

New National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois

Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area was formally established on May 25 with acceptance of a 66-acre donation from the nonprofit Friends of the Kankakee. The refuge, in the Kankakee River basin of Iroquois County, IL, is not yet open to the public.

“The Kankakee River Basin represents a unique Midwestern landscape,” noted U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director Tom Melius. “I’m very pleased to continue working with the local community and partners to conserve priority wetlands, remnant oak savanna and grasslands as well as enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.”

Establishing the refuge and conservation area recognizes decades of work with conservation partners. The 66-acre acquisition was funded, in part, by the [Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation](#), which works to advance the development and use of renewable energy resources and protect natural areas and wildlife habitat across Illinois.

As part of the Service’s commitment to working closely with the community, it has joined with nine other organizations as well as local residents to begin creating a sustainability plan in the Hopkins Park/Pembroke Township area in Kankakee County. The plan will allow local residents and organizations to collaborate and shape the future of conservation.

National wildlife refuges not only sustain and enhance natural resources, but they can also add to the economic vitality and quality of life for communities. Learn more about the Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area online: <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kankakee/>