



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND B.A.S.S. SIGN MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT ON RECREATIONAL FISHING

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.) joined forces to improve recreational fisheries. On August 1, Service Director John Turner and B.A.S.S. Chairman and CEO Helen Sevier signed a memorandum of agreement providing a framework for cooperation in improving fisheries habitats and developing new fishery-related activities on Service lands nationwide.

The signing ceremony took place at the Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge, located between Valdosta and Lakeland in southeast Georgia. It is one of the more than 233 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System that offers some form of recreational fishing where compatible with the major purpose for which the refuge was established.

B.A.S.S. was originally organized to popularize and perpetuate the sport of bass fishing. In recent years, the 550,000-member organization has evolved into a major advocate for conserving the Nation's aquatic environments for their continued use and enjoyment by the American people. B.A.S.S. supports the activities of state and Federal conservation agencies and conducts youth programs to foster ethical angling practices and conservation principles.

The new agreement is in keeping with the spirit of the Service's new recreational fisheries policy, "Fisheries-USA," signed by Director Turner earlier this year. In announcing that policy, Turner said, "With the demand for recreational fishing expected to increase by 40 percent by the year 2030, the Service must join other government, industry, and conservation organizations to actively address the future of recreational fisheries and the habitats on which they depend."

The selection of Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge as the site for the signing ceremony is significant because of the Service's past efforts to enhance recreational fishing opportunities on the refuge and its plan to work with local B.A.S.S. clubs to pursue additional improvement projects there. The refuge offers anglers 3,500 acres of open water, marsh, and cypress swamp.