

News Release

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Seeks Public Input to Increase Access to Refuge System Lands

As part of its ongoing effort to increase public access on federal lands, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced it is seeking the public’s assistance to develop a list of its managed lands that would benefit from new or increased access routes.

On March 12, 2019, President Donald Trump signed into law the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (S.47, the Dingell Act), which directs the Service and other federal land management agencies to develop a priority list of lands that have significantly restricted or no public access where that access could be improved. The public is encouraged to identify national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries and other lands managed by the Service that meet the complete criteria.

“Improving public access to hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation on national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries has been a key focus of the Department of the Interior under this Administration,” said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Aurelia Skipwith. “In just the last year, the Department opened 1.4 million acres of land and water to new or additional hunting and fishing opportunities — the single largest expansion on Service-managed lands in recent history. We’re committed to continuing expanding the availability of these unique and magnificent places for wildlife dependent recreation for the benefit of the American people.”

Comments will be accepted over a 30-day comment period from February 10-March 11, 2020.

Some of the criteria for nominated lands include: public lands must be managed by the Service and 640 contiguous acres; have significantly restricted or no public access; and be open under federal or state law to hunting, fishing, or use of the land for other public recreational purposes.

For additional information and a full list of required criteria for consideration as specified by the Dingell Act, visit: <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/realty/Public-Access-Nominations.html>.

Commenters are encouraged to review the required criteria and include additional information as to why the parcel should be on the Service’s priority list. Once the comment period closes the Service

will evaluate the nominations to determine which lands meet the requirements and considerations specified by the Dingell Act.

The Service's final priority list will be posted online by March 12, 2020, and updated biennially thereafter for 10 years.

The Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service have also sought the public's input to nominate lands within their jurisdictions under similar criteria.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).

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