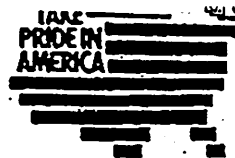




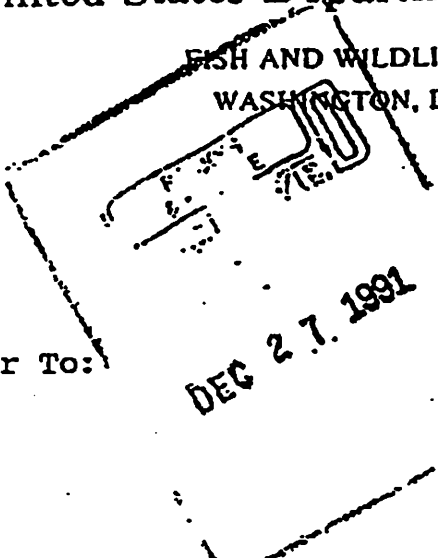
United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR,
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



DEC 23 1991

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12/23/91

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/RF/91-5368

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7
From: ^{9/20/91} Director
Subject: Urban Refuge Policy

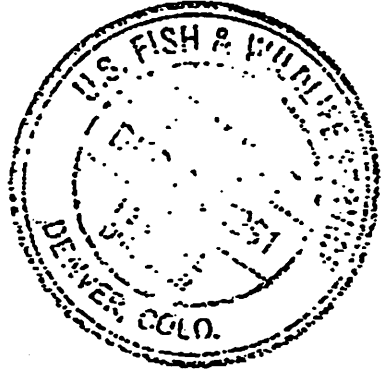
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Protecting habitat in urban areas is a high priority of the President and the general public. In addition, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) through its 1991 Vision Statement has declared its commitment to biological diversity, public outreach and education, and partnerships. Although there are many benefits to acquiring these areas, we recognize the high cost associated with urban projects. Therefore, we have developed the attached policy to guide the Service in acquiring refuges in urban areas.

Richard M. Smith

Attachment

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

URBAN REFUGE POLICY

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to provide, preserve, restore, and manage a national network of lands and waters to meet society's needs for areas where the widest possible spectrum of benefits associated with wildlife and wildlands is enhanced and made available to the public. Towards this end, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) seeks to provide refuge visitors an understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife resources through environmental education and interpretation and through recreational experiences, oriented toward wildlife, to the extent these activities are compatible with the purposes for which a refuge is established.

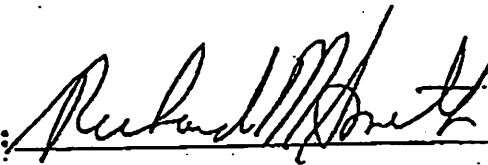
In support of this goal, it shall be the policy of the Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire lands and waters in or adjacent to metropolitan statistical areas to protect fish and wildlife resources and habitats that will provide the public wildlife oriented recreation, education and interpretation opportunities. A metropolitan statistical area is defined as a city of at least 50,000 population, or a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area of at least 50,000 with a total metropolitan population of at least 100,000--75,000 in New England.

Some urban refuges may protect habitats of great significance to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources, including endangered and threatened species. However, the primary purpose for establishment of new urban refuges will be to foster environmental awareness and outreach programs to develop an informed and involved citizenry that will support fish and wildlife conservation. If Service lands already exist in the same urban area, the Service will only acquire additional habitat types of sufficient size to meet habitat needs as determined by the Regions and education, interpretation and recreation needs that are not currently being met by the existing refuge or other state or county agencies. These refuges will provide public use benefits associated with fish and wildlife resources that include, but are not limited to, bird watching, fishing, scientific research, environmental education, open space in an urban setting, and protection of cultural resources.

Service acquisition policy will remain to acquire the minimum interest necessary to reach management objectives and general Service authorities for acquisition shall apply to these urban refuges. In areas specifically authorized by an Act of Congress,

acquisition will be carried out in accordance with the policies prescribed by Congress in the authorizing legislation. Management, operational and acquisition considerations for urban refuges will include:

- 1) education, interpretation and wildlife-oriented recreation value;
- 2) opportunities for partnerships with state and local governments, private individuals, or citizens groups;
- 3) potential role of non-profit or volunteer groups for management purposes;
- 4) adequacy of buffer areas and habitat corridors where possible that contribute appreciably to the long-term preservation of habitats.

Approved: 

Date: 12/20/91