



News Release

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Masonville Cove Designated as Nation's First Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today designated [Masonville Cove](#) in Baltimore as the nation's first Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. With 80 percent of Americans living in cities, the Service's new Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative will forge connections between the National Wildlife Refuge System, natural resource conservation, and people living in urban areas.

"National wildlife refuges are the best of America's wild places, but many are not near major metropolitan areas. Most Americans have grown up without a real connection to the outdoors and wildlife, and the Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative gives us a chance to change that," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe.

The [U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#), [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#) and [The Chesapeake Bay Trust](#) will dedicate a total of \$55,000 in support of the Masonville Cove partnership.

Masonville Cove Nature Area was opened in 2012 on a restored site owned by the Maryland Port Administration on the Patapsco River, allowing public access to the cove for the first time in over 70 years. The nature area offers opportunities within the city limits for walking, fishing, bird watching and other recreational activities. Currently 11 acres of the nature area are open to the public and after further restoration 52 acres will be open to the public.

An energy-efficient, "green" environmental education center opened in 2009 at Masonville Cove. Living Classrooms Foundation, the National Aquarium, and the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay Coalition run programs at the center that have reached thousands of community members, local schoolchildren and their teachers.

The Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative grows out of the Service's *Conserving the Future* vision, which sets a strategic path for the National Wildlife Refuge System for the next decade and beyond. For more information, visit <http://americaswildlife.org/>.

In 2007, the Maryland Port Administration selected Masonville Cove as a future site to store material dredged from the harbor to maintain shipping channels and began the massive clean up of the site. During restoration, 27 abandoned vessels and 61,000 tons of trash have been removed, including debris believed to date back to the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904.

The Service manages more than 560 national wildlife refuges and 150 million acres across America. Many of the wildlife refuges are in urban areas, including Denver, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Detroit and Boston, among other cities. More than 47 million people annually visit national wildlife refuges.

Follow the conversation on Twitter: #UrbanPartnership

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, <http://www.fws.gov/>

