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**NWRA Applauds President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request**  
*Significant investment in landscape conservation and wildlife priorities*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** —NWRA applauds President Obama's Fiscal Year 2014 budget for including important conservation priorities including the National Wildlife Refuge System and Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The President's request includes \$499 million for the National Wildlife Refuge System's Operations and Maintenance (O&M) accounts; a level that importantly restores the cuts from sequestration and would ensure hunting, fishing and bird and wildlife watching opportunities are not lost to the public. An investment in the nation's Refuge System is an excellent investment in the American economy. The System and its 45 million annual visitors contribute over \$4 billion in economic output and provide more than \$32 billion in ecosystem services.

The budget also outlines a path to full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, one of the nation's most powerful land acquisition tools. This is in line with the priorities American's want – clean air, clean water, places to recreate and keeping working lands working.

“President Obama has provided a budget proposal that keeps the American value of wildlife conservation at its core,” said David Houghton, President of NWRA. “We are particularly heartened by the use of mandatory funds for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the inclusion of the Everglades Headwaters in the request.”

The President's strong support for collaborative conservation programs through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is an integral component of funding for future conservation successes. The NWRA-led Northern Everglades initiative, which includes the Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area, has become a national example of landscape conservation. The budget request includes \$5M for the Everglades Headwaters, which will provide funds to jumpstart the effort to ensure clean water for South Florida, sustain critical wildlife corridors, and continue a traditional ranching way of life.

NWRA also commended the President on the funding request for two other NWRA priorities, the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas and Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge encompassing the entire Connecticut River Watershed in New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont, with requested amounts of \$5M and \$4.6M respectively for continued collaborative conservation work. These refuges are also the first two designated National Blueways and highlight the Administration's dedication to protect our nation's vital waterways and watersheds.

NWRA urges Congress to support the President's funding request for the Refuge System, Land and Water Conservation Fund and wildlife conservation programs. Congress is expected to take up the President's budget in May and pass a final appropriations bill by September 30.

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*The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to conserve America's wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect, enhance, and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries.*