

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge
P. O. Box 68, St. Marks, FL 32355
Phone: 850-925-6121
Fax: 850-925-6930

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 3, 2009

Release #10-06
Contact: Robin Will/James
Burnett

Public Input Sought on St. Marks Refuge Expansion

In October 2009, the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge received approval to request public input on a proposal to add an additional 35, 295 acres to the refuge. This acquisition would further the refuge stewardship mission and protect additional habitat for wildlife. The acreage includes upland pine forests, wetlands and coastal habitats in Wakulla, Jefferson, Franklin, and Taylor counties. The land within the approved acquisition boundary would only be purchased from willing sellers/owners.

Acquisition of this land will allow the refuge to continue its efforts to protect clean water, restore historic hydrology and native habitats, and enhance habitat for Florida black bear, waterfowl, shorebirds, neotropical songbirds, and several threatened and endangered species. The latter include the frosted flatwoods salamander, the red-cockaded woodpecker, and the whooping crane, soon to be a returning winter migrant to St. Marks NWR.

Currently, the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge offers many recreational opportunities, including the visitor center and gift shop, as well as frequent educational programs on the environment and several annual wildlife festivals offered for the family. There are multiple trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Other activities such as hunting, bird watching, fishing, boating and photography draw many visitors each year. These recreational activities will be considered when goals are developed for the new property.

The full proposal is available at the St. Marks NWR website (www.fws.gov/saintmarks) and hard copies and CDs are available at the visitor center. Your comments are welcome and encouraged, both on the posted comment card and at upcoming public meetings: Wakulla County Public Library, Tuesday Nov. 17, 5-8 pm and Leroy Collins Leon County Public Library, Meeting Room A, 200 W. Park Ave., Tallahassee, Thursday Nov. 19, 5-8 pm. For additional information, please call 850-925-6121.

X X X X X X X

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.