OVERVIEW

2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter establishes U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) policy, criteria, and procedures for naming and renaming National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) and National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) units, administrative sites, management complexes, and management units.

2.2 What is the scope of this chapter?

A. This chapter applies to naming and renaming NWRS and NFHS units, administrative sites, management complexes, and management units (see Exhibit 1 for definitions).

B. This chapter does not apply to naming and renaming Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices, Ecological Services Offices, or leased office space.

C. It is only necessary to name units, administrative sites, management complexes, and management units if they have, or we anticipate that they will have, Service public signage or appear on a public-facing map.

2.3 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter? See Exhibit 1 for a glossary of terms we use in this chapter.

2.4 What is the Service’s overall policy?

A. Responsibility for naming. When a national wildlife refuge, NFHS unit, Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) county, or administrative site is not named by Congress or the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, the Director names it to distinguish it from other Federal and state units and sites (see section 2.8).

B. Congressionally and Migratory Bird Conservation Commission-named areas. If Congress named or renamed a complex, NWRS or NFHS unit, or site, then only Congress can
rename it. If the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission named a unit, then the Service will obtain the Commission’s approval before renaming it, unless Congress chooses to rename it.

C. Criteria. When proposing names, we prefer using a geographic or geologic feature identifiable with the location if the feature significantly affects the use or the natural resources of the area (see section 2.6 for additional criteria).

D. Changing a name. We change the name of a complex, unit, or site only when it is necessary to distinguish it from other Federal and state units and sites, or when changing the name will address a public concern, facilitate management, or honor an individual who played a significant role in establishing or operating the unit or site (see section 2.6).

E. Consultation. Before renaming, we conduct the appropriate level of consultation, as described in section 2.7.

2.5 What are the authorities for this chapter?


CRITERIA AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

2.6 What criteria does the Service use for new names?

A. National Wildlife Refuge System and National Fish Hatchery System General Criteria.

(1) We give first preference to a geographic or geologic feature identifiable with the location if the feature significantly affects the use or the natural resources of the area. The name of the feature must not be so common that its quality of distinctiveness is lost.

(2) If there is no significant geographic or geologic feature, we may name a unit or management unit for an appropriate wildlife, fish, or plant species in the area.

(3) We propose names that are short, distinctive, descriptive, and acceptable to local interests.

(4) We propose names that are not disrespectful of cultural and ethnic groups.

(5) We propose names that the public will not confuse with the names of:

(a) Other NWRS and NFHS complexes and units,
(b) Other Federal and state units.

(6) We do not name or rename national wildlife refuges, national fish hatcheries, Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA), administrative sites, management complexes, and management units after an individual, except that:

(a) The Director may name or rename a management unit or a visitor center to honor a deceased individual who played a significant role in establishing or operating the associated unit, with the written consent of one or more of the individual's heirs.

(b) A Project Leader may group multiple fee-title WPA acquisitions into a WPA management unit and name or rename it after a former landowner, alive or deceased, when the local community associates the area with that individual, and we have the written consent of the individual or one or more of his/her heirs.

B. Management Complex-specific Criteria.

(1) Refuge Complexes. If the complex will manage multiple national wildlife refuges, then the Regional Director must name the complex after the geographic area (e.g., the North Louisiana Refuges Complex, the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex) or after the complex’s main office location (e.g., Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge Complex). All complexes that manage refuges must have “Complex” as the last part of the name.

(2) National Fish Hatchery Complexes. If the complex will manage multiple NFHS units, then the Regional Director must name the complex after the geographic area (e.g., the Maine/New Hampshire Complex) or after the complex’s main office location (e.g., Lahontan National Fish Hatchery Complex). These complexes must have “Complex” as the last part of the name.

(3) Wetland Management Districts (WMD). To facilitate management, a Regional Director may combine multiple Director-approved WPA counties into a complex and name it as a WMD. All new complexes that manage WPAs must have “Wetland Management District” as the last part of the name (e.g., Tamarac Wetland Management District).

C. Refuge-specific Criteria. In our planning for a new refuge:

(1) If 90 percent or more of the total acres proposed for acquisition are conservation easements or other less-than-fee interests in real property, then we must use “Conservation Area” as the last part of the unit name.

(2) If 66 to 89 percent of the total acres proposed for acquisition are conservation easements or other less-than-fee interests in real property, and we delineate separate areas for fee title and easement acquisition, then we must use “National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area” as the last part of the unit name.

(3) In all other cases, we must use “National Wildlife Refuge” as the last part of the unit name.
D. WPA-specific Criteria.

(1) Project Leaders may group one or more WPA acquisitions within a Director-approved WPA county into a WPA management unit and name it (e.g., Grenna Lake Waterfowl Production Area), to distinguish it from other Federal and state units and sites for management or public use purposes. These management units must have “Waterfowl Production Area” as the last part of the name.

(2) When the local community associates one or more WPA acquisitions with the name of a former landowner, a Project Leader may group those WPA acquisitions into a WPA management unit and name it after the individual’s last name (e.g., Smith Waterfowl Production Area), with the written consent of the individual or one or more of his/her heirs.

2.7 What is the Service’s process for consulting stakeholders about proposed name changes? Before renaming a national wildlife refuge, NFHS unit, or visitor center, we consult stakeholders about the proposed renaming using a public process. Before renaming a management complex, management unit, including WPAs, or other site, we consult stakeholders about the proposed renaming if we anticipate that stakeholders may have concerns. The consultation must include:

A. Notifying the public. The Regional Director (or his/her designee) must notify the public and request public input before changing the name.

(1) The Regional Director must also notify any Native American tribes who have ancestral, cultural, or historical associations with the region, but no longer live in the area.

(2) Regions must notify the public using both electronic and non-electronic means to ensure appropriate public engagement (e.g., notices at local post offices or stores, newspaper notices or stories, press releases, web and social media postings, etc.).

(3) The notifications must include a description of the reasons for the name change, an explanation for the proposed new name, a request for comments, and instructions and a deadline for submitting comments. We must give the public a minimum of 30 calendar days to provide written comments following the day the notices are published, and we may extend the comment period for 14 days if we find there is significant public interest.

(4) If the unit, site, or associated management complex currently has a visitor center, then the Regional Director (or his/her designee) also must ensure that the visitor center location:

(a) Prominently displays a sign or poster that announces the proposed name change and provides instructions for submitting written comments; and

(b) Prominently displays and provides copies of a flyer that includes a description of the reasons for the proposed name change, an explanation for the proposed new name, a request for comments, and instructions and a deadline for submitting comments.
B. Consulting with the affected congressional delegation. The Regional Director must send to each member of the congressional delegation a letter that includes a description of the reasons for the proposed name change, an explanation for the proposed new name, and a request that each Member of Congress contact us, in writing, if they have concerns about the proposed renaming. We must give each Member a minimum of 30 calendar days to respond in writing.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPROVALS

2.8 What are the overall responsibilities for naming and renaming Service units and sites? See Table 2-1.

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<tr>
<th>These employees...</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. The Director</strong></td>
<td>(1) Approving or declining to approve Servicewide policy;</td>
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<td>(2) Considering input from stakeholders before deciding whether or not to change the name of a national wildlife refuge or NFHS unit; and</td>
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<td>(3) Approving, in writing, proposed names and name changes for national wildlife refuges, NFHS units, and administrative sites, and also for visitor centers and management units in national wildlife refuges that will be named after an individual.</td>
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<td><strong>B. Regional Directors</strong></td>
<td>(1) Consulting stakeholders about all proposals to change the name of a national wildlife refuge, NFHS unit, or visitor center, and about other renaming proposals if he or she anticipates that stakeholders may have concerns;</td>
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<td>(2) Requesting the Director’s written approval of proposed names and name changes for national wildlife refuges, NFHS units, and administrative sites, and also for visitor centers and management units in national wildlife refuges that will be named after an individual;</td>
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<td>(3) Approving, in writing, proposed names and name changes for management complexes, and delegating responsibility for approving other names and name changes;</td>
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<td>(4) Ensuring that their Regions maintain documentation for names and name changes for all units and sites this chapter covers;</td>
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<td>(5) Ensuring that Assistant Regional Directors and Project Leaders within their Regions understand and comply with this policy; and</td>
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<td>(6) Notifying the Chief, Division of Realty, in Headquarters, of any new named units or name changes.</td>
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</table>
These employees... | Are responsible for...
---|---
**C. Chief, Division of Realty, in Headquarters** | (1) Maintaining the Service’s official record of names for NWRS and NFHS units and administrative sites, and  
(2) Ensuring Service land records and map data are accurate for these units and sites.

8/20/2020

X Aurelia Skipwith  
Aurelia Skipwith  
Director  
Signed by: AURELIA SKIPWITH