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Houghton Welcomed as New NWRA President

Washington, DC - The board of the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) is pleased to announce that David Houghton has been chosen as the organization's new President. Houghton, who previously served as Executive Vice-President, has a long and distinguished association with the NWRA, and has been recognized in recent years for his outstanding working bringing together diverse stakeholders to protect large landscapes beyond refuge boundaries.

"David has an extraordinary vision for conservation and the NWRA and there is no better person to take the reins at this crucial juncture," said Stuart Watson, Chairman of the NWRA board of Directors. "His unique ability to bring together diverse stakeholders, appreciation for the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and business acumen are certain to propel the organization to the next level."

Houghton has been associated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Refuge System throughout his professional and public service career. He started as a biotech at Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), MA, then moved to assistant refuge manager at Rachel Carson NWR, ME, where in addition to his core duties, he established Friends volunteer groups, and later served as Deputy Project Leader at the Rhode Island NWRs. His association with the NWRA spans many years, acting first as a volunteer regional representative, then board member, consultant, and finally as a staff member.

"I'm excited to take the helm of an organization that plays such a central role in advancing the joint wildlife conservation missions of the National Wildlife Refuge System and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," said Houghton. "I look forward to expanding our partnership with the Service and to accomplishing even greater conservation results in the months and years ahead."

Houghton, who has led NWRA's Beyond the Boundaries program was a central architect alongside the FWS in helping to create the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area, a milestone conservation initiative that will protect 150,000 acres of public and private land and serve as a vital ecological link in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. He was also an influential voice in the development of the new National Wildlife Refuge System vision, *Conserving the Future*, advocating for a Beyond the Boundaries approach to conservation, and the need to engage a broad diversity of rural and urban stakeholders in delivering the Refuge System mission. NWRA served as the FWS's lead partner in development of the seminal Refuge System vision.

Houghton succeeds Evan Hirsche whose eleven years of dynamic, dedicated service grew the organization into an effective and recognized voice in the conservation community and immeasurably strengthened NWRA's advocacy in support of the Refuge System.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association's mission is to conserve America's wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect and enhance the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries. For more information, visit www.refugeassociation.org.

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