

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge Established

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

This past spring Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge became America's 563rd refuge.

National Wildlife Refuges are lands managed by, or in partnership with, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants. This new national wildlife refuge is devoted to the conservation of southern Appalachian mountain bogs, one of the rarest and most imperiled habitats in the United States.

The Nature Conservancy donated an easement on a 39-acre parcel in Ashe County, formally establishing the refuge.

Mountain bogs are home to five endangered species – bog turtles, green pitcher plant, mountain sweet pitcher plant, swamp pink, and bunched arrowhead. Bogs also provide key benefits to humans. They have a natural capacity for regulating water flow, holding floodwaters like giant sponges and slowly releasing water to nearby streams, thus decreasing the impacts of floods and droughts.

The refuge may eventually grow to 23,000 acres, depending on the willingness of landowners to sell land and the availability of funds to purchase those lands. To guide bog conservation, the Service has identified 30 sites with bogs and will focus bog conservation in these areas, either through land and easement purchases, or supporting the stewardship efforts of private landowners.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.