



CARE Applauds House Appropriations Committee for Proposed Increase in Refuge System Funding

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2009 (Washington, DC) - The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a coalition of 22 national conservation, sporting and scientific organizations representing over 14 million Americans, applauds the House Appropriations Committee for its proposed increase to the annual budget for the National Wildlife Refuge System for Fiscal Year 2010 (FY10). The Committee's recommendation builds upon the \$20 million increase suggested by President Obama for a total \$40 million increase for the System.

"This increase represents a crucial investment in America's National Wildlife Refuge System," said Evan Hirsche, chair of CARE. "The System has suffered from funding shortfalls since its creation in 1903; Congress's work in recent years to reverse this trend is making a real difference for wildlife, habitat and people."

This \$40 million increase will take the operating budget for the Refuge System to \$503 million, translating to roughly \$3.35 per acre for the 150 million-acre System. It makes national wildlife refuges one of Congress's leading conservation priorities and builds upon the remarkable increases in FY 2008 and FY 2009. If enacted, this increase will help the Refuge System regain its footing in achieving its core wildlife conservation and public outreach priorities.

"Stretching across 12 time zones, the sun never sets on the Refuge System," said Hirsche. "And neither should our commitment to ensure it receives the resources needed to meet its conservation mission."

Since 1995, the diverse organizations in CARE have consistently called upon Congress to fully fund the National Wildlife Refuge System, currently estimated to be at least \$808 million annually, 43% more than currently funded. CARE's request for FY 2010 is \$514 million, \$11 million less than the current recommendation by the Committee.

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The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) was created in 1995 as a loose coalition of diverse organizations concerned about the ability of our National Wildlife Refuges to fulfill their missions. Members of CARE recognize the inadequacy of existing funds to operate and maintain the National Wildlife Refuge System and the biological, recreational, and economic consequences that this lack of funding has on the Refuge System and its surrounding communities.

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ALSO AVAILABLE TO JOURNALISTS:

- 2009 CARE Report
- Interviews with Evan Hirsche, Chair of CARE and the President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, and CARE Coalition Members
- Photos

CARE ORGANIZATIONS

American Birding Association
American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Izaak Walton League of America
Marine Conservation Biology Institute
National Audubon Society
National Rifle Association of America
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Safari Club International
The Corps Network
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society
Trout Unlimited
U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute