

Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Boundary Established

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved on December 23, 2008, establishment of Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Pennsylvania. The refuge boundary encompasses 20,466 acres in Monroe and Northampton counties, within which the Service may begin acquiring nationally significant habitat for wildlife as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge will encompass rare ecosystems and several plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act. Cherry Creek, in the bottom of the valley, flows into the Delaware River. Following the creek's path, Kittatinny Ridge is a major avenue for migrating birds and bats.

The Service had begun to work with partners and landowners within the refuge boundary to identify opportunities to acquire lands through easements and fee title. A number of organizations, including the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, The Nature Conservancy and the National Park Service, among others, already protect a significant amount of land within and near the new refuge boundary.

The Service's action culminated a movement begun in 2005 when Representatives Paul E. Kanjorski (PA-D-11th) and Charles W. Dent (PA-R-15th) co-sponsored a bill to consider a prospective national wildlife refuge within Cherry Valley. The legislation was in response to a petition endorsed by community leaders and local elected officials in Monroe County. The 109th Congress approved the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act in 2006. The study and an environmental assessment required under the National Environmental Policy Act were completed in December 2008, and the Service's Northeast Region recommended establishment of the refuge boundary.