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## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FORGES AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY; PRESENTS AWARDS TO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM SUPPORTERS**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service launched an agreement to promote nature photography on national wildlife refuges and presented Citizens Awards to key supporters of the National Wildlife Refuge System during a congressional reception highlighting National Wildlife Refuge Week celebrated October 12-18 this year.

At the reception, Fish and Wildlife Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Jane Kinne, president of the board of directors for the North American Nature Photography Association. The principal membership organization of professional photographers, editors, and publishers, the association promotes nature photography as an art form and a medium of communication for the sciences, nature appreciation, and environmental protection.

"I'm proud to form this partnership with the North American Nature Photography Association to promote nature photography on national wildlife refuges," said Service Director Clark. "Through the lens of the nation's top nature photographers, millions of Americans will get a glimpse of the beautiful landscapes and tremendous variety of wildlife found throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System."

(over)



**AMERICA'S NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES...**  
*where wildlife comes naturally!*

Wildlife photography on national wildlife refuges is one of the most popular draws for this 92-million-acre federal network of lands and waters dedicated to wildlife conservation. The 30 million people who visit national wildlife refuges each year also enjoy fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and environmental education. There are 512 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Under the MOU, the Service and association will promote compatible and ethical use of national wildlife refuges for nature photography and the use of nature photography in Service environmental education programs.

At the reception, Service Director Clark also announced recipients of the Service Citizens Awards, presented annually during National Wildlife Refuge Week to major supporters of the Refuge System.

“The thousands of people from all walks of life who devote their time and talents to help the National Wildlife Refuge System epitomize America’s commitment to protecting its fantastic fish and wildlife resources,” said Service Director Clark. “Citizens Awards are tokens of our appreciation for key supporters whose contributions have been especially important to achieving our conservation mission.”

Rollin Sparrowe, president of the Wildlife Management Institute, accepted the Service Citizens Award on behalf of the **Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE)**, a coalition of 17 sportsmen’s and environmental groups. Under Sparrowe’s leadership, CARE has been instrumental in raising awareness of the National Wildlife Refuge System on Capitol Hill, with the outdoor news media, and within respective organizations’ membership. Through its emphasis on addressing the \$805 maintenance and operations backlog for the Refuge System, CARE is largely responsible for the biggest proposed funding increase for the Refuge System in years, with next year’s Interior Appropriations bill calling for a \$41 million increase.

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Wallace Kuralt accepted the Service Citizens Award on behalf of his brother, renowned CBS television journalist **Charles Kuralt**, who was honored with the award posthumously. Kuralt's "CBS Sunday Morning" and "On the Road" broadcasts allowed Americans a glimpse of the wonders and beauty of national wildlife refuges, as did his best-selling book, *Charles Kuralt's America*. Kuralt also donated his time and talents to the Fish and Wildlife Service by serving as a national spokesperson for the National Wildlife Refuge System on a television public service announcement.

**The Citizen's Committee to Complete the Refuge** was recognized with the Service Citizens Award for its grass-roots advocacy leading to establishment of Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in California in 1972 and continuing to help the refuge acquire important wetlands habitat. Most recently, the committee supported the acquisition of Bair Island in Redwood City for the refuge, which will allow restoration of tidal marshes critical to endangered species, migratory birds, and fisheries. One of the oldest and largest refuge community coalitions, the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge serves as a national model for a Service initiative to establish such partnerships at other national wildlife refuges. Florence LaRiviere, committee president, accepted the award on behalf of the committee.

Marvin and Lee Cook, owners of **Wilderness Graphics, Inc.**, of Tallahassee, Florida, received the Service Citizens Award for developing a variety of high quality informational products, such as leaflets, slide shows, videos, and exhibits, on the National Wildlife Refuge System. Wilderness Graphics has donated thousands of dollars in in-kind services while working with the Service for nearly 20 years.

For more information on the National Wildlife Refuge System, call 1-800-344-WILD; visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's homepage at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) and click on National Wildlife Refuge System; or better yet, visit a national wildlife refuge.