



040 FW 2

Naming and Renaming Units and Unit Sites

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2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter prescribes basic policy, criteria, and procedures for naming and renaming unit sites operated by the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service/we).

2.2 To whom does this chapter apply? This chapter applies to all units that are under control of the Service.

2.3 What is the Service policy on naming? We will assign an official name to each unit and unit site that we operate to provide dis recognition from other holdings, both administratively and among the general public.

2.4 What terms do I need to know? For purposes of this chapter:

A. Unit means any proposed or existing research area, administrative site, and all components of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the National Fish Hatchery System.

B. Site means any sub-unit, geographic feature, or improvement within a unit.

2.5 Who approves new names or name changes? Unless Congress or the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission mandated the Director will approve new names or name changes for research areas, administrative sites, all units of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the National Fish Hatchery System, and specific sites within units.

2.6 Who is responsible for implementing the provisions of this chapter?

A. Regional Directors will ensure that all proposals or recommendations for naming and renaming units and unit sites comply with this chapter.

B. Project leaders will provide the appropriate documentation required for new names or name changes and will comply with the criteria and procedures in this chapter.

C. The Chief, Division of Realty, Headquarters, is responsible for managing the official unit names of research areas, administrative sites, and all units of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the National Fish Hatchery System.

2.7 What criteria are used for proposing names? If neither an act of Congress nor an approval of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission established the unit name, the following criteria apply to naming or renaming a unit. These same criteria apply to naming or renaming specific sites within a unit.

A. You must give first preference to a geographic or geologic feature identifiable with the unit's location, if the feature significantly affects the use or the natural resources of the area. The name of the feature must not be so commonly used that its quality of distinctiveness has been lost.

B. If there is not a significant geographic or geological feature you can identify, you may name a unit or unit site for any wildlife, fish, or plant species.

C. Do not name or rename a unit after any individual, unless it is a waterfowl production area (see [paragraph H\(1\)](#) below). You may name buildings, trails and other facilities within a unit after an individual who played a significant role in the establishment or operation of the unit.

D. Avoid a name that causes confusion with an existing unit's name (for example, Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge).

E. Avoid using a name already in use on other Federal or State units in the same State.

F. Do not use a name that may be disrespectful to any cultural or ethnic group.

G. Keep the name brief, distinctive, descriptive, and acceptable to local interests wherever possible.

H. To provide consistency throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System, all new refuge units, except waterfowl production area conservation areas, must have "National Wildlife Refuge" as the last part of the unit name.

(1) A waterfowl production area that is commonly referred to by using the previous owner's name may be named after the individual. Waterfowl production areas will have "Waterfowl Production Area" as the last part of the unit name.

(2) When the Service has no fee title ownership rights, such as for projects consisting entirely of easements, use "Conservation Area" as the last part of the unit name.

2.8 What are the procedures for naming a new unit?

A. Follow criteria in [paragraph 2.7](#) when proposing a name for a new unit.

B. The Director must approve the name for any new unit.

C. You may select a tentative name to serve as a temporary means of in-house identification until the name is approved.

D. When submitting the Preliminary Project Proposal (PPP) for a proposed new unit to the Director for approval, you must include the proposed name and documentation to support the selection of the name (see [341 FW 2](#)).

2.9 What are the procedures for renaming a unit?

A. If an act of Congress or the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission established the unit name, then only another act of Congress or approval of the MBCC can rename the unit. If we established a unit name, then you do not need an act of Congress or approval of the MBCC to rename the unit. If a congressional act or MBCC approval refers to an existing unit name that we previously established, we still do not need an act of Congress or approval of the MBCC to rename the unit.

B. Any individual or organization may recommend a new name for an existing unit.

C. Follow the criteria in [paragraph 2.7](#) when renaming a unit.

D. The Director must approve the new name for any existing unit.

E. We discourage, but do not prohibit, the renaming of existing units. Name changes cause administrative problems for the Service, such as confusion and sometimes adverse reaction by the general public.

F. The Regional Director must submit a memorandum to the Director providing a critique of the proposed name change and the reasons for recommending the adoption or rejection (if original recommendation is from another source) of the proposal.

2.10 What are the procedures for naming and renaming specific sites within a unit?

A. Follow the criteria in [paragraph 2.7](#).

B. The Regional Director must approve the names of buildings, trails or other facilities within a unit. You may obtain approval by including proposed names for specific sites in the Decision Document ([341 FW 2](#)) or by submitting a separate memorandum.

C. When establishing any geographic site name, follow the standards and requirements of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

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