

Policy on Commemorative Memorials on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska

Background and Need

Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) are an integral part of the history and culture of the State and a wide variety of events and persons are worthy of commemoration. Over the years unofficial memorials to individuals and events have appeared on refuge lands. A smaller number of officially recognized memorials have also been installed. After the designation of World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, within the Alaska Maritime NWR, and in response to increasing requests for the placement of memorials on refuges, development of a regional policy was deemed necessary.

This policy is based on existing national policy for commemorative memorials installed on public lands across the U.S. Sources include the Commemorative Works Act of 1986, National Park Service regulations (36 CFR 2.62 Memorialization; 36 CFR 12.9 Commemorative Works in National Cemeteries), National Park Service policy (9.6 Commemorative Works and Plaques), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Historic Preservation Plan for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.

Principles

This policy describes the parameters for appropriate memorials on refuges. To be permanently commemorated in a National Wildlife Refuge is a high honor, affording a degree of recognition that implies national importance. At the same time, excessive or inappropriate use of commemorative memorials diminishes its value as a tool for recognizing people or events that are truly noteworthy. Excessive or inappropriate use of commemorative memorials can also divert attention from the important resources and values that National Wildlife Refuge visitors need to learn about. Therefore, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will prohibit the use and proliferation of commemorative memorials except when specific standards are met. As a foundational principle, memorials on refuges must respect and maintain the purposes and values for which refuges were established.

Definition

The term "commemorative memorial" means any statue, monument, sculpture, memorial, plaque, or other structure or landscape feature, including a garden or memorial grove, designed to perpetuate in a *permanent* manner the memory of a person, group, event, or other significant element of history.

Process

Commemorative memorials must be authorized by Congress, or approved by the Regional Director (RD).

A commemorative memorial approved by the RD may be approved only under the conditions that there be no expense or liability incurred by the Service for its purchase or fabrication. The Service will not be obligated to maintain, repair, or replace commemorative memorials approved for display on a NWR.

The process begins with consultation between the applicant and the Refuge Manager. An application for authorization to erect a commemorative memorial shall be in the form of a proposal that includes the following information:

- 1) A brief narrative justification explaining the importance of the person, group, or event to be commemorated and its relationship to the refuge;
- 2) A list of the persons or events to be memorialized;
- 3) Any other information to be inscribed on the commemorative memorial; and
- 4) A scale plan depicting the details of the design, materials, finish, carving, lettering and the arrangement of the inscription proposed for the commemorative memorial.

The Refuge Manager must determine that the commemorative memorial is compatible with the refuge purposes. The information to be displayed, and design of the memorial, must be reviewed and approved by the Refuge Manager. The consultation process required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act must be completed before the RD will approve a commemorative work. The approved design and Refuge Manager's recommendation will be forwarded to the RD for approval.

The installation of a commemorative memorial in a refuge without the authorization of the RD is prohibited. The RD may order the removal or modification of commemorative memorials installed without proper authorization.

Criteria

Commemorative memorials will be allowed when:

- Congress has specifically authorized their placement; or
- There is compelling justification for the recognition, and the commemorative memorial is the best way to express the association between the refuge and the person, group, event, or other subject being commemorated.

Commemorative memorials must:

- Be fully compliant with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969;
- Be directly associated with an important historical event or period on the refuge; Substantially increase visitors' appreciation of the significance of refuge resources or values;
- Be designed and sited to avoid disturbance of natural and cultural resources and values;
- Present historically accurate information;
- Be located in surroundings relevant to its subject;
- Be constructed of materials suitable to and compatible with the local environment;
- Meet FWS design and maintenance standards;

- Be appropriate in scale and materials, and proportional for the setting;
- Clearly identify reconstructions or replicas as reconstructions;

Commemorative memorials *may not*:

- Be placed in designated Wilderness areas;
- Encroach on any other preexisting work or be aesthetically intrusive;
- Interfere significantly with open space and existing public use;
- Unnecessarily duplicate or supersede other markers;
- Be attached physically to historic properties;
- Block the view of landscapes or features;
- Include the name of the person(s) responsible for its purchase or installation;

Preexisting Commemorative Memorials

Some refuges contain commemorative memorials placed prior to implementation of this policy. Memorials emplaced prior to the passage of Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980 are considered historic features. Unpermitted memorials emplaced since the passage of ANILCA will be evaluated for their historic value. Memorials with historic value will not be altered, relocated, obscured, or removed, even when they are deemed inaccurate or incompatible with prevailing present-day values. Any exceptions from this policy require specific approval by the RD.

Donated Commemorative Memorials

There may be occasions when a commemorative memorial will be offered or provided by a private donor. Acceptance of a donated commemorative memorial by the RD is conditioned upon compliance with the specifications of this policy. Donations of commemorative memorials should include sufficient funds to provide for their installation and maintenance. The Service will not be obligated to maintain, repair or replace commemorative memorials donated to a National Wildlife Refuge.

Temporary Commemorative Memorial

This policy refers primarily to memorials intended for *permanent* installation. Temporary memorials must receive the same review from the Refuge Manager who may refer the applicant to the RD for approval as outlined above. Temporary memorials must be removed at the end of their intended use, or be made of natural, biodegradable materials.

Ownership of Commemorative Memorials on FWS lands

Title to a commemorative memorial lies with the Service upon installation.



Approved

MAY 08 2012

Date