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News Release



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Refuge Flag Raised Over Newly Acquired Skaggs Island Property

Acquisition of Former Naval Base for San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge Celebrated by Leaders of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Navy, Rep. Lynn Woolsey

FREMONT, CA – At a ceremony this morning on Skaggs Island in Sonoma County, Rowan Gould, the Acting Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (the Service) was joined by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roger M. Natsuhara, U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey and others to celebrate the transfer of the former naval base property on the island to the Service for inclusion in the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Attendees cheered as representatives of the Service and the Navy jointly hoisted the flag of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge over the property for the first time.

The transfer of the 3300-acre parcel, which became effective Mar. 31, increases the size of the 13,000-acre San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge by a quarter, adding much-needed haven in the North Bay for birds and other wildlife.

“The property on Skaggs Island is a missing piece of the puzzle for restoration in the North Bay, and we’re excited to see it become part the refuge,” said Don Brubaker, manager of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. “Thanks to great teamwork between the Navy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the support and cooperation of a lot of partners, we were able to make it happen.”

Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), a key advocate for the restoration of Skaggs Island, introduced legislation in 2008 that enabled the property to be transferred from the Navy to the Service. In 2010, the Navy demolished more than 100 structures and completed an extensive environmental cleanup of the site, which served as a naval communications base from 1942 to 1993.

The San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge was created in 1974 to protect migratory birds, wetland habitat and endangered species like the salt marsh harvest mouse and California clapper rail. The refuge and San Pablo Bay support the largest wintering population of canvasbacks on the West Coast.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov

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