



STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

OCTOBER 2014

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR URBAN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

INTRODUCTION

The future success of conservation lies ultimately in our ability to inspire Americans to connect with the outdoors and nature, and to become stewards of the environment. Americans are spending less time outdoors, and are becoming more ethnically and racially diverse. With more than 80% of Americans now living in urban areas, our challenge is to become relevant in their daily lives. Without public awareness and support, our conservation mission will not succeed.

Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation challenges us to enhance the relevance of the National Wildlife Refuge System (System) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to a rapidly changing America. Building a connected conservation constituency requires engaging with the ever-growing urban population to ensure that Americans care about conservation. To this end, the *Conserving the Future* document contains a specific recommendation:

“RECOMMENDATION 13: Create an urban refuge initiative that defines excellence in our existing urban refuges, establishes the framework for creating new urban refuge partnerships and implements a refuge presence in 10 demographically and geographically varied cities across America by 2015.”

Urban areas present a strategic opportunity to reach new audiences who don't know about the Service and therefore are less likely to visit Service lands. Refuges close to highly-populated areas provide the greatest opportunity to engage new and diverse audiences, whether through an urban refuge or an urban wildlife refuge partnership. Strategically building an urban conservation constituency ultimately benefits the entire System and the broader conservation community by nurturing increased support among these audiences.

The goal of the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program (Program) is to engage urban communities as partners in wildlife conservation. Excellence may be achieved through the eight standards that serve as a framework for collaboration among the Service and urban communities, whether such collaboration is on or off Service lands. The eight standards are:

- 1. KNOW AND RELATE TO THE COMMUNITY**
- 2. CONNECT URBAN PEOPLE WITH NATURE VIA STEPPING STONES OF ENGAGEMENT**
- 3. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS**
- 4. BE A COMMUNITY ASSET**
- 5. ENSURE ADEQUATE LONG-TERM RESOURCES**
- 6. PROVIDE EQUITABLE ACCESS**
- 7. ENSURE VISITORS FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME**
- 8. MODEL SUSTAINABILITY**

Developed with input from Service staff (including urban refuge managers) and local and national partners, these standards support the Program's goal and the Service mission to conserve wildlife for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The approach to excellence for urban national wildlife refuges must be as flexible and unique as the very communities the refuges serve. The Service must strive to understand both human *and* natural environments in order to best address the expectations of the urban community. The Service must provide programs and leadership on conservation initiatives that are relevant to their urban audiences while highlighting the many ecosystem services and aesthetic benefits nature provides. Service staff, volunteers, and partners must proactively engage urban communities to develop meaningful connections to nature that will last a lifetime. This starts by building awareness, fostering deeper understanding, and growing participation through programs that will bring more people from the urban world into the broad conservation community.

Urban refuges are well situated to build a more robust conservation constituency. At the same time, the challenge of broadly engaging all urban audiences is far too big for any one agency or organization to tackle alone. The Program recognizes the importance of embracing traditional and new collaborations. Various entities notable for their work in conservation, education, or human health -- to name a few areas of overlapping interest - can ultimately help achieve conservation of wildlife, plants, and habitats, which is essential to maintaining a healthy planet for people.

USING THE STANDARDS

- The term “urban refuge” is used throughout these standards. However, these standards apply not only to Service lands in urban areas, but also, to the greatest extent possible, to all urban projects where the Service is a partner. For planning purposes, a refuge is considered urban if it is within 25 miles of a population of 250,000 or more, although the standards can be applied to neighboring communities of any size. The criteria for an urban refuge will be examined as needed, or when the standards are reviewed every five years.
- Each urban refuge or partnership is unique. As such, a range of strategies and assessment tools are provided in order that the most suitable choices are made for a particular urban area.
- The standards’ objectives set Service guidelines for urban refuges to plan for the future, to measure success, and to take advantage of extraordinary opportunities to build a conservation constituency with their immediate urban neighbors. Standards may be adapted to fit specific circumstances.
- The standards are designed to complement other *Conserving the Future* recommendations and step-down plans. Visit www.fws.gov/refuges/vision to reference other plans, such as the Friends Mentoring Action Plan; Strategic Plan for Volunteers, Friends Organizations, and Community Partners; Environmental Education Strategic Plan; Interpretation Strategic Plan; and Strategic Communications Plan.
- The Standards of Excellence will be reviewed and updated by the Refuge System at least every five years to ensure relevancy and currency.

STANDARDS OUTLINE

Each standard has several components and a significant amount of detail. This outline clarifies the purpose of each section, provides definitions of concepts, and describes connections between various elements.

As you read the standards and engage in activities to implement the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program, keep in mind the intended impact¹:

URBAN COMMUNITIES PARTNER IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

That is our target. Everything you do should help accomplish this goal. With that in mind, here's what you will find in each standard:

INTRODUCTION

A brief summary of the situation that each standard addresses is provided. This section gives background on the purpose for the standard (i.e., why it is essential to our agency mission), and generally describes what action(s) are sought. Where applicable, the introduction also addresses who the situation affects, who has a stake in the problem/issue, and what we know about it and the people involved.

BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS

These questions offer a quick way to assess progress being made toward accomplishing implementation goals. An urban refuge achieving excellence will answer "yes" to each question.

PAY-OFFS

These describe the value in achieving the expressed **GOALS** and **OUTCOMES** at your refuge.

GUIDEPOSTS

These are markers of advancement toward achieving goals and associated outcomes. They describe things you might notice (see, hear, read, etc.) if your refuge is making progress toward implementing a standard and achieving the **SHORT, INTERMEDIATE, and LONG TERM OUTCOMES**.

APPENDIX A: STRATEGIES

This section contains ideas and suggestions for strategies or activities that will help you implement the standard. These are some of the actions you can take to accomplish implementation goals and effect change in your audience to meet **SHORT, INTERMEDIATE, and LONG TERM OUTCOMES**. Therefore, choose activities based on your desired results.

APPENDIX B: ASSESSING PROGRESS

This section identifies anticipated outcomes and lays out implementation goals, objectives, and metrics that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

¹ Impact refers to the results expected ten years or more after an initiative is under way; the results manifest as the social change you are working to create. **Impacts** are *organizational and/or community level changes* expected to result from the outcomes produced by program activities; impacts may include improved conditions, increased capacity, and/or changes in the policy arena.

OUTCOMES

Outcomes are not "what we do"; rather, they are the results from what we do that are of value or benefit to others. They are the changes that occur or the differences that are made for program participants, communities, or organizations.

Outcomes are divided into **SHORT, INTERMEDIATE, and LONG TERM OUTCOMES.**

- **SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES** often relate to learning and constructs like awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, opinions, aspirations, and motivations. They are changes in individuals and may be measured at the end of a program activity or soon after the activity has finished. Short-term outcomes are designated as such because they are the first meaningful changes that follow directly from an activity, and they come before a series of other, longer-term outcomes – i.e., they are antecedents to intermediate outcomes. To achieve intermediate outcomes, you must first achieve short-term outcomes. Examples: Increased awareness of the importance and benefit of adopting sustainable practices; learning how to reduce one's carbon footprint.
- **INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES** often relate to actions, behavior, practice, decision-making, policies, and social action. They are second-order changes in individuals or groups that result from successful achievement of short-term outcomes over time and are usually measured within several months to three years after individuals participate in program activities. They are a precursor to achieving long-term outcomes. Example: Routinely using sustainable practices that reduce one's carbon footprint.
- **LONG-TERM OUTCOMES** relate to a change in conditions – social, economic, civic, and environmental. These outcomes are the more distant benefits or changes anticipated as a result of the initiative; they often have broader and more durable significance than short-term or intermediate outcomes. Long-term outcomes result from achievement over time of short-term and intermediate outcomes; they focus on community-wide changes, and are measured several years after program completion. Example: The community reduces overall carbon emission.

If our activities consistently produce these outcomes, we expect ultimately to change or impact wildlife conservation in urban areas over a longer period.

GUIDEPOSTS

We thought it would be helpful to have guideposts at the outset, and also to see the specific guideposts within the context of the assessment framework.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

A goal is what you hope to accomplish when your program is completed. It is broader than an objective.

IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES

Objectives should help you reach your implementation goals, which ultimately will help the program achieve an impact. The objectives refer to specific events or actions that need to occur before you can achieve your implementation goal.

METRICS

Metrics are what you measure to assess progress toward achieving your objective.

STANDARD 1: KNOW AND RELATE TO THE COMMUNITY

A “community” has varied definitions; some may think it of as a residential neighborhood while others envision it as a city, county or region. To effectively implement the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program, each Service site has a responsibility to define the geographic boundaries of the urban it serves, cultivate an understanding of the community within those boundaries, and work to build a presence that is inclusive of, and welcoming to, the diverse individuals that make up that community. While maintaining our identity is fundamental to achieving our mission, we must also endeavor to integrate with our neighbors, becoming a strong, indispensable thread in the community fabric.

To become an integral part of the community fabric, the Service must build robust relationships with its urban neighbors. Given the numerous possibilities of community composition and the need to be pragmatic, the use of demographic data and input from an array of community leaders is essential to begin to identify, understand, and relate to those who live and work in the neighborhoods surrounding the urban refuge, but are not currently visiting. It is crucial that we learn from and about the audiences we intend to engage; be willing to allow what we learn to guide our work – even if that sometimes means changing course; create an environment in which people feel safe to express culturally-based values, perceptions, and experiences; and practice earnest two-way communication to ensure the community knows its voice is heard, respected, and valued.

Knowing our audiences and relating to the community is the foundation of the Standards of Excellence.

BIG-PICTURE QUESTIONS

- Is Service staff regularly conducting an analysis of the demographic characteristics (ethnicity, culture, language, economic status, religion, age, social status, education, etc.) and needs of the community?
- Is Service staff using the results of the analysis to identify and engage community leaders from under-served audiences and inform planning and programming to remain relevant in the community?
- Are the results of the analysis, cultural competency training, and feedback from target audiences being used by Service staff to understand cultural nuances and prevalent perceptions and to ensure an inclusive environment that is hospitable and culturally sensitive?

Urban refuges that achieve excellence understand the values, interests, cultures, and needs of the surrounding/adjacent community and allow that knowledge to guide their work.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. Knowing and relating to the community is the foundation for successfully implementing the subsequent standards.
2. The Service will gain a deep, lasting knowledge of the community that transcends staff turnover.

3. The Service will build a foundation for informing decisions on program priorities and the use of limited resources.
4. Refuge programming and planning will reflect the voice of the whole community, resulting in increased public confidence and support.
5. The community will recognize that the Service is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members and being of service to its neighbors, resulting in increased public trust and community support.
6. All segments of the community will feel valued by the Service and know that they have equal access and opportunity to participate in our programs.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff consistently uses a variety of methods and tools to research and understand the demographic characteristics of the community.
- Service staff is meeting with community leaders from diverse groups to gather knowledge about the attitudes, needs, and beliefs of the target audiences within the local community.
- Community needs inform decisions related to refuge planning.
- Service staff uses tools acquired in cultural competency training to develop a more inclusive environment.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing staff and volunteers talk more about the community's demographic characteristics.
- You are hearing staff and volunteers talk more about the attitudes, beliefs, and unique needs of target audiences within the community.
- You are hearing community leaders acknowledge that their input is reflected in refuge plans and public programs.
- Staff and volunteers demonstrate increased skill in exhibiting cultural sensitivity and respectfully communicating with culturally diverse groups.
- You are hearing individuals from diverse groups say they feel included and respected by Service staff.
- Collectively, the composition of refuge staff, interns, and volunteers more closely reflects the diversity of the neighboring population.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

STANDARD 2: CONNECT URBAN PEOPLE WITH NATURE VIA STEPPING STONES OF ENGAGEMENT

To garner and retain broad support and participation in the conservation of natural resources, the Service must reach out, connect with, and serve a broad diversity of urban dwellers, providing reasons and opportunities for urban residents to find, appreciate, and care for nature in their communities and beyond.

Presenting both a challenge and an opportunity, engaging our urban neighbors and fostering a sense of stewardship reflect the heart of the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program. An increasing “disconnect” between American people – especially younger generations – and the natural world has been well documented. Yet, this disconnect does not equal a lack of caring and proximity to natural places; it does not necessarily reflect how nature is valued. In addition, American society is more ethnically and socially diverse and increasingly more urban, with 80% of Americans living in urban or suburban areas (2010 U.S. Census).

These societal changes may contribute to a lessened understanding and awareness of humans’ reliance on the natural environment. Open spaces are valuable to humans for clean air, clean water, healthy recreational opportunities, and community enhancement. If the American people are not aware of interdependent connections and the benefits nature provides, the Service will not succeed at gaining support of, and assistance with, conservation efforts. Therefore, it is critical to offer an array of programs and activities that link urban residents, starting in early childhood, with the natural environment, providing increased opportunities for meaningful experiences in nature.

While traditional visitors to Service lands are most likely comfortable in natural settings, many potential refuge visitors, or those who might participate in nature programs in other natural areas, may have less comfort and lack nature-based skills. To engage these non-traditional audiences, we need to create programs that are relevant to and targeted for individuals of different comfort and skill levels and from varying backgrounds. We must offer a wide variety of nature-based programs, often considered “conservation education,” and provide experiences aimed at gently increasing these audiences’ comfort level in the outdoors. Then, we can strategically build on those experiences to encourage participation in natural resource conservation. To do this, we must understand the diverse perspectives, values, and cultures of urban communities and adapt our approach accordingly. To be successful, our efforts will proceed in increments that are manageable, focus on quality of experience, and allow for innovation, flexibility, and adaptive management by Service staff and partners.

BIG-PICTURE QUESTIONS

- Is the Service consistently engaging with community members who reflect a broad diversity of the local area? Is the Service reaching the “whole community”?
- Is the Service providing a full spectrum of engagement that includes multidisciplinary opportunities for all levels of interest, i.e., for “nature novices” as well as “nature enthusiasts”?
- Is the Service helping urban residents find, recognize, and care for natural environments within their own backyards, communities, and beyond?

Urban refuges that achieve excellence engage all demographic groups within their community, providing varied opportunities for residents to connect with and care for nature.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. Community members from previously underrepresented groups will extend the reach of the Service by sharing their new knowledge of natural resources within their demographic group.
2. When a broader spectrum of the community is actively engaged by the Service, members of the community will in turn have an increased understanding of natural systems and a greater appreciation for the conservation work of the Service.
3. Community members will increase their participation in conservation projects on and off Service lands.
4. Community leaders will provide unsolicited support for the Service and natural resource conservation.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Outreach and education programs have been revised to meet the needs of community members, resulting in a wide variety of nature experiences and programs targeted for urban audiences.
- Greater diversity is observed among visitors and program participants (for example, multiple languages can be heard on the refuge at any given time).
- Service staff has successfully engaged diverse audiences in conservation projects both on-refuge and in the urban community.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing program participants say they know more about local wildlife and are no longer uncomfortable participating in nature-related activities.
- You are hearing that program participants are sharing their knowledge of natural resources within their demographic group.
- You are hearing program participants say they recognize the Service's role in conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats in their community.
- Diverse audiences within the community are engaged in meaningful conservation projects that are perceived as beneficial to the community and result in positive conservation outcomes.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving Excellence.

STANDARD 3: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

To foster a society that values nature and supports fish and wildlife conservation, the Service must expand its presence within urban communities. To accomplish this, we must gain the support of community partners to share resources, broaden our skills, and help us understand the joys, challenges, and opportunities of living and working in urban environments. Working with organizations, institutions, community leaders, and Friends groups that strengthen our ability to spread the wildlife conservation message to new audiences will facilitate implementing programs and projects that benefit the health and well-being of humans and wildlife, and will help us achieve conservation goals previously unachievable.

Establishing successful, long-lived partnerships is not the sole responsibility of a charismatic project leader or refuge manager. Indeed, relationships must be cultivated and supported by multiple Service staff over time to ensure partnerships are sustained over the long term. To that end, the Service will work closely with its partners in the urban community, ensuring they recognize our commitment to the partnership and to conservation and outreach in the community.

In the case of partnerships, quality should be more important than quantity; the type of partnership inconsequential. Both formal and informal partnerships have proven to be effective in building strong relationships. Partnerships that are formalized (i.e., whether through funding agreements or memoranda of understanding) and operate under a written agreement that describes shared goals, objectives, roles, and responsibilities between the community partner and the field station can increase the success of the partnership and the likelihood that it will last. However, not all partnerships can or should be formalized. We need to remain flexible to participate in relationships as they evolve and build partnerships that serve the best interests of all parties.

BIG-PICTURE QUESTIONS

- Do the partnerships reflect the demographics and culture of the neighboring community?
- Are the partnerships mutually beneficial?
- Are the partnerships helping to achieve the land stewardship and conservation goals of the Service?

Urban refuges that achieve excellence utilize formal and informal partnerships with a variety of individuals and organizations within the community to achieve common goals for land stewardship and conservation of natural resources for the benefit of the community.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. The Service can achieve conservation and outreach goals we cannot meet alone. For example:
 - Conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitat outside of Refuge System lands; and
 - Widespread community awareness of the Service's role in natural resource conservation and how land stewardship benefits all people.
2. Relevant local partnerships will:
 - Build distinctive connections with the community;
 - Deepen and/or broaden the Service's impact and relevance in the community;
 - Supplement Service expertise and increase capacity to implement conservation projects and education/outreach;
 - Reduce Service expenditures; and
 - Promote the Service's mission and priorities within partners' sphere of influence.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff responsible for developing and maintaining partnerships is identified and appropriately trained.
- The demographics and culture of the urban community are reflected in partnerships being built.
- The Service and partners collaborate, develop, and use an assessment tool for evaluating partnership effectiveness and project success.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- Service staff has increased awareness and knowledge of how conservation efforts might intersect with the goals of local partners to meet the needs of the community and the Service.
- Community partners have increased their knowledge of the Service's mission, values, and organizational culture.
- The Service can identify all of the partners needed to engage target audiences in land stewardship and conservation of natural resources in the urban community.
- Partnerships that achieve common goals for increased public awareness and appreciation of nature within the urban community continue to grow.
- Partners conduct or sponsor education/outreach and habitat conservation in the community that align with [Strategic Habitat Conservation](#) goals of the Service.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

STANDARD 4: BE A COMMUNITY ASSET

To remain relevant to a growing population of urban Americans, the Service must lend support, skills, services, resources, and expertise in natural resource conservation to members within that community. To thrive, the Service must be a community asset, collaboratively working to meet those needs that strengthen the urban community as a whole.

A community asset is anything that improves the quality of community life. People, such as refuge staff, provide time, expertise, and resources to the community. A structure or place -- such as a visitor center, wildlife viewing area, meeting room, schoolyard habitat, or other open space -- provide a place to gather and engage in various activities. The asset can also be an organization or agency, such as the Service, which provides jobs and supports the local economy. The greater an asset the Service is to the community, the more likely the Service will maintain relevance for community members.

Being involved in community-based projects beyond refuge boundaries allows the Service to build credibility with and have an influential presence within the urban community. Generating revenue in the local economy, providing places to gather, and contributing talents and services to communities garner appreciation and trust for the dedication, support, and unique expertise of the Service. By being a value-added partner, the Service increases cooperative efforts and collaboration to implement mutually-beneficial programs that ultimately help accomplish the agency's natural resource conservation mission.

BIG-PICTURE QUESTION

Is the refuge providing services, resources, and expertise to the urban community in a way that contributes to the health and welfare of the community as a whole, while supporting the mission of the Service?

Urban refuges that achieve excellence contribute human, financial, and physical resources toward improving the quality of community life, thereby strengthening the urban community as a whole.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. Service staff, volunteers, and Friends will be recognized as valuable resources and important members of the community.
2. Communities will have a greater connection to the refuge and will increasingly support and engage in refuge events, activities, and conservation efforts.
3. Increased engagement by the community will translate into increased volunteerism, partnerships, and outreach for the Service.
4. Community organizations, local businesses and governments, and destination marketing organizations (e.g., convention and visitor bureaus) will significantly expand awareness and support for the Service and its wildlife conservation mission.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Every Service employee is spending 2–8 hours per year in service to the community.
- Service staff, volunteers, and Friends are conducting outreach events in the local community.
- Service staff promotes the refuge to new audiences, and facilities are being used by all demographic groups within the community for non-traditional activities (e.g., meetings, voting, community celebrations, etc.) as well as education and wildlife-dependent recreation.
- The refuge hosts at least one special event per year that attracts community members and out-of-town visitors and generates revenue for the community.
- The Service is providing local students with internships, and/or volunteer and youth leadership opportunities.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear community members, from all demographic groups, say they are visiting the refuge for the first time because of their contact with a Service employee conducting outreach or a service activity.
- You are hearing visitors from the community comment about the “connections” they’ve made with the natural and/or cultural resources at the refuge.
- You are hearing individuals from the community acknowledge contributions the Service makes to the community.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

STANDARD 5: ENSURE ADEQUATE LONG-TERM RESOURCES

Urban refuges and the partnership-based work of the Service must have sustainable resources to make lasting commitments to achieve the mission of the Service, the Refuge System and local refuges, and to maintain a meaningful presence in urban communities. Therefore, each Service region must ensure adequate, consistent resources in the form of funding and staffing

A viable urban national wildlife refuge presence, whether land or partnership based, is key for the local urban community. To achieve this presence, urban refuges must have adequate and stable funding to support staffing, facilities, maintenance, operations, and the ever-changing needs associated with increased participation and visitation. Funding to ensure refuge facilities are of the highest quality is critical to establishing and maintaining a credible, stable, and safe presence in the urban environment. Sufficient staff dedicated to outreach efforts, volunteer management, environmental education, and interpretation is essential for building relationships with the various audiences within the urban community.

Urban refuges also need a specific organizational and management structure to address the typical issues of the urban environment and to ensure that the Service presence meets the unique needs of reaching urban audiences while accomplishing the Service mission.

Urban refuges can be a conduit for long-term support of off-refuge projects and support of other organizations in the local community. While ideally these projects would enhance conservation in the urban environment, urban refuges should consider a wide range of activities that further the Service mission and its relevance to the community. This participation may be in the form of providing grants for development and enhancement of schoolyard habitat projects; staff participation in local youth programs or community events; providing input and technical assistance in urban planning for open spaces and aquatic habitats; and participation in local organizations that have similar conservation goals or those that have the potential to increase visitation and partnerships at a refuge. All of these activities require stable financial and staff resources. At the same time, resources with community partners can be leveraged to increase effectiveness and to reach shared goals.

To successfully implement the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program Standards of Excellence, adequate long-term financial, human, and physical resources are essential.

BIG-PICTURE QUESTION

Does an individual urban refuge have adequate resources (staff, volunteers, partners, facilities and programmatic/operational funding) necessary to sustain a credible presence in the community while meeting the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program Standards of Excellence?

Urban refuges that achieve excellence have sufficient funding and appropriate staffing enabling them to know their community; engage community members in the natural world; build partnerships; be an asset to the community; provide equitable access to Service facilities and programs; ensure visitors feel safe and welcome; and model sustainable practices.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. Each urban refuge can achieve the other seven Standards of Excellence.
2. The urban community will recognize the Service as a dependable presence.
3. The Service will garner support from a broader based conservation constituency within the community.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Gaps in expertise are identified and appropriately filled with FTEs, term appointments, internships, and/or strategic partnerships.
- The refuge is staffed with personnel that have expertise in urban refuge management, volunteer management, partnership building, communications/outreach, environmental education, interpretation, and law enforcement.
- Staffing, operations, and activities related to urban visitor services rank as a high priority and are funded at levels comparable to other priority activities within the region.
- Leadership dedicates adequate funding to urban refuges to sustain and grow partnerships and programs important to the community and to maintain visitor facilities.
- Urban Program Standards of Excellence are incorporated into relevant planning documents and factored in when implementing plans.
- Refuge personnel invest time and energy in developing and supporting an active Friends group and volunteer corps.
- Internships are available to local urban youth.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing all staff talk more about having the human resources to accomplish the goals outlined in the Urban Program Standards of Excellence.
- You are hearing urban partners say that the Service is becoming a dependable presence in the community.
- You are hearing representatives from local jurisdictions, partners, and other stakeholders acknowledging the Service's efforts to strive for refuge planning that is complementary to other local land use planning efforts.
- There is an increase in number and diversity of individuals volunteering and becoming Friends members at the refuge that results in new audiences being reached.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

STANDARD 6: PROVIDE EQUITABLE ACCESS

Time spent in nature is vital to human health and well-being. However, in the built environments of urban areas, opportunities for individuals to connect with nature are often limited. Too often the ability to access refuges in urban communities is constrained by inadequate transportation options and/or physical or financial challenges. These barriers must be reduced to the greatest extent possible if the Service is to be relevant to urban communities.

BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS

- Is the refuge accessible to all residents of the urban area?
- Are refuge programs and events accessible to all residents of the urban area?

Urban refuges that achieve excellence are easily accessible to all people living and working in nearby communities regardless of transportation, physical, or financial limitations.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. Community members will recognize the Service's commitment to ensuring all people have equal access to nature.
2. A broader conservation base will be built within the community.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Projects and strategies that ease the burden of transportation to the refuge are being implemented.
- The strategy for ensuring all refuge facilities comply with Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines is being implemented.
- A program to provide scholarships to cover program fees and income-based reductions to low- income households and Title 1 schools is in place.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- Partners and community planners commit to addressing transportation barriers encountered in reaching refuge programs and events.
- Greater numbers of community members with disabilities are participating in refuge programs and events and increasing their appreciation of nature and the refuge's purpose.
- Greater numbers of students from Title 1 schools are participating in refuge programs and events and increasing their appreciation of nature and the refuge's purpose.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

STANDARD 7: ENSURE VISITORS FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME

National wildlife refuges and other natural areas often are undiscovered places of beauty. Each year thousands of visitors experience these lands for the first time and are captivated by the wildlife and habitats. However, one barrier for some potential visitors is the perception that natural areas are dangerous, with examples of “danger” spanning a wide range.

At the same time, real threats often do exist on Service lands; for example, venomous snakes are not uncommon at many sites, including urban wildlife refuges. Therefore, before we can ask visitors to appreciate the wonders of nature, we must first address their basic need for safety – both real and perceived. We must help our urban guests examine their perceptions and develop a better understanding of how to behave around the wild animals they tell us they fear, increasing their comfort level in nature.

People who live in large cities are keenly aware of the precautions they need to take to be safe. The same awareness is needed when visiting an urban wildlife refuge, especially when there is the potential for encountering a dangerous situation. While the Service cannot remove all of the dangers present in the outdoors, measures can be taken to ensure that the refuge is safe from crime and other hazards, and that visitors are educated on ways to be safe in nature. Providing visitors with the information they need to distinguish real threats from perceived threats, and how to take precautions to avoid dangerous situations, will impart the knowledge and skills they need to feel and be safe in order to engage and learn. Communicating clearly what to expect will make visiting an urban wildlife refuge a safe, comfortable, and rewarding experience.

Just as people never get a second chance to make a good first impression, neither do national wildlife refuges. A person’s behavior is governed not by what objectively exists in the environment, but by what is perceived to exist. Therefore, to attract visitors from the community, urban refuges must be safe and welcoming, portrayed as safe and welcoming in outreach materials, and *appear* to be safe and welcoming to community members from different cultures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS

- Is the Service providing safe and appropriate opportunities for visitors of all skill levels from all demographic groups in the surrounding communities to engage in place-based outdoor education activities?
- Is the Service creating an environment to reduce the perception of danger in natural settings?
- Do all members from the community, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or cultural affiliation, feel welcome at the refuge?

Urban wildlife refuges that achieve excellence maintain a high standard of facility maintenance, minimize real threats to safety, welcome individuals from all demographic groups, and engage in dialogue to understand visitors’ views of natural areas to facilitate their increased comfort experiencing the natural world.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. Once they feel welcome and safe, all visitors will be able to experience the wonders of nature.
2. There will be a decreased amount of vandalism, crime, and other unwelcome activities occurring on Service land.
3. Volunteerism for the Service and participation in the Friends group will increase.
4. Support from the community regarding Service land management and programs will increase.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Refuge grounds and facilities are intentionally maintained to appeal to the target audiences in the community.
- Training material is developed to teach Service staff, volunteers, and Friends best practices in welcoming and orienting visitors.
- Refuge law enforcement officers are meeting with Visitor Services staff to coordinate and ensure visitor safety.
- Real threats to safety are identified and eliminated or minimized in a timely manner.
- Outreach materials are revised to include images of people that reflect all the faces in the community.
- Outdoor experiences are available to increase visitors' level of comfort in a natural setting.
- Refuge law enforcement is frequently seen patrolling the public use areas on the refuge.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear staff talk enthusiastically about welcoming first-time visitors from target audiences to the refuge.
- You hear refuge law enforcement officers sharing information about crime, vandalism, and other dangers occurring at the refuge with Visitor Services staff.
- Volunteerism is increasing; participation by all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in the community is increasing.
- You observe staff and volunteers demonstrate cultural proficiency and use best practices to welcome visitors to the refuge.
- You hear visitors from a variety of racial/cultural groups in the community say they feel safe and welcome at the refuge.
- You hear visitors from a variety of racial/cultural groups in the community say they are more at ease in outdoor settings on the refuge.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

STANDARD 8: MODEL SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability has been defined as “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems” ([IUCN - The World Conservation Union, United Nations Environment Programme, World Wide Fund for Nature](#)). Thus, sustainability is about more than conserving natural resources; it's also about creating an environment where we are able to live well and future generations can truly thrive.

Hence, to model sustainability, we must expand our thinking and change our actions to include practices that extend beyond Service boundaries. One example that can cross boundaries and support living sustainably is a bike share program for lower-income urban residents with a focus on improving the environment and human health (by reducing air pollution and curtailing obesity-related diseases).

As a leader in conservation and a trustee of our nation’s natural resources, the Service has a responsibility to set the standard for sustainable use of resources, energy conservation, and promotion of biological diversity. Sustainability will be achieved through the day-to-day decisions and actions of Service employees, Friends, volunteers, partners, and the greater community, as well as by land management actions.

To foster responsible decision-making and actions supporting a desirable planet for all species now and in the future, it is necessary to actively promote the benefits of living sustainably. We must educate, inspire, and assist others to adopt sustainable practices. For example, often what is good for one’s health (such as reducing the risk of heart disease by eating lower on the food chain) is also a strategy for conserving natural resources, a critical element of sustainability.

Let’s communicate our approach to sustainability in ways that engage our urban neighbors and invite them to do their part during their visits to the refuge and at home. Consistently showcasing our sustainability efforts will generate a positive ripple effect throughout the community and landscape, which in the long-term will contribute to the mental, physical, spiritual, and social health of those involved.

BIG-PICTURE QUESTIONS

- Is the Service showcasing sustainable practices in overall site operations?
- Is the Service offering opportunities for the community to engage in sustainability efforts on and off the refuge?
- Is the Service communicating its approach to sustainability in relevant, meaningful ways that educate and inspire visitors to do their part at home?
- Is the Service promoting the benefits of nature and sustainable practices for the wellness of people as well as wildlife?

Urban Wildlife Refuges that achieve excellence adopt sustainable practices, showcase sustainable use of resources, proclaim the benefits of connecting with the natural world, and inspire sustainable actions for the benefit of wildlife and people.

PAY-OFFS

Why is it worth achieving the goals outlined in this standard?

1. The Service will be recognized as a leader in implementing sustainable practices to benefit wildlife and people.
2. The community will support and demonstrate actions promoting sustainability, thereby effectively generating change throughout the community and environmental landscape.
3. Community members will support preserving undeveloped natural areas in urban settings.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- At least one new sustainable practice is implemented and showcased at the Service site every year.
- Service staff and volunteers are setting personal goals to reduce their carbon footprint within the site's boundaries and in the community.
- Service staff, volunteers, Friends, and partners annually conduct education/interpretive programs on sustainable practices.
- Outreach materials that communicate the Service's sustainability efforts are relevant and meaningful to community members.
- The refuge annually conducts projects with the local community that support sustainability and contribute to mental, physical, spiritual, and/or social health.
- Service staff, volunteers, and Friends are able to identify on-site sustainability projects that are meaningful to them.
- Service staff, volunteers, and Friends share their stories of adopting sustainable practices with visitors from the local community.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear Service staff and volunteers talk with visitors about the sustainable practices being implemented at the refuge.
- Service staff and volunteers are working toward their goal(s) to reduce their carbon footprint at the refuge.
- There is a decrease in carbon emissions generated by Service staff and volunteers.
- You hear community members acknowledge the benefits of personally using sustainable practices.
- You hear community members talk about connections between health, wellness, and sustainability.
- You hear that community members are adopting sustainable practices at home and at work.
- Service staff is using the [Climate Leadership in Refuges](#) (CLIR) Tool to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

See [Appendix A: Strategies](#) for activities that will help you implement this standard.

See [Appendix B: Assessing Progress](#) for goals, objectives, metrics, and outcomes that will help you measure progress toward achieving excellence.

APPENDIX A: STRATEGIES

STANDARD 1 – KNOW AND RELATE TO THE COMMUNITY

UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMUNITY

Use a variety of interdisciplinary tools to research and understand the demographics of your community including: U.S. Census Bureau reports; state Department of Education Annual Report Cards; demographic and socio-economic resources from local officials; information from local media, local chambers of commerce, non-profit organizations serving under-represented audiences, and academic research by universities on the local community's issues, needs, and desires.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Below are two *New York Times* tools that make exploring Census data easy and interactive. You can view demographic data such as the distribution of racial and ethnic groups, household income, education levels, and others by Census tract or at the county level.

[Mapping America: Every City, Every Block](#)

[Mapping the 2010 U.S. Census](#)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCES

[Annotated Bibliography](#)

An annotated bibliography of related literature was developed as part of the collaborative research project led by the Refuge System's Natural Resources Program Center Human Dimensions Branch to support the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program. The annotated bibliography is provided via Google Docs and includes searchable fields on study objectives; the setting or location of the study; study participants, outcomes and findings; and implications for management.

[2013 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report](#)

[The Outdoor Foundation](#)® has produced the *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report* to provide a deeper understanding of American participation in outdoor activities with a focus on youth and diversity. This annual report (2007-2013) helps explain the state of outdoor participation for the outdoor industry, federal officials and state and local organizations.

[ViSIT](#)

The *Visitor Survey Information Tool (ViSIT)* is a web tool for exploring data collected as part of a nationwide survey of visitors to national wildlife refuges.

Refuges that were a part of the nationwide survey of visitors can use the tool to examine the data on visitors to their refuge, including visitor characteristics such as gender, age, education, income, race, and ethnicity; visitor trip characteristics; and visitor experiences. The survey results can also be used to compare visitation to other refuges in the region and throughout the Service.

STAY RELEVANT

Encourage Service staff to stay in one urban community for longer periods of time (i.e., 10 years) to become part of the community fabric and establish and maintain trust. Frequent staff turnover (every three years) undermines what the Service is trying to do in urban areas.

Convene an advisory group (see 107 FW 1 **MANAGEMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES** for important considerations) composed of community members representing target audiences to identify needs and conservation values, and develop strategies for working more closely with these groups. Advisors may include, but are not limited to, health care providers, community leaders, educators, faith-based organizations, organizations serving at-risk youth, organizations representing specific cultures/ethnicities and others that embrace the community's diversity.

Implement an open public process for civic engagement to seek input to understand existing and potential barriers to connecting with various demographic groups.

Demonstrate that community input is valued by using community-based teams to assist with program development and implementation. Motivate, recruit, equip, and inspire community leaders from under-served communities to get involved.

CONSIDER CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Provide alternative-language programming, materials, and displays that are relevant to target audiences. Note that Executive Order 13166 requires all Federal agencies to provide equal access to Federal programs and services for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The LEP program includes oral and written translations for languages where there are a high number of LEP clients speaking that language in the servicing areas and where there is a significant frequency of contact between the LEP beneficiaries and the service providers. The U.S. Department of Justice has published extensive guidance on [LEP](#).

Conduct cultural competency training for all staff and volunteers based on the demographic analysis, meetings with community leaders/groups, and best practices; content includes tools to cultivate an inclusive environment that recognizes and celebrates diversity.

Advance an ethos of inclusion, marked by demonstrating respect and openness toward all individuals.

Ask yourself: *How am I made to feel welcome?* Next, learn the ways people from other cultures feel welcome by asking representatives from various groups: *What makes you feel welcome?* Consider offering the community leaders you meet a cup of coffee (or tea) and ask if you can talk this over. Your success in achieving excellence depends on how well you understand what helps your audiences feel they belong.

Be adaptive: Base program types and delivery methods on feedback from the community. For example, communicate with parents in the manner they prefer (orally, in native language, etc.); provide "staffing" that is linguistically and ethnically representative; bring our message to community groups on their turf; etc.

If you encounter difficulties making connections with community leaders/groups representing large demographic segments of your community, spend time researching potential barriers. Identifying barriers to engaging community groups and developing strategies to overcome them are essential for meeting your goals.

STANDARD 2 – CONNECT URBAN PEOPLE WITH NATURE VIA STEPPING STONES OF ENGAGEMENT

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

- Where possible, the Service will provide resources to diverse community organizations to conduct conservation education programs for urban residents. Examples of resources include, but are not limited to, teacher training and curriculum development to support existing education standards; loan programs featuring educational and field supplies such as binoculars, field guides, journals and other materials; supplies and equipment to teach outdoor skills such as archery and fishing; expertise; matching funds for grants and partnerships; and assistance with developing and understanding schoolyard habitats.
- Include a continuum of nature experiences for students and urban residents that moves from awareness to engagement. Student experiences will grow over the school year and the student's school career. Encourage repeat visitation and participation. Examples include: building nature play areas in the community; bringing live wildlife programs to schools and civic events; and leading tours in nearby natural places to increase comfort with local wildlife species.
- Develop more in-depth and “adventurous” programs to build “nature confidence” for urban residents. Examples include: night walks, overnight camp trips, and week-long summer camps.
- Participate in alternative outdoor experiential programs that incorporate the arts. Examples include nature journaling and drawing, ceramics and sculpture, painting, photography and film, music, dance, and theater. Ensure activities are compatible with refuge mission when conducted on refuges.
- Tell stories with the voice of specific ethnic groups. Contract/hire local ethnic, minority professionals for cultural special events and/or specific culturally based interpretive activities/programs.
- Highlight the value of wildlife that lives in urban areas, and foster connections between wildlife and urban residents. Stress that wildlife is not just found in faraway places. Programs will include entry-level outdoor experiences to create awareness of the wildlife in urban areas.
- Utilize materials and standards developed by other *Conserving the Future* Implementation Teams (i.e., communications, environmental education, and interpretation), as well as tools from the North American Association for Environmental Education, the National Association for Interpretation, and other professional organizations.
- Host culturally-relevant programs on and/or off Service lands where we work alongside target audiences to plan and implement activities that are relevant to them—while simultaneously sharing our wildlife and conservation messages as part of the activity.

ENGAGING URBAN RESIDENTS IN CONSERVATION WORK

- Incorporate Service messages in all programs.
 - Host or assist with work projects/tours/cleanup projects/restoration of natural infrastructure that benefit the urban community.
 - Assist urban communities in identifying local natural areas that can be monitored, cared for, restored, or visited as urban “nature places.” Encourage urban residents to promote and complete projects within their community.
 - Provide resources, curriculum, guidance, and technical assistance as needed to local community groups. For example, develop a tool bank (shovels, wheelbarrows, rakes, etc.) that can be on loan to community groups for conservation projects.
 - Conduct workshops to teach educators and other community leaders how to successfully conduct conservation projects in urban landscapes. Projects can range from on-the-ground restoration to leading conservation education programs.
 - Develop outreach materials and activities to address landscape-level conservation issues and challenges that affect urban residents’ health, such as air and water quality, pollinators, invasive species, climate change, and availability of outdoor recreational opportunities.
 - Offer simple and practical ways that people can assist in conservation efforts. Topics may include: the value of pollinators for native landscapes and urban gardens; the threats of invasive species to food/crops; interactions with wildlife in urban neighborhoods; and the importance of water and air quality.
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STANDARD 3: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING RELEVANT PARTNERSHIPS

- Develop a working knowledge of the range of groups that serve and represent the urban community. For example: education, health, art and entertainment, cultural, business, industry, environmental/natural resources, urban planning, and other public services. Become familiar with these organizations’ missions.
- Identify potential groups with whom to partner to achieve common goals for land stewardship, natural resource conservation, and education/outreach.
- Identify non-traditional groups as potential partners, with the goal of reaching previously under-served audiences (identified in Standard 1) within the community.
- Never rule out the utility of an unlikely partner.
- Consider diverse (e.g., ethnic, age, organizational, geographic) partners that represent the societal characteristics of the community.
- Seek assistance from key community leaders with capacity to catalyze partnerships.
- Find and implement an “easy win” project that the Service and partners can develop together to build trust and show results
- Identify liaison(s) – staff, Friends members, volunteers, partners or others within the community -- to assist in developing relationships.
- Meet with community representatives on a regular basis to build stable, long-term relationships.

- Develop Urban Refuge Coordinator positions, with knowledge skills and abilities in biology and communication. Position descriptions must allow for flexible work schedules – evenings and weekends.
- Train multiple staff to use communication tools and cultural competencies for developing and maintaining partnerships (see Goal 1.5)
- Encourage Service staff to stay in one urban community for more than five years to build partnerships and establish and maintain trust. Frequent staff turnover is counterproductive to building strong relationships.
- Join existing partnerships that will help facilitate the overall goals of the urban community and the Service.
- Be transparent and open about Service interest and goals in pursuing the partnership.
- Find ways to add value to community organizations and partnerships.
- Invite others to attend your meetings. Welcome input on programs, management activities, and issues of concern.
- Look for ways to make a connection between what we do and what the community needs. For example, we can argue the importance of protecting riverine wetlands or we can argue that we are protecting the water supply for the community.
- Let others take credit; value any contribution, large or small.
- Work with partners and community representatives to understand the needs of the urban community.
- Establish criteria for appropriate partnerships.
- Define expectations and responsibilities for each partner in the relationship, whether formal or informal community partnerships. Anything that can be shared to help the partnership achieve its purpose should be articulated, including, for example, how tools, equipment, materials, funds, and ideas will be used.
- Work closely with a partner so the partner knows the Service is engaged and committed to the partnership. By taking on too much too early, our existing and/or new partnerships may feel neglected.
- Raise awareness of the economic values of the Service's and partnership (s') contributions to the community.
- Use a partnership-directed or designed assessment for evaluating partnership effectiveness and project success.
- Regularly share information/reports with the community about ongoing projects, partnerships, and outcomes.
- Emphasize and support relations between partners and the individuals/groups they serve.
- Allow new partners to enter after a project is underway. This is important; sometimes we must be the mediator to convince other partners to agree.
- Don't let one partner dominate or self-promote because often this alienates new partners.
- Depending on the goal, maintaining small(er) partnerships with a solid work commitment can be an important asset.
- Show appreciation and gratitude to partners and volunteers through Service-approved recognition. (See Strategic Plan for Volunteer and Partner Involvement).
- Periodically revisit the suite of community partners to ensure partners demonstrate the strengths, demographics, and resources of the urban community.

STANDARD 4 – BE A COMMUNITY ASSET

PEOPLE AND EXPERTISE

- Create an atmosphere where staff, Friends, and volunteers show pride in the refuge mission.
- Acknowledge staff with incentives (e.g. time-off awards, non-monetary awards, recognition) to provide superior customer service to community members.
- Engage with the community by providing sufficient staff time and sharing resources/expertise to support mutual goals.
- Participate in community-wide events. When appropriate, wear the Service uniform or “logo wear.”
- Act as a hub to share environmental and natural resource conservation-related information and services.
- Provide easily accessible information to the community about land conservation opportunities and incentives; native wildlife and natural history of the local community; and sustainability practices in communities, schools, and other developed areas. Actively engage with the community to encourage action, where appropriate.

PHYSICAL STRUCTURES AND PLACES

- Revise policy so that Service lands and/or facilities may be made available for community meetings and events in support of shared urban conservation goals.
- When revising outreach plans, consider the following strategies:
 - Host a mobile donation blood bank to demonstrate that the Service cares about community health; offer healthy nature activities to visiting donors, providing information and/or materials to encourage them to return to the refuge;
 - Become a voting location and provide outreach materials to encourage voters to come back and visit;
 - Allow youth group celebrations for significant accomplishments where the project is conservation-based; for example, host an Eagle Scout ceremony open to the community; and
 - Host events that involve ethnic traditions or something of cultural significance to the community; make appropriate connections to wildlife, conservation, diversity, etc.
- Use Service and partners’ websites, brochures, and other community outreach media to promote refuge grounds and facilities as places to hold community activities (if such activities are appropriate and compatible with refuge mission).

AGENCY

- Communicate the financial impact of refuges by referencing the “Banking on Nature” report and share economic reports with members of local government, media, chambers of commerce, and other appropriate community leaders.
- Participate in local government planning meetings, advisory boards, urban green space planning, and in other civic activities to build capacity to achieve the goals of the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program.

- Seek opportunities to assist in community-based projects or initiatives where Service expertise or resources will add value to the project or initiative. Encourage cross-program Service collaboration in these projects.
 - Partner with educational institutions and other organizations to expose students and teachers to wildlife and natural resource conservation careers.
 - Partner with educational institutions and other organizations to provide students with internship, volunteer positions, and youth leadership opportunities.
 - Engage local businesses and other non-traditional organizations in conservation projects on or off Service lands.
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STANDARD 5: ENSURE ADEQUATE LONG-TERM RESOURCES

STAFFING

- Actively incorporate necessary urban refuge skills into existing position descriptions, performance plans, and annual work plans.
- Invite detailees with urban refuge skill sets to assist a refuge in conducting urban-focused projects.
- Partner with colleges and universities to identify programs and students that can assist with and/or accomplish urban refuge programs and projects. Consider recruiting graduate and upper level students who are seeking capstone and thesis projects.

FUNDING

- Actively seek partnerships, grants, corporate support, and other traditional and nontraditional sources of funds to leverage the work of urban conservation and the Service mission.
- Use *Visitor Standards: A Handbook for Evaluating Visitor Service Programs* to evaluate program and facility quality.
- Update current Friends Partnership Agreements and/ or relevant Cooperative Agreements that allow our partners to fundraise in support of the Standards of Excellence and comply with Service policy.
- Work with Friends groups to identify mutual priority funding needs and develop a mutual plan to meet those needs.
- Seek and apply for Service and government grants, such as Challenge Cost Share, Invasives with Volunteers, Connecting People with Nature small grants, and transportation program funding (e.g., Federal Lands Highway Program Funding).
- Attend grant writing and management workshops and trainings.

PLANNING

- Incorporate the Urban Standards of Excellence and expectations into annual work plans and performance plans for urban refuge staff.
- Attend local community planning and council meetings to learn about local efforts and initiatives.
- Coordinate with partners and Friends groups to represent shared interests when participating in local planning efforts.

VOLUNTEERS, FRIENDS, AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Maintain a well-trained volunteer program that is managed by a volunteer coordinator from a refuge or partner organization.
 - Work closely with Friends or other support groups that provide entrée to community organizations; engage community leaders.
 - Hire local youth throughout the year through Student Conservation Association, Pathways, work-study programs, and via partnerships to build long-term relationships with the local community.
 - Use temporary hiring and school service learning opportunities to enhance capacity; work directly with youth to build bridges into the local community.
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STANDARD 6 – PROVIDE EQUITABLE ACCESS

TRAVELING TO URBAN REFUGE EVENTS

- Utilize the expertise of regional and national roads/transportation coordinators.
- Review the 2010 Transit and Trail Connections: Assessment of Visitor Access to National Wildlife Refuges report.
- Partner with local transportation organizations to conduct multi-modal transportation analyses.
- Have someone new to the area navigate to and through the refuge and off-site refuge programs to provide an outsider's perspective.
- Identify diverse partners and stakeholders who may contribute to, or be impacted by, refuge transportation projects.
- Work with diverse partners and stakeholders to craft mutually beneficial transportation projects. For example, collaborate with municipalities to create projects that result in a range of affordable transportation options for community members seeking to access the refuge.
- Educate local, state and federal decision-makers about the benefits of providing access to natural areas.
- Work with partners/Friends to communicate the value of transportation projects that connect local communities with refuges.
- Work with partners/stakeholders to deliver mutually beneficial transportation projects, such as well-placed signage = that clearly indicates how to access refuge entrance(s) or projects that eliminate barriers for pedestrian/bike access by creating safer paths to the refuge.
- Form partnerships to create linkages with other conservation and recreational spaces, such as greenways and water trails.
- Ensure awareness of the refuge through adequate signs, maps, graphics, and audible messages.
- Talk to local businesses to ensure employees know the refuge and how to get there so they can inform potential visitors.
- Ensure that the refuge website, phone messages, and other modes of communication clearly indicate how to access the refuge in different ways, including, for example, using public transit, sidewalks/trails, and more. If needed, provide information in multiple languages.
- Make sure the website is Section 508 compliant.
- Provide appropriate parking areas for different sized vehicles, such as RVs or buses.

- Provide infrastructure for bicyclists to store and lock their bikes while at the refuge.
- If the site has good but little known or rarely used pedestrian access, ask the Friends to organize a walk from a nearby neighborhood to illustrate the ease of access by foot (or bicycle, if appropriate).
- Work with partners/Friends to secure funds for transportation and access projects.
- Work with partners/Friends to generate funds for schools to access the refuge.
- Request local, city and county government agencies that deliver education and outreach to hold some of their public programs on the refuge, so meeting attendees are brought onsite.
- Ensure that program timing eases the burden of transportation (e.g., all-day children's programs, evening, or weekend programs).
- Connect organizations that already have buses (religious institutions, parks and recreation departments, city/county agencies, etc.) with groups that want to come to the refuge but do not have adequate transportation.
- Evaluate public transportation options and financial and physical barriers when planning off-site programs.
- Work with stakeholders in off-site programs to identify alternative transportation opportunities.
- Ensure that communications about off-site programs clearly state directions and various modes of transportation that participants can use to access the location. If applicable, provide information in multiple languages.
- Ensure that off-site refuge programs are conducted at locations and facilities that meet the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Architectural Barrier Act Accessibility Guidelines.

ACCESS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- Ensure appropriate staff is familiar with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Outdoor Developed Areas; and the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines. Due to their complexity, consult regional office about resources, training opportunities, archived webinars, and more.
- Review and use other applicable guidelines that can expand the ability of the Service to provide high-quality experiences (e.g., Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines).
- Identify an existing committee or create one to address accessibility issues for people with disabilities to help the refuge find gaps and solutions.
- Investigate/identify visitor proximity to special needs groups to match community needs; create a refuge Accessibility Ambassador.
- Consult other local outdoor sites to see how they create accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Work with appropriate groups (e.g., Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired) to identify partners and funding opportunities to bring facilities into compliance with the Service's Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines.
- Work with appropriate groups to implement actions to provide higher quality experiences for persons with disabilities.
- Understand that it may not be feasible for every feature within a site to be compatible for everyone. Staff can provide comparable experiences by offering a variety of locations with varied access within an approximate fifty-mile radius of the refuge.
- Offer variety of opportunities for accessing and enjoying refuge resources (i.e. handicap kayak launch, sand wheelchair, tram tour, etc.).
- Hire a person with a disability (e.g., a United Cerebral Palsy client to greet visitors).

- Develop an Accessibility Transaction Plan that is required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and update annually. The Division of Diversity and Civil Rights will create the initial Transaction Plan and management consideration.
- Include various persons with disabilities in photos used in outreach materials.
- Consult with the Service's Division of Diversity and Civil Rights regarding all Reasonable Modification requests from the public; this is especially important if the refuge is considering the denial of such a request.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

- Where applicable, work with partners/Friends to provide income-based reductions and scholarships to fee programs; create criteria and applications for financial assistance.
- Work with partners that serve low-income households to identify populations and offer reduced fees or day passes to refugees. For example, in Oregon, communities offer day passes to the zoo, available at local library branches.
- Add financial assistance message on all outreach materials and websites, as applicable.
- Develop strategies that enable employees/volunteers staffing entrance kiosks to allow first-time visitors who come without funds or exact change to experience the refuge, rather than turning them away. Often these people will not return or have a positive view of the site if forced to search for cash.

STANDARD 7 – ENSURE VISITORS FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME

BE PREPARED

- Provide guidance and training on ways to welcome urban visitors to the refuge and provide exceptional customer service. Note that every staff member, volunteer, and Friends member is a host with a responsibility to make visitors feel safe, welcome, and included.
- Ensure the cultural proficiency of all those who provide services to visitors (Goal 1.5) and learn about the preferences of different groups for various facilities and programs, as well as their preferred leisure activities and group structures when visiting (e.g., nuclear families vs. extended families).
- Work with community organizations to eliminate any perceptions of discrimination. These groups can play an important role in bringing diverse people together through work on shared community development goals. Explicit efforts to build understanding and trust across groups of different racial and ethnic backgrounds should also be pursued.
- Address language barriers. Some relatively simple measures can contribute to a more welcoming atmosphere, such as having both recorded messages and written materials available in languages other than English (e.g., Spanish, Cantonese, Arabic, etc.).
- Learn more about the history of the area and how various cultural groups contributed to the story of natural/cultural resource conservation. Ensure that all groups are sufficiently represented in the history/story of the refuge, making a better cultural connection to history of the 'place,' and enabling more people to see themselves as belonging.
- Conduct a literature review to identify the perceived dangers in natural areas most commonly associated with target audiences in the community. Meet with community leaders to ground-truth the findings.

- Engage with individuals and community groups to better understand their perceptions of natural areas, the refuge, wildlife, and any associations with danger. Investigate ways to address concerns.
- Design a logical flow of traffic, install signs that orient visitors to their surroundings, and make sure the entrance(s) to facilities are clearly marked. First-time visitors can become easily frustrated when it's unclear where they should go.
- Design visitor facilities (e.g., buildings, trails, kiosks, parking lots, roads, observation platforms) with the urban visitor in mind to address physical comfort. Include bench seating, bathrooms, and shelter in staging areas where visitors are expected to gather or wait. Restrooms and drinking fountains should be easy for visitors to access upon entering the Visitor Center, and appropriate seating areas should be provided around the building and on trails so visitors have several places to rest.
- Unlock the entrance gate and/or door to the Visitor Center no later than the announced opening time. First-time visitors who arrive when your brochure states you open, but encounter a locked gate, will be frustrated at best and perhaps not return.
- Strive to employ staff and recruit interns and volunteers that reflect the faces in the community.

PROVIDE POSITIVE VIEWS OF AN URBAN REFUGE

- Expand outreach activities to increase positive perceptions of the refuge.
- Proactively work in the community to dispel myths and encourage outdoor experiences in natural areas on the refuge.
- Develop orientation materials (virtual and in-person) that address how to prepare for a visit to the refuge; include how to dress, what to expect, what activities are available, what to bring.
- Treat first-time visitors as guests, not strangers. Smile, offer your hand, and tell people you're glad they are here.
- When speaking with new visitors, use language that can be understood by everyone. When we use technical terms, acronyms, or jargon without a word of explanation--particularly, if we do it again and again--first-time visitors unaccustomed to the language will feel the same way you would if you dropped in on a foreign language class mid-semester: lost and uncomfortable.
- Post welcome signs and provide information in multiple languages, where appropriate.
- Design (or retrofit) facilities to reflect what the local community is comfortable experiencing. Consider, where appropriate, solid bridges and paved trails as opposed to the rustic/weathered bridges and unpaved trails common at rural refuges.
- Maintain a high standard of facility maintenance to reduce risk of injury, abuse (e.g., vandalism), and perception of neglect. For many visitors "kept up" translates to "looks safe."
- Design (or retrofit) visitor facilities (e.g., buildings, trails, kiosks, parking lots, roads, observation platforms) with the urban environment in mind to minimize opportunities for criminal activity. Include adequate lighting in parking lots, on stairways, and on roads and at building entrances.
- Consider producing photos/sounds of animals that visitors could expect (or not expect – vampire bats and tigers) to encounter; virtual tours of the refuge; information about real threats and how to handle them (e.g., poison oak, stinging nettle, biting insects, snakes); and FAQs dispelling common nature myths.
- Encourage community presence through trail rover or "refuge watch" volunteer programs (similar to neighborhood watch).

- Provide adequate law enforcement staff trained in relationship building and two-way communication to engage with urban communities. Ensure LE staff understands that engagement is the key to building trust within the community, and trust is the avenue through which we can partner with our neighbors. When trust is established, we can leverage community engagement to help stop and solve crime.
- Coordinate with local public safety jurisdictions, including fire departments, neighborhood watch organizations, police departments, and community groups.

STANDARD 8 – MODEL SUSTAINABILITY

It is not difficult to make many of the things we do more sustainable. Examples include: changing incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescents to conserve energy; printing materials double-sided on recycled paper with soy- or vegetable-based inks; installing low-flow toilets to conserve water; drinking coffee from reusable mugs; buying locally-sourced products such as locally-grown, organic food to reduce the carbon footprint and toxic chemicals; and planting native plants to improve habitat for wildlife.

PRACTICE SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR

- Use the [Climate Leadership in Refuges \(CLIR\)](#) Tool to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve sustainability at the Service site, and to communicate with partners, visitors, the community, and other stakeholders about the importance of sustainability and taking action on climate change.
- Incorporate wildlife-friendly design elements in facilities and infrastructure, such as bird-friendly windows, wildlife crossings at roadways, and habitat management.
- When serving refreshments during workshops and events, use reusable (not disposable) utensils, drink-ware, plates, etc. Be aware of the amount of packaging used for snack foods; consider buying in bulk.
- Offer incentives for staff members, visitors, and volunteers to walk, bike, take alternative transportation, or utilize fuel-efficient/hybrid/electric personal or government vehicles in refuge programs. Example: incentives include prime parking spaces and public transit subsidy benefits.
- The [Organizational Environmental Management System \(EMS\)](#) is a framework for implementing programs, policy and guidance that incorporate sustainability into all of the Service’s operations. Through EMS, the Service is committed to:
 - Demonstrating leadership in all aspects of sustainability.
 - Putting forth sustainability guidance and policy.
 - Communicating our success to stakeholders.
 - Establishing and reviewing sustainability objectives and targets;
 - Reducing waste and preventing pollution.
 - Meeting or exceeding all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.
 - Continually improving our Organizational EMS to improve overall sustainability performance.
- Conduct a cradle-to-grave analysis for all new construction projects. Sustainable design also considers building materials. The complete life cycle of resources, energy, and waste implications of possible building materials can be analyzed before building construction. A cradle-to-grave analysis traces a material or product (and its byproducts) from original, raw material sources (plant, animal, or mineral) through extraction, refinement, fabrication,

treatment, transportation, use, and eventual reuse or disposal. This analysis includes the tabulation of energy consumed and the environmental impacts of each action and material. Two good sources of information on the cradle-to-grave implications of commonly used building materials are the American Institute of Architects' Environmental Resource Guides (1992-present) and the National Park Service's Environmentally Responsible Building Product Guide (1992).

- Strive for a zero-waste program, which includes demonstrations and outreach materials that encourage these behaviors in the community. Model desired behavior by drinking water from reusable (not disposable) water bottles.
- Use best practices for stormwater and graywater management, and install water efficient fixtures.

EDUCATE, ENGAGE & INSPIRE OTHERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

- Use CLIR to work with stakeholders to share information about our greenhouse gas emission monitoring, reduction, and success.
- Use CLIR to provide visitors with information about sustainability and tips for managing their greenhouse-gas footprint.
- Provide a variety of demonstrations of sustainability projects and practices, such as wildlife crossings or stormwater projects, on lands and in facilities that may be incorporated into community projects.
- Develop a Sustainability Walking Tour, via social media, on site, or in the community.
- Help visitors make the connection between wellness and sustainable practices. For example, walking is not only good exercise for body, mind, and spirit, but it also lessens reliance on a vehicle to travel short distances, and reduces emissions and the carbon footprint.
- Incorporate sustainability messages into existing communications, environmental education, and interpretation programs.
- Develop communications material on the sustainable land management and construction practices employed by individual field sites.
- Utilize the Services Ambassador training program model to train all staff members, volunteers, Friends, and partners to be knowledgeable about sustainability efforts.
- For more ideas to share with refuge visitors, visit the EPA websites:
 - [Learn about Greener Living](#)
 - [Sustainability](#)
- Partner with wellness programs that integrate nature. Some example are: the Nature Prescription Initiative, a tool designed to help medical providers encourage patients to go outside, or the National Park Service's "[Healthy Parks Healthy People US.](#)"
- Share sustainability success stories with the community by posting them on the Service site's website and/or Facebook page.

Appendix B: Assessing Progress

STANDARD 1 – KNOW AND RELATE TO THE COMMUNITY

UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMUNITY

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff has increased knowledge of demographic composition and characteristics of the community.
- Service staff has increased knowledge of who's who in the community.
- Service staff has increased knowledge of the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, needs, and wishes of target audiences within the community.

Intermediate

- Service staff formulates new insights about the characteristics and needs of the community.
- Service staff understands how demographic information and input from community leaders inform decisions related to planning and implementation.
- Community leaders recognize that the Service is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members and being of service to its neighbors.

Long term

- The Service has a deep, lasting knowledge of the community that transcends staff turnover.
- The Service has established trust throughout the community, resulting in increased public confidence and community support.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff consistently uses a variety of tools to research and understand the demographic characteristics of the community.
- Service staff is meeting with community leaders from diverse groups to gather knowledge about the attitudes, needs, and beliefs of the target audiences within the local community.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing staff and volunteers talk more about the community's demographic characteristics.
- You are hearing staff and volunteers talk more about the attitudes, beliefs, and unique needs of target audiences within the community.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 1.1: Service staff and volunteers have current knowledge of the local community's demographic characteristics (ethnicity, culture, language, economic status, religion, age, social status, education, and etc.).

Objective: By March 2015, and every five years thereafter, conduct an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the urban community within the defined radius of the refuge.

Metric: The analysis is completed by March 31, 2015, and on a five-year rotation thereafter.

Objective: By April 2015, and every five years thereafter, each staff member and volunteer is able to accurately state a summary of findings from the current demographic analysis.

Metric: A summary of findings from the current analysis describes the demographic characteristics of the local community.

Metric: The summary of findings from the current analysis is accessible to all staff and volunteers by April 30, 2015, and every five years thereafter.

Metric: Percentage of refuge staff and volunteers able to accurately state the summary of findings by April 30, 2015, and every five years thereafter.

Metric: Percentage of staff and volunteers that can accurately describe the primary cultural groups in the community.

GOAL 1.2: Service staff has current knowledge of the attitudes, needs, and beliefs of the target audiences within the local community.

Objective: By May 2015, Service staff is able to access a list of community leaders/groups from each “population” representing the diversity reflected in the demographic analysis.

Metric: A list of leaders/groups that reflects the diversity of the community is developed.

Metric: The list of community leaders/groups is readily accessible to all staff and volunteers by May 31, 2015.

Objective: Service staff learn about the target audiences and their unique needs by meeting with community leaders/groups (“experts”) at least once a year, beginning no later than June 2015.

Metric: Meetings with community leaders/groups begin by June 30, 2015.

Metric: Meetings with community leaders/groups to access needs occur in FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, and FY19

Metric: Percent of community leaders who are met with annually (at a minimum).

Metric: Annually, characteristics and needs of target audiences have been articulated.

Metric: A comprehensive network of community leaders, with knowledge of the groups to be served, has been built by September 30, 2016

Objective: By September 2015, research and identify existing beliefs and perceptions of danger in natural settings held by cultural groups and community members representative of target audiences.

Metric: Research is completed by September 30, 2015.

Metric: Perceptions of danger in natural settings held by target audiences are identified by September 30, 2015.

Metric: Unique and/or prevalent beliefs related to dangers associated with wild plants, animals and places held by target audiences are known by all Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members.

Objective: Based on research and meetings with community leaders and other community members, Service staff by December 2015 has a good working knowledge (sufficient to meet objectives in subsequent standards) of the attitudes, beliefs, and unique needs of the target audiences.

Metric: FY15 meetings with “priority” community leaders/groups are concluded by September 30, 2015.

Metric: Knowledge of the community required to successfully meet the objectives in the subsequent standards is summarized and shared with all Service staff by December 31, 2015.

STAY RELEVANT

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Considering community needs during planning becomes a routine practice at the refuge.
- Service staff establishes regular communication back to the community that continues over time.
- Community leaders/groups acknowledge that their input is reflected in refuge plans and visitor service programs.

Intermediate

- Service staff modifies program goals and delivery methods based on new insights about the needs of the community.
- Refuge programming and planning reflect the voice of the whole community, rather than the voice of just a few groups.
- Community leaders/groups communicate to their constituents that Service staff is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members and being of service to its neighbors.

Long term

- The community as a whole recognizes that the Service is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members and being of service to its neighbors.
- All groups within the community feel valued and respected by the Service.
- The community as a whole increases its support of the Service.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Community needs inform decisions related to refuge planning.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing community leaders acknowledge that their input is reflected in refuge plans and public programs.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 1.3: The Service builds trust with the community.

Objective: Beginning no later than September 2016, Service staff communicates back to the community, via community leaders, how the demographic analysis, which resulted in greater knowledge of the community, has informed the agency and how Service staff is using that knowledge.

Metric: In FY17, community leaders can describe how findings from the demographic analysis are used by Service staff to benefit the community.

Objective: Beginning in FY16, Service staff regularly publishes and shares an annual report that documents and celebrates accomplishments and illustrates being an asset to the community.

Metric: An annual report is published in FY16.

Metric: Number of annual reports published over a five-year period.

Metric: Annual report is made available to the community.

GOAL 1.4: The Service builds relevance within the community.

Objective: The refuge manager uses the demographic characteristics and community needs to inform decisions related to planning and implementation.

Metric: Community leaders/groups see their input reflected in refuge plans, as appropriate.

Objective: By September 2016, all new community-specific education, interpretive, and outreach programs are based on the results of demographic analyses and meetings with community leaders, cultural groups, and individuals representing the intended audience.

Metric: Community leaders/groups see their input reflected in visitor services programs

CONSIDER CULTURAL DIVERSITY

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff has increased awareness of cultural differences within the community.
- Service staff has increased knowledge of the needs and wishes of target audiences within the community.
- Service staff has increased skill in respectfully communicating with culturally diverse groups.
- Service staff has increased ability to obtain feedback on programs.

Intermediate

- Service staff formulates new insights about the characteristics and needs of the community.
- Service staff modifies program goals and delivery methods based on knowledge of cultural preferences of the audience and best practices related to cultural competencies.
- Community leaders/groups communicate to their constituents that Service staff is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members and being of service to its neighbors.
- Audience members from diverse groups indicate feeling included at Service events and respected by Service staff.
- Programming and planning reflect the voice of the whole community, rather than the voice of just a few groups.

Long term

- The Service possesses a deep, lasting knowledge of the community.
- The community as a whole recognizes that the Service is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members and being of service to its neighbors.
- All groups within the community feel valued and respected by the Service.
- The community as a whole increases its support of the Service.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Staff and volunteers use tools acquired in cultural competency training to develop a more inclusive environment.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- Staff and volunteers demonstrate increased skill in exhibiting cultural sensitivity and respectfully communicating with culturally diverse groups.

- You are hearing individuals from diverse groups say they feel included and respected by Service staff.
- Collectively, composition of refuge staff, interns, Friends, and volunteers more closely reflects the diversity of the population around the refuge.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 1.5: Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members demonstrate cultural proficiency and deliver a higher quality of service, honoring and respecting community members' diversity, cultural beliefs, and practices, thereby producing better outcomes.

Objective: Beginning in FY15 and annually thereafter, each Service staff member, volunteer, and Friends member participates in a minimum of four hours of cultural competency training.

Metric: Percentage of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members completing at least four hours of cultural competency training in FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, and FY19.

Objective: Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members see cultural differences and interact with all cultural groups in ways that recognize and value differences.

Metric: Percentage of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members that can describe at least one cultural belief/practice valued by a minimum of three distinct cultural groups in the community.

Metric: Percentage of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members that can describe at least one way to show community groups that their cultural differences are valued.

Objective: Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members are able to describe at least two ways to effectively communicate with the various cultural groups in the community.

Metric: Percentage of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members that can describe at least one way to increase the effectiveness of communications with two distinct cultural groups in the community.

Metric: Outreach methods are tailored to the cultures represented in the community.

Objective: By June 2016, community members' cultural views/experiences are integrated into Service education, outreach, and communications.

Metric: Percentage of education, outreach materials and other communications that are developed in consideration of the community's various cultural views, experiences, and/or practices on June 30, 2016; June 30, 2017; June 30, 2018; June 30, 2019; and June 30, 2020.

GOAL 1.6: Members of the various cultural groups that make up the local community feel included at Service events and respected by Service staff and volunteers.

Objective: Beginning in FY15, and annually thereafter, Service staff reaches out to key contacts from at least one "new" cultural group, and facilitates its participation in Service events.

Metric: A key contact from a "new" cultural group participates in at least one Service event in FY15.

Metric: Key contacts from "new" cultural groups participate in Service events annually.

Metric: The extent to which relationships with "new" cultural groups are being built.

Objective: By September 2016, Service facilities and off-site events have a process for obtaining feedback from the community to determine whether they feel included and respected.

Metric: By September 30, 2016, a process for obtaining community feedback is established.

Metric: Process for obtaining community feedback is implemented at least 90% of the time.

STANDARD 2 – CONNECT URBAN PEOPLE WITH NATURE VIA STEPPING STONES OF ENGAGEMENT

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Program participants previously apprehensive of outdoor “nature experiences” say they are no longer uncomfortable engaging in these activities.
- Participants in entry-level programs return to participate in mid-level programs.
- Program participants have increased awareness and knowledge of nature and other natural resources in their community.
- Community members have increased knowledge of local natural systems (e.g., water sources, pollinators, wildlife corridors, air quality, weather, etc.) and how these natural systems benefit the human community locally and globally.
- Community members have increased knowledge of the Service and its mission.

Intermediate

- Program participants from in-depth programs partake in Service conservation projects.
- Program participants have increased appreciation of local natural resources.
- Program participants indicate that nature-based experiences are relevant to their lives.
- Program participants share their knowledge of natural resources within their demographic group.
- Community members recognize the value of natural systems.
- Community members can describe the relationship and interconnectedness of local, regional, and global natural systems (e.g. flyways, climate, agriculture, waterways, etc.).
- Appreciation for the Service is increased within the urban community.
- Community members value the conservation work of the Service.

Long term

- The community as a whole forms a positive environmental attitude.
- The community as a whole provides support for the Service and natural resource conservation (e.g. increased advocacy; increased participation in conservation projects beyond the boundaries of their cities; leading a range of nature-based experiences for their residents; support of local, state, and national initiatives to create new natural areas).
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You’ll know you’re making progress with implementation when:

- Outreach and education programs have been revised to meet the needs of community members, resulting in a wide variety of nature experiences and programs targeted for urban audiences.

- Greater diversity is observed among visitors and program participants (for example, multiple languages can be heard on the refuge at any given time).

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing program participants say they know more about local wildlife and are no longer uncomfortable participating in nature-related activities.
- You are hearing that program participants are sharing their knowledge of natural resources within their demographic group.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 2.1: Provide programs targeted for audiences of different comfort and skill levels and offer a wide variety of nature-based experience.

Objective: Beginning no later than September 30, 2016, annually deliver and assess at least two culturally relevant programs aimed at target audiences in the community.

Metric: Number of culturally relevant programs delivered in FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, and FY19

Metric: Number of participants attending these programs each year.

Metric: Percentage attendance by target audiences.

Metric: Participants' reaction to and feedback about the program.

Metric: Based on feedback, did each program include culturally relevant elements?

Objective: By September 2016, using the information gathered about the needs of target audiences and their perceptions of dangers inherent in natural areas (Goal 1.2), develop, deliver, and assess at least one program or outdoor experience for urban residents who are uncomfortable with, or even fearful of, experiences in nature.

Metric: Number of programs/outdoor experiences developed for visitors uncomfortable participating in nature-related activities by May 31, 2016.

Metric: Number of times the program/experience is delivered by September 30, 2016.

Metric: Number of participants in the program/experience.

Metric: Participants' reaction to and feedback about the program/experience.

Metric: Based on feedback, did each program/experience address participants' discomfort of experiences in nature?

Objective: By December 2016, develop, deliver, and assess at least one outdoor experience that lessens the visitors' perception of danger in natural areas.

Metric: Number of outdoor experiences developed by September 30, 2016.

Metric: Number of times the outdoor experience is delivered by December 31, 2016.

Metric: Number of participants in the outdoor experience(s).

Metric: Participants' reaction to and feedback about the program/experience.

Metric: Based on feedback, did each outdoor experience address the identified perceptions of danger?

Objective: By December 31, 2017, local audiences have options to attend at least two entry-level programs, two mid-level programs, and two in-depth programs at the refuge or with partners in the community.

Metric: Number of programs offered at entry-level, mid-level, and in-depth programs.

Metric: Entry-level programs gently increase the audiences' comfort level in the outdoors.

Metric: Mid-level programs strategically build on audiences' experiences in entry-level programs.

Metric: In-depth programs strategically build a foundation for participation in natural resource stewardship activities.

Objective: By December 31, 2018, all of the above programs offered to the urban community are consistently attended at 75% capacity, with at least 50% of participants from target audiences.

Metric: Percentage of programs attended at 75% capacity.

Metric: Percentage of programs where target audience comprises at least 50% of the participants.

Metric: Composition of program participants increasingly reflects the demographics of the local community.

GOAL 2.2: Provide programs that raise awareness of the Service mission.

Objective: By March 2015, 100% of programs delivered include information about the Service mission.

Metric: Percentage of programs offered that include info on Service mission by March 30, 2015.

GOAL 2.3: Provide programs that demonstrate how the conservation of natural resources is important to the local urban community.

Objective: By December 2018, at least 75% of refuge programs delivered demonstrate how the conservation of natural resources benefits the local community.

Metric: Annually, beginning in FY15, percentage of programs offered that demonstrate how the conservation of natural resources benefits the local community.

Metric: 75% of programs offered demonstrate how the conservation of natural resources benefits the local community by December 31, 2018.

GOAL 2.4: Participants in Service programs targeted to the urban audience represent a broad demographic of the urban community.

Objective: By June 2016, at least 20% of outreach and education programs have been revised to meet the needs of urban community members as described by the analysis of current demographic characteristics and outcomes of meetings with community leaders described in Goals 1.1 and 1.2.

Metric: Percent of outreach and education programs revised on June 30, 2016.

Objective: Between January 2016 and December 2020, increase the degree to which the demographic mix of visitors (including program participants) aligns with that of the local community, based on the demographic analyses.

Metric: Number of programs provided each year to organizations with memberships reflecting the local community, or other metrics applicable in context.

Metric: Percentage of the racial-ethnic makeup of student participants reflects the faces in the community, as reported by school districts in state Department of Education annual reports.

Metric: Composition of program participants increasingly reflects the demographics of the local community.

Objective: Beginning October 1, 2015 and every two years thereafter, use the Visitor Demographic Survey (in development as of August 2014), to analyze the demographic of participants in refuge programs.

Metric: Degree to which refuge program participants reflect the demographic of the local community in FY16, FY18, FY20, and FY22.

Metric: Composition of program participants increasingly reflects the demographics of the local community.

ENGAGING URBAN RESIDENTS IN CONSERVATION WORK

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Program participants have increased awareness and knowledge of nature and other natural resources in their community and the need for conservation.
- Community members have increased knowledge of the Service's role in conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the benefit of their community.
- Community members' increased participation in Service-led conservation projects on- and off USFWS lands.

Intermediate

- The composition of participants in Service conservation projects increasingly reflects the demographics of the local community.
- Program participants have increased appreciation of local natural resources.
- Program participants indicate that nature-based experiences are relevant to their lives.
- Program participants share their knowledge of natural resources within their demographic group.
- Community members recognize the value of natural systems.
- Appreciation for the Service is increased within the urban community.
- Community members value the conservation work of the Service.
- Community members identify natural resource conservation needs in their city and neighborhoods.
- Community groups network and work together toward the common goal of environmental stewardship.
- Community members and groups network and work together to lead conservation projects in their neighborhoods.

Long term

- The community as a whole forms a positive environmental attitude.
- The community as a whole provides support for the Service and natural resource conservation (e.g. increased advocacy; increased participation in conservation projects beyond the boundaries of their cities; leading a range of nature-based experiences for their residents; support of local, state, and national initiatives to create new natural areas).
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff has engaged diverse audiences in conservation work by conducting or participating in conservation projects both on-refuge and in the urban community.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing program participants say they recognize the Service's role in conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats in their community.
- Diverse audiences within the community are engaged in meaningful conservation projects that are perceived as beneficial to the community and result in positive conservation outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 2.5 Engage the community's diverse audiences in meaningful conservation projects on the refuge and in neighboring communities.

Objective: By September 2018, 100% of on-refuge Friends or volunteer projects/programs are advertised to the community's diverse target audience through directed outreach.

Metric: Percentage of volunteer projects/programs advertised to diverse target audiences in FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, and FY19.

Metric: 100% of volunteer projects/programs advertised to diverse target audiences in FY17 and beyond.

Metric: Percentage of community members from target audiences participating in projects/programs as a result of targeted outreach.

Objective: During FY16 and in each subsequent year, conduct or participate in at least three off-refuge conservation projects in the community in partnership with local organizations.

Metric: Number of annual conservation projects conducted and/or participated in FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20

Metric: From FY16 to FY20, the composition of participants increasingly reflects the demographics of the local community.

STANDARD 3 – BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

DEVELOPING RELEVANT PARTNERSHIPS

OUTCOMES

Short-Term

- The Service has determined which of their conservation and outreach goals are best achieved through partnerships.
- The Service has increased its knowledge of potential partners' purpose, values, needs, concerns, and motivations and the likelihood of forming viable partnerships with these groups.
- The Service has greater knowledge of the community's need for land stewardship, conservation of natural resources, and education.
- The Service has increased its awareness and knowledge of how conservation efforts might intersect with goals of partners to meet needs of the community and the Service.
- Service staff has increased awareness of mutual benefits that will accrue by partnering.
- Partners have increased their knowledge of the Service's mission, values, and organizational culture.
- Partners have increased awareness and knowledge of how effective land stewardship benefits people.
- Partners have increased ability to discuss local issues with others who have compatible missions and values.

Intermediate

- Service staff is able to reduce barriers that originate from cultural differences, build trust and respect, and create an environment where creative ideas and problem solving can flourish.

- Service staff is able to communicate ways in which conservation efforts align with partners' missions, values and needs, highlighting mutual benefits.
- Partners can define the community's need for conservation and describe why the partnership with the Service is necessary.
- The Service increases its ability to leverage funds with partners to meet shared goals and accomplish projects.
- Partners share their knowledge of the Service's mission and priorities within their sphere of influence.
- Partners have increased ability to work as a community to improve natural resources.
- Partners increase the target audiences' awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of nature within the urban community.

Long-Term

- The Service is able to rely on partners to support conservation of fish and wildlife and their urban habitats.
- Partners promote land stewardship and implement community conservation of fish and wildlife.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff responsible for developing and maintaining partnerships is identified and appropriately trained.
- The demographics and culture of the urban community are reflected in the partnerships being built.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- Service staff has increased its awareness and knowledge of how conservation efforts might intersect with the goals of local partners to meet the needs of the community and the Service.
- Community partners have increased their knowledge of the Service's mission, values, and organizational culture.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 3.1: Potential partner organizations, groups, and individuals that will help meet the needs of the urban community and the Service for land stewardship, conservation of natural resources, and/or education and outreach are identified.

Objective: By June 2015, define the Service's priority outreach and/or conservation needs that can best be fulfilled through partnership(s).

Metric: Priority outreach and/or conservation needs best fulfilled via partnerships are defined by June 30, 2015.

Objective: By June 2015, develop a comprehensive list of individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and agencies (i.e. education, medical, non-profit, arts, and state and local municipal) that serve the urban community.

Metric: A comprehensive list of individuals/organizations that serve the urban community is completed by June 30, 2015.

Metric: The list includes representatives from all demographic groups identified in Goal 1.1.

Metric: The list includes “non-traditional” groups/organizations/institutions.

Objective: By September 2015, train appropriate staff to use communication tools and cultural competencies for developing and maintaining partnerships.

Metric: Service staff responsible for developing and maintaining partnerships is identified by June 30, 2015.

Metric: Identified staff is trained to use communication tools and cultural competencies by September 30, 2015.

Objective: By September 2015, identify individuals and groups on the list who may have compatible goals and values and are willing to work with the Service.

Metric: By September 30, 2015, individuals and groups with compatible values and willing to work with the Service are identified.

Objective: By December 2015, work with outside partners to identify the urban community’s needs as they relate to land stewardship, conservation of natural resources, and/or education/outreach.

Metric: A preliminary community needs assessment is completed by December 31, 2015.

Objective: By December 2015, identify potential partners that can help meet the needs of Service and that allow the Service to help meet the needs of the urban community as it relates to land stewardship, conservation of natural resources, and/or education/outreach.

Metric: Potential partners are identified by December 31, 2015.

GOAL 3.2: Develop partnership(s) with identified groups and individuals to promote and support increased land stewardship, conservation of natural resources, and education/outreach in urban areas.

Objective: By March 2016, define the expectations and describe the mutual benefits of the potential partnership(s).

Metric: Expectations of each potential partnership are defined by March 31, 2016.

Metric: The mutual benefits that partners can anticipate are described by March 31, 2016.

Objective: By June 2016, meet with potential partners (previously identified) and exchange information regarding mission, organizational culture, and needs to determine likelihood of a viable partnership.

Metric: Meet with potential partners by June 30, 2016.

Metric: Likelihood of a viable partnership with each potential partner is documented.

Objective: By September 2016, establish partnerships with organizations, groups and individuals to address urban community needs (Identified in Goal 3.1).

Metric: Partnerships are established by September 30, 2016.

Metric: An “easy win” project is identified to build trust and show results.

MAINTAINING AND EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS

OUTCOMES

Short-Term

- The Service has increased its knowledge of the partners needed to engage its target audiences in land stewardship and conservation of natural resources in the urban community.
- The Service has increased its ability to work effectively with non-resource management organizations to further conservation and outreach goals of the Service.
- The Service has increased its ability to leverage partners’ expertise to extend the Service’s access in the community.
- Members of partner groups/organizations are able to describe the value they find in nature (e.g., ecosystems, habitats, wildlife, fish, plants, etc.).

Intermediate

- Partners gain recognition for their contributions in stewardship of private and public lands.
- The Service is able to rely on a multi-stakeholder partnership that supports community and Service conservation goals.
- Shared goals are accomplished and successes are celebrated.
- Partners conduct education/outreach and implement community conservation projects that align with conservation goals of the Service.
- Partners achieve common goals for increased public awareness and appreciation of nature within the community.
- Partners improve their organization's public image by contributing to the improvement of local natural resources.
- Service conservation-based decisions consider community needs to the extent possible by law, reinforcing trusting relationships throughout the urban community.
- Partners serve as community leaders in facilitating land stewardship and conservation of natural resources in the community.
- Partners routinely conduct or sponsor education/outreach and habitat conservation in the community that aligns with [Strategic Habitat Conservation](#) goals of the Service.

Long-Term

- Partners advocate for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants and their urban habitats.
- Partners and the community have complete trust in the Service.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- The Service and partners collaborate on and use an assessment tool for evaluating partnership effectiveness and project success.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- The Service is able to identify all of the partners needed to engage its target audiences in land stewardship and conservation of natural resources in the urban community.
- Partnerships that achieve common goals for increased public awareness and appreciation of nature within the urban community continue to grow.
- Partners conduct or sponsor education/outreach and habitat conservation in the community that align with [Strategic Habitat Conservation](#) goals of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 3.3: Partnerships and community relationships continue to grow, becoming more effective over time.

Objective: Beginning in 2017 and annually thereafter, examine existing partners and partnerships and identify the need for additional partners to reflect the diversity and culture of the urban community.

Metric: Partnership "gap" analysis is completed by March 31, 2017, and annually thereafter.

Metric: Within two months of analysis, appropriate partners are identified to fill gaps.

Objective: By September 2017, establish partnerships with additional organizations or groups that reflect the urban community, and that can help further meet the needs of the urban community and the Service for land stewardship, conservation of natural resources, and education/outreach.

Metric: Partnerships that fill identified gaps are established by September 30, 2017.

Metric: Partnerships are expanded as needed to further land stewardship, conservation of natural resources, and education/outreach efforts.

Objective: By December 2017, establish one multi-stakeholder partnership, with the contributions of each partner defined.

Metric: A multi-stakeholder partnership is established by December 31, 2017.

Metric: Partner contributions are defined.

GOAL 3.4: Maintain stable and long-term partnerships that support land stewardship, expand conservation of natural resources and conduct education/outreach for the benefit of the urban community.

Objective: By June 2016, establish urban partnership coordinator(s) for the station and identify responsibilities to continue partnership implementation.

Metric: Urban partnership coordinator position description, with responsibilities for partnership implementation, is approved by December 31, 2015.

Metric: Urban partnership coordinator position is established and advertised by March 31, 2016.

Metric: Urban partnership coordinator position is staffed by June 30, 2016.

Objective: By December 2017, the Service and partners collaborate to develop and use an assessment tool for evaluating partnership effectiveness and project success.

Metric: All partners participate in developing the assessment.

Metric: The partnership-designed assessment for evaluating effectiveness and project success is completed by December 31, 2017.

Metric: The “easy win” project is evaluated for partnership effectiveness and project success.

Metric: The partnership-designed assessment is used as road map to establish the multi-stakeholder partnership.

Objective: By June 2018, partnerships are well-established and are ongoing.

Metric: The partnership-designed assessment, conducted prior to June 2017, verifies that existing partnerships are well-established and poised for future success, as defined in their assessment tool.

STANDARD 4 – BE A COMMUNITY ASSET

PEOPLE AND EXPERTISE

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff has increased knowledge of the value of supporting activities relevant to the local community.
- Service staff has the knowledge and skills to participate in and conduct outreach activities and deliver quality customer service.
- Individual community members, from all demographic groups, have more positive

associations with refuge staff.

- Individual community members increase their awareness that the refuge is a community resource available to them for education, recreation, scientific discovery, and more.
- Community members, who learn about the refuge from Service employees performing activities in the community, visit the refuge and increase their knowledge of local natural resources.
- Community organizations, schools, local governments and businesses, and destination marketing organizations (e.g., convention and visitor bureaus) increase their awareness that the refuge exists within their city.

Intermediate

- Individual community members, partners, and local businesses and governments increase their trust of and confidence in the Service.
- Individual community members, schools, partners, and local businesses and governments recognize refuge staff as a credible and reliable source of conservation-related information.
- Individuals from the community, schools, partner organizations, and local businesses and governments increase their involvement in refuge programs and projects, growing volunteerism and participation in the Friends group.

Long term

- Community members as a whole recognize refuge staff as trustworthy and dependable community members, whose service increases the quality of community life.
- The refuge is part of the community's identity and community members value and support its conservation mission.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Every Service employee is spending 2–8 hours per year in service to the community.
- Service staff, volunteers, and Friends are conducting outreach events in the local community.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing community members, from all demographic groups, say they are visiting the refuge for the first time because of their contact with a Service employee conducting outreach or a service activity.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 4.1 Service staff provides relevant services to the local community, based on the needs identified by target audiences (Goal 1.2).

Objective: By September 2016, include at least one Service mission-related community service activity² in the performance plans of 100% of Service staff. (Employees select their activity(s) from

² An appropriate community service activity will benefit the community while supporting the Service mission. Possible examples include: leading nature walks or hikes for Seniors; teaching a hunter safety course; training children and/or adults in "citizen science" protocols; helping the Boys and Girls club build a Natural Outdoor Learning Area; weeding a Schoolyard Habitat; participating in the City's annual creek clean-up; speaking about local wildlife at a community meeting; organizing a nature photography club for an after-school program; sharing expertise in natural resource

the list of community needs generated in Goal 1.2.)

Metric: Percentage of Service staff with community service activity(s) in their performance plans for FY17, FY18, FY 19, and FY20.

Metric: Each staff member provides a minimum of 2, and up to 8, hours of mission-related community service activities annually.

Metric: Number of hours of mission-related community service activities provided annually by staff.

Objective: By March 2017 and each year thereafter, all Service staff receives training on providing quality customer service and outreach.

Metric: Percentage of staff receiving customer service and outreach training by March 31, 2017

Metric: Percentage of staff receiving customer service and outreach training in FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20.

Metric: Number of visitors commenting on the high quality of customer service in FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

Objective: By June 2017, every Service staff member conducts outreach by representing the Service in at least one community activity/event per year.

Metric: Percentage of staff conducting outreach at community activities/events in FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

Metric: Number of community activities/events Service staff participates in during FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

PHYSICAL STRUCTURES AND PLACES

OUTCOMES

Short term

- All Service staff has increased knowledge of the desired result of hosting non-traditional activities/events, relevant to the local community, at the refuge.
- All Service staff has increased knowledge of the reason for attracting new urban audiences to use refuge lands and facilities.
- All Service staff is able to explain the value and results of hosting non-traditional activities/events, relevant to the local community, at the refuge.
- Individual community members, from all demographic groups, increase their awareness that the refuge is a community resource available to them for education, recreation, scientific discovery, and more.
- Individual community members, organizations, local businesses and governments, and destination marketing organizations increase their awareness of the refuge's purpose and what it has to offer.

Intermediate

- Individual community members and members of community organizations, local businesses and governments, and destination marketing organizations develop intellectual and emotional connections to the refuge's remarkable natural resources.

Long term

- Community organizations, local businesses and governments, and destination marketing organizations identify the refuge as a community asset to be enhanced and promoted for

conservation with Master Naturalists. Activities may occur on or off Service lands, and may occur in cooperation with a partner. Employees are on Service time and must clearly indicate they are a Service representative; e.g., wear a Service uniform.

- the benefit of the community.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff promotes the refuge to new audiences; facilities are being used by all demographic groups within the community for non-traditional activities (e.g., meetings, voting, community celebrations, etc.) as well as education and wildlife-dependent recreation.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing visitors from the community comment about the “connections” they’ve made with the natural and/or cultural resources at the refuge.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 4.2: Refuge grounds and facilities provide a venue for community activities, demonstrating that the refuge is an asset to the urban community.

Objective: Annually, permit communities to conduct a minimum of three appropriate and compatible, non-traditional activities on refuge lands that support or promote the Service mission.

Metric: Annual number of non-traditional activities permitted/hosted.

Objective: By September 2016, revise outreach plans to include at least five specific actions for attracting target audiences to Service lands and facilities, and/or raising the visibility of the Service.

Metric: By September 30, 2016, refuges outreach plans are updated to include five or more specific strategies for promoting use of refuge facilities and sites for community activities by.

Metric: For other Service offices in urban areas that don’t have public facilities, outreach plans are updated to include five or more specific strategies for increasing the visibility of Service activities benefitting the community and/or promoting nearby refuge facilities/sites for community activities by September 30, 2016.

AGENCY

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff has increased knowledge of the reason for attracting, and tracking, “tourists” to refuge special events.
- Service staff has increased ability to identify and correctly estimate “refuge-related revenue” generated for the community.
- Service staff has increased ability to articulate the economic benefits provided to the community by the refuge.
- Participants in special events increase their knowledge of refuge-specific natural resource management and conservation and the associated benefits to people, fish, wildlife, and plants.

- Individual community members, organizations, and local businesses and governments increase their awareness that the Service contributes to community-based projects that benefit the community.
- Individual community members, organizations, local businesses and governments, and destination marketing organizations increase their knowledge of what the Service contributes to the community, both directly and indirectly (e.g., revenue generated by events).
- Student interns/volunteers/youth leaders increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities in natural resource management, education and outreach, wildlife biology, administration, and maintenance.
- Student interns/volunteers/youth leaders increase their knowledge of refuge-specific natural resource conservation, and the associated benefits to people, fish, wildlife, and plants.

Intermediate

- Local taxpayers and governments recognize the economic benefits provided to the community by the refuge.
- Local schools and students recognize the Service as dependable resource for professional development opportunities.

Long term

- Local community groups, organizations, schools, businesses and governments, and destination marketing organizations recognize the Service and its staff, facilities, and lands as community assets.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- The refuge hosts at least one special event per year that attracts community members and out-of-town visitors and generates revenue for the community.
- The Service is providing local students with internships, and/or volunteer and youth leadership opportunities.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing individuals from the community acknowledge contributions the Service makes to the community.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 4.3: Community organizations, schools, local businesses and governments, and destination marketing organizations (e.g., convention and visitor bureau) recognize the benefit the refuge brings to for the local economy, tourism and community members.

Objective: By September 2017, host at least one special event per year that attracts tourists, as well as non-traditional visitors and other local community members, and generates revenue for the community.

Metric: Number of special events hosted in FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20

Metric: Total number of people attending the event each year.

Metric: Number of tourists attending the event each year.

Metric: Estimate of tourist dollars brought into the community each year.

Metric: Estimate of other revenue generated by the event each year.

Objective: By September 2018, provide staff expertise to facilitate at least one community-based project of benefit to both the community and the refuge.

Metric: Number of community-based projects underway by September 30, 2018.

Metric: Number of projects underway with measurable economic benefit.

Objective: By September 2015 and annually thereafter, provide local students with (preferably paid) internships and/or volunteer and youth leadership opportunities.

Metric: Number of paid internships filled by local students during FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

Metric: Number of unpaid internships filled by local students during FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

Metric: Number of volunteer and/or youth leadership positions filled by local students during FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

Objective: Beginning in FY16 and annually thereafter, write and disseminate an “economic/financial report”³ that highlights revenue brought into the community by special events, community projects, and other refuge activities.

Metric: A record is kept documenting estimated revenue brought into the community by special events and other refuge activities.

Metric: Reports are written and disseminated in FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

STANDARD 5: ENSURE ADEQUATE LONG-TERM RESOURCES

STAFFING

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Staff has the knowledge and skills to accomplish the goals and objectives articulated in the other seven Urban Program Standards of Excellence.
- The refuge has increased capacity (i.e., ability, efficiency and/or effectiveness) to accomplish the goals and objectives articulated in the other seven Standards of Excellence.
- The refuge has the capability to apply best practices and evaluation models to design programs.
- Increased involvement with the community through outreach, education, and/or conservation-related activities.

Intermediate

- Service staff morale is heightened.
- Progress is being made toward achieving the goals articulated in the other seven Standards of Excellence.
- New audiences have increased their knowledge of the refuge and its purpose.
- Urban partners perceive the Service as a dependable presence in the community.
- The urban public is more apt to volunteer to protect and/or care for natural resources and Service facilities.
- The Service adaptively manages urban programs through structured program evaluation.
- The Service increasingly perceives urban refuges as assets to wildlife conservation.

Long term

- Service staff morale is consistently high.

³ Include the information from this report as a section in the Annual Report (Goal 1.3). The information may be disseminated by itself as a separate report, or through dissemination of the Annual Report.

- The urban public recognizes the Service as a dependable presence in the community.
- The Service has achieved a broader based conservation constituency within the urban community.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Gaps in expertise are identified and being filled with FTEs, term appointments, internships, and/or strategic partnerships.
- Your refuge is staffed by personnel having expertise in urban refuge management, volunteer management, partnership building, communications/outreach, environmental education, interpretation, and law enforcement.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing all staff talk more about having the human resources to accomplish the goals outlined in the Urban Program Standards of Excellence.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 5.1 Every urban refuge is adequately staffed with an appropriate mix of permanent and seasonal positions and supplemented with strategic partnerships to provide the necessary expertise in urban refuge management, volunteer management, partnership building, communications/outreach, environmental education and interpretation, maintenance, and law enforcement.

Objective: By September 2017, all Service regions adopt the new Urban Refuge Manager Position Description (in development as of August 2014) for hiring at urban refuges.

Metric: Has the Region adopted the new position description by September 30, 2017?

Objective: Between September 2017 and September 2018, at least 30% of all urban refuge manager positions are filled using "Knowledge, Skills and Abilities" defined in the Urban Refuge Manager Position Description (PD) (in development).

Metric: Between September 2017 and September 2018, at least 30% of all urban refuge manager positions filled in the Region use the new position description.

Objective: After September 2018, at least 75% of all urban refuge manager positions are filled using "Knowledge, Skills and Abilities" defined in the Urban Refuge Manager Position Description (in development).

Metric: A minimum of 75% of all urban refuge manager positions filled in the region use the Urban Refuge Manager PD.

Objective: By October 1, update urban refuge organizational charts to encompass responsibilities of volunteer management, partnership building, communications/outreach, environmental education, interpretation, and law enforcement.

Metric: The organizational chart is updated by September 30, 2017.

Metric: Funding is allocated to fill vacant positions by October 1, 2017.

Objective: Using the Urban Skill Set Worksheet (in development), by September 2017 and every two years thereafter, conduct an analysis of refuge positions and strategic partnerships to identify expertise and staffing needs.

Metric: The initial analysis is completed, and expertise and needs are identified by September 30, 2017.

Metric: Has a biennial analysis been completed and needs identified?

Objective: Within six months of analyses, a plan to fill gaps in expertise with FTEs, term appointments, internships, and/or strategic partnerships is in place.

Metric: The initial plan to fill gaps in expertise is completed by March 31, 2018.

Metric: Subsequent plans to fill gaps in expertise are completed within six months of analysis.

Objective: Within one year of analyses (i.e., no later than six months following development of the “gaps plan”), begin to fill gaps in expertise with FTEs, term appointments, internships, and/or strategic partnerships.

Metric: The extent to which the plan is implemented and the foundation laid for filling gaps.

Metric: Percentage of gaps filled at the one-year, 18-month, and two-year periods.

Metric: Staff possesses (or has access to) the expertise to use best practices and evaluation models to design and deliver programs for diverse audiences.

Objective: By October 1, 2015, a minimum of one performance measure to welcome and orient diverse visitors is included in those Service staffs’ performance plans who work at urban refuges or hatcheries.

Metric: Percentage of staff performance plans that include ‘welcome and orient urban visitors’ as a performance measure on October 1, 2015.

Objective: By October 1, 2015 and each subsequent performance year, all urban refuge and hatchery personnel’s Individual Development Plans (IDPs) include training related to improving communication with various cultural groups visiting Service land.

Metric: Percentage of refuge personnel completing the communication or cultural competency training identified in their IDP during FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

FUNDING

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff working at the refuge has increased capacity (i.e., ability, efficiency and/or effectiveness) to accomplish the goals and objectives articulated in the other seven Standards of Excellence and produce desired results.
- Service staff working at the refuge has the capability to apply best practices and evaluation models to design programs.
- Increased involvement with the community through outreach, education and/or conservation-related activities.

Intermediate

- Service staff morale is heightened.
- Progress is being made toward achieving the goals articulated in the other seven Standards of Excellence.
- Urban partners perceive the Service as a dependable presence in the community.
- The Service adaptively manages urban programs through structured program evaluation.
- The Service increasingly perceives urban refuges as assets to wildlife conservation.

Long term

- Service staff morale is consistently high.
- The urban public recognizes the Service as a dependable presence in the community.
- The Service has achieved a broader based conservation constituency within the urban community.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Staffing, operations, and activities related to urban visitor services rank as a high priority, and are funded at levels comparable to, other priority activities within the Region.
- Leadership dedicates adequate funding to urban refuges to sustain and grow partnerships and programs important to the community and to maintain refuge visitor facilities.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing urban partners commenting that the Service is becoming a dependable presence in the community.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 5.2 Station, Regional and national level leadership dedicate adequate funding for urban refuges to sustain and grow partnerships and programs important to the community and to maintain refuge visitor facilities to a high level of quality, as defined in USFWS policy 605 FW1.

Objective: Urban-related staffing, operations, and activities (within budget code 1263 Visitor Services) rank as a high priority in order to meet the Standards of Excellence and are funded at 100%.

Metric: Degree to which urban refuge organizational charts (Goal 5.1) are fulfilled.

Metric: Degree to which operational base funding is provided for suitable public programs.

Metric: Degree to which maintenance base funding is provided to maintain visitor service facilities in good condition.

Metric: Degree to which deferred maintenance, visitor facility enhancement and construction funding are considered high priority by regions when allocating funds.

Objective: Work with Friends groups and partners to provide 20-50% of funding needed to accomplish urban engagement projects/programs (i.e. above and beyond Service staff and facilities).

Metric: Friends fundraising is fully compliant with the Service's Friends and Donations Policies.

Metric: Percentage of engagement programs/projects accomplished with partner contributed funds.

Objective: Beginning in FY16 and annually thereafter, work with a minimum of three Service programs other than Refuges (e.g., Ecological Services, External Affairs, Migratory Birds, Fisheries, etc.), and/or other non-Service federal partners (e.g., NPS, BLM, USGS, USFS, NOAA, NASA, HUD, HHS, etc.) to accomplish projects/programs in urban communities.

Metric: Number of other Service programs and/or non-Service federal partners engaged in accomplishing projects/programs in urban communities during FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, and FY20.

PLANNING

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Local jurisdictions, partners, and other stakeholders are aware of the Service's efforts to strive for refuge planning that is complementary to other local land use planning efforts.

Intermediate

- Local jurisdictions, partners, and other stakeholders recognize the Service as a dependable and trustworthy presence in the community.

Long term

- The urban public and community as a whole recognize the Service as a dependable and trustworthy presence.
- The Service has achieved a broader based conservation constituency within the urban community.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Urban Wildlife Refuge Program Standards of Excellence are incorporated into relevant planning documents and factored in when implementing plans.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You are hearing representatives from local jurisdictions, partners, and other stakeholders acknowledge the Service's efforts to strive for refuge planning that is complementary to other local land use planning efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 5.3 Urban refuges actively incorporate Standards of Excellence into planning efforts.

Objective: By September 2015, inventory and identify gaps within current/active refuge management plans to ensure that the Standards of Excellence are addressed.

Metric: The inventory is completed and gaps identified by September 30, 2015.

Objective: By September 2018, where feasible, append all existing plans to reflect Standards of Excellence and incorporate actions into refuge operations.

Metric: Percentage of appropriate plans updated by end of FY16, FY17, and FY18

Metric: Associated actions are incorporated into refuge operations each fiscal year.

Objective: Incorporate the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program Standards of Excellence at the goal level for new Comprehensive Conservation Plans and other relevant planning documents for urban refuges. (e.g.: visitor services step-down plans, land protection plans, environmental assessments, habitat management plans).

Metric: Percentage of new planning documents where the Standards of Excellence are incorporated.

Metric: When implementing plans, the objectives articulated in the Standards of Excellence are considered.

Objective: Annually, or more frequently if needed, coordinate with local jurisdictions and stakeholders to discuss refuge planning and strive for plans that are complementary to other local land use planning efforts.

Metric: Annual number of projects coordinated with local jurisdictions and stakeholders.

VOLUNTEERS, FRIENDS, AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Volunteers have the knowledge and skills to support accomplishing the goals and objectives articulated in the other seven Urban Program Standards of Excellence.
- The volunteer corps has increased capacity (i.e., ability, efficiency and/or effectiveness) to support accomplishing the goals and objectives articulated in the other seven Standards of Excellence.
- The Service increases its involvement with the community through outreach, education and/or conservation-related activities.
- The reach of the Service is extended.

Intermediate

- Progress is being made toward achieving the goals articulated in the other seven Standards of Excellence.
- New audiences have increased their knowledge of the refuge and its purpose.
- Partners perceive the Service as a dependable presence.
- Community members are more apt to volunteer to protect and/or care for natural resources and Service facilities.
- Service volunteers have increased ability to apply their knowledge and skills to further conservation on and off Service lands.

Long term

- The urban public and community as a whole recognize the Service as a dependable presence.
- The Service has achieved a broader based conservation constituency within the urban community.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff invests time and energy in developing and supporting an active Friends group and volunteer corps.
- Internships are available to local urban youth.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- An increase in the number and diversity of individuals volunteering at the refuge results in new audiences being reached.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 5.4: The refuge has an active Friends group(s), volunteer corps, and/or youth internships to help support the mission and goals of the refuge and their partners.

Objective: Using the Urban Skill Set Worksheet (in development), by September 2017 and every 2 years thereafter, conduct an analysis of the refuge volunteer program, Friends group(s), and youth internship opportunities to identify expertise and needs and fill gaps.

Metric: The initial analysis is completed and expertise and needs are identified by September 30, 2017.

Metric: Biennial analyses are completed and all needs are identified in FY19 and FY21.

Metric: Gaps are filled in a timely manner.

STANDARD 6 – EQUITABLE ACCESS

TRAVELING TO URBAN REFUGE EVENTS

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff increases their knowledge of transportation barriers that community members may encounter when traveling to refuge programs and events.
- Partners/stakeholders have increased knowledge of transportation barriers that community members may encounter when traveling to refuge programs and events.
- Community planners have increased knowledge of the need for better signage and public transportation to and from the refuge.
- New audiences, including individuals, businesses, municipalities, schools, and community groups that reflect the makeup of the community, engage with Service staff.
- Community members have increased awareness of the Service's commitment to ease the burden of transportation to the refuge.

Intermediate

- Community members use the Service-facilitated transportation modes and routes to get to the refuge.
- Community members use the way-finding system⁴ to get to the refuge.
- A greater percent of community members from all demographic groups participate in Service programs and events and increase their appreciation of nature and the refuge's purpose.

Long term

- All groups within the community feel valued and respected by the Service.
- The community increases its support of the Service and its programs and activities.
- Community members demonstrate their commitment to conservation issues on and off Service land.

- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Projects and strategies that ease the burden of transportation to the refuge are being implemented.

⁴ The basic process of way-finding involves four stages: 1. Determining one's location in relation to nearby objects/landmarks and the desired destination; 2. Selecting a course to the destination; 3. Checking to make sure that the selected route is heading towards the destination; 4. Recognizing when the destination is reached.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- Partners and community planners commit to addressing transportation barriers that community members encounter when traveling to refuge programs and events.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 6.1: Minimize barriers to traveling to on-site refuge programs.

Objective: By September 2017, conduct an analysis of currently available modes of transportation to and from the refuge within the geographic boundaries of the urban area.

Metric: Percentage of the transportation analysis completed by September 30, 2017.

Objective: Within six months of the analysis, and no later than March 31, 2018, identify gaps in transportation modes and routes.

Metric: Based on the analysis, gaps in transportation modes and routes have been identified by March 31, 2018.

Metric: All easily fillable gaps (e.g., extending bike routes) have been identified by March 31, 2018.

Objective: Within one year of the analysis and no later than September 31, 2018, develop a transportation plan that includes projects and strategies that ease the burden of transportation to the refuge.

Metric: A strategic plan to ease the burden of transportation has been developed within one year of the analysis and no later than September 31, 2018.

Metric: Transportation projects identified in the plan will result in an increased range of affordable transportation options for community members traveling to and from the refuge.

Objective: Within one year of plan development and no later than September 30, 2019, implement at least one project that eases the burden of transportation to the refuge.

Metric: Number of transportation-related projects implemented by September 30, 2019.

Objective: Within two years of the analysis and no later than September 30, 2020, install a way-finding⁵ system to and from the refuge that meets the needs of the community.

Metric: The way-finding system is developed in collaboration with community partners.

Metric: A way-finding system is installed within two years of the analysis and no later than September 30, 2020.

GOAL 6.2: Minimize barriers to traveling to off-site refuge programs.

Objective: For regularly occurring off-site programs (e.g. annual creek clean-up day, monthly bird survey, etc.), identify and assess potential transportation barriers.

Metric: All transportation barriers to accessing regularly occurring off-site programs are identified.

Metric: Percentage of barriers to off-site programs assessed.

Objective: By March 2018, ease the burden of transportation on regularly occurring off-site refuge programming.

Metric: Percentage of regularly occurring off-site programs where transportation is not a barrier to participation in FY15, FY16, and FY17.

Metric: Percentage of regularly occurring off-site programs where transportation is not a barrier to participation on March 30, 2018.

Objective: Work with at least one partner/stakeholder to conduct programs in more accessible locations.

⁵ The basic process of way-finding involves four stages: 1. Determining one's location in relation to nearby objects/landmarks and the desired destination; 2. Selecting a course to the destination; 3. Checking to make sure that the selected route is heading towards the destination; 4. Recognizing when the destination is reached.

Metric: Number of partners/stakeholders engaged in this process.

Metric: Percentage of off-site programs relocated to more accessible sites.

ACCESS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff increases their knowledge of ways and means to provide equivalent access and comparable experiences for people with disabilities.
- Service staff increases their knowledge of the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines.
- Community members have increased awareness of the refuge's guarantee to provide equivalent access and comparable experiences for people with disabilities.
- A greater percent of local residents, businesses, municipalities, community groups, and schools are aware that the refuge is accessible regardless of physical abilities.

Intermediate

- A greater percent of community members from all demographic groups, with varying physical abilities, participate in refuge programs and events, and increase their appreciation of nature and the refuge's purpose.

Long term

- All groups within the community feel valued and respected by the Service.
- The community as a whole increases its support of the Service and its programs and activities.
- Community members demonstrate their commitment to conservation issues on and off Service lands.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- The strategy for ensuring all refuge facilities comply with Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines is being implemented.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- Greater numbers of community members with disabilities are participating in refuge programs and events and increasing their appreciation of nature and the refuge's purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 6.3: The refuge provides equivalent access and comparable experiences for people with disabilities.

Objective: By March 2015, identify all refuge facilities not in compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Metric: Percentage of the assessment completed by March 31, 2015.

Objective: By September 30, 2015, develop a strategy for getting all facilities on the refuge in compliance with the standards outlined in the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Metric: A strategy for ensuring all refuge facilities comply with ABA Accessibility Guidelines is in place by September 30, 2015.

Objective: By September 2016, all facilities on the refuge meet the standards outlined in the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Metric: Percentage of refuge facilities that meet the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines by September 30, 2016.

Objective: As soon as possible and no later than March 2015 (or immediately upon request), provide aids and assistance to individuals with disabilities so they have an equal opportunity to participate fully in refuge programs.

Metric: Percentage of refuge programs in which auxiliary aids and/or assistance are available to individuals with disabilities.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff increases their knowledge of potential financial barriers limiting access to the refuge.
- Refuge partners/Friends increase their knowledge of the benefits of providing scholarships to cover program fees and income-based reductions to low- income households and Title 1 schools.
- A greater percent of local residents, businesses, organizations, and schools are aware that the refuge welcomes all community members regardless of financial means.

Intermediate

- A greater percent of community members from all demographic groups participate in refuge programs and events and increase their appreciation of nature and the Service's purpose.
- A greater percent of Title 1 schools participate in refuge programs and events; students increase their appreciation of nature and the Service's purpose.

Long term

- All groups within the community feel valued and respected by the Service.
- The community increases its support of the Service and its programs and activities.
- Community members demonstrate their commitment to conservation issues on and off Service lands.
- Urban refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- A program to provide scholarships to cover program fees and income-based reductions to low- income households and Title 1 schools is in place.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- Greater numbers of students from Title 1 schools are participating in refuge programs and events and increasing their appreciation of nature and the refuge's purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 6.4: The Service provides financially challenged individuals free and low-cost opportunities to engage in wildlife-dependent recreation and connect with nature.

Objective: By September 2016, complete an assessment of financial barriers that exist at your site(s).

Metric: Percentage of the assessment completed by September 30, 2016.

Metric: All fees and activities with associated costs have been identified.

Objective: Beginning in FY15, promote fee-free days and/or programs, as appropriate.

Metric: All fee-free days are promoted, as appropriate, in FY15 and all subsequent years.

Objective: In collaboration with partners, by September 2017, Service staff has developed a program to provide scholarships to cover program fees and income-based reductions to low-income households and Title 1 schools.

Metric: Percentage of scholarships provided to low-income households and Title 1 schools requesting financial assistance.

Metric: Percentage of income-based reductions provided to low-income households and Title 1 schools requesting financial assistance.

STANDARD 7 – ENSURE VISITORS FEEL SAFE AND WELCOME

BE PREPARED

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff and volunteers have increased ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Service staff and volunteers have increased skill in respectfully communicating with culturally diverse groups.
- Service staff and volunteers have increased knowledge of community members' perceptions regarding natural areas; visitors' concerns about real and perceived dangers have been clearly identified.
- Service staff and volunteers have increased knowledge and skill in orienting urban visitors to natural areas.
- Service staff and volunteers modify program content and delivery methods based on insights related to perceptions held by community members.
- Refuge law enforcement increases communications related to actual occurrences of crime, vandalism, and other dangers, enabling other on-site personnel to have current, accurate knowledge to share with visitors, as appropriate.
- Service staff decreases incidents of crime, vandalism, and other safety concerns.

Intermediate

- First-time and returning visitors from various demographic groups feel welcome at the refuge.
- Visitors from the various demographic groups in the community increase their level of comfort participating in activities in natural areas on and off Service lands.
- Individuals from the community, schools, partner organizations, and local businesses and government agencies increase their involvement in Service programs and projects, growing volunteerism and participation in the Friends group.

Long term

- The community as a whole recognizes that the Service is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members' perspectives and being of service to its neighbors.
- All groups within the community feel valued and respected by the Service.
- The community as a whole increases its support of the Service.

- Urban wildlife refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Refuge grounds and facilities are intentionally maintained to appeal to the target audiences in the community.
- Training material is developed to teach Service staff, volunteers, and Friends best practices in welcoming and orienting visitors.
- Refuge law enforcement officers are meeting with Visitor Services staff to coordinate and ensure visitor safety.
- Real threats to safety are identified and eliminated or minimized in a timely manner.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear staff talk enthusiastically about welcoming first-time visitors from target audiences to the refuge.
- You hear refuge law enforcement officers sharing information about crime, vandalism, and other dangers occurring at the refuge with Visitor Services staff.
- Volunteerism is increasing; participation by all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in the community is increasing.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 7.1: Service staff, volunteers, Friends members, and grounds and facilities are prepared to contribute to potential visitors, from the various demographic groups in the community, feeling welcome at the refuge.

Objective: By September 2015, Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members demonstrate cultural proficiency.

Metric: Percentage of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members meeting the objectives stated in Goal 1.5.

Metric: Percentage of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members demonstrating cultural proficiency.

Objective: Refuge grounds and visitor facilities appear welcoming to community members from different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, based on information gathered in meetings with community leaders (Goal 1.2).

Metric: Characteristics the community associates with a welcoming place are identified by September 30, 2015.

Metric: Grounds are maintained to reduce the appearance of harboring potential threats.

Metric: Visitor facilities are well maintained.

Metric: Entrance (s) to visitor facilities are clearly marked and always open on time.

GOAL 7.2: Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members are prepared to address community members' perceptions of danger in natural areas.

Objective: By December 2015, determine at least five strategies/tools that address potential visitors' perceived dangers in natural settings.

Metric: Number of strategies/tools identified to address the urban visitors' perceived dangers in natural settings.

Objective: By March 2016, develop training materials for Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members on how to orient urban visitors to a natural area, based on the strategies/tools identified.

Metric: Are training materials developed and available for use by March 31, 2016?

Metric: Do the training materials incorporate the identified tools and strategies?

Objective: No later than April 2016, and annually thereafter, provide Service staff and volunteers with "Visitor Safety Training" addressing real and perceived dangers and how to orient urban visitors to a natural area using the training materials developed.

Metric: Is the first training conducted by April 30, 2016?

Metric: Is subsequent training provided annually?

Metric: Percentage of staff trained.

Metric: Percentage of volunteers trained.

Metric: Are the training materials effective?

Metric: Level 1 Evaluation (staff/volunteers' feedback) is implemented.

Objective: No later than May 2016, and at least every two years thereafter, provide Friends group members and community partners with "Visitor Safety Training" addressing real and perceived dangers and how to orient urban visitors to a natural area using the training materials developed.

Metric: Is the first training conducted by May 31, 2016?

Metric: Percentage of Friends group members that attended training.

Metric: Percentage of community partners that attended training.

Metric: Is subsequent training provided at least every two years?

Metric: Level 1 Evaluation (Friends'/Partners' feedback) is implemented.

GOAL 7.3: Ensure that real threats are minimized through thoughtful design, adequate staffing and appropriate law enforcement.

Objective: At a minimum, work with refuge and local law enforcement officials annually and beginning no later than March 2015 to assess and document potential crime/vandalism/danger concerns.

Metric: Is the first assessment completed by March 31, 2015, and results provided to Service staff?

Metric: Is an assessment completed annually and results provided to Service staff?

Objective: Based on assessment, annually prioritize results by level of risk/urgency.

Metric: Is a prioritized list of improvements/projects developed?

Metric: Are high risk/urgency improvements/projects funded?

Objective: Based on priority level, provide and/or modify facilities or services to eliminate or minimize threats, as appropriate.

Metric: Are the annual priorities accomplished?

Metric: Are real threats eliminated or minimized in a timely manner?

PROVIDE POSITIVE VIEWS OF AN URBAN REFUGE

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Individuals from the various demographic groups in the community increase their awareness of the Service's desire to include all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in Service programs and activities.
- Community members have increased knowledge of the Service and its mission.
- First-time and returning visitors from various demographic groups in the community feel welcome at the refuge.
- Program participants who were apprehensive of engaging in nature state that they are no longer fearful of being in the natural places; they have become familiar with the outdoor experience in which they participate.
- Program participants have increased awareness and knowledge of nature and other natural resources in their community.

Intermediate

- Program participants from the various demographic groups in the community increase their level of comfort participating in activities in natural areas on and off Service land.
- Program participants have increased appreciation of local natural resources.
- Program participants indicate that nature-based experiences are relevant to their lives.
- Program participants share their knowledge of natural resources within their demographic group.
- Community members recognize the value of natural systems and the Service's conservation work.
- Appreciation for the Service is increased within the urban community.

Long term

- The community as a whole recognizes that the Service is genuine in its pursuit of understanding community members' perspectives and being of an asset to its neighbors.
- All groups within the community feel valued and respected by the Service.
- The community as a whole increases its support of the Service.
- Urban wildlife refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Outreach materials are revised to include images of people that reflect all the faces in the community.
- Outdoor experiences that increase visitors' level of comfort in a natural setting are available.
- Refuge law enforcement is frequently seen patrolling the public use areas on the refuge.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You observe staff and volunteers demonstrate cultural proficiency and use best practices to welcome visitors to the refuge.
- You hear visitors from a variety of racial/cultural groups in the community say they feel safe and welcome at the refuge.
- You hear visitors from a variety of racial/cultural groups in the community say they are more at ease in outdoor settings on the refuge.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 7.4: Community members from all demographic groups view the refuge as being safe and welcoming.

Objective: By December 2016, communications and outreach strategies include actions to increase the perception that the refuge is safe and welcoming.

Metric: Communications and outreach strategies are written/revised to include actions to increase the perception that the refuge is safe and welcoming, by December 31, 2016.

Metric: Images of people in outreach materials reflect the faces in the community.

Metric: By December 31, 2016, at least 50% of all outreach materials characterize the refuge as safe and welcoming to all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. .

Metric: By June 2017, all outreach materials characterize the refuge as welcoming to all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.

Objective: By December 2015, all Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members demonstrate cultural proficiency when welcoming visitors of different race, ethnicity, and culture.

Metric: Percent of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members using appropriate language (based on best practices learned in cultural competency training) when welcoming visitors.

Metric: Percent of Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members observed showing appropriate respect (based on best practices learned in cultural competency training) when welcoming visitors of different race, ethnicity, and culture.

Objective: By June 2016, Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members successfully use knowledge and skills acquired in Visitor Safety Training= to orient community members to the natural areas on the refuge.

Metric: Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members address perceptions of danger when orienting visitors to the natural areas.

Metric: Service staff, volunteers, and Friends members use appropriate techniques when orienting visitors to the natural areas.

Objective: Refuge law enforcement is consistently seen patrolling the site by visitors from the community.

Metric: Refuge law enforcement has a visible on-site presence.

GOAL 7.5: All visitors have the opportunity to participate in experiences that increase their level of comfort in a natural setting.

Objective: By December 2016, outdoor experience(s) that lessen the perception of danger in natural areas are available to refuge visitors (see Goal 2.1).

STANDARD 8 – MODEL SUSTAINABILITY

PRACTICE SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff and volunteers can describe the new sustainable practices implemented at the site.
- Service staff and volunteers know the overall greenhouse gas emissions at the refuge and the sources of carbon.
- Service staff and volunteers are working toward reducing their carbon emissions.

Intermediate

- Service staff and volunteers talk with visitors about the sustainable practices being implemented.
- Service staff and volunteers share their personal success stories about reducing their carbon footprint.

Long Term

- The overall greenhouse gas emissions at the Service site are reduced.
- The Service's Urban Wildlife Refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- At least one new sustainable practice is implemented and showcased at the Service site every year.
- Service Staff and volunteers are setting personal goals to reduce their carbon footprint within refuge boundaries and in the community.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear Service staff and volunteers talk with visitors about the sustainable practices being implemented at the site.
- Service staff and volunteers are working toward their goal(s) to reduce their carbon footprint at the site.
- There is a decrease in carbon emissions generated by Service staff and volunteers, based on the CLIR calculation tool.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 8.1: Promote sustainable practices such as energy efficiency, alternative energy use, water conservation, “green” purchasing and facility management, minimal-to-zero waste, and environmental management.

Objective: In FY15, and for five years thereafter, annually implement at least one new sustainable practice at the refuge by applying principles in Service Manual Chapter 565 FW 1 (especially see exhibits 1 and 2) to maximum extent practicable.

Metric: Number of new sustainable practices implemented by September 30, 2015

Metric: Number of new sustainable practices implemented annually between 2015 and 2020.

Objective: In FY15 use the Climate Leadership in Refuges (CLIR) calculation tool to determine overall greenhouse gas emissions at the refuge, identify the sources of carbon (including emissions from visitor transportation), and post results for public to see.

Metric: Overall greenhouse gas emissions at the refuge have been determined by September 30, 2015.

Metric: Sources of carbon are identified by September 30, 2015.

Metric: Results are posted in a public place by September 30, 2015.

Objective: Within six months of determining overall greenhouse gas emissions and no later than March 2016, every person working on the refuge sets goals for reducing his/her carbon footprint.

Metric: Percentage of Service staff and volunteers with personal goals for reducing their carbon footprint at the refuge by March 31, 2016.

Objective: Within six months of setting personal goals for reducing their carbon footprint at the refuge and no later than September 2016, at least 80% are working toward their goal(s) and there is a minimum of a 1% decrease in carbon emissions generated by staff and volunteers (use the CLIR calculation tool).

Metric: Percentage of Service and volunteers working toward their goals for reducing their carbon footprint at the refuge, September 30, 2016

Metric: Percent decrease in carbon emissions contributed by staff and volunteers, September 30, 2016

EDUCATE OTHERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Community members have an increased awareness of sustainable practices being used at the Service site.
- Community members have an increased knowledge of the relevance and benefits of sustainable practices.
- Community members increase their skill in implementing sustainable practices.
- Community members have an increased knowledge of the positive impact sustainable practices have on wildlife and people.
- Individuals in the community explore ways to use sustainable practices at home.

Intermediate

- Individuals in the community share knowledge of sustainable practices with family, employers and/or other community members.
- Community members use sustainable practices at home and/or at work.
- Community members support sustainable practices in the community.
- Community members support preserving undeveloped natural areas, in urban settings, for their intrinsic value.

Long Term

- The community as a whole supports and promotes sustainable practices city-wide.
- The community incorporates preserving undeveloped natural areas into their Master Plan for present and future decision-making.
- The Service's Urban Wildlife Refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff, volunteers, Friends, and partners annually conduct education/interpretive programs on sustainable practices.
- Outreach materials that communicate the Service's sustainability efforts are relevant and meaningful to community members.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear community members acknowledge the benefits of personally using sustainable practices.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 8.2 Provide educational materials and opportunities at the refuge and in the community for people to observe, participate in, and adopt sustainability actions.

Objective: By September 2016 and annually thereafter, conduct or participate in at least three educational programs where community members gain knowledge and skill in implementing sustainable practices.

Metric: Number of educational programs on sustainable practices conducted during FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20, and FY21.

Metric: Number of educational programs on sustainable practices participated in during FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20, and FY21.

Metric: Percentage of programs that include activities to build skill in implementing sustainable practices.

Metric: Number of community members who receive information about sustainability practices, including tips for managing their greenhouse-gas footprint.

Objective: By March 2017, disseminate outreach materials, developed using the principles of interpretation, to communicate the Service's sustainability efforts and the benefit to wildlife and people.

Metric: Outreach materials describe "sustainability practices" being conducted on the refuge in a meaningful way.

Metric: Descriptions of "sustainability practices" used in outreach materials are relevant to community members.

Metric: Outreach materials include the positive impacts sustainable practices have on wildlife and people.

Metric: Outreach materials are available at the refuge and disseminated to the community by March 31, 2017.

Metric: Are these outreach materials posted on the refuge's website and community electronic "bulletin boards?"

ENGAGE WITH OTHERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Community members have an increased knowledge of connections between health and wellness and sustainability.
- Community members have an increased knowledge of the positive impact sustainable practices have on people.
- Community members have an increased knowledge of the benefits of engaging in activities in the outdoors.

Intermediate

- Individuals in the community share knowledge of the health and wellness benefits of sustainable practices with family and/or other community members.
- Community members state that connecting with the natural world contributes to their mental, physical, spiritual, and social health.
- Community members use sustainable practices at home and/or at work.
- Community members support sustainable practices in the community.
- Community members support preserving undeveloped natural areas in urban settings for their intrinsic value.

Long Term

- The community as a whole supports and promotes sustainable practices city-wide.
- The community incorporates preserving undeveloped natural areas into their Master Plan for present and future decision-making.
- The Service's Urban Wildlife Refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff, volunteers, Friends, and partners annually conduct projects with the local community that support sustainability and contribute to mental, physical, spiritual, and/or social health.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear community members talk about connections between health and wellness and sustainability.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

GOAL 8.3 Engage with community partners using a holistic approach to promote the health and well-being of people and the sustainability of natural resources.

Objective: Beginning no later than October 2016= and continuing for four years thereafter, annually conduct or participate in at least three projects with the local community that support sustainability and contribute to the mental, physical, spiritual, and/or social health of those involved.

Metric: Number of projects, that support sustainability, conducted or participated in annually FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20, and FY21.

Metric: Percentage of annual projects that contribute to the mental, physical, spiritual, and/or social health of those involved.

Objective: At least 70% of the individuals participating in sustainability projects can describe at least one connection between wellness and sustainable practices.

Metric: Percentage of participants that describe a connection between wellness and sustainable practices.

INSPIRE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

OUTCOMES

Short term

- Service staff and volunteers find sustainable practices implemented at the refuge beneficial and meaningful.
- Service staff and volunteers share their personal success stories about adopting sustainable practices.
- Community members have an increased awareness that sustainable practices benefit people.
- Community members have an increased knowledge of sustainable practices being used at the Service site, and why they're meaningful to the staff, volunteers, and Friends.
- Community members have an increased knowledge of sustainable practices being used at home by Service staff, volunteers, and Friends.
- Community members have an increased knowledge of the ways Service staff, volunteers, and Friends have reduced their carbon footprint.
- Individuals in the community explore ways to use sustainable practices at home.

Intermediate

- Individuals in the community share the benefits of sustainable practices with family, employers and/or other community members.
- Community members use sustainable practices at home and/or at work.
- Community members support sustainable practices in the community.
- Community members support preserving undeveloped natural areas in urban settings for their intrinsic value.

Long Term

- The community as a whole supports and promotes sustainable practices city-wide.
- The community incorporates preserving undeveloped natural areas into their Master Plan for present and future decision-making.
- The Service's Urban Wildlife Refuges are integral in demonstrating the relevance of the Service to the American people.

GUIDEPOSTS

You'll know you're making progress with implementation when:

- Service staff, volunteers, and Friends are able to identify on-site sustainability projects that are meaningful to them.
- Service staff, volunteers, and Friends share their stories of adopting sustainable practices with visitors from the local community.

You'll know you're making progress achieving outcomes when:

- You hear community members talk about the benefits of sustainability.
- You hear that community members are adopting sustainable practices at home and at work.

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and METRICS

Goal 8.4 Community members adopt sustainable practices after being inspired by the practices implemented on-site, and adopted by Service staff, interns, volunteers, and Friends.

Objective: By September 2015, all staff, volunteers, and Friends are able to talk about Service sustainability projects that are meaningful to them.

Metric: By September 30, 2015, percentage of staff, volunteers, and Friends able to talk about on-site sustainability projects that are meaningful to them.

Objective: By September 2015, each staff, volunteer, and Friends member communicates to at least one visitor from the local community about sustainability efforts they've personally adopted.

Metric: Percentage of staff, volunteers, and Friends who adopted a new sustainable practice in FY15.

Metric: Percentage of staff, volunteers, and Friends who discuss adopting a new sustainable practice with at least one visitor from the local community by September 30, 2015.

Objective: Within one year of determining overall greenhouse gas emissions and no later than September 2016, Service staff and volunteers share their personal story of reducing their carbon footprint with visitors from the local community.

Metric: Percentage of staff and volunteers that share their story of reducing their carbon footprint with visitors from the community during FY16.