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CONTACT: Christine McGowan, cmcgowan@refugeassociation.org, (802) 505-0508

Joy Blackwood Hired as Urban Wildlife Refuge Program Manager

The National Wildlife Refuge Association is pleased to welcome Joy Blackwood as its new Urban Wildlife Refuge Program Manager. Blackwood will work in partnership with 14 urban refuges around the nation both on-the-ground and at the national level to help bring forth their visions for the future, provide technical assistance and support collaborative efforts that raise awareness and elevate the importance of wildlife refuges in urban areas.

"The Refuge System's Urban Wildlife Conservation Program is critically important to insure that our wildlife conservation efforts remain relevant for the 80 percent of Americans who now live in our urban centers," said David Houghton, President of the Refuge Association. "Joy brings years of community outreach experience that will enable us to effectively reach new audiences and connect them with the incredible wildlife refuges in their backyards."

Prior to joining the Refuge Association, Joy directed a distinguished coalition of national environmental and conservation executives that represents a broad spectrum of voices, perspectives and environmental policy issues to protect the communities in which we live, work, pray and play. She led the development of the *Green Leadership Trust*, a network of board members of color and indigenous leaders and established a first-of-its-kind partnership with Green 2.0 for environmental NGOs to publicly release their organization's diversity data.

Before working with the environmental sector, Joy spent many years managing multi-faceted public health education and training programs; advocating to end the AIDS pandemic; fighting to reduce the stigmas of the disease and empowering underrepresented individuals and communities.

Joy's passion for protecting the majestic places we so cherish is deeply rooted in her British and Jamaican background, as well as the years she devoted to changing the public's opinion and understanding of the green movement and the benefits of the great outdoors.

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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.