



National
Wildlife Refuge
Association

1901 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 407
Washington, DC 20006
www.refugenet.org

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Contact: Michael Woodbridge
202-333-9075
mwoodbridge@refugenet.org

NWRA Applauds Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus Invasive Species Legislation

Washington, D.C. – The NWRA today announced its support for legislation introduced by the newly-formed Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus to combat invasive species in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Introduced by Caucus chairs, Reps. Ron Kind (D-WI) and Jim Saxton (R-NJ), along with vice chairs, Reps. Michael Castle (R-DE) and Mike Thompson (D-CA), the legislation promotes innovative strategies with which to counter the rampant growth of invasives and emphasizes partnerships with non-governmental organizations including local refuge Friends and volunteers.

H.R. 5900, the Refuge Ecology Protection, Assistance, and Immediate Response (REPAIR) Act, authorizes grants to states, Friends groups and other partners for invasive species monitoring and removal on national wildlife refuges across the country. In addition, the bill makes permanent the Cooperative Voluntary Invasive Species Monitoring and Control Program. For the past three years, this successful program has gained nationwide attention for technological innovation and for being strongly embraced by refuge volunteers and staff alike.

Invasive species are a top threat to the National Wildlife Refuge System. More than 300 individual refuges have taken actions to control invasives, and the Refuge System has identified approximately \$260 million in projected needs to combat invasive species. By utilizing the strong volunteer support available to the Refuge System, we can significantly expand our ability to identify and record data on invasives in refuges and implement control measures.

The REPAIR Act is the first major legislation introduced and endorsed by the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus. The Caucus was created to raise awareness of the Refuge System, support adequate Refuge System budgets, and ensure the sustained growth of the Refuge System for future generations. The Caucus already has over 45 committed members and is steadily growing.

Established in 1975, the National Wildlife Refuge Association is the only organization dedicated exclusively to protecting, enhancing and expanding the National Wildlife Refuge System, lands and waters set aside by the American people to protect our country's diverse wildlife heritage. A national membership organization, the organization benefits from the support of U.S. Fish and Wildlife professionals, more than 115 refuge "Friends" group affiliates, and thousands of individual members in all states. For more information, visit www.refugenet.org.

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