



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 3370

Subject: Improving Conservation Stewardship of and Increasing Public Access to Urban National Wildlife Refuges

**Sec. 1 Purpose.** The Department of the Interior (DOI) is highlighting Urban National Wildlife Refuges and conservation stewardship on public lands and waters under its jurisdiction. This Order directs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and other appropriate Bureaus within DOI to carry out the Secretary's priorities, including: restoring trust in the stewardship of public lands by being a good neighbor; creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to that of President Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.; and encouraging and assisting Americans, particularly those who live in urban areas, to experience the outdoors within their local communities.

Urban National Wildlife Refuges are units of the National Wildlife Refuge System (System) that have a population center of at least 250,000 people within 25 miles of their boundaries. The FWS established the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program to inspire Americans to connect with nature and the outdoors to become stewards of the environment and empower local organizations, cities, and towns across the country to support innovative, community-based conservation. This program, along with Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships, Urban Bird Treaty Program Cities, and other urban conservation and wildlife partnerships, will deliver a flexible and adaptive approach to engaging communities served by urban wildlife refuges.

**Sec. 2 Authorities.** This Order is issued under the authority of Executive Order 13443, "Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation"; the DOI's land and resource management authorities, including the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934 (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.); Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, (16 U.S.C. 742 et seq.); National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Pub. L. 105-57); National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Improvement Act of 2010, (Pub. L. 111-357); National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 742f); Partnerships for Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 3741); Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460k et seq.); Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970 (16 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); and the National Fish Hatchery System Volunteer Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-360).

**Sec. 3 Background.** Today, more than 80 percent of Americans live in or near cities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Area Criteria) with limited opportunities to access nature or experience outdoor recreation. Children are spending increasingly less time outdoors, and more time in front of screens using entertainment media. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that youth ages 8 to 18 spend an average of 6 to 9 hours a day in front of screens. More than half of American adults report

spending less than 5 hours outdoors in nature each week and more than three-quarters spend less than 10 hours outdoors. (The Nature of Americans: Disconnection and Recommendations for Reconnection, April 2017)

The System includes more than 560 national wildlife refuges that make up a national network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of America's fish, wildlife, and plants. There is a national wildlife refuge located within a 1-hour drive of nearly every metropolitan area in the United States, providing nearby opportunities to discover wildlife and gain a greater appreciation for the world of nature. Through our fundamental mission of wildlife conservation, we recognize that to be successful, we must inspire the American people to connect to their wildlife heritage and participate as stewards of the System.

The Urban Wildlife Conservation Program was created to be an innovative model that centers on introducing Americans living in densely populated areas to more than 100 national wildlife refuges near urban areas, while also encouraging new, non-traditional audiences to visit and have high-quality experiences within these refuges. The program provides strategic opportunities to promote wildlife conservation and enjoyment of hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities in the heart of areas where many people live. It focuses on public and private partnerships to deliver both conservation and enjoyment on and off national wildlife refuges. Urban National Wildlife Refuges also provide opportunities to enhance grassroots efforts of local communities to conserve local watersheds and ecosystems benefitting both people and wildlife.

It is the intent of the Secretary to highlight Urban National Wildlife Refuges as places where community-centered approaches can be used to address local needs and places to reach out to the next generation of anglers, hunters, and conservationists, while providing infrastructure and safe access.

**Sec. 4 Directive.** Increase access and provide safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for outdoor recreational opportunities focused on encouraging all Americans and visitors to the United States to visit and participate in activities on the more than 100 urban national wildlife refuges through actions that support wildlife conservation and Secretary's Orders 3347, 3356, and 3366. The following actions are to be undertaken upon issuance of this Order.

a. Within 45 days, the FWS will provide a report to the Secretary that summarizes accomplishments in designating its first annual Urban National Wildlife Refuge Day held on September 29, 2018.

b. Within 120 days, Urban National Wildlife Refuges will conduct the following activities:

(1) Take affirmative steps to cultivate new partnerships or expand the scope of existing relationships with current partners that promote conservation activities in target communities, address barriers to public access and recreational activities on refuges, or use technologies or applications tailored to the target communities.

(2) Develop standards to assess the effectiveness of measures taken to improve visitor experiences, quality of outdoor recreational opportunities, and increases in outreach and engagement with targeted communities.

(3) Work together with States and other partners to develop plans to introduce new or non-traditional audiences to hunting, fishing, or other recreational activities conducted at the refuge or in the community, such as engaging local schools or community groups in multiple visits throughout the year, where either refuge employees visit schools or groups in the target communities; or school classes and other groups are invited to visit the refuges. Also, focus on opportunities that are not already met by State efforts to recruit, retain, and re-engage (R3).

c. Within 120 days, FWS will conduct the following activities:

(1) Review standards that qualify existing national wildlife refuges as urban refuges, as prescribed in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual chapter on the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program (110 FW 1).

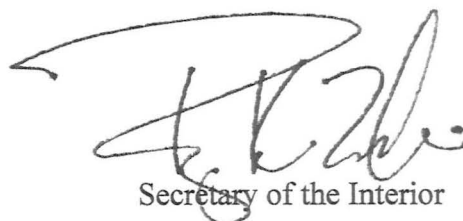
(2) Review Standards of Excellence governing the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program.

(3) Develop recommendations for improving the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program by working with refuge managers to identify opportunities to institute actions consistent with this Order.

d. Continue coordination with other Federal urban conservation initiatives such as the Urban Waters Federal Partnership and cooperate with other Federal Agencies such as the Department of Education and the Department of Housing and Urban Development on initiatives focused on urban and suburban areas that will support the mission of the FWS.

**Sec. 5 Implementation.** The Deputy Secretary is responsible for implementing all aspects of this Order, in coordination with Assistant Secretaries.

**Sec. 6 Expiration Date.** This Order is effective immediately. It will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever occurs first.



Secretary of the Interior

Date: October 19, 2018