



## Welcome Hackmatack!

**McHenry County IL/Walworth County WI (July 15, 2012)**— Today Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar celebrated the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) authorization of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge with refuge supporters. Friends of Hackmatack are delighted, having advocated for this new refuge on the Illinois-Wisconsin border for the past eight years. The Friends thank the thousands of Illinois and Wisconsin citizens, the many organizations and our elected leaders who partnered with us to request that the USFWS study a refuge for our area. We were thrilled this past March, when after two years of study, the Fish & Wildlife Service recommended that a refuge be established and are overjoyed today to learn that the beautiful bi-state glacial landscape we so love will join the ranks of America's existing 556 national wildlife refuges. We look forward to working with the USFWS, conservation organizations, landowners and communities on both sides of the border as the refuge grows into a Midwest destination.

*Responding to the announcement, Friends of Hackmatack steering committee members said:*

"A small group of people cared passionately enough about the natural spaces near where they live to pursue a dream of giving the area national recognition," said **Lenore Beyer-Clow, Woodstock, Illinois resident and Policy Director at Openlands**. "Today, we are thrilled with the result: The authorization of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge."

"I believe the Wisconsin-Illinois Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge honors and protects for wildlife, for our own well-being, and for future generations all the rare and unique habitats, bio-systems, existing within the refuge boundaries," said **Audrey Denecke, Twin Lakes, Wisconsin resident**. "I chose to volunteer as a Steering Committee member in this effort to give back for the joys of a lifetime living close to nature first in northern Illinois and now in SE Wisconsin. My ancestors farmed in central Wisconsin. My father and mother found a lot for the home they built in Lake County because my father's family would come to fish and picnic in northern Illinois. I grew up playing in the prairies, climbing the trees, swimming in the clear lakes, and eating fresh foods from area gardens. Today many of my family still live in the area. And I enjoy sharing our bounty with my youngest nieces and nephews. The gift of the

Hackmatack National Refuge is that many other children and families in the bi-state area and beyond will also be able to share this refuge space for decades to come."

"Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge will be a joy and inspiration for many generations to come," said **Margaret Lass-Gardiner, Walworth County, Wisconsin resident and Friends of Hackmatack co-chair**. I am honored to have had a small part in its development."

"My family has resided in McHenry County for many generations. Having witnessed first-hand the changes in this county, I felt compelled to do my best to preserve, protect, and defend the land of McHenry County, the land of my ancestors. I have so many memories of this place, and I want the same for my children and their children. I want them to be able to hunt, fish, and enjoy the beauty of nature," said **Sherry Pickrum, Richmond, Illinois resident and Friends of Hackmatack co-chair**. "I am thrilled that Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge is on the path to becoming a reality."

"It is inspiring to see the hard work of a group of local people come to fruition in the form of a new national wildlife refuge which will save this special landscape for future generations to enjoy" said **Penny Roehrer, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin resident, former alderman, board member of Friends of Big foot Beach State Park**. "Preserving more open space and connecting existing preserved land will enhance our beautiful landscape and will bring more attention to the destination that it already is -- Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge."

"Friends of Hackmatack presented the case that the glacial landscape along the Illinois-Wisconsin border is a very special place," said **Cindy Skrukud, Solon Mills, Illinois resident and Clean Water Advocate for the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club**. "Now the scenic beauty and wildlife habitat of our oak savannas, rare tallgrass prairie and the high quality Nippersink Creek have been recognized on the countrywide stage."

**Contact:**

Lenore Beyer-Clow, 815-245-0316 email: [lbeyer-clow@openlands.org](mailto:lbeyer-clow@openlands.org)

Audrey Denecke 262-215-4149 email: [abdenecke@aim.com](mailto:abdenecke@aim.com)

Margaret Lass-Gardiner, 262-348-0211 email: [sixdogs6@gmail.com](mailto:sixdogs6@gmail.com)

Sherry Pickrum, 815-236-4591 email: [spick@aol.com](mailto:spick@aol.com)

Penny Roehrer, 262-258-4840 email: [proehrer@wi.rr.com](mailto:proehrer@wi.rr.com)

Cindy Skrukud, 815-353-5123 email: [cindy.skrukud@sierraclub.org](mailto:cindy.skrukud@sierraclub.org)