

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the Walk a Mile in My Boots Program?**

Walk a Mile in My Boots is a work-exchange program between cattle ranchers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The exchange will provide an opportunity to learn more about each other's lifestyles.

- **Who can participate in the Walk a Mile in My Boots Program?**

Any rancher or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee may participate (FWS employees will need supervisor approval).

- **Is this a National program?**

Yes, exchanges will be taking place throughout the entire United States. Ideally, the exchange will be arranged between ranchers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees in the same general vicinity so that the exchange will be local and relevant to participants' interests.

- **How do I sign up?**

Contact the Walk a Mile in My Boots Coordinators:

Dawn Lagrotteria – dawn_lagrotteria@fws.gov
304-876-7479

Sally Valdes – sally_valdes@fws.gov
703-358-2201

Stacey Katseanes – skatseanes@beef.org
202-879-9114

- **How long are the exchanges?**

This is flexible, depending on the availability of the rancher and FWS employee. The average exchange will be 2-10 days. A minimum of 2 days is recommended in order to get a quality experience.

- **What if I want to go on an exchange or host someone but don't want to do a reciprocal exchange? Is this OK?**

Sure. The program is flexible. Reciprocal exchanges are encouraged, but it is not mandatory. When you fill out your application form, you can provide information on the type of exchange you would like to do.

- **I would like to host a Fish and Wildlife Service person on my ranch but am afraid that if I do they will be looking for endangered species violations. Is there any protection for the land owner against something like this?**

There isn't a way we can exempt a rancher from the Endangered Species Act while participating in the Walk a Mile in My Boots Program. However, when a Fish and Wildlife Service person comes to your ranch, they are there to learn, ask questions, and participate in the ranch activities. Their purpose in being there is to learn about ranching, not look for violations.

- **If I apply for the Walk a Mile in My Boots Program, how long will it take until I am actually able to go on my exchange?**

This depends a lot on where you live and how many host ranches / FWS offices are in your area. It might be 6 – 8 months after you apply before you actually go on your exchange. Apply early and be prepared to wait for an appropriate time or season to ensure your exchange is successful and rewarding.

- **What types of things can I do on my exchange?**

Cattle ranchers can visit an FWS field office, refuge, regional office or travel to the FWS headquarters in Washington, D.C. They can have the opportunity to shadow biologists, managers, educators, conduct outdoor field activities, attend government meetings and work with other officials. Outdoor activities might include participating in a migratory bird study, doing water control monitoring, sampling fish, or assisting with a telemetry study of an endangered species.

FWS employees can visit a cattle ranch and shadow ranchers in their daily ranch operations. This might include a variety of activities, such as branding and vaccinating calves; moving and feeding cattle; irrigating pastures; mending or building fences; or haying.