

Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

#47- July 27, 2006

ACTION ALERT

Urge your U.S. Representative to join the new Wildlife Refuge Congressional Caucus!

The Blue Goose Alliance, along with the National Wildlife Refuge Association and other conservation organizations, is asking everyone who has an interest in national wildlife refuges to urge their congressional representatives to join the newly formed Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus.

The National Wildlife Refuge System has always been the orphan child of the federal conservation programs. Its stature and standing in congress has been at the bottom of the agency totem pole. Its funding has been barely adequate, but these days shortages are forcing refuges to take even more drastic steps to fulfill their objectives. Refuges need your help.

As someone who is involved with wildlife refuges at the local level, you know that the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) is facing a crisis these days. Recently some members of the U.S. Senate tried to modestly increase Refuge System funding, but the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee failed to follow that lead and authorized a much smaller budget.

What has been needed for a long time is a higher profile for wildlife refuges within the halls of Congress. What has been needed is a visible and effective group of lawmakers working continually to support the magnificent National Wildlife Refuge System.

Fortunately there is now an opportunity to change the status of wildlife refuges in congress. It was recently announced that longtime refuge supporters Ron Kind (D-WI) and Jim Saxton (R-NJ), along with Michael Castle (R-DE) and Mike Thompson (D-CA), are leading a bipartisan charge in the U.S. House of Representatives to launch the first-ever Wildlife Refuge Caucus! This groundbreaking caucus will work inside Capitol Hill to advance issues important to our National Wildlife Refuge System. As of July 10, caucus membership included the following 25 Representatives:

Spencer Bachus (AL), Tammy Baldwin (WI), Ed Case (HI), Michael Castle (DE), John Dingell (MI), Lloyd Doggett (TX), Michael Fitzpatrick (PA), Wayne Gilchrest (MD), Raul Grijalva (AZ), Rush Holt (NJ), Nancy Johnson (CT), Mark Kennedy (MN), Dale Kildee (MI), Ron Kind (WI), Frank LoBiondo (NJ), Martin Meehan (MA), Michael Michaud (ME), George Miller (CA), Frank Pallone (NJ), Donald Payne (NJ), Jim Saxton (NJ), Robert Simmons (CT), Fortney Pete Stark (CA), Mike Thompson (CA), and Robert Wexler (FL).

The purpose of the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus is to help the following:

- Raise awareness of our Refuge System
- Create a voice for refuges in Congress
- Support adequate Refuge System budgets
- Support the six priority activities outlined in the Refuge Improvement Act (hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, wildlife observation, environmental education and interpretation)
- Support strategic growth of the Refuge System

The National Wildlife Refuge System needs your help today. Please contact and urge your U.S. Representative to join the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus. You can use <http://www.house.gov/writerep> to find information on how to contact your Representative.

Below is a draft letter you may use to contact your Representative. Thank you for your support.

President, Blue Goose Alliance

DRAFT

Join the Wildlife Refuge Caucus

Dear Representative:

I urge you to join the new Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus. The Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus is co-chaired by Reps. Jim Saxton and Ron Kind and is vice co-chaired by Reps. Michael Castle and Mike Thompson. They are currently soliciting founding members through a Dear Colleague letter.

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President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge just over one hundred years ago and the Wildlife Refuge Caucus is committed to honoring this outstanding legacy. Please join Representatives Kind and Saxton in the effort to fortify, protect and preserve the National Wildlife Refuge System.

For further information, please contact Mark Lange (202-225-5506) in Mr. Kind's office or Andy Oliver (202-225-4765) with Mr. Saxton.

Your name and address here

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<http://www.bluegoosealliance.org>