

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Commemorating the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WELCH (for himself and Mr. SANDERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge.

Whereas the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (referred to in this preamble as the “Refuge”) was established in 1943 under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715 et seq.) for the protection and management of migratory birds;

Whereas the Refuge is located on land sacred to the tribes of the Western Abenaki;

Whereas the Refuge encompasses 6,729 acres of protected land in Franklin County, Vermont;

Whereas more than half of this acreage is protected as an inviolate sanctuary, preserving pristine habitats for wildlife and native plant species to thrive;

Whereas the Refuge is part of the Atlantic Flyway system of National Wildlife Refuges connecting the northern breeding grounds and southern wintering areas of migratory birds;

Whereas the Refuge was designated as a RAMSAR Wetland of International Importance in 2013, 1 of just 41 national wildlife refuges in the United States so designated;

Whereas the Refuge is recognized as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society;

Whereas habitats found in the Refuge include floodplain forests, wetlands, shrublands, bogs, grasslands, and upland areas;

Whereas the natural environment of the Refuge is essential to the ecosystems of Lake Champlain, supporting wildlife and preserving clean water resources;

Whereas these ecosystems mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon and strengthening the resilience of neighboring communities;

Whereas the 900-acre Maquam bog located in the Refuge is designated as a Research Natural Area and is the only pitch pine woodland bog in New England;

Whereas the Refuge is home to vital feeding, resting, and breeding habitats for birds, which have supported more than 200 bird species;

Whereas the Refuge is home to the largest concentration of waterfowl in the Champlain Valley and hosts more than 20,000 ducks during their fall migration, including wood ducks, mallards, green-winged teal, and ring-neck ducks;

Whereas the grassland habitats of the Refuge are home to bobolink, meadowlark, and savannah sparrows;

Whereas the wetland habitats of the Refuge are populated by reptiles, fish, and amphibians;

Whereas pollinators thrive in the shrublands and grasslands of the Refuge, including 13 species of bumblebees;

Whereas other species that call the Refuge home include raccoons, black bears, coyotes, skunks, beavers, red foxes, river otters, bobcats, porcupines, muskrats, and minks;

Whereas many of these animals are protected by the State of Vermont as threatened or endangered, such as the black tern and eastern sand darter;

Whereas more than 80,000 visitors travel to the Refuge annually to partake in hiking, birding, fishing, boating, and hunting;

Whereas visitors to the Refuge travel from all 50 states and multiple foreign countries to appreciate the beauty and biodiversity of the Refuge;

Whereas the Refuge provides a valuable educational and interpretive resource for visitors and neighboring communities;

Whereas the experience in nature while visiting the Refuge fosters a spiritual connection between people and the land they inhabit;

Whereas the Refuge and the natural environment of Vermont support a vibrant outdoor recreation industry that has contributed billions of dollars to the State's economy;

Whereas archaeologists have documented a cultural heritage in the Refuge dating back more than 5,000 years; and

Whereas the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Abenaki community work in partnership to protect and

maintain these cultural sites, preserving them for generations to come: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) commemorates the 80th anniversary of the
3 establishment of the Missisquoi National Wildlife
4 Refuge;

5 (2) recognizes the importance of this protected
6 land to biodiversity and fragile ecosystems in
7 Vermont and the world; and

8 (3) resolves to support the National Wildlife
9 Refuge System, including the Missisquoi National
10 Wildlife Refuge, by providing the necessary financial
11 and staffing resources to carry out its mission of
12 conserving wildlife, protecting habitats, and pro-
13 viding access to outdoor recreational opportunities.