

Patuxent Research Refuge



Baltimore, MD/Washington D.C.

community



Baltimore-Washington Corridor is a densely packed expanse of transportation, industry, and government that is home to over 9 million people. Most is within a 30-mile radius of Patuxent Research Refuge (PRR) in Laurel, MD, including over 1.4 million people. Focus communities beyond Laurel include Baltimore through the Masonville Cove Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership and Fairfax County, VA through the Fairfax County Public School system, the 11th largest school system in the nation. The proposal, through these partnerships, will reach over 1.7 million people.

Project Summary:

A tiered approach will target audiences, starting from the Refuge and expanding throughout the broadest geographic tier. At the refuge level, focus is on the residents and schools within Laurel. all the way to Baltimore at Masonville Cove and to northern Virginia focusing on residents and schools located within Fairfax County.. This will establish a corridor for urban wildlife refuge connections to be created and fostered by the initiative's strong pool of partners. Masonville Cove is at the heart of our proposal to reach into the 13 neighboring schools in the Baltimore communities of Curtis Bay, Brooklyn, and Cherry Hill. The next tier includes residents and schools surrounding Patuxent, with a focus on the residents and schools within the town of Laurel.

play

Identify and strengthen a network of community supported wildlife corridors:

- Strengthen existing and develop new partnerships to create a sustainable program that benefits local communities as well as natural resources.

work

Establish an Urban Wildlife Corps which would actively engage over 30 youth in conservation career activities annually.

learn

Expand support for field experiences including transportation for school field trips and innovative interpretative programming for youth and families throughout the summer and weekends:

- Provide transportation for 40,000 students from local schools and community centers to engage them in a variety of outdoor experiences in their surrounding community.

serve

Engage communities through long term investment in their local environment through local nature mentors and multicultural connections:

- Develop 14 schoolyard habitats and begin community-wildlife gardens.
- Establish local nature mentors in communities and neighborhoods.

Living Classrooms Foundation - Chesapeake Bay Foundation - Maryland Port Administration - Chesapeake Conservancy - Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Friends of Masonville Cove - Parks and People Foundation - National Aquarium Institute - Baltimore City - National Wildlife Federation - Anne Arundel County Public Schools - Baltimore City Public Schools - Prince George's County Public Schools - Fairfax County Public Schools - Washington DC School District - Greater Baltimore Children and Nature Network - Natural History Society of Maryland, Inc. - Fairfax County Park Authority - Baltimore's Waterfront Partnership's Healthy Harbor Initiative - Northern Virginia Conservation Trust - Earth Force - Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority - Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District - National Park Trust - National Park Service-Wolf Trap - Earth Sangha - Northrup Grumman

Urban National Wildlife Refuges

INTRODUCTION

The future success of conservation lies ultimately in our ability to inspire Americans to connect with the outdoors and nature, and to become stewards of the environment. With over 80% of Americans living in urban areas, spending less time outdoors, and becoming more ethnically and racially diverse, our challenge is to become relevant in their daily lives. Without public awareness and support, our conservation mission will not succeed.

Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation challenges us to enhance the relevance of the National Wildlife Refuge System (System) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to this rapidly changing America. Building a connected conservation constituency requires connecting with the ever-growing urban population in order to ensure that Americans care about conservation. To this end, the *Conserving the Future* document contains a specific recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 13:

“Create an urban refuge initiative that defines excellence in our existing urban refuges, establishes the framework for creating new urban refuge partnerships and implements a refuge presence in 10 demographically and geographically varied cities across America by 2015.”

Urban areas present a strategic opportunity to reach new audiences that are currently not visiting nor aware of the Service. Refuges that are in the heart of where the people are located provide the best opportunity to engage new audiences, whether through an urban refuge or an urban wildlife refuge partnership. Building this constituency ultimately benefits the entire System and the broader conservation community by nurturing new supporters who care.

The goal of the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program is to engage surrounding urban communities in wildlife conservation as partners. Excellence may be achieved through eight standards that serve as a framework for collaboration between the Service and urban communities on and off Service lands:

- 1. Know and Relate to the Community**
- 2. Connect Urban People with Nature via Stepping Stones of Engagement**
- 3. Build Partnerships**
- 4. Be a Community Asset**
- 5. Ensure Adequate Long-Term Resources**
- 6. Provide Equitable Access**
- 7. Ensure Visitors Feel Safe and Welcome**
- 8. Model Sustainability**

In order to demonstrate the potential of urban refuges to reach new audiences in their communities, the Service requested innovative proposals from each region for one urban refuge to receive \$1 million in base funding in FY14. The Service received strong proposals from our 101 existing urban refuges that are within 25 miles of a population of 250,000 or more. **San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC)** received the funding as announced in August 2014.

The approach to excellence for urban national wildlife refuges must be as flexible and unique as the communities the refuges serve. The Service must strive to understand both human and natural environments in order to understand the expectations of the urban community. The Service must strive to provide programs and leadership on conservation initiatives that are relevant to their communities. Service staff, volunteers, and partners must engage urban communities to develop meaningful connections to wildlife that last a lifetime. This starts by building awareness, fostering deeper understanding, and growing participation through programs that bring more people from the urban world into the larger conservation community.

Urban refuges are great places to build a broader conservation constituency, but the challenge is far too big for any one agency or organization to tackle alone. The Urban Wildlife Refuge Program recognizes the importance of embracing traditional and new collaborations. Various entities whose interests may be conservation, education, human health, or other subjects ultimately can help achieve conservation of wildlife, plants, and their habitats that are essential to maintaining a healthy planet for people.