoon Scenic Byway.

The reopening and dedication event of *The Centennial Trail* on Saturday morning, October 6, will begin with a family early-bird tour of Bird's Impoundment Trail at 7am. The National Recreation Trail dedication will begin at 8am at the Pelican Island Viewing Area, followed by a tour of *The Centennial Trail* for the first time since it was closed for improvements in mid-August. Tours of the refuge butterfly garden will be offered throughout the morning and the Pelican Island Preservation Society, the refuge friends group, will be selling special National Wildlife Refuge Week t-shirts. Refuge trails will remain open to the public throughout the day and on a daily basis thereafter. This event also kicks off National Wildlife Refuge Week, October 7 – 13, in which national wildlife refuges all around the country will be offering special programs to provide opportunities for people to reconnect with nature.

The dedication event will be located at the Pelican Island Viewing Area, ½ mile south on Historic Jungle Trail off Highway A1A in Sebastian. Visitors arriving for the early-bird tour should meet at the Pelican Island Welcome and Orientation Area, the first parking lot on the left when traveling south on Jungle Trail. Reservations are not required. For more information, please call Joanna Webb at (772) 562-3909 ext 258 or email pelicanisland@fws.gov.

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 97-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 fish, wildlife management 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 Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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