

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 21, 2012

CONTACTS

Tina Shaw, 612-713-5331
Gary Muehlenhardt, 612-713-5477

Environmental Assessment Available for Proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge Open House Events Scheduled

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has released for public review and comment an Environment Assessment (EA) for the possible establishment of a national wildlife refuge in two counties along the Wisconsin and Illinois border between Milwaukee and Chicago.

The EA presents four alternatives designed to benefit specific wildlife and plant habitats within the original study area. The boundaries were formulated based on the watersheds, existing conservation areas, habitat requirements of desired wildlife species, public roads, and comments received from the public. The preferred alternative identified by the planning team would link and expand upon existing conservation areas to benefit migratory birds, endangered species, and provide for wildlife-dependent recreation. Land conservation methods for core areas, up to 11,200 acres in total, would include fee purchase from willing sellers, conservation easements, and private initiatives aimed at creating contiguous natural habitat.

The agency will be hosting two open house events to request input from the public. The public is invited to attend these open house events to talk with Service planning staff and submit comments on the EA.

The first open house will be on Tuesday, April 3, 2012, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in Glacial Park, Route 31 and Harts Road, Ringwood, Illinois. The second open house will be on Wednesday, April 4, 2012 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Genoa City, Wisconsin at the Brookwood Middle School, 1020 Hunter's Ridge Drive.

Interested citizens may stop by any time during the open houses, and stay as long as they wish, to speak with Service staff or submit comments. Comment forms will be made available so that written comments can be submitted onsite or mailed in later.

The Service will accept comments on the EA until April 27, 2012. Written comments can be submitted at the open house events or to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Planning - Attn: Hackmatack Refuge EA, 5600 American Boulevard West, Bloomington, MN 55437.

Comments may also be sent through the Service's Planning website at:
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/Hackmatack/index.html>

The EA is available on this website. Copies of the plan were also sent to many local libraries.

For more information on the Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service visit
<http://midwest.fws.gov>.

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.

Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfwmidwest, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwsmidwest, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest>.