

News Bulletin



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Fish and Wildlife Service provides more time for feedback on Great Thicket Land Protection Plan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has extended the comment period to April 3, 2016, instead of March 4, on the proposed Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge across six states.

“We’ve heard from a variety of partners and other stakeholders across New England and New York that more user groups are hearing of the Great Thicket proposal and could use more time,” said Scott Kahan, Northeast Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. “Given the large nature of this project, we would like to provide people with an additional month to review, meet with us, provide information to their colleagues, and submit comments.”

The Great Thicket proposal responds to calls from conservation partners who have determined that more permanently protected and managed young forest and shrublands is needed to restore wildlife populations and return balance to northeast woodlands. Over the past century, many shrublands and young forests across the Northeast have been cleared for development or have grown into mature forests. The plan proposes a variety of options for landowners to participate to conserve young forest, from managing their own land to selling an easement or land. [Read more about the proposal.](#)

Following the comment period, the agency will review public comments, develop responses, make adjustments to the plan as needed, and prepare a final land protection plan.

If the plan is approved by the Service’s director, a final version will be released to the public, and the agency can begin working with interested landowners. The land protection effort would take decades, as the Service works strictly with willing sellers only and depends on funding availability to make purchases. [Learn more at the Great Thicket webpage.](#)