



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Natural Resources Program Center

National Wildlife Refuge System

The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.



Greater sage-grouse. Credit: USFWS

Background

The Natural Resources Program Center is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System and will directly support the science-based management of the Nation's 547 National Wildlife Refuges and 37 Wetland Management Districts that manage more than 150 million acres of public lands and waters across the United States in all 50 States, several Territories, and the marine environment.

The underpinning legislation guiding the formation of the Center is the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-57). The Act states that the Secretary shall, "monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants in each refuge."

What does the Center do?

The primary purpose of the new Center is to collect and synthesize information which supports management at multiple geographic scales and informs decisions at all organizational levels.

The Center also informs adaptation strategies to climate change and other environmental stressors and assists local managers and

staffs on National Wildlife Refuges by providing sound, scientific protocols and data to inform management decisions and evaluate impacts of management actions.



Tagging horseshoe crabs for monitoring. Credit: USFWS

The Center will streamline and enhance the Refuge System's scientific capacity through integrating scientific protocols with other agencies, states, and the scientific communities to provide contributions that transcend the National Wildlife Refuge System and provide consistency of methodologies that will facilitate outreach messages to partners and the public.

How will the Center accomplish this?

The Center will work with partners and develop

standardized peer-reviewed protocols for information collection. The Center will manage data in accordance with the data standards of the federal government, the agency, and the Department of the Interior.

Data will be readily available to field station employees, other agencies, the academic community, and the general public when appropriate. Science-based decision support tools will be developed for on-the-ground managers to bolster the linkage between the science and management actions. Scientific data from the NWRS will inform and validate predictive models on climate change as well as other relevant models.

Why Fort Collins, CO?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is locating the



Seabird survey on Ulak Island, Credit: Karen Sullivan



office in Fort Collins in order to leverage resources with key partners and ensure sound stewardship of public funds. Science offices for both the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey are located in Fort Collins. Having physical proximity to these offices will help the Service integrate systems across the federal government and minimize duplication of effort.

What resources have been appropriated for this effort?

In FY2010 the Service received \$12M to begin this effort with \$3M for the Center and \$9M disbursed nation-wide for the overall effort. The Center will hire 10 permanent, full-time, professional positions in FY2010.

The FY2011 President's Budget requests an additional \$8M for the effort.

Contact

For additional information about the Center and its programs contact:

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<http://www.fws.gov/refuges>

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