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Malheur Occupation Ends

Restoration Can Begin; Conservation Must Continue

News broke early this morning that the four remaining occupants of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge agreed to surrender to authorities at 8 a.m. PST. About three hours later, the occupiers were taken into custody.

The following is a statement by David Houghton, president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association:

“We’re relieved to finally see the occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge come to an end.

“The FBI, local law enforcement and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be commended for a peaceful resolution, despite threats of violence from the four remaining occupants.

“These criminals will now be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, as they should.

“The work to restore Malheur can now begin, but it will not be quick or easy. With threats of booby-traps and videotaped evidence of damage to roads, fences and other refuge property, the effort to assess and repair the damages will be extensive.

“Today, as we express our relief, we should also reflect on this episode, and consider how we got here, and ways we can come together in every community to ensure it doesn’t happen again.

“America’s national wildlife refuges are public lands we all cherish, whether for their incredible and diverse wildlife habitats, their recreational opportunities or their ability to inspire children and adults alike to love and conserve our shared heritage as Americans.

“Let’s not let the criminal activities of extremists distract the rest of us from the important collaborative conservation work that continues throughout this nation, with America’s national wildlife refuges playing a leading role in conserving our best landscapes for the future.”

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The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to conserve America's wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect, enhance, and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries.