



October 2012

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Hunting, Fishing, & Outdoor Recreation

## *National Wildlife Refuge System*

### The Recommendations

*The Service will work closely with state fish and wildlife agencies to conduct a review of its current hunting and fishing opportunities, especially opportunities currently offered for youth and people with disabilities. Based on this review, the Service and states will work cooperatively to prepare a strategy for increasing quality hunting and fishing opportunities on national wildlife refuges.*

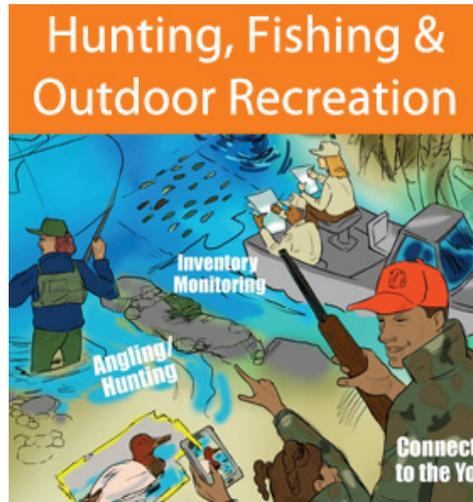
*Support and enhance appropriate recreation opportunities on national wildlife refuges by partnering with state fish and wildlife agencies, other governmental bodies, conservation organizations and businesses; and by updating relevant policies and infrastructure.*

Kids Birding at Minnesota Valley NWR (USFWS)



### The Issue

The National Wildlife Refuge System provides some of the finest outdoor recreational opportunities in the world and people care about what they know and what they can experience. How can we teach Americans the Refuge System not only provides essential habitat for wildlife, but they also are beneficial and relevant places for people? How do Refuges become more accessible to all Americans, regardless of their location or physical abilities? These are some of the challenges the Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation team will address as they seek to expand wildlife-dependent recreation by working with traditional conservation partners, and expanding new partnerships, to market and promote refuge visitation, improve access and encourage young people and other novices to take up hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography.



Strategic Illustration from Vision Conference

### Implementation of *Conserving the Future*

The Service's vision for the National Wildlife Refuge System, entitled *Conserving the Future*, proposes in Recommendation 17 and 18 working closely with state conservation agencies and organizations to provide appropriate and compatible new hunting and fishing and other wildlife dependent recreational opportunities in the Refuge System. The Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation implementation team will develop recommendations, plans, strategies, policy and decision support tools necessary to improve recreational access and opportunities on national wildlife refuges to a broad cross section of Americas.

The Service's work plans for the Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation implementation team (Recommendations 17 and 18 of *Conserving the Future*) can be downloaded online at: [www.AmericasWildlife.org/workplans](http://www.AmericasWildlife.org/workplans) and includes these deliverables:

**The *Conserving the Future* vision is available online at:**

[www.AmericasWildlife.org/vision](http://www.AmericasWildlife.org/vision)

- **Strategy for New Opportunities:** Survey the entire Refuge System- engaging every field station- to fill the gaps in information, capture success stories and potential new opportunities, and validate current use summaries. Once the information is collected, the team will work with States and other conservation partners to complete a strategy for developing new opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and photography, with special emphasis on youth and people with disabilities.
- **Fish Stocking:** Evaluate whether recreational fishing opportunities are limited due to policy and focus on potential new effects on existing and potential new fish stocking and recreational fishing opportunities as they relate to Service policy.
- **Outdoor Skills:** Develop a system-wide plan to address opportunities related to shooting sports, hunter education, and outdoor-skills development, taking advantage of multiple modes of delivering messages and reaching diverse audiences.

- **Welcome and Orient Outdoor Recreationists:** Create minimum standards, instructions and toolkits to use for welcoming new and existing hunters and anglers to the National Wildlife Refuge System. Integrate information into strategic web communications and themed exhibits to inform, educate and promote outdoor recreation on wildlife refuges.
- **Appropriate Use:** Review the Appropriate Use policy and accompanying guidance to ensure refuge managers have the newest guidance to evaluate proposed new and existing refuge uses before proceeding to a compatibility review; have a better understanding of what uses are allowed and why, and develop a mechanism that allows consistent implementation with the overall goal of creating a connected conservation constituency and ensuring conservation objectives are met.

perfect avenue for those engaged in protecting wildlife to support the Refuge System. There are nine implementation teams focused on: Communications, Community Partnerships, Interpretation and Environmental Education, Strategic Growth, Scientific Excellence, Planning, Leadership and an Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative. For regular updates, go online: [www.AmericasWildlife.org](http://www.AmericasWildlife.org). The website hosts quarterly progress reports, blogs written by members of the implementation teams, and news on vision implementation products. There are opportunities for your voice to be heard in the website's social network where draft products will be posted to solicit feedback.

For additional information, contact Anna Harris, Implementation Coordinator, at [Anna\\_Harris@fws.gov](mailto:Anna_Harris@fws.gov) or (703) 358-2320.



Hunting on Refuges (USFWS)

## Get Involved

In the summer of 2010 the Service began developing the Conserving the Future vision for the Refuge System. Today, with implementation of the vision moving forward, Conserving the Future is the

## The Next Teddy Roosevelt?



Theodore Roosevelt (TR), leader of the Rough Riders and hero at San Juan, progressive politician and social reformer, 26th President of the United States – TR was also known as the “Great Conservationist” and set aside over 125 million acres of national forest while president, and created the first national wildlife refuge, Pelican Island, in 1903. How did TR come to care about conservation? His effectiveness for conservation came from his intellect, personality, and office; however, his care came from exposure to wild things and wild places early in life. TR was a naturalist and a hunter. He loved the out-of-doors and he wanted to make sure that others could experience what he enjoyed for years to come.

Who will be the next TR? How will they first get connected with nature? The National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) had its birth with a stroke of TR's pen; it is now redoubling its efforts to facilitate opportunities for Americans to experience wildlife and to follow in the footsteps of Roosevelt to be conservation heroes of the future. The Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation Implementation Team for Conserving the

Future is working with states and other partners to provide new quality opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography, and other appropriate refuge uses, for the NWRS. Five sub-teams are addressing issues such as improving outdoor skills, welcoming and orienting hunters and anglers, fish stocking policies, appropriate use decisions, and inventory and increasing the number of quality outdoor recreation opportunities. The strategies being developed will focus on a broad range of opportunities across the nation, and for a diverse group of people, with special consideration for new opportunities for youth and people with disabilities.

Hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational pursuits are steeped in tradition within the United States and can provide outstanding opportunities for families to enjoy their public lands. And who knows – it may be the close observation and a special photograph of a deer taken by a young boy, or the first mallard duck harvested by a young girl, to spark a passion for conservation, and lead them down a path to be the next Teddy Roosevelt. Let's hope so!

*This blog was written by Robin West, co-chair of the Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation Implementation Team. Robin is also the Regional Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System in the Pacific Region. His favorite TR quote is, “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”. With this guidance, we understand that we ALL have tools to help build a great conservation future!*