



National Wildlife Refuge Creation: Options for Private Landowners



Service botanist examines bog plants, credit USFWS/Gary Peeples.

To help develop Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge, and to advance bog conservation in general, we've identified 30 Conservation Partnership Areas scattered over 13 Southern Appalachian counties. These areas typically consist of one or more bogs and adjacent land. Within these 30 Conservation Partnership Areas, we'll work with willing landowners to acquire property to create the refuge, but we'll also explore other options that would allow interested and willing landowners to help with bog conservation while retaining ownership of their land.

The Service only works with willing landowners and no one is under any obligation to sell their land or otherwise participate in the creation of the refuge or bog conservation. For landowners within the Conservation Partnership Areas who are interested in helping create the refuge or conserve bogs, there are options.

| <i>Participation is completely voluntary.</i> | Rights and responsibilities of the original landowner | Rights and responsibilities of the Fish and Wildlife Service |
|--|---|--|
| Fee-title sale The Service purchases the land from a willing seller. | Ownership, with associated rights and responsibilities, transfers to the Service | As purchaser of the property, the Service inherits rights and responsibilities associated with ownership. |
| Conservation easement Landowner agrees to transfer certain development rights, specified in the easement, to the Service for habitat management. Easement terms agreed to by landowner. | Owner retains ownership of the land yet transfers certain rights to the Service. Land uses that would adversely affect native plants and animals are normally restricted. Easement terms agreed to by landowner. | Service acquires certain rights providing it the ability to manage for fish and wildlife on the property. Easement terms agreed to by landowner. |
| Lease The Service leases and manages a piece of land for a defined period of time. | Property owner retains property rights and responsibilities except for those turned over to the Service for a period of time as defined in the lease. | Service acquires certain agreed-upon property rights and responsibilities for a period of time as defined in the lease. |
| Management agreement The Service enters into an agreement with a landowner specifying land management activities the owner will conduct over a period of time, often with some level of Service support. | Property owners retain all rights and responsibilities related to property ownership. Additional commitments may be included in the management agreement, which the Service and the landowner would willingly enter into. | The Service would have no rights or responsibilities associated with property ownership. Additional commitments may be included in the management agreement, which the Service and the landowner would willingly enter into. |
| Technical and financial assistance The Service may offer technical and financial assistance to landowners for specific projects to improve fish and wildlife habitat on their property. | Property owners retain all rights and responsibilities related to property ownership. | The Service would have no rights or responsibilities associated with property ownership. |

Note: It is Service policy to work only with willing landowners. Landowners are not under any obligation to sell their land, sell their development rights, lease their land, enter into a management agreement, or receive assistance.