



**Barrington Area Council of Governments**  
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Barrington, Illinois 60010  
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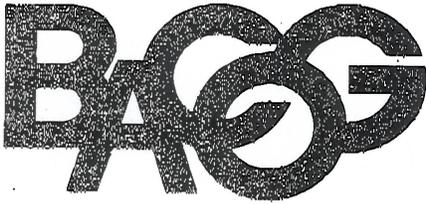
Date: December 6, 2010 # of pages (including cover sheet): 4  
To: BACOG Village Presidents/Township Supervisors  
From: Julie Losinski - BACOG  
Re: Letter of Support – Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge in the northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin area

**Message:**

For your files.

As passed at the November BACOG Board meeting, please see attached letter of support for Hackmatack.

bcc: Board of Trustees "ref. USFWS Hackmatack"



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[www.bacog.org](http://www.bacog.org)

November 30, 2010

Mr. Gary Muehlenhardt  
Project Planning Manager for Hackmatack  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Division of Conservation Planning  
Attn: Proposed Hackmatack NWR  
BHW Federal Building, Room 530  
1 Federal Drive  
Ft. Snelling, MN 55111

Dear Mr. Muehlenhardt,

The Barrington Area Council of Governments (BACOG) is a regional planning organization covering a 90-square-mile area and representing seven municipalities and two townships. Located in the northwest Chicago metropolitan area, the BACOG area covers portions of Cook, Lake, McHenry and Kane Counties. BACOG's members are the Villages of Barrington, Barrington Hills, Deer Park, Lake Barrington, North Barrington, South Barrington and Tower Lakes, and Barrington and Cuba Townships. Our mission is to foster cooperation and strategies to address regional challenges and support the regional comprehensive plan.

As such, our organization strongly supports the proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge in the northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin area. We believe that a national wildlife refuge will further our organization's goals, as well as those of the Fish & Wildlife Service, to improve the protection of wildlife resources in our region and raise awareness of their value among the general population.

One of the highest priorities of BACOG is protecting land and natural resources. BACOG's members have institutionalized the preservation and protection of open space through the BACOG regional comprehensive plan and the municipal and township comprehensive plans for over 40 years. The greater Barrington area provides an important role, having preserved thousands and thousands of acres in forest preserves in Lake and Cook Counties and private open space, in protecting native eco-systems and providing long-term, sustained habitat for

important species. This year, the Spring Creek Forest Preserve in Barrington Hills and unincorporated Barrington Township, an area of approximately 4000 acres, was designated by the National Audubon Society as an "Important Bird Area" for globally rare prairie birds and rare, threatened, and endangered grassland bird species. Species that were long-gone have now returned and are nesting in this region, such as Henslow's sparrows, bobolinks, meadowlarks, grasshopper sparrows, and dickcissels. We believe the BACOG area is integral to the robust functioning of the Hackmatack refuge through the connections and linkages for wildlife that will be established.

The BACOG area is also home to protected oak savannas, wetlands, bogs, fens and restored waterways; these are important to our governments and residents as habitat for rare and threatened species which provide diversity in the natural community. The prairie white fringed orchid has also been identified in the BACOG area, and remnant populations exist in the study area and should be considered for inclusion in the refuge. A special effort to provide additional suitable wetland habitat for the endangered whooping cranes, which have stopped over at existing wetland sites in the study area, is warranted. We also note the importance of Nippersink Creek as a critical linkage between existing conservation lands.

Our members and residents engage in outdoor recreation activities which would be enhanced by the presence of a refuge and a robust trail system. It is important to provide connections, in the form of greenways and land and water trails, between the refuge and the many forest preserves, open spaces and other protected areas in the region. We believe the Hackmatack plan should include linkages to these areas that are outside the refuge.

We encourage you to give your refuge plan a strong educational component, including a standout visitor's center that will engage the local communities and schools. Our organization officially supports No Child Left Inside, which provides education and opportunities for children and families to connect with nature. BACOG has started a public education program about surface waters and groundwater and their interconnections and effect on natural areas. This type of information should also be a priority for an educational component at the Hackmatack refuge.

The bi-state area has a legacy of public and private organizations with a historic commitment to conservation, with BACOG and our member governments being just one example. We urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to work in partnership with these entities through intergovernmental agreements, leveraging significant land acquisition projects, creating linkages for potential recreational trails and wildlife corridors, and forming joint management agreements when appropriate.

We also would ask that portions of the BACOG area be considered for inclusion in the Hackmatack refuge designation, even if separated from the main refuge area. The reasons for this request include the Important Bird Area designation, the presence of rare and endangered species, the huge areas of open space still available to be preserved, and the possibility of linkages and pathways connecting the two areas.

BACOG is a strong supporter of the proposal to establish a national wildlife refuge in the region. We look forward to working with USFWS as the process moves forward.

Sincerely yours,



Janet L. Agnoletti  
Executive Director

cc: Rowan Gould, Acting Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Marc Miller, Director, Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Ken Salazar, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bruce J. Sauer, BACOG Chairman and  
Village President – Village of North Barrington  
Karen Y. Darch, President – Village of Barrington  
Robert G. Abboud, President – Village of Barrington Hills  
Eugene Dawson, Supervisor – Barrington Township  
David Nelson, Supervisor – Cuba Township  
Bob Kellermann, President – Village of Deer Park  
Kevin C. Richardson, President – Village of Lake Barrington  
Frank J. Munao, Jr., President – Village of South Barrington  
Kathleen O. Leitner, Village President – Village of Tower Lakes