



National Wildlife
Refuge System

June 2012

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative

National Wildlife Refuge System

The Recommendation

Create an urban refuge initiative that defines excellence in our existing urban refuges, establishes the framework for creating new urban refuge partnerships and implements a refuge presence in ten demographically and geographically varied cities across America by 2015.

The Issue

With 80% of Americans living in cities, how do we connect urban America with our wild places, such as national wildlife refuges? How do we teach a new generation to love the land – when pavement is what they usually see? How do we help children find inspiration in nature all around them – when they spend so much time indoors and plugged in? America will have much of their direct contact with nature while in an urban setting, thereby shaping the nation’s conservation values, ethics and priorities, and requiring the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to reach beyond our boundaries. These are the challenges of the Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative.

Implementation of Conserving the Future

The Service’s vision for the National Wildlife Refuge System, entitled *Conserving the Future*, proposes in Recommendation 13 an Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative that will increase the Service’s relevancy to urban citizens. This initiative will establish measures to help define and achieve excellence, create a framework for creating new urban partnerships, and establish a refuge presence in ten demographically and geographically varied cities in the U.S.

The Service’s work plan for the Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative (Recommendation 13 of *Conserving the Future*) can be downloaded online at <http://AmericasWildlife.org/workplans>



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The urban environment meets nature.

and includes these deliverables:

- **Urban Audience Analysis:** Identify target audiences to understand habitats, behaviors, and barriers to access in urban areas.
- **Standards of Excellence for Urban Refuges:** Develop a set of measureable objectives and standards of excellence for achieving Service goals in urban areas.
- **Urban Partnership Handbook:** report on new and innovative partnership approaches that can provide a presence in urban areas with or without a land base.



The *Conserving the Future* vision is available online at:

www.AmericasWildlife.org/vision

- **Summit of Urban Refuge Managers:** convene a summit of urban refuge managers and partners to share and institutionalize the Standards, discuss overcoming barriers, and measure success.
- **Web-based seminars** annually with urban refuge managers and staff to address specific needs and issues

Get Involved

Two years ago, the Service began developing the *Conserving the Future* vision for the Refuge System. Today, with implementation of the vision moving forward, *Conserving the Future* is the perfect avenue for those engaged in protecting wildlife to support the Refuge System. For regular updates, go on-line: <http://AmericasWildlife.org>. The website hosts “In the Spotlight” blog posts with examples of the vision in action, as well as the “Newswire,” sharing the latest information. There are opportunities for your voice to be heard in the website’s social network where draft products will be posted to solicit feedback.

For additional information, contact Anna Harris, Implementation Coordinator, at Anna.Harris@fws.gov or (703) 358-2320.

Urban Wildlife Refuge Profile

The John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum is located just one mile from the Philadelphia International Airport in Pennsylvania. The refuge provides a visitor center, foot trails, fishing, and wildlife observation platform, as well as 10 miles of trails, all within access of public transportation.

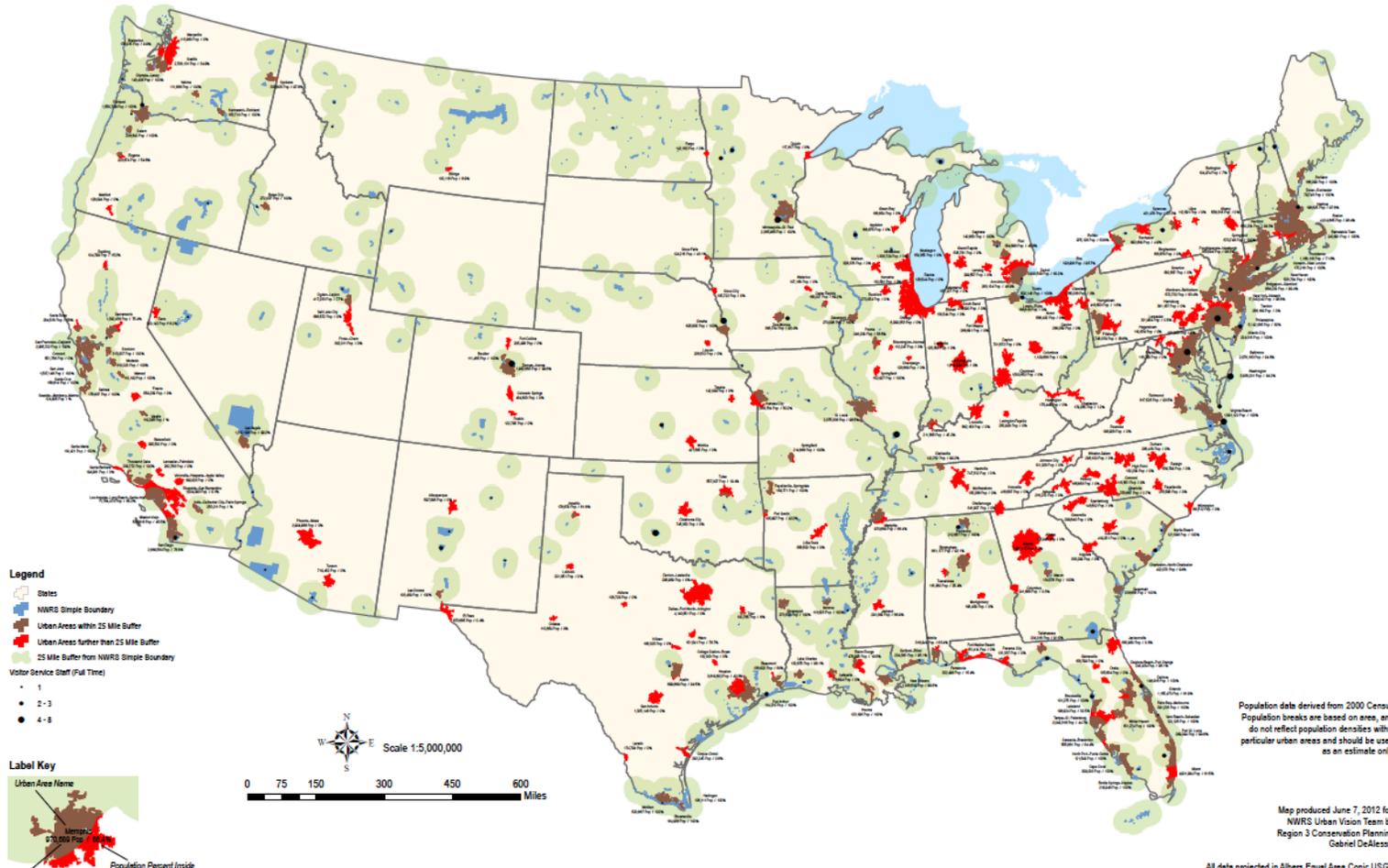
Congress established the refuge in 1972 to protect the last 200 acres of freshwater tidal marsh in Pennsylvania. When completed, over 1,200 acres of varied habitats will be protected for the residents of Philadelphia to enjoy. The refuge has become a resting and feeding area for more than 300 species of birds, 80 of which nest here. Fox, deer, muskrat, turtles, fish, frogs and a wide variety of wildflowers and plants call the refuge home.

The John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum is one of more than 500 Refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System, which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and its habitat, and represents the most comprehensive wildlife management program in the world.



Visitor with park ranger at John Heinz NWR.

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Map of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the proximity of refuges to urban areas.