

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



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For Immediate Release:

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes to Establish a National Wildlife Refuge at New River near Langlois, Oregon

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that it is initiating a planning process to study the feasibility of establishing a National Wildlife Refuge at New River in Coos and Curry counties near Langlois, Oregon. The Service has identified a 5,900-acre study area encompassing diverse and valuable upland and wetland habitats. The study area is bordered on the north by Floras Lake, on the west by the Pacific Ocean and the New River Area of Critical Environmental Concern managed by the Bureau of Land Management, on the south by Boice-Cope County Park, and on the east by U. S. Highway 101. The area was identified because of its rich fish and wildlife values, which have been supported by ranching practices, and because of the high potential for restoring native habitats.

The wetlands and pasturelands in the New River bottoms support the largest spring staging area for Aleutian cackling geese in Oregon. More than 40,000 geese have been documented using the area in recent years. Establishing a refuge would help address the growing depredation concerns of local ranchers. The New River bottoms provides habitat for a variety of migratory birds including shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. More than 100,000 western sandpipers and 2,000 whimbrels have been recorded on a single day on one ranch. The New River is one of only four locations along the Oregon coast supporting wintering tundra swans. The New River, Floras Creek and other small streams harbor strong runs of wild anadromous fish including coho salmon, chinook salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and Pacific lamprey.

“The New River bottoms and adjacent Cape Blanco area constitute the largest unfragmented grassland habitats remaining along the entire Oregon and Washington coasts”, said Roy W. Lowe, Project Leader for the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex. “Ranching practices have provided valuable habitat for diverse and abundant wildlife species and we want to insure that continues in the future”, said Lowe. If the proposed New River National Wildlife Refuge were established, it would be managed by the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex headquartered in Newport, with a sub-office in Bandon.

This week, the Service issued the first Planning Update for the proposed New River National Wildlife Refuge. This Planning Update describes the proposal, the public planning process that will occur, and how to become involved in the process. The Update was mailed to all appropriate federal, state, tribal, county and local agencies and groups as well as landowners within and adjacent to the proposed refuge. To add your name to the mailing list, contact the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 2127 SE Marine Science Drive, Newport, Oregon 97365-5258, 541-867-4550 or email oregoncoast@fws.gov.

Updates will be issued periodically to keep the public informed of the progress, events and schedule of the planning study. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will host a public open house on June 16, 2005. The open house meeting will be held from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Blanco Middle School, 48241 Highway 101, in Langlois. The public is invited to attend the meeting to learn about the proposal and the planning process, and to provide the Service with comments and concerns. The Open House will begin with a short presentation followed by a session where the public can discuss the proposal one-on-one with Refuge System employees. If you cannot attend the Open House, but wish to submit comments or provide information please send them by July 8, 2005, for consideration during the development of the planning documents. Please send written comments to Amy Wing, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Refuge Planning, 911 NE 11th Ave., Portland, Oregon 97232-4181, FAX 541-231-6187 or via email FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov (Please use “New River” in the subject line).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 96-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.