



June 28, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As leaders of the organizations comprising the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), we are writing to request a meeting with you. We are eager to discuss our coalition's work to address the challenges facing the National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) as a result of years of funding falling short of levels to address increased responsibilities, robust community engagement, and basic operational needs. We would like to hear about the Administration's plans to prioritize and uplift the Refuge System as the fiscal year 2025 budget process continues.

CARE is a unique and longstanding coalition representing 24 wildlife, sporting, scientific, and conservation organizations that span the political spectrum, representing more than 16 million Americans who value outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation. CARE was created in 1995 to bring together the disparate groups of hunters, anglers, biologists, environmentalists, scientists, and many more around shared values and their love of wildlife and outdoor recreation in order to advocate for increased funding for the National Wildlife Refuge System. More information about CARE's priorities and our membership can be found at [www.fundwildliferefuges.com](http://www.fundwildliferefuges.com).

Our national wildlife refuges are essential for protecting biodiversity and climate resilient habitats and communities, providing community-driven conservation, and supporting wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities nationwide. Yet despite the Refuge System's critical importance as the nation's only set of federal lands and waters dedicated to wildlife conservation, consecutive years of constrained funding have damaged its health and integrity. The situation facing the Refuge System is unsustainable and threatens its ability to effectively fulfill its conservation mission.

We request a hybrid virtual and in-person meeting with you in July to formally introduce our coalition and our work, and to further discuss our coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and your support for the Refuge System. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Edward B. Arnett, Ph.D., CWB®  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Wildlife Society



Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
American Fisheries Society



Jamie Rappaport Clark  
President and CEO  
Defenders of Wildlife



Pat Conzemius  
President & CEO  
Wildlife Forever



Jeff Crane  
President and CEO  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation



Julie Davis  
Board Chair  
American Birding Association



Whit Fosburgh  
President & CEO  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation  
Partnership



Elizabeth Gray, Ph.D.  
CEO  
National Audubon Society



W. Laird Hamberlin  
CEO  
Safari Club International



Geoffrey L. Haskett  
President  
National Wildlife Refuge Association

Glenn Hughes  
President  
American Sportfishing Association

Scott Kovarovics  
Executive Director  
Izaak Walton League of America

Lance Morgan, PhD  
President  
Marine Conservation Institute

Jennifer Morris  
CEO  
The Nature Conservancy

Collin O'Mara  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Wildlife Federation

Adam H. Putnam  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ducks Unlimited

Mary Ellen Sprenkel  
President & CEO  
The Corps Network

Land Tawney  
President & CEO  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Tony Wasley  
President  
Wildlife Management Institute

Jamie Williams  
President  
The Wilderness Society

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Wood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Wood  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Trout Unlimited