

Celebrating 20 years at Cape May National Wildlife Refuge

The Cape May National Wildlife Refuge is celebrating its 20th Anniversary as well as the Refuge's Two Mile Beach Unit's 10th Anniversary. The celebration will include the dedication of the long-awaited new boardwalk marsh trail.

Festivities will take place at the refuge's Two Mile Beach Unit located at 12001 Pacific Avenue, Wildwood Crest, NJ next to the U.S. Coast Guard: Loran Support Unit.

Friends of the refuge and local county residents are welcome to attend. Please RSVP by phone to Laurel Wilkerson, Deputy Refuge Manager as soon as possible at (609) 463-0994 if you plan to attend.

This ceremony will also be honoring U.S. Representative Frank LoBiondo (NJ-02) for his efforts to expand and staff the refuge. Congressman LoBiondo has consistently supported the refuge and has been dedicated to its success.

In June of 2009, Congressman LoBiondo secured \$2 million for the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and \$1.1 million for the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR for further land acquisition at each respective location. The funding was contained in H.R. 2996, the Fiscal Year 2010 Interior-Environment Appropriations Act. Earlier this year, LoBiondo secured \$1.5 million for Supawna NWR in Salem County as part of the Fiscal Year Omnibus Appropriations bill. LoBiondo has secured \$18.3 million for the expansion and improvement of South Jersey's three refuges since 1998.

Ten years ago, the refuge acquired the 510 acres of beachfront, tidal ponds and maritime forest in Wildwood Crest creating the Two-Mile Beach Unit, which has proven to be critical habitat for the federally listed piping plover (threatened), the state endangered least turn and American black duck. The refuge is currently seeking to acquire an additional 10,320 acres to expand the lands to 21,820 acres in Cape May County.

Since its inception, the Littoral Society has been involved in protecting the integrity and expansion of America's coastal refuges and, in recent years, has aggressively fought off ill-conceived development proposals and partnered with other groups to add more land to the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge.

The Cape May Refuge is globally significant for several reasons, but primarily because of its diverse and unique habitats that provide home to many threatened and endangered species – from horseshoe crabs, to the thousands of shorebirds like the Red Knot, which feast on their eggs in spring.

In 2007, Defenders of Wildlife, a national non-profit environmental group designated the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge among America's ten most endangered National Wildlife Refuges - One of the most endangered yet most important when you factor in the role the Cape May forest plays in providing habitat cover for tens of thousands of migrating song birds. This is reason enough to push for the acquisition of the additional

10,320 acres to prevent fragmentation of this important habitat and promote the connectivity of the Cape May forest.

We encourage the public to join us in celebrating 20 years of protecting some of the most important habitat in world.

For more information, contact Jessica Knox, Friends board member and Conservation Coordinator for the Littoral Society's Delaware Bay program at 856-455-2174 or jessica@littoralsociety.org.