



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington, D.C. 20240

DIRECTOR'S ORDER NO. 155

Subject: National Wildlife Refuge System Law Enforcement Program Reforms

**Sec. 1 What is the purpose of this Order?** This Order further implements the Secretary's mandate to improve law enforcement and officer safety within the Department, including the National Wildlife Refuge System (System or NWRS).

**Sec. 2 What is the scope of this Order?** This Order adopts the decisions described in the May 2003 report, "Interim and Long-Term Deployment of Law Enforcement Resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System." Please refer to that document for a more thorough discussion of the decisions.

**Sec. 3 How will the organizational structure of the NWRS law enforcement program change?**

a. At Headquarters, the Branch of Refuge Law Enforcement will become the Office of Refuge Law Enforcement. The Chief of the Office of Refuge Law Enforcement will report directly to the Deputy Assistant Director, National Wildlife Refuge System.

b. Each Regional Office will establish an Office of Refuge Law Enforcement headed by a Regional Chief, Office of Refuge Law Enforcement (RCORLE). To ensure consistency between Regions in accordance with Fulfilling The Promise Recommendation L10, we will staff the RCORLE using the standard position description developed by the Headquarters office. The RCORLE will report directly to the Office of the Regional Chief, NWRS.

**Sec. 4 How will the Refuge Law Enforcement Zone System be implemented?** We will establish a Refuge Law Enforcement Zone Officer (RLEZO) position in each designated law enforcement zone. Zone officers will provide refuge law enforcement program oversight and technical assistance to national wildlife refuges within their zone. Zone officers will coordinate directly with refuge managers, refuge officers, and Fish and Wildlife Service special agents. The RCORLE will supervise all zone officers within their Region. To ensure consistency between Regions, we will staff zone officer positions using the standard position description developed by the Headquarters office.

**Sec. 5 What will change in how the System manages collateral duty law enforcement officers?**

a. All collateral duty refuge officers who retain their law enforcement commission past September 30, 2003, will become dual-function refuge officers and must spend 25 to 50 percent of their time on law enforcement duties. We define law enforcement in the May 2003 report, "Interim and Long-Term Deployment of Law Enforcement Resources of the National Wildlife Refuge System." We will require dual-function refuge officers to document

time spent on law enforcement duties, and the supervisor will certify this documentation annually with concurrence by the zone officer.

b. We will only train and commission new dual-function refuge officers that are in the GS-0485 and GS-0025 series, at the GS-11 or lower grade level. The only exception to this standard will be dual function refuge officers with aircraft pilot duties.

c. We will no longer allow law enforcement commissions for GS-14 refuge managers as of October 15, 2003.

d. We will limit law enforcement commissions for GS-13 refuge managers to those that document officer safety concerns that justify the retention of their enforcement authority. We will evaluate these exceptions by October 15 annually, and the Regional Chief, NWRS, will approve them, with concurrence from the Chief, Office of Refuge Law Enforcement. The requirements listed in Section 5a of this document apply to all dual-function refuge officers, including GS-13 refuge managers waived under this section.

**Sec. 6 How will refuge officers be recruited?** We will use a centralized vacancy announcement process to recruit for full-time refuge officer positions. The Division of Human Resources will coordinate the vacancy announcement process with the servicing human resources offices and the Chief, Office of Refuge Law Enforcement. The field station refuge manager or designee will select the successful candidate. The Chief, Office of Refuge Law Enforcement will review and certify that all pre-appointment requirements and all conditions of employment have been met and satisfied prior to the training and commissioning of refuge officers.

**Sec. 7 What is the effective date of this Order?** This Order is effective immediately. We will incorporate its contents into Parts 022, 440, and 608 of the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual. Its provisions will remain in effect until September 30, 2004, unless amended, superseded, or revoked.

  
**Acting** DIRECTOR

Date: July 16, 2003