

Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

#67 – September 13, 2010

President Don Redfearn Responds to President Barack Obama's "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative Members/Supporters Urged to Vote in Favor of This Proposal

President Don Redfearn has responded to President Barack Obama's "America's Great Outdoors" initiative, by suggesting that the Nation's natural resource lands are in dire need of a higher profile. These lands have to be considered the core of any initiative that profiles our outdoor heritage. The four land agencies - Forest Service, Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Wildlife Refuge system comprise nearly 1/3 of our Nation's area.

Congress has mandated certain basic purposes for each of these units, but in doing so over different time periods, a sense of administrative cohesion has been lost or ignored. The Blue Goose Alliance has suggested the President to take action to bring the administration of all our natural resources under one umbrella in a cabinet level "Department of Conservation Lands."

This idea has been posted on the 'America's Great Outdoors' web site at:

<http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/0/03F34463F596440C8625779C0079586C?OpenDocument#votinganc>

It is suggested that you go to the website and endorse this proposal. Some voting has already occurred. Comments are also needed to clarify the BGA position that separating the Refuge system from the FWS is a win – win situation. The FWS would be in a much better position, organizationally without Refuges.

It might help to follow these instructions: When the Great Outdoors web page describing the BGA Refuge proposal appears, click on the green PROMOTE inside the orange outlined square. The USDA log-in page will appear. If you do not have an account and most of us will not, then complete the Registration Form and click on submit. Or if you have an account, log in by entering your user name and password. After logging-in or registering, the original web page appears again. Now that you have registered and/or logged in you can vote by clicking on the green word PROMOTE. Your vote has now been tabulated.

Following is the letter to President Obama:

The Blue Goose Alliance
1961 Marble Canyon Drive
Bullhead City, AZ 86442

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C 20500

September 8, 2010

Dear Mr. President:

The Blue Goose Alliance (BGA), a non-profit conservation organization, is pleased to respond to your “America’s Great Outdoors” initiative. Such an effort is long overdue. The initiative makes note of the Federal Government as the Nation’s largest land manager. It is in this area that we have comments, major concerns and recommendations.

President Theodore Roosevelt was the first President to use the “Bully Pulpit” to protect massive units of the Nation’s natural resources. Over the ensuing decades the Forest Service (FS), the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) were established and expanded. Collectively, the area of this Federal estate contains 695 million acres, approximately 1/3 of the entire Nation.

These units constitute the heart of America’s natural resource lands. They share a commonality of responsibilities and often, common boundaries. Even so, each agency functions separately under inherent legislative mandates. Collectively they are rich in archeological and cultural history, wildlife, forests, minerals, scenic vistas, geological phenomenon, wilderness, volcanoes, glaciers, tundra, grasslands, marshes, rivers, lakes, deserts, swamps, estuaries, and marine environments. The values range from the tangible - minerals, watersheds, forests and grasslands - to recreational, educational, intangible, spiritual and priceless.

Because of size, distribution and diversity, Federal resource lands are the core of **“AMERICA’S GREAT OUTDOORS.”** They should be managed in a cohesive, focused and professional manner to assure maximum and sustainable use for present and future generations. Natural treasures owned, used, and enjoyed by all Americans, are the foundation that defines our history, our greatness and our way of life. How they are managed will determine our destiny.

We respectfully submit that before these resource lands can be the most productive, there is need for modification in organizational structure of those Departments and Agencies now responsible for their management. We see significant and positive results by combining these four land managing organizations into one Department to be recognized as the Nation’s exclusive manager of natural resource lands and waters. We suggest the title **“DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION LANDS.”**

Land resource management in the 21st century demands a break from the past. Scientific and objective management will best serve the interest of all Americans, and not to a few special interests. It makes sense to have a Department focused only on management and protection of resource lands. It will allow a Secretary to administer without being burdened with dissimilar and contradictory mandates. Such change need not alter the basic legislative mandates of the individual agencies. It will save money, it will be

more efficient, it will be more effective and it will offer the advantages of scientific stewardship for all conservation lands.

The National Audubon Society's "*America's Hidden Lands*," is an excellent reference that highlights the National Wildlife Refuge system. That publication and other materials related to the plight of the System can be found at www.bluegoosealliance.org. One would tend to believe it difficult to hide a 150 million-acre system. It has more than 550 units located in every state and territory and on islands and atolls in the far reaches of the Pacific. The System is more widely distributed, has more individual units, has greater diversity of habitats and hosts more species of plants and animals than any other land use system. There is none other like it in the world. However, Audubon's use of the word "Hidden" is an apt characterization, because refuges are a mere program in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; an Agency steeped otherwise in regulatory responsibilities and subsidy programs. The National Wildlife Refuge system lacks adequate leadership at the agency level, is under funded, is under staffed and is off the Nation's radar compared to the other land resource agencies.

For the future of America's Great Outdoors we offer two related recommendations:

First, we recommend the establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge Service, as a separate Agency within the U. S. Department of the Interior.

Second, we recommend consolidating the four major land management agencies into one Cabinet level Department – A "Department of Conservation Lands."

Sincerely,

/s/ Don E. Redfearn
Don E. Redfearn
President

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<http://www.bluegoosealliance.org>

**NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES....WHERE THE EXTRAORDINARY IS
EVERY DAY!**