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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Arctic Bird Kite-flying to Showcase Widespread Support for Arctic Refuge**  
*Arctic Refuge supporters to fly kites and testify on behalf of nation's wilderness icon*

ANCHORAGE – Concerned citizens will show their support for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on Tuesday by telling the Obama administration to protect our nation's wilderness icon – and by flying a kite.

Supporters will be undertaking the serious business of testifying at a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) hearing on the Arctic Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), and will also gather to celebrate the vital role that the Arctic Refuge, and its Coastal Plain in particular, plays in our nation's natural heritage by flying Arctic bird kites that migrated to Alaska from the nation's capital. These kites will in turn demonstrate the widespread, nationwide support for the Refuge by featuring the names of thousands of Americans who have pledged to join the fight to gain long-term protection for one of our nation's last great wild places on its 50th anniversary year.

Tuesday's hearing on the Arctic Refuge's CCP is a key chance for public input on the development of an updated management plan for the Refuge – a process conducted every 15 years for every national wildlife refuge in the country. The Arctic Refuge is long overdue for an updated plan; its last plan was released in 1988. This year, as part of the planning process, FWS could conduct a wilderness review for the 10 million acres that are not currently designated as wilderness, including the 1.5 million-acre Coastal Plain, also known as the Refuge's biological heart. A wilderness recommendation from FWS for the Refuge's Coastal Plain is a step toward long-term protection for this critical haven for hundreds of species of birds, polar bears, muskoxen, caribou and the land that the people of the Gwich'in Nation call the "sacred place where life begins."

The Arctic bird kites represent birds that begin their lives on the Arctic Refuge's Coastal Plain and fly through all 50 states and six continents. Similar kite-flying events will be taking place throughout the year across the country. This national migration aims to highlight the natural connection between the Arctic Refuge and the rest of the world, while raising awareness about one of our nation's last wild places.

WHAT: Arctic Flight kite-flying event, Arctic Refuge CCP hearing

WHO: Alaska Wilderness League activists

WHEN: 6-7 p.m. May 11 (kite flying); 4-6 p.m. & 7-9 p.m. May 11 (CCP hearing)



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WHERE: Kite flying will take place at the Cuddy Family Midtown Park, 201 E. 40th Avenue in Anchorage; CCP hearing will be held at U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Office, Gordon Watson Conference Room, 1011 E. Tudor Road in Anchorage

VISUALS: Children and adults flying Arctic bird kites, Arctic animal mascots

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