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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 14, 2015
INFORMATION: Suzanne Baird, Refuge Manager, 410-228-2692 ext. 101**

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge Invites the Public to the Refuge for a Public Meeting on Prescribed Fire

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge will hold a public meeting on the Prescribed Fire Management Program at the Refuge Visitor Center on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting will explain how prescribed fire is used as a habitat management tool on the refuge, the science behind the decisions, and the guidelines the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required to follow when using fire as a management tool. The presentation will cover how the refuge works with adjoining private landowners to meet mutual goals. It will also include discussion of the challenges the refuge faces in dealing with wildfire occurrences and how these types of fires are handled.

Refuge Manager Suzanne Baird encourages all interested individuals to join the discussion on Jan. 22.

“The fire program here at Blackwater Refuge has gone through some changes and funding challenges through the last several years,” Baird said. “This meeting will be an opportunity for us to review with our neighbors here in Dorchester County how this program is changing and what resources capabilities will remain the same into the future. I hope everyone who is interested will come out to get a better understanding of how we use fire on the landscape.”

The meeting will include an informational presentation followed by a question-and-answer session and public discussion. During the presentation, Maryland Forest Service specialists will review their guidelines regarding the use of prescribed burning on private property.

For more information, contact Refuge Manager Suzanne Baird at suzanne_baird@fws.gov or 410-228-2692 ext 101 or Zone Fire Management Officer Art Canterbury at art_canterbury@fws.gov or 410-228-2692 ext 128.

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