



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240



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**APR 04 2014**

Memorandum

To: Service Directorate

From: Director *David M. Ashe*

Subject: Implementing the Four New Service Manual Chapters on Friends Organizations (633 FW 1-4)

This memorandum provides implementation guidance for the four new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual chapters on Friends organizations (633 FW 1-4).

Although we addressed all comments from the Directorate review of these chapters in April 2013, as much as we can within the law and existing policies, the new policy will still require changes in the way we work with Friends organizations. Due to the complex nature of Friends partnerships and the need to inform Service managers and Friends members on the requirements in the policy, employees may take up to 6 months from the date the policy is signed and effective to implement changes.

The only exception to this 6-month implementation timeframe is the transition of all Friends agreements to the new Friends Partnership Agreement. As stated in the policy, all current agreements with official Friends organizations must be converted to the Friends Partnership Agreement when they expire or within 3 years of the date the policy is published (whichever is first).

Although employees may be able to comply with most policy requirements immediately, some of the new requirements are complex and will require careful consideration and communication with our Friends partners over the next 6 months, including:

- Distinguishing official Friends partnerships from other community partnerships based on the new definition and requirements of Friends;
- Converting existing Friends fee-based recreation programs to the Service's public recreation program through established administrative procedures; and
- Implementing new staffing and operating procedures for Friends nature stores, and removing restricted sales items.

A cross-programmatic team consisting of Friends and Partnership Coordinators developed a communication toolkit to help Service staff comply with the policy. We applaud those efforts and encourage continued Regional collaboration to ensure successful implementation of the policy. The toolkit (as well as contact information for the National and Regional Friends Coordinators) can be found on the Friends Web site at [www.fws.gov/refuges/friends](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/friends).