



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington, D.C. 20240



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## Memorandum

To: Service Directorate

From: Deputy Director

Subject: Amendment to Friends Partnership Agreement template in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual (Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3)

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that an amendment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Friends Partnership Agreement template, Exhibit 1 of 633 FW 3, was recently approved. The initial language in Section V.C(13) of the template, which addresses Friends responsibilities, resulted in unnecessary confusion about its intent and was inconsistent with similar guidance issued by the National Park Service. The signed amendment can be found here: <http://www.fws.gov/policy/a1633fw3.pdf>.

The Service's decision to make this minor modification to the template agreement resulted from a number of comments we received over the past two years about implementing key sections of the Friends Partnership Agreement (Exhibit 1 to 633 FW 3). In addition to this issue, other concerns over the policy were raised by Service programs, including:

- The qualification requirement for official Friends organizations to have a mission which supports the purposes and objectives of a Service site or program as stated under Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3, Instructions page;
- Language addressing the need for a Friends organization to submit information on gross receipts, expenditures, projects, etc., to the Service's Regional Director, upon request, as stated under Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3, V.C(11);
- The anti-lobbying provision as stated under Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3, V.C(13);
- The requirement for Friends direct solicitations on Service-managed property to go into a Service contributed funds account as stated under Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3, V.A(12);
- Language addressing the disposition of Friends assets upon the termination of an agreement as stated under Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3, IV. D. (5); and,
- Language addressing the need for Friends to indemnify, save and hold harmless the Department of the Interior, the Service and its employees as stated under Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3, VIIA.

After consulting closely with the Office of the Solicitor in the Department of the Interior (Department) on each of these issues, the Service determined that only the anti-lobbying language in Exhibit 1, 633 FW 3, V.C(13) could be changed. Language identified in other sections of the policy is necessary as originally approved due to our legal responsibilities and the Department's policy. You can find the revised Friends Partnership Agreement template with the amended language in section V.C(13) here: <http://www.fws.gov/policy/e1633fw3.html>. Please continue to provide support to field staff and Friends organizations to update and renew all Friends agreements using the revised template by April 4, 2017. If an agreement has already been approved using the original template, there is no need to resign it until the current agreement expires.

It is important to keep in mind that the Friends Partnership Agreement template provides suggested language common to most Service Friends partnerships. There may be unique circumstances that require the insertion of additional language to explain special needs for those circumstances. However, the other provisions summarized above must be included in any Friends agreement signed by the Service.

The Service is confident that Friends and staff can work together effectively to complete these new agreements. We want this to work for all situations, and the best way to achieve that goal is to ensure that Project Leaders and the Regional Friends Coordinators review the agreements thoroughly before they are signed.

Our vision is for Friends organizations to remain strong nonprofit organizations that effectively support the Service mission and programs to advance wildlife conservation in America. We continue to welcome your feedback about how we can better address your needs. Questions on the revised Friends Agreement template should be directed to Ms. Joanna Webb, Division of Visitor Services and Communications, (703) 358-2392 or [joanna\\_webb@fws.gov](mailto:joanna_webb@fws.gov).