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NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES ACROSS THE U.S. HELP COMPANIES, INDIVIDUALS TO GO ZEROSM

The Conservation Fund and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Launch National Partnership to Restore Wildlife Habitat and Offset Carbon Emissions by Planting Trees

SANTEE, S.C. (March 30, 2007) – With the serene waters of Lake Marion in the background and surrounded by a mixed pine-hardwood forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dale Hall joined The Conservation Fund’s president, Larry Selzer and John Frampton, Director of South Carolina’s Department of Natural Resources at Santee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in eastern South Carolina to unveil a national agreement to restore wildlife habitat and offset carbon emissions by planting native trees on national wildlife refuge lands.

“This is an excellent step towards forest restoration for the entire nation’s Refuge system,” said Hall. “Having a partners like The Conservation Fund provide trees and funding is a benefit for the environment and wildlife, and a great service for the American people. Everybody wins.”

From the Santee NWR in South Carolina to the San Joaquin NWR in California, now all 545 of the Service’s national wildlife refuges can receive a new source of conservation funding from the Fund’s Go ZeroSM program, an initiative that helps companies and individuals calculate and then offset their carbon dioxide footprint by planting native trees in protected areas across the country.

“With the loss of more than 20 million acres of forestland in the lower Mississippi River Valley alone over the last century, restoring our nation’s native forest habitat is a critical component in our fight against climate change – one of the most challenging environmental issues of our time,” said The Conservation Fund’s president, Larry Selzer. “By leveraging new sources of conservation capital, we’re demonstrating the extraordinary results that can be achieved when public and private partners support a balanced approach to conservation.”

As part of its successful Carbon Sequestration Program, The Conservation Fund launched Go ZeroSM to engage people around the world -- companies, communities, and individuals -- in the effort to combat climate change. Go ZeroSM measures the specific carbon dioxide emissions of virtually any slice of life, from travel-related emissions to corporate headquarters, high profile

events to single individuals. The Conservation Fund then offsets that impact by planting native trees, which absorb carbon dioxide as they grow.

Approximately 25 acres of native forest habitat will be restored at Santee NWR. Established in 1941, the refuge extends for 18 miles along the northern shore of Lake Marion. Located within the upper coastal plain region of Clarendon County, Santee NWR protects over 15,000 acres of diverse habitat in four different units: Bluff, Dingle Pond, Pine Island, and Cuddo Units. Open water, upland hardwood and mixed pine hardwood forest, upland pine forest, freshwater marshes, shrub wetlands, managed impoundments, forested wetlands, cultivated fields, and grasslands provide for a vast array of migratory bird species. Among the many species of migratory birds that can be found on the refuge are several species of management concern such as the painted bunting, wood stork and bald eagle.

Support from the Fund's Go ZeroSM partners, including Dell, Gaiam, The North Face, Travelocity and others, has helped to restore sensitive bottomland hardwoods forests at national wildlife refuges in Louisiana, Georgia, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Virginia. Future plantings are scheduled at refuges in California and Illinois.

These newly restored habitats do more than just address climate change; they leave a lasting legacy by restoring important wildlife habitat, improving air and water quality, and enhancing outdoor recreational areas – the very places travelers visit.

Since 2000, The Conservation Fund has restored nearly 30,000 acres and planted nine million trees through its carbon sequestration program. Over the next 100 years, these new forests will capture an estimated 13 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent from the atmosphere. Calculate your footprint at www.gocarbonzero.org.

The Conservation Fund is the nation's foremost environmental nonprofit dedicated to protecting America's land and water legacy for current and future generations. Seeking innovative conservation solutions for the 21st century, the Fund works to integrate economic and environmental goals. Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has helped its partners safeguard wildlife habitat, working landscapes, community "green space," and historic sites totaling more than five million acres nationwide. With one percent fundraising costs and 96 percent program allocation, The Conservation Fund is recognized as the nation's top rated environmental nonprofit by both the American Institute of Philanthropy and Charity Navigator. www.conservationfund.org.

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 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources 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 and Native American tribal 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. <http://www.fws.gov/southeast>