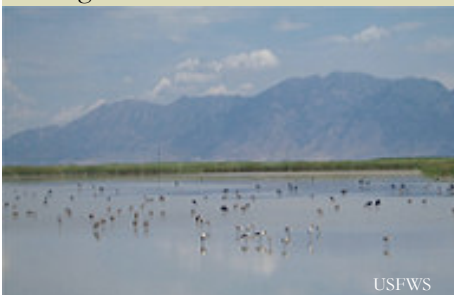


# Restoring Our Refuges: A Plan for Utah



The 15-year Comprehensive Conservation Plan for **Ouray National Wildlife Refuge** calls for improving the wetland habitat for migratory birds along the Green River. The refuge plans to create wider and multiple levee breaches to promote more natural water flows and reduce the amount of silt deposited at tight inlets and outlets. The project will improve the health of the river and the wetlands, and allow access for endangered fish.



At **Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge**, inadequate funding hinders efforts to properly control water levels in 25 impoundments. The budget cuts will also hamper monitoring efforts as well, such as for water contaminants and migratory bird populations.



*American Avocets at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Utah*

## **The National Wildlife Refuge System struggles to meet its wildlife conservation mission**

### **In Utah alone, 20 mission-critical projects sit on the shelf**

Utah is home to spectacular natural resources including 3 National Wildlife Refuges. These refuges are national treasures, providing habitat to millions of migratory birds and other wildlife, including three-quarters of all White-faced Ibis in North America. Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge alone provides 41,000 acres of wetlands for half a million ducks each fall, while hosting 75 percent of all western Tundra Swans.

In **2008**, over **55,000 visitors** enjoy hiking, bird watching, environmental education, hunting and fishing on Utah's refuges.

**Yet, national wildlife refuges in Utah may not be able to continue protecting wildlife and offering world-class recreation.** Utah wildlife refuges are saddled with deferred operations and maintenance projects that total more than \$10.9 million.

**Today, the state's wildlife refuges need at least 21 additional positions.** Those include 10 wildlife biologists, 3 guides and educators, and 6 essential maintenance and enforcement personnel. Without these people, Utah refuges will fall further behind in meeting the demand.

**What's the solution?** CARE recommends \$514 million for the Refuge System's FY 2010 Operations and Maintenance budget and an increase to at least \$765 million by FY 2013.

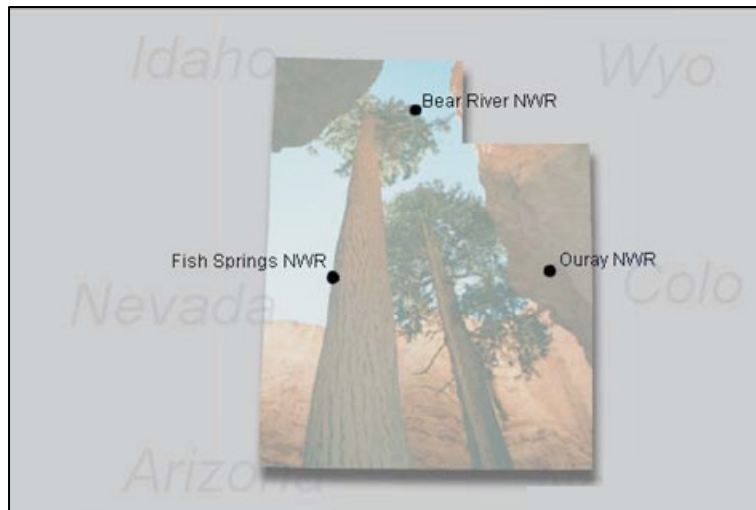
## About C.A.R.E.

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement is a diverse coalition of 22 conservation, recreation, sporting, and scientific organizations with more than 14 million members and supporters across the United States. CARE has been working since 1995 to help the National Wildlife Refuge System fight a serious funding crisis.

*American Birding Association*  
*American Fisheries Society*  
*American Sportfishing Association*  
*Assateague Coastal Trust*  
*Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation*  
*Defenders of Wildlife*  
*Ducks Unlimited*  
*Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*  
*Izaak Walton League of America*  
*National Audubon Society*  
*National Rifle Association of America*  
*National Wildlife Federation*  
*National Wildlife Refuge Association*  
*Safari Club International*  
*The Corps Network*  
*The Nature Conservancy*  
*The Wilderness Society*  
*The Wildlife Society*  
*Trout Unlimited*  
*U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance*  
*Wildlife Forever*  
*Wildlife Management Institute*

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[www.FundRefuges.org/CARE/  
CareHome.html](http://www.FundRefuges.org/CARE/CareHome.html)



## Saddled with declining purchasing power and a \$3.5 billion backlog of deferred operations and maintenance projects, the National Wildlife Refuge System is in a financial vise

The Refuge System needs an annual increase of \$15 million in its operations budget just to keep pace with inflation and demand. The Refuge System welcomed more than 41.2 million visitors in 2008, up from 33 million in 1998.

### National Wildlife Refuges are undeniable economic engines.

According to the *Banking on Nature* report from the FWS:

- Spending by visitors to refuges generated more than \$1.7 billion of sales nationwide, created 27,000 jobs in local communities and added \$543 million in employment income. These economic data do not include Alaska or Pacific island refuges, which together generate millions of annual visitors.
- At **Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge**, for every dollar appropriated to the refuge budget, \$2.31 are generated in expenditures to the local economy. Visitor spending totaled \$1.9 million, generating 31 local jobs, \$625,000 in employment income and \$300,000 in total tax revenue.

Yet, according to Management Systems International, a respected business consultant, the Refuge System has seen its real purchasing power decline by 11 percent between fiscal years 2003 and 2008.

The Government Accountability Office found that with continuing funding constraints and an expanding list of challenges, it may be difficult to maintain the Refuge System as envisioned in law – “where the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge System are maintained; priority visitor services are provided; and the strategic growth of the system is continued.”

**There is a solution to safeguard the world’s finest network of public lands dedicated to wildlife conservation:** \$514 million in FY 2010 for the National Wildlife Refuge System and an increase to at least \$765 million by FY 2013 – steps that will restore operational quality and begin to chip away at the deferred operations and maintenance backlog.