

**\* American Woodcock Society \* Boone and Crockett Club \* California Waterfowl Association \* Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation \* The Conservation Fund \* Delta Waterfowl Foundation \* Ducks Unlimited \* Houston Safari Club \* Masters of Foxhounds Association \* National Rifle Association \* National Shooting Sports Foundation \* National Wildlife Federation \* National Wildlife Refuge Association \* National Wild Turkey Federation \* North American Falconers Association \* Orion, The Hunter's Institute \* Pope and Young Club \* Professional Outfitters and Guides of America \* Quality Deer Management Association \* Ruffed Grouse Society \* Safari Club International \* Whitetails Unlimited \* Wild Sheep Foundation \* Wildlife Management Institute \***

August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

The undersigned organizations, which represent hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and women conservationists, are writing to express our strong support for the creation of the Green River National Wildlife Refuge in Kentucky.

Located in Henderson County, the Green River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) would restore and protect a valuable wetland complex for the benefit of migratory birds and threatened and endangered species while also creating significant opportunities for hunting, fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation. Additionally, the NWR would have significant beneficial impacts to the regional economy.

The land being proposed for protection includes a diverse system of bottomland hardwood forests, wetlands, uplands, and agricultural lands. The area has been considered ecologically important since 1958, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service first identified this area as an acquisition priority for waterfowl conservation.

The proposal for the Refuge, which was informed by the input and expertise of a diverse cross-section of local stakeholders, has numerous goals including:

- Establish a second national wildlife refuge fully located in Kentucky to support fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation;
- Protect and manage wetlands and bottomland forest habitats to support waterfowl, migratory birds, and threatened and endangered species;
- Provide high-quality hunting and sport fishing;
- Provide opportunities for public use and environmental education and interpretation;
- Collaborate with partners to protect and enhance biodiversity and water quality and quantity within the Ohio River and Green River watersheds, benefiting both people and wildlife; and
- Ensure healthy wildlife populations for the benefit of Kentuckians and all Americans.

The stated purpose of the refuge would be to provide habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, non-game land birds, such as neo-tropical songbirds, and bald eagles, and other birds of prey.

Establishment of the refuge would also preserve habitat for several species listed as endangered or threatened, many species of wildlife found in wetlands and bottomland hardwood forests while also providing outstanding nesting habitat for wood ducks.

The refuge would be a prime destination for many outdoor recreational activities, including waterfowl hunting, fishing, kayaking, hiking and birdwatching which would have direct positive benefits to the regional economy.

More than 55 million people visit national wildlife refuges each year generating \$1.7 billion in sales and nearly 27,000 jobs for regional economies. The Green River NWR would add to Kentucky's growing tourism industry, which generated \$14.5 billion in economic impact during 2016, an increase of over five percent from \$13.7 billion in 2015. In 2016 alone, tourism generated \$63.5 million in direct spending in Henderson County.

For these reasons, we are united in our strong support for the establishment of the Green River National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments and for your ongoing service on behalf of America's sportsmen and women conservationists.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society  
Boone and Crockett Club  
California Waterfowl Association  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
The Conservation Fund  
Delta Waterfowl Foundation  
Ducks Unlimited  
Houston Safari Club  
Masters of Foxhounds Association  
National Rifle Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
National Wildlife Federation  
National Wildlife Refuge Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
North American Falconers Association  
Orion, The Hunter's Institute  
Pope and Young Club  
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Safari Club International  
Whitetails Unlimited  
Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Management Institute