

Dear Colleagues,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working to establish new U.S. Requirements for nominations of U.S. Ramsar wetlands of International Importance.

The Ramsar Convention, of which the United States and 169 other nations are party to, promotes the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.

In order to effectively achieve the Convention's mission, the United States seeks to clarify the types of proposals that lead to successful designations.

Our international wetland conservation work depends on cooperation and collaboration with a variety of partners, promoting jobs, recreation, education and conservation. These new requirements do not supplant the International Ramsar Criteria

([https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/ramsarsites\\_criteria\\_eng.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/ramsarsites_criteria_eng.pdf))

Rather, they're meant to augment the on-the-ground benefits Ramsar designations are intended to have for local communities and wetlands. The Service seeks to understand how proposed sites leverage the designations to organize educational/recreation events, enhance habitat connectivity and/or support for species which utilize wetlands in the United States during any part of their life cycle, and promote community engagement and visitorship through outreach and branding. The requirements also include a good faith agreement towards the ongoing reporting of activities and responsible stewardship.

What we're seeking from your organization, as part of a focus group, is whether or not these proposed requirements facilitate defining the scope of Ramsar applications proposed to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. These requirements are designed to clarify and streamline the review of Ramsar proposals, save our conservation partners' time through transparency into required documentation, and affirm the ongoing roles and responsibilities of nominating entities. We welcome your feedback on how these requirements could be improved further.

If you'd like to provide feedback, please email [cade\\_london@fws.gov](mailto:cade_london@fws.gov) with your response by **X date**. We welcome your sharing this email with other conservation partners interested in the Ramsar Convention and in the nomination of U.S. Ramsar sites.

Thank you for your time and consideration. To learn more about the Ramsar Convention, visit our website at

<https://www.fws.gov/international/wildlife-without-borders/ramsar-wetlands-convention.html>

And the official Convention website at [www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** We are collecting this information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501) to seek comments from conservation organizations with an interest in wetland conservation about newly proposed internal policy for the review of U.S. Ramsar sites. Your response is voluntary and we will not share the results publicly. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. OMB has reviewed and approved this survey and assigned OMB Control Number 1090-0011.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** We estimate it will take you 30 minutes to participate in this focus group and provide your response, including time to read instructions and gather information. You may submit comments on any aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, Madonna L. Baucum, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (BPHC-PPM), 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: BPHC Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.