



NATIONAL *fish, wildlife & plants*
CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Project Title: “National Wildlife Refuge System Climate Change Communications and Engagement Strategy”

Headline Title (2-5 words): NWRS CC Engagement Strategy

Brief Summary (Abstract): Through shared understanding and engagement, Refuge System staff, Friends organizations, partners, visitors and other key stakeholders will be informed, empowered, and inspired to take personal and collective action to help reduce their carbon footprint (mitigation) and to address the impacts of climate change and related stressors on fish, wildlife and plants on Refuges and within local landscapes (adaptation).

Project Location: Nation-wide

Partners: FWS Vision Science Team, NPRC - Human Dimensions Branch, NWRS Visitor Services, University of Colorado, USGS, Ecological Service, Office of the Science Advisor, Branch of Habitat Restoration, NCTC and multiple field refuge staffs

Background: A multidisciplinary team developed a Climate Change Communications and Engagement Strategy (strategy) in accordance with Recommendation 2 of the *Conserving the Future* vision document. The Refuge System is the nation’s premier system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Refuge System protects thousands of species and supports popular recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, and wildlife observation. As a portal to the natural world, the Refuge System is uniquely positioned to improve understanding of the effects of climate change on these important natural resources and to garner public and partner support for mitigation and adaptation strategies that address climate impacts. In turn, the Refuge System may then also promote relevant personal action at both individual and collective levels

Project Goals:

Goal 1: Identify at least one Refuge System unit from each Service region that has shown exemplary innovation and progress toward developing and implementing climate change communication and engagement strategies with multiple audiences. Highlight the efforts and lessons learned of these stations in ways that facilitate and encourage emulation by other Refuge units. Specific emphasis will be placed upon those refuges in each region that have scientifically demonstrated the effects of, and/or adaptation to, climate change using photos, graphics or other techniques.

Goal 2: Cultivate a front line of Refuge System staff, Friends organizations, and long-term volunteers to serve as “Climate Change Ambassadors” to effectively engage and inspire Refuge visitors, local communities and school systems, and other Service staff to take personal and collective mitigation and adaptation actions. The objective is not to train employees to become climate change scientists, but to provide audiences with sufficient information to make informed decisions about their own personal action.



Goal 3: Continuously link climate change communication and engagement activities recommended in this to document to all other relevant *Conserving the Future* communications efforts. These include those strategies outlined for refuge Communications, Interpretation, Environmental Education, Friends, Volunteers and Community Partnerships, the Standards of Excellence for Urban National Wildlife Refuges, the refuge Ambassador Program, and Climate Leadership in Refuges (CLIR) teams.

Strategy Goals Implemented: Goal 6

Climate Impacts Addressed: Impacts on species and habitats

Status of Project Implementation: Project is ongoing

Project Outcomes:

As a result of successful implementation of this communications and engagement strategy, primary audiences will:

- Have the ability to effectively communicate with and engage Refuge visitors, local stakeholders, community leaders, and local school systems about refuge responses to climate change on refuges and within local landscapes.
- Serve as “Climate Change Ambassadors” with the ability to promote a deeper understanding of climate impacts among key internal and external audiences, to discuss the potential implications of climate change impacts in a personal way, and to motivate these key audiences to seek solutions.
- Have the skills, tools, and resources to facilitate the integration of best practices related to
- Share refuge-specific information with secondary audiences in other Service programs that can promote a broad understanding of climate impacts and enhance engagement to seek solutions to address those impacts.
- Communicate to refuge visitors and local stakeholders how components of the Service Climate Change Strategic Plan, NFWPCAS, Strategic Habitat Conservation and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives fit together to form an integrated strategy incorporating all work at landscape scales

Funding Sources: USFWS

Photos/Attachments:



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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Climate Change Communications and Engagement Strategy for the National Wildlife Refuge System

