



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2015

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CYNTHIA MARTINEZ NAMED NEW CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 11, 2015 - The National Wildlife Refuge Association applauds the selection of Cynthia Martinez as the new Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Martinez will assume her duties immediately.

“Cynthia embodies what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stands for - hard work, forward thinking, and a dedication to wildlife conservation,” stated David Houghton, President of the Refuge Association. “She has done an incredible job as Deputy Chief of Refuges and we have no doubt she will do an even better job as Chief.”

Martinez served as Deputy Chief of Refuges since 2012, acting as interim Chief following the promotion of James Kurth to Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior to serving as Deputy, she was head of the Refuge System’s Division of Visitor Services and Communications from 2010 to 2012. In that capacity, she led the process for developing the Refuge System’s *Conserving the Future* vision document, which will continue to guide the management and growth of the Refuge System through the next decade.

“Cynthia is a great fit for this position,” said Ashe. “She possesses a diversity of experience working within the Service and National Wildlife Refuge System. Cynthia also demonstrates the strong leadership and innovation the Service needs as we continue to introduce new generations of Americans to conservation.”

Martinez is a fifth-generation New Mexican whose family has lived in the northern portion of the state since the 1850s. She is the former refuge manager for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Las Vegas, NV. Desert National Wildlife Refuge is the largest national wildlife refuge in the lower 48 states and the entire Complex of four refuges encompasses more than 1.6 million acres of land.

Martinez began her Service career in the Student Conservation Education Program (SCEP) working as an assistant contaminants specialist in the Phoenix, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office. She went on to become a fishery biologist and assistant field supervisor for the Southern Nevada Field Office.

Martinez earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from New Mexico State University and a Masters of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Management from the University of Arizona.

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The National Wildlife Refuge Association is the only independent nonprofit that promotes and protects the world’s largest wildlife conservation network: the National Wildlife Refuge System. www.refugeassociation.org.