

NEWS RELEASE

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Service, Partners Dedicate America's 553rd National Wildlife Refuge
*Pennsylvania's Cherry Valley Refuge conserves critical wildlife area
within 100 miles of major U.S. cities*

Stroudsburg, PA – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the establishment of Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge as America's 553rd national wildlife refuge. The refuge will conserve nationally significant wildlife areas, including habitat for threatened and endangered species and a major corridor for migratory birds and bats. Located only 75 miles from New York City and 100 miles from Philadelphia, the refuge represents a new opportunity to connect more than 3 million citizens with the outdoors.

The refuge was officially established on October 18, 2010, when the Service acquired 185 acres of land within the refuge boundary from Mary and Dominick Sorrenti of Sorrenti's Cherry Valley Vineyards. The Sorrenti's hosted today's dedication, which included U.S. Congressman Paul E. Kanjorski (PA-11th), and representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Friends of Cherry Valley and other members of the citizen-led Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Partnership.

“Cherry Valley is a model for the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative,” said Acting Director Rowan Gould. “It is an example of how private citizens and local communities can safeguard the places they care about. The Service is pleased to be part of the citizen-led partnership that helped create this refuge, and we look forward to working with our new

neighbors to protect additional lands as part of the refuge.”

The Service has been working with the partnership and local citizens to identify property to purchase for the refuge since it was approved in December 2008. The approved boundary for the refuge encompasses more than 20,000 acres in Monroe and Northampton counties. The first 185-acre parcel of land was purchased from the Sorrenti’s with congressionally-appropriated Land and Water Conservation Fund monies.

Local citizens, with assistance from The Nature Conservancy, created a partnership to protect Cherry Valley in 2001. At the urging of the partnership, Congressman Kanjorski and Charles W. Dent (PA-15th) co-sponsored the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act, which passed in 2006. This study led to the decision to approve the refuge.

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and many others have long been key pieces of this initiative and have been instrumental in establishing the refuge,” said Congressman Kanjorski. “Because of this refuge, people living in Monroe County for generations to come will have the opportunity to experience an untouched environment that will continue to remain preserved for years to come.”

“Cherry Valley is an important part of The Nature Conservancy’s work to protect Pennsylvania’s special places, for people and for nature,” said Pennsylvania Chapter Executive Director Bill Kunze. “This refuge will help protect working farms and a portion of the Appalachian Trail, as well as habitat for rare species.”

Members of the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Partnership include The Nature Conservancy, Friends of Cherry Valley, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program, National Park Service, Monroe County Planning Commission, Monroe County Conservation District, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Appalachian Northampton Community College, East Stroudsburg University, Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Pocono Avian Research Center.

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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