

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

Portland, OR

community



Portland, OR – population 2,314,554

- Population growth in the Portland metropolitan area increased by up to 23% in the last decade with most growth in Hispanic, black, and Asian populations.
- Students participating within current Environmental Education programs are 32% economically disadvantaged, 20% English language learners, and 35% minorities.
- Target Portland's largest neighborhood, Cully Park, which has 13,300 residents within a 4.5 square miles, and 51% are people of color. Additionally, 71% are food insecure: almost 9 in 10 students qualify for free/reduced lunch, 75% utilize food stamps, but only 13% use a community garden.

Project Summary:

To effectively engage our community, we have chosen five focal areas to align our projects with – equity and inclusion, health, education, public engagement, and people. Working with Intertwine Alliance, refuge friends groups, and other urban partners, we will provide innovative approaches that can be scaled locally, regionally or nationally and can leverage social capital to achieve quick results. Through Our Common Ground campaign, we will market nature through modern, relatable, and entertaining digital and grass roots messaging. We will help transform a 25-acre brownfield into an environmental asset for Portland's largest, and one of its most underserved, neighborhoods. An Urban Refuge Program Guide will capture our work and provide an exportable model for other partners and cities to use. We will engage youth ambassadors to capture their abilities and innovation to cultivate tomorrow's conservation leaders. This proposal will ensure transportation options for community members most in need. And through storytelling, technology, authentic experiences, and community building, we will reach and engage our new, urban audiences.

play

- Fund the design of a nature play area within Cully Park conceptually designed by local students.
- Common Ground Daycation Planner and Native Species app will be part encyclopedia, travel guide and video game to connect people with trails, transportation routes, natural wonders and native species.
- Host cultural events on refuges to celebrate the common ground between nature and the cultural values that our community brings.

work

- In the first year, employ 10 Youth Ambassadors to get real-world experience and the opportunity to make important decisions with real money and meaningful impact.

learn

- Fund the construction of Cully Park's 40,000 square foot Inter-Tribal Gathering Garden - a place that will honor and educate about indigenous cultural values and ethics through holistic, culturally-significant garden design and maintenance.
- Develop programming at the Oregon Zoo's new Education Center and consult in the content

of exhibits and programming throughout the Zoo campus for the 1.7 million annual visitors.

- The Common Ground web portal will serve as a conduit for citizens to participate with Intertwine partners and an educational platform about the benefits of nature and the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Build connections with the outdoors through skill building workshops and excursions that teach fishing and hunting.

serve

- Help transform and build Cully Park, a 25-acre brownfield, into a new environmental asset that educates youth, provides green jobs and business opportunities, creates open space, and establishes a replicable community-based model for engaging in conservation and the outdoors.
- Provide "kick-starter" funds to help maintain a community garden, including cultural programming, volunteer training and management, and travel to other urban and rural communities to share the garden's model of social sustainability.
- Engage local friends groups to build refuge and community volunteer programs that aim to serve the new audiences that are reached through the Urban Challenge.

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.