



Active Duty U.S. Military Offered Free Entrance to National Wildlife Refuges

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Thanking America's Armed Forces Active Duty U.S. Military Offered Free Entrance to National Wildlife Refuges

Brussels, Ill - To show appreciation for those who serve in the U.S. Military, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is now issuing an annual pass offering free entrance for active duty military members and their dependents to every unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, as well as National Parks and other public lands.

“Through the years, military members, especially those far from home in times of conflict, have found inspiration and rejuvenation in America’s wild landscapes. Their dedication enables all Americans to enjoy these special places in safety and security,” said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. “This new pass gives us a way to thank members of the Armed Forces and their families for their service and their sacrifices.”

Active duty members of the U.S. Military and their dependents can pick up their pass at the Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge visitor center in Brussels, Ill from 8 a.m.-4 p. m. Monday through Friday. They must show a current, valid military identification card to obtain their pass. More information is available at <http://store.usgs.gov/pass/index.html>.

Although Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge does not charge an entrance fee, 35 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System do charge a fee. This military version of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass permits free entrance all of them, as well as to sites managed by the National Park Service, the

Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Forest Service that charge entrance fees. The pass is also available through these Federal agencies.

“We’re proud to open our refuge to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families,” said Refuge Manager John Mabery. “Refuges across the nation offer outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, and we hope they’ll be able to relax and have fun with their families on this or any of our other outstanding refuges.”

The Service’s National Wildlife Refuge System and the military have strong ties. More than 200,000 acres of the Refuge System are former military lands, and nearly 50 of the 556 units in the Refuge System include lands transferred from the military to the Service. Following World War I and all subsequent conflicts in our nation’s history, returning veterans took advantage of hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational opportunities on refuge lands – and thousands continue to enjoy these activities. Today, the Service employs some 1,400 veterans in full-time and temporary positions, equal to nearly 20 percent of the agency’s workforce.

For more information, call Cortney White-Solum at 618-883-2524 or email Cortney_White@fws.gov.

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, visit www.fws.gov.

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