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## **NWRA Applauds Navy's Decision to Scuttle Proposed Airfield next to Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC**

**Washington, DC-** The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) today hailed the Navy's decision to abort its proposal to build an "Outlying Landing Field" (OLF) next to the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in northeastern North Carolina. "The Navy should be commended for its decision to scuttle this plan," said Evan Hirsche, President of the NWRA. "Their decision ensures pilots are protected as well as the abundant wildlife that depends upon the Pocosin Lakes NWR."

Pocosin Lakes NWR refuge hosts more than 100,000 snow geese, tundra swans, and other waterfowl each winter in addition to endangered red wolves and black bears. For the past five years, the Navy has actively sought to build a landing field to practice jet take-offs and landings 3.5 miles from Pocosin Lakes NWR in Washington and Beaufort Counties. The harmful affects on wildlife caused by the Navy jets practicing on the OLF could have been devastating to migratory birds such as tundra swans, while also posing a serious hazard for Navy pilots who would run the risk of colliding with 20 lb birds.

NWRA repeatedly called for the Navy to abandon its bid to build the OLF proximate to the refuge, highlighting the threat the project posed to wildlife in its *2005 State of the System* report (see: [www.refugeassociation.org/new-publications/SOS.html](http://www.refugeassociation.org/new-publications/SOS.html)). NWRA joined a diverse chorus of opposition that included the environmental and sportsmen's communities, local citizens, Governor Mike Easley, and NC State Legislature.

The Navy also announced that it is abandoning four other North Carolina sites previously under consideration in Craven, Bertie, Hyde and Perquimans counties. Instead, the Navy will consider two new sites in North Carolina -- Sandbanks in Gates County and Hales Lake in Camden/Currituck counties -- and three in Virginia - Cabin Point, Mason, and Dory.

*The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to protect, enhance and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System, America's premier network of lands and waters set aside to conserve our diverse wildlife heritage.*

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