



For Immediate Release
March 1, 2017

Contact: Desiree Sorenson-Groves
dgroves@refugeassociation.org
(202) 290-5593

National Wildlife Refuge Association Welcomes Ryan Zinke as the Next Secretary of the Interior

The National Wildlife Refuge Association today expressed its support for Ryan Zinke as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior following the Senate's confirmation of him this morning.

“We are pleased by the Senate's confirmation of Ryan Zinke to be the 52nd Secretary of the Interior and look forward to working with him to conserve our nation's wildlife and to support our National Wildlife Refuge System,” said Geoffrey Haskett, Acting President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

At 850 million acres, the Refuge System is the world's largest network of protected lands and waters dedicated to wildlife conservation. As the Refuge System has grown, so has visitation by Americans who enjoy the Refuge System's “Big Six” compatible recreational uses: hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, photography, environmental education, and interpretation. The Refuge System now welcomes over 48 million visitors annually – about 10 million more than just a decade ago.

“Secretary Zinke is a Teddy Roosevelt conservationist, and this philosophy of conserving our nation's wildlife and habitat while providing access for hunters, anglers, birders, and all wildlife enthusiasts will be essential for his new position overseeing this country's natural resources,” said Haskett. “I am encouraged by Secretary Zinke's commitment to keeping our public lands public, and am confident he will appoint a Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who shares his great dedication to all our public lands.”

Secretary Zinke has consistently voted to keep public lands in public hands, and his experiences working with ranchers, Native Americans, sportsmen, wildlife enthusiasts, and government agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during his time as Montana's Congressman will prove invaluable as Secretary of the Interior.

###

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