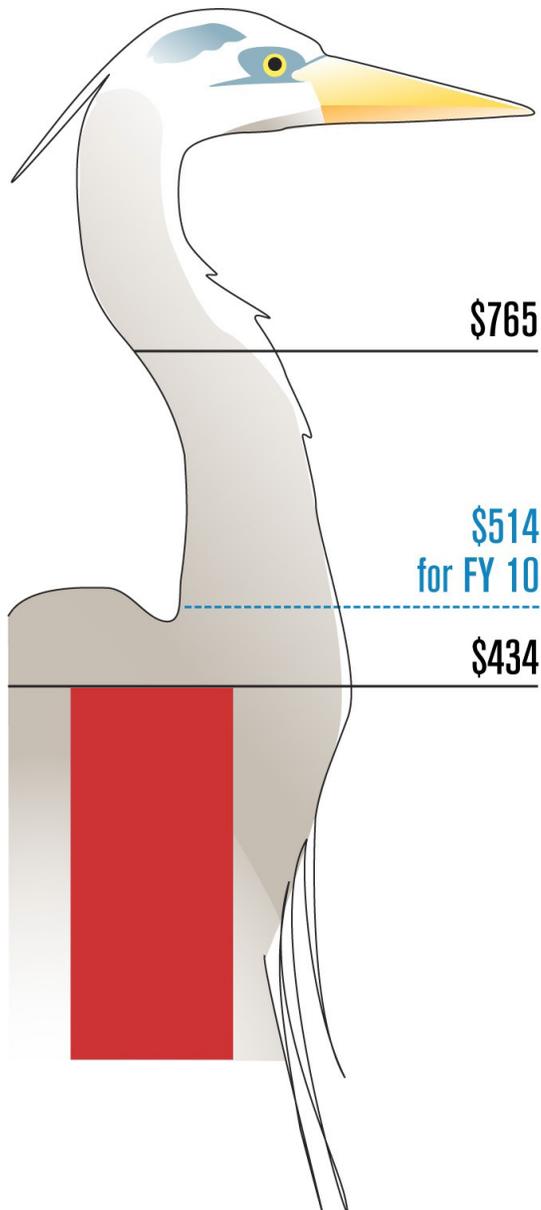




National Wildlife Refuge System

\$514 Million in FY 2010



A comprehensive analysis by CARE determined that the Refuge System needs **at least** \$765 million in annual operations and maintenance funding by FY 2013 to properly administer its 150 million acres, nature programs, habitat restoration projects, and more. The increase in FY08 to \$434.1 million was an important, and much appreciated, step in the right direction. To continue toward the reasonable and achievable goal of \$765 million by 2013 (a level that will not begin to address the \$3.5 billion backlog), **the Refuge System needs \$514 million in FY 2010.**

Note: CARE is currently re-evaluating the full needs of the Refuge System after the addition of 54 million acres in early 2009.

A Century of Wildlife Conservation on the Brink

Since 1903, our National Wildlife Refuge System has preserved America's wildlife, hunting and fishing traditions, and ever-shrinking natural areas. Each year, nearly 40 million people hunt, fish, watch wildlife, and learn from educational programs on wildlife refuges in every U.S. state and territory. In addition, refuges are critically important on local and regional scales, as visitors generate more than \$1.7 billion in annual sales to local economies, which employs over 27,000 U.S. workers. And in keeping with its conservation mandate, the Refuge System provides a last bastion for more than 250 at-risk plant and animal species. But, unfortunately, refuges aren't as healthy as they may appear.

Although the much needed increase in FY 08 helped, previous years of stagnant or declining budgets caused a rapid swelling of the Operations and Maintenance backlog to its current \$3.5 billion, and forced plans for a dramatic 20% downsizing of the workforce. Refuge visitors often show up to find roads and visitor centers closed, viewing platforms and trails in disrepair, and habitat restoration and school education programs eliminated. Invasive plant species are taking over and crime is on the rise as only 200 law enforcement officers are now asked to do the job of over 800.

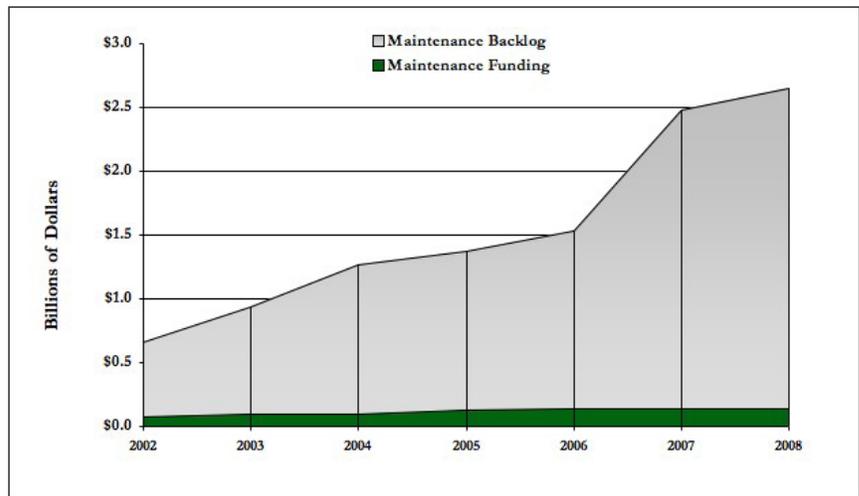
An Era of Downsizing

In 2004, the Refuge System stopped filling job vacancies in recognition that funding was not keeping pace with rising fixed costs and inflation. With over 300 positions already eliminated and another 250 on the chopping block, these dramatic reductions are burdening dedicated, but overworked, staff tasked with the daunting challenge of managing and restoring complex habitats, offering safe haven for plants and wildlife, providing an eager public with adequate educational and recreational opportunities, providing law enforcement on increasingly urban refuges, and scores of other responsibilities. *Is this America's commitment to wildlife conservation that Theodore Roosevelt envisioned more than 100 years ago?*

CARE seeks to work with the Obama Administration and the 111th Congress to restore funding for the Refuge System and reach at least \$765 million by Fiscal Year 2013, the amount needed to begin to fulfill the Refuge System's core mission and purposes.

At a time when the maintenance backlog is soaring (*see figure at right*) and thousands of buildings, roads, observation towers, duck blinds, and heavy equipment are falling into disrepair, our 549 wildlife refuges cannot afford to wait any longer for the attention and funding priority they deserve.

If we do not soon address the challenges facing our Refuge System, the national network of wildlife conservation lands envisioned by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 will never materialize. CARE remains ready to work with Congress to ensure the Refuge System is provided \$514 million for FY 2010 and is protected for the benefit of plants and wildlife, 40 million annual visitors, and future generations of Americans.



About C.A.R.E.

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement is a diverse coalition of 22 conservation, recreation, sporting, and scientific organizations with more than 14 million members and supporters across the United States. CARE has been working since 1995 to help the National Wildlife Refuge System fight a serious funding crisis.

American Birding Association
American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Assateague Coastal Trust
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Izaak Walton League of America
National Audubon Society
National Rifle Association of America

National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Safari Club International
The Corps Network
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society
Trout Unlimited
U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute



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