



News Release

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest Region Names Jennifer Owen-White Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge Manager

(Albuquerque, N.M.) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Southwest Region is proud to announce selection of Jennifer Owen-White as Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Manager. Bringing extensive and broad experience as Director of Education for the Science Spectrum Museum, Park Naturalist, Natural Resource Specialist and Regional Interpretive Specialist for Texas Parks and Wildlife, and most recently, as Refuge Manager for Santa Ana NWR and Visitor Service Manager for South Texas Refuge complex in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Jennifer is an ideal choice for leading the first urban refuge in the Southwest area.

"She is the right person for this job," says Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Regional Director for the Service's Southwest Region. "Not only does Jennifer have the right credentials, she is highly motivated. With Jennifer's leadership, we will be actively involved in the South Valley's revitalization, whether it is community connection or economic resurgence."

Working with the Service since 2010, Jennifer has made a name for herself within the National Wildlife Refuge System. She was one of six Refuge Managers across the United States selected to participate in an International birding conservation effort with China. A certified interpretive host and trainer, Jennifer is active with the National Association for Interpretation, and was recognized as the Region's Sense of Wonder recipient for her contributions to the National Interpretation and Environmental Education Vision Implementation Team.

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As the first Refuge Manager for Valle de Oro NWR, Jennifer sees the refuge farm lands as an ideal site for habitat restoration and the gateway to outdoor experiences for urban youth with interpretive programs and hands-on environmental education opportunities. “I feel so lucky to have this great opportunity to bring the people of Albuquerque *their* urban National Wildlife Refuge and to provide citizens of all ages the opportunity to explore nature and become better connected to conservation,” Owen-White said of her new endeavor.

Tuggle adds, “This particular refuge is not a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service holding, it is a viable part of the community as it relates to what is going on in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Without the community we would not have this refuge. Our commitment to the community and the community’s commitment to us really is what dictates our success as we move forward to the next phase of building our first urban refuge.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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