



Left to right, scarlet tanager; eastern bluebird and blackburnian warbler; all by Danny Bales.

How would tax revenues be affected if the National Wildlife Refuge is created?

Lands acquired by the Service, which does not include lands protected by conservation easements, are removed from county tax rolls. However, through the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act, in the past the Service has offset tax losses by annually paying county and other local governments an amount that often equals or exceeds that which would have been collected from taxes if the land was still in private ownership. The Act has required that the revenue sharing payments be based on the greatest of:

- ¼ of one percent of the appraised market value;
- 25 percent of the net revenues generated on the National Wildlife Refuge; or
- 75 cents per acre.

Service lands are reappraised every five years. Funding for the payments comes from income generated on national wildlife refuges. Beginning in fiscal year 1976, the receipts earned have not been sufficient to make 100 percent of the payments. The only exception was 1980. Local governments have received a prorated share of the revenue sharing payments, or a percentage, based on available funds. Congress can appropriate funds to make up the shortfall.

Fish and wildlife have been shown to be economically important nationwide. According to the report, "Banking on Nature 2006: The Economic Benefits to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation," nearly 35 million people visited national wildlife refuges in Fiscal Year 2006, generating almost



Upland oak-hickory forest by the Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

\$1.7 billion in total economic activity and creating almost 27,000 private sector jobs, producing about \$542.8 million in employment income. Throughout Tennessee, over 3.5 million participants engaged in one or more of three wildlife related recreation activities (fishing, hunting, wildlife watching) during 2006 and spent over two billion dollars.

How would the Service acquire funds to purchase National Wildlife Refuge land?

For this particular National Wildlife Refuge, funding would most likely be provided through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

For more information

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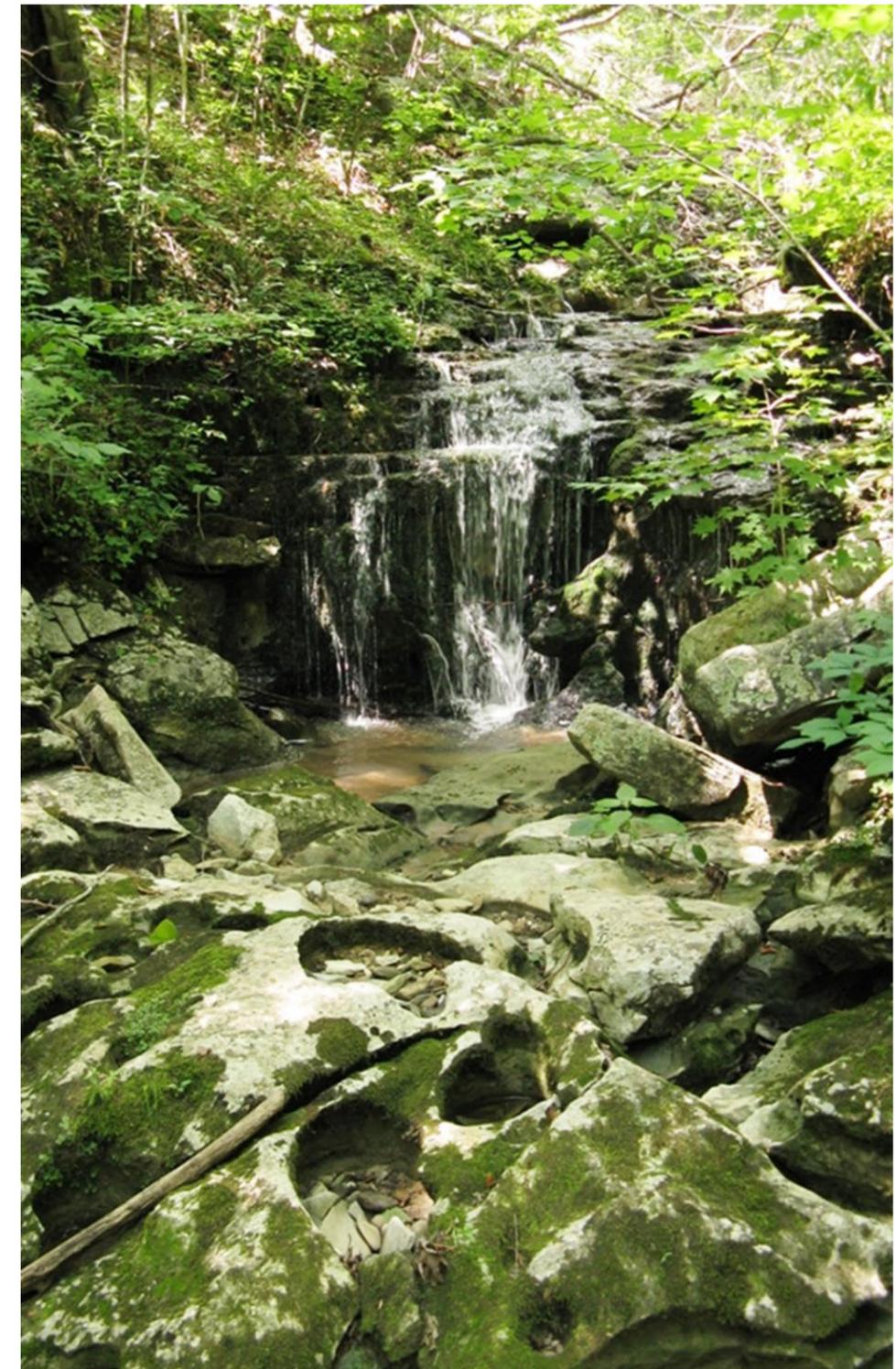
Proposed Paint Rock River National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is studying the potential for a National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Tennessee. The Service's National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's premier system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's fish, wildlife and plants.

The Paint Rock River is one of the last free-flowing rivers in the Southeastern United States. A tributary of the Tennessee River, it lies in the Cumberlands Plateau region of Alabama and Tennessee. Three tributaries to the Paint Rock River (Larkin Fork, Estill Fork, and Hurricane Creek) originate in Franklin County, Tennessee. From there, the river flows south through several counties in Alabama to join the Tennessee River near the town of New Hope. The area within the watershed consists primarily of forested hills with agricultural production occurring in the valleys and floodplains adjacent to the river and its tributary streams.

The proposed establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge in the Paint Rock River watershed is one of two America's Great Outdoors (AGO) priorities identified in Tennessee in the AGO's November 2011 Fifty-State Report. This project also has the support of Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and aligns with several AGO goals, including large landscape conservation, enhanced river access, and support for creative public-private partnerships.

Lost Spring by the Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy





Left to right, top to bottom: Alabama lampmussel by Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center; greenside darter by Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; cave salamander by Corry Holliday; wild geraniums by Sally Palmer; foam flowers by Sally Palmer; Grotto falls at the Walls of Jericho by the Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

There are many potential benefits to a National Wildlife Refuge, such as:

- Protecting water quality and helping ensure water availability which will help maintain the area's high aquatic biodiversity and also benefit people who use the waters of the Tennessee River;
- Providing access for outdoor recreation, such as hiking, hunting, fishing, bird watching, and canoeing/kayaking;
- Providing public environmental education and interpretation programs;
- Increasing eco-tourism that boosts the local economy;
- Protecting tracts of hardwood forest, thereby conserving habitat for migratory birds and a variety of other wildlife;
- Safeguarding over 15 federally threatened and endangered species, as well as dozens of State-listed species

Schedule for the Proposed Paint Rock River National Wildlife Refuge Project
Service to host public information meetings to determine interest in the project and recommendations
 December 2012

Service to develop draft Land Protection Plan and environmental documents
 December 2012 – January 2013

Proposed Public comment period on the draft documents
 April 2013

Service to submit documents to Washington Office for final decision
 June 2013

What is a National Wildlife Refuge?
 A National Wildlife Refuge (refuge, NWR) is federally protected land that is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



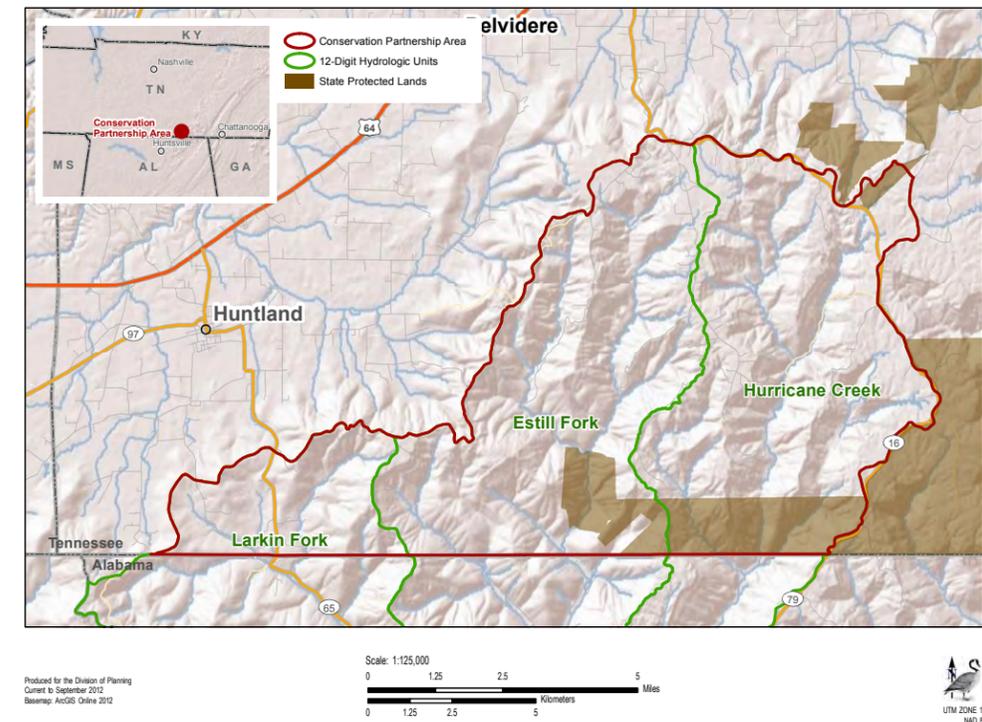
What is a Conservation Partnership Area?
 A Conservation Partnership Area (CPA), when authorized by the Director of the Service, only designates those lands that the Service has authority to acquire or manage through various agreements. The authorization of a CPA does not grant the Service jurisdiction or control over lands within the CPA and it does not automatically make lands within the CPA part of the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System). Lands do not become part of the Refuge System until the Service buys them or they are placed under an agreement that provides for their management as part of the Refuge System.

How would a National Wildlife Refuge be established on the Paint Rock River?
 As part of establishing a new refuge, the Service has to develop a Land Protection Plan (LPP). The primary purpose of this plan is to inform landowners and other stakeholders of the Service's intent to set aside land for conservation. The process includes evaluation, planning, and compliance process. It is used by the Service to study land conservation opportunities, including adding lands to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Service's approach in the Paint Rock River watershed would be to approve a CPA within which the Service would seek to protect lands. Protection could be accomplished through a variety of approaches such as purchasing land from willing sellers, or arranging an easement, or establishing a management agreement.



Proposed Paint Rock River Conservation Partnership Area Franklin County, Tennessee



As part of the process, the Service has to inform the public and analyze the environmental (including socio-economic) effects of this action under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires that federal planning activities be documented to insure that environmental, economic, or social effects are thoroughly evaluated and disclosed to the public. The Service develops an environmental report analyzing wildlife protection needs, proposed alternatives, and the effects of the proposed alternatives on the human environment.

Included in the Land Protection Plan is a Conceptual Management Plan (which describes potential refuge management needs, activities, and public uses, and determines which public uses would be compatible with the purpose of the proposed refuge. As part of the process to establish a new refuge, a Conservation Partnership Area would need to be approved by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Or, Congress can also approve one or more of these areas within which the Service is authorized to negotiate with interested landowners. The Service and its partners would work with willing landowners using several methods to acquire land or land rights, including fee simple purchases and conservation easements.

What if I own land inside an approved Conservation Partnership Area and I do not want to sell?

An approved Conservation Partnership Area (CPA) does not give the Service any special jurisdiction or control over the land inside it. Being inside a CPA does not require landowners to sell their property. Lands only become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System when they are purchased from willing sellers or placed under agreements with willing participants.

Owners with land inside a Conservation Focal Area who choose not to sell maintain every right to their land, including the right to sell the land to whomever they choose. Those owners would be able to manage their lands as before.

What if I don't want to sell my property and wish to develop it?

A Conservation Partnership Area does not preclude owners from developing their properties. You may choose to develop your land within such an area. All such development would be subject to local zoning and regulatory authorities.

Would land use and zoning change within a USFWS Approved Conservation Partnership Area?

No. Zoning and land use regulations would continue under the jurisdiction of the appropriate local government. The Service would manage only its own property, or property in which it acquires an interest via conservation easement.

If the National Wildlife Refuge is created, will I be able to use it for hunting, fishing, or hiking?

The Service gives priority consideration to six wildlife-dependent public uses on national wildlife refuges: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation. If these uses are determined to be compatible with the refuge purposes, and funds are available to manage them, they would be allowed on the refuge. Lands protected by conservation easements would not be available for public access unless agreed to by the landowner.