



United States
Department of the
Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



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Director's Order No. 208

Subject: Urban Wildlife Refuge Designation and Partnerships

Sec. 1 What is the purpose of this Order? This Order establishes an Urban Wildlife Refuge Designation and Partnership program that authorizes and encourages all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) programs to conduct cooperative fish and wildlife conservation, education, and outreach activities in urban communities.

Sec. 2 What are the objectives of the Service's Urban Wildlife Refuge Designation and Partnership program? Our objectives are to:

- a. Expand connections between Service activities and the increasingly diverse and urbanized populations of Americans through innovative approaches to urban community engagement;
- b. Expand opportunities for people of all ages in urban areas to appreciate and become involved in fish and wildlife conservation and stewardship activities;
- c. Better coordinate existing successful Service programs (e.g. Urban Bird Treaty program, existing urban National Wildlife Refuges) that work to achieve conservation objectives in urban areas;
- d. Support the Departmental and Service priority initiative of increasing youth involvement in fish and wildlife conservation activities; and
- e. Fulfill the goals in the document "Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation."

Sec. 3 What is an urban community? For this program, we consider an urban community to be one with a population of at least 250,000 people. An urban wildlife refuge is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) that has a population of at least 250,000 people within 25 miles of its boundaries.

Sec. 4 What is the scope of this Order? This Order applies to all Service programs. Although partnership activities may take place on a refuge in an urban community, they may also occur on other types of Service lands (e.g., hatcheries) or off of Service lands. The important factor is that the activities take place in support of the Service mission.

Sec. 5 What are the authorities for this Order?

- a. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act ([16 U.S.C. 661](#)).
- b. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 ([16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee](#)), as amended.
- c. National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998 ([16 U.S.C. 742f](#)).
- d. Partnerships for Wildlife Act ([16 U.S.C. 3741](#)).
- e. Refuge Recreation Act of 1962 ([16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4](#)), as amended.
- f. Youth Conservation Corps Act ([16 U.S.C. 742f](#)).
- g. National Fish Hatchery System Volunteer Act of 2006 ([P.L. 109-360](#)).

Sec. 6 What are the main components of the Urban Wildlife Refuge Designation and Partnership program? The Urban Wildlife Refuge Designation and Partnership program has four main components:

- a. **Urban partner designations:** The program creates a new category of partnership-based lands—lands designated as “National Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships.” These are not Service-owned lands, nor are they governed by Departmental or Service regulations or policies. Instead, these are lands that are owned and managed by others who share our interest in establishing National Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships. These partnership lands are located in urban areas so people can enjoy outside experiences that foster connections with fish and wildlife and their habitats. The partnerships promote active engagement of people in the natural world. They inspire the imagination and create a connected conservation constituency of people who are aware of,

understand, and support the work of the Service and others in fish and wildlife conservation.

(1) The Director may designate a National Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership with a State, county, or municipal government or with a non-profit organization when he/she receives a nomination packet from a Directorate member (either from the Regions or Headquarters). We must document the designation in a memorandum of understanding or other agreement (see [section 7c\(2\)](#)) with the partner. The agreement memorializes the partnership between the Service office and the partner organization who will work together on urban wildlife and habitat management or conservation outreach activities.

(2) The Service office that partners with the other government/organization may:

- Be a National Wildlife Refuge, Ecological Services field station, National Fish Hatchery, Fish and Wildlife Assistance Office, or other Service office;
- Provide technical support, information, education, and grants to support urban fish, wildlife enhancement, and outreach and education program activities. Grant administration and financial management must meet the requirements in [Parts 515 and 516 of the Service Manual](#) on Federal financial assistance;
- Provide the partner organization appropriate and consistent signage that identifies the site as an official Service partner in the National Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership program; and
- Allow the partner organization the consistent use of the urban wildlife refuge graphic and other Service partnership identification on print and Web-based information. (See [041 FW 2](#) for limitations.)

b. Standards of excellence and other materials: The program will establish standards of excellence, best management practices, urban outreach training, and other support activities and materials that help us to develop and enhance programs and partnerships in urban areas. These materials will address the unique challenges and opportunities inherent to working in urban environments and establish metrics by which we can measure success.

- c. **Accountability:** The program requires the Service office partnering with others to compile a summary report of accomplishments and recommendations, which will be sent to the Directorate every 2 years.
- d. **Program oversight:** A cross-program team of senior Service leaders (including at least one field manager), led by the Chief – NWRS and a Regional Director appointed by the Director, will provide general oversight of the Urban Refuge Designation and Partnership program. The team will also establish metrics for evaluating progress and measuring success.

Sec. 7 What are Service employees' responsibilities for implementing this Order?

a. The Director:

- (1) Approves or declines Urban Wildlife Refuge Designation proposals.
- (2) Designates Service leaders to oversee the program.

b. The Chief – NWRS:

- (1) Ensures there is policy in place that helps us achieve the goals and recommendations established in the “Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation” document, and
- (2) Provides technical and management support staff for the partnership program and maintains a listing of accepted partnership designations.

c. Directorate members in the Regions and in Headquarters:

- (1) Support Service staff efforts to implement this policy in the urban communities within their areas of responsibility;
- (2) Ensure partnerships are documented through memorandums of understanding, cooperative agreements, grant agreements, or other appropriate documents;
- (3) May provide signage for display and recognition by partner organizations on partnership sites; and
- (4) May provide technical staff and expertise to help partner organizations address complex fish and wildlife habitat management issues, and help urban populations increase their enjoyment and understanding of fish and wildlife through fish and wildlife recreation, education, and outreach activities.

d. The Chief, Division of Visitor Services and Communication:

- (1) Provides staff support to NWRS leadership to help implement this Director's Order;
- (2) Compiles information and prepares a summary of Servicewide program participation, including accomplishments and recommendations, to be submitted to the Directorate at least once every 2 years; and
- (3) Ensures partnership sites/projects are appropriately designated.

Sec. 8 When is this Order effective? This Order is effective immediately. It remains in effect until incorporated into the Service Manual in Part 600 or until amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever comes first. If not incorporated into the Service Manual, the Order will expire 18 months from the date of signature.

/sgd/ Daniel M. Ashe
DIRECTOR

Date: September 25, 2013

For more information about this policy, contact the Division of Visitor Services and Communication. For more information about this Web site, contact [Krista Bibb](#) in the Division of Policy and Directives Management.

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