

The Mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Air Quality Program is to protect and enhance air quality in support of ecosystem management in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Our Vision is a Refuge System free of impacts from human-caused air pollution and is consistent with the Refuge System Improvement Act, which requires that: *"...the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the [Refuge] System are maintained..."*

More than 550 units make up America's National Wildlife Refuge System, which is dedicated to the protection and preservation of wildlife. Our refuges are committed to conserving natural wildlife habitats, caring for endangered species, and helping Americans enjoy the outdoors. Proper management of air resources is vital to protecting and maintaining Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) resources. Pursuant to the Clean Air Act, as amended in 1977, the Service has an affirmative responsibility to protect air quality related values on national wildlife refuges, with special emphasis on Class I Wilderness Areas (areas in excess of 5,000 acres formally designated as Wilderness prior to August, 1977). Congress gave the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), a Federal Land Manager (FLM) of Wilderness Areas, the responsibility to protect the air quality and natural resources, including visibility, of the area from man made air pollution. Polluted air injures wildlife and vegetation, causes acidification of water, degrades habitats, accelerates weathering of buildings and other facilities, and impairs visibility.