



NATIONAL  
**WILDLIFE**  
REFUGE SYSTEM

# Module 2e

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*National Wildlife Refuges & Public Lands*

# National Wildlife Refuges & Public Lands

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages an unparalleled network of public lands and waters called the National Wildlife Refuge System.

National Wildlife Refuges use Compatibility to determine if a public use is appropriate to occur.



PHOTO: USFWS  
CANAAN VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

# National Wildlife Refuge System Hierarchy

The President of the United States  
President Joseph Biden



Department of Interior  
Secretary: Deb Haaland



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Director: Martha Williams



National Wildlife Refuge System  
Chief: Cynthia Martinez



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# National Wildlife Refuge System

## *Mission Statement*

“The mission of the System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generation of Americans.”



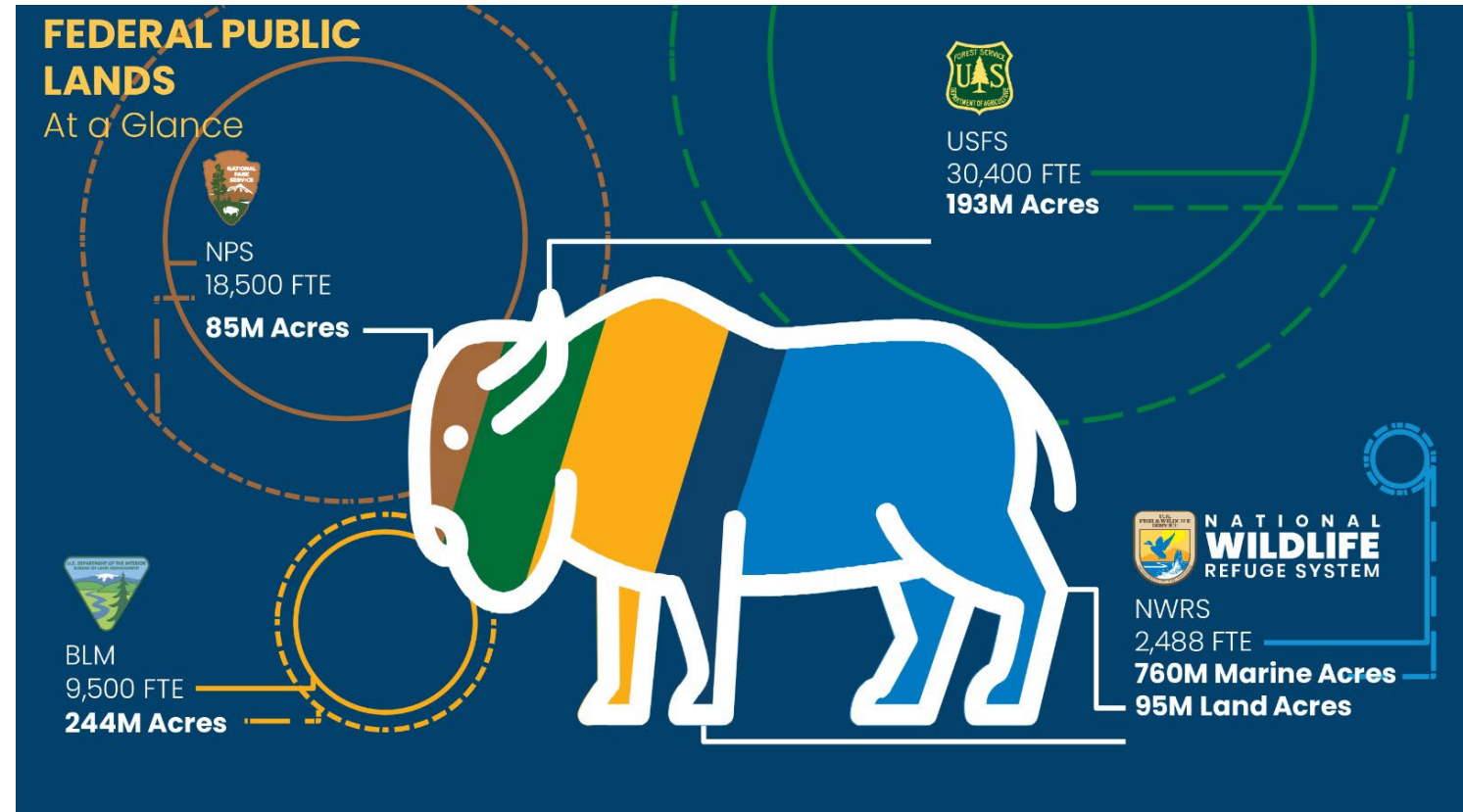
PHOTO: KEITH SHANNON/USFWS  
EASTERN NECK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



# Public Lands

There are more than 560 National Wildlife Refuges spanning the country, at least one in every state and U.S. Territory.

[Click here to learn more about Public Lands](#)



# Region 1

12 Interior Region Names Based on Watersheds



Region 1 also known as the "North Atlantic- Appalachian Region" consists of 14 states.

Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

The Regional Office is located in Hadley, Massachusetts.

# Compatibility Determination

*Refuge Improvement Act*

A Compatibility Determination or "CD" is a written determination signed by the Refuge Manager and Regional Chief signifying that a proposed or existing use of a national wildlife refuge is or is not a compatible use.

All public uses must be compatible with the purpose for which the refuge was established.

[Click here to learn more about Compatibility Determination](#)



# Public Uses

Most refuges offer one or more of the "Big Six" priority uses.

## Six Wildlife Dependent Public Uses

A **compatible use** is a proposed or existing wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a national wildlife refuge that, based on sound professional judgment, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the National Wildlife Refuge System mission or the purposes of the national wildlife refuge.

Interpretation



Wildlife Observation



Photography



Hunting



Environmental Education



Fishing

