



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wildlife Forever Announces New Friend's Challenge Grant Fund

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BROOKLYN CENTER, MN: Wildlife Forever is pleased to announce the availability of a new pool of conservation funding for National Wildlife Refuge Friends groups. The "Friend's Challenge" fund will provide \$25,000 in matching funds to assist in leveraging local conservation donations. All grants must be matched on a minimum of 1 to 1 resulting in \$50,000 for wildlife populations across the country on our National Wildlife Refuge System.

"Wildlife Forever recognizes that many of our members are involved with local conservation efforts and Friend's groups. We want to assist these grassroots efforts by matching conservation dollars and leveraging local donations," said Douglas H. Grann, President & CEO of the Minnesota based nonprofit organization.

Friend's Challenge grants will be made available up to \$2,500 each to qualifying groups. The funds must be matched from a third-party donor and sent to Wildlife Forever for validation of the match. Groups that promote wildlife habitat and quality are eligible to apply for the funds. Programs that enhance fish and wildlife populations through management and research can also compete for the challenge grants.

Examples of past projects supported by Wildlife Forever include:

- Brown Bear research on O'Malley River within the Kodiak NWR, AK. Grant amount: \$2,500.
- Planted nursery and started seedlings of prairie cord grass at Squaw

Creek NWR, MO. Grant amount: \$2,000.

- Provided rip-rap for shoreline stabilization at Wheeler NWR, AL.
Grant amount: \$1,600.

According to Grann, “It is the local projects by the Friends group members that truly make a difference for fish and wildlife across America. We are pleased to set aside this funding for Friend’ s groups and encourage everyone to participate. I would encourage all those with local projects to visit the Wildlife Forever web site and get an application. In the Centennial year of the Refuge System we want to support the tremendous efforts of the Friends groups by providing matching funds to increase local dollars and support sweat equity.”

Grant applications will be reviewed by a Friend’s Challenge review committee and challenge grants awarded throughout the year 2003. Wildlife Forever reserves the right to determine, in its sole discretion, the eligibility of a project for support. Requirements include a completed application form (see www.wildlifeforever.org), and a letter of project review and approval from the appropriate National Wildlife Refuge. Matching funds must be sent to Wildlife Forever on a minimum of a one-one basis. For more information please call Wildlife Forever at 763-253-0222 or write to Wildlife Forever, Friend’s Challenge, 2700 Freeway Blvd, Suite 1000, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430.

Wildlife Forever is a national nonprofit conservation organization headquartered in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. The mission of Wildlife Forever is "to conserve America' s wildlife heritage through conservation education, preservation of habitat, and management of fish and wildlife."

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