

September 1997

Fish & Wildlife News: September 1997

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife News

September 1997

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Jamie Clark Confirmed as Service's New Director



USFWS photo

The U.S. Senate confirmed Jamie Rappaport Clark as the new director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on July 31, several weeks after President Clinton nominated her to the post. She was sworn in shortly thereafter.

Senators on the Environment and Public Works Committee gave Clark warm bipartisan support during her nomination hearing on July 16.

"Ms. Clark is an outstanding candidate for the tasks at hand," Committee Chairman John Chafee of Rhode Island said in his introductory remarks in what turned out to be a short and harmonious hearing. "Throughout her educational and professional experiences, she has been involved on a daily basis with the principles of fish and wildlife management."

"Jamie has distinguished herself as someone who can find innovative solutions to difficult problems," said Sen. Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho.

"Jamie Clark is one of those rare people who get high marks from everyone who works for her," added Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon.

Senators also heaped praise on the professionalism of the Service's 7,000 employees and cited numerous examples of the Service's efforts to work in partnership with citizens of their states to deal with difficult conservation issues. "I think they are an outstanding group and we are lucky to have them," Chafee said.

The directorship is the only position in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that requires confirmation by the U.S. Senate. The Environment and Public Works Committee voted to recommend Clark's confirmation to the full Senate. Eight days later, the Senate unanimously voted to confirm the nomination.

Clark, a career wildlife biologist who joined the Service in 1989, had served as Assistant Director for Ecological Services since 1994.

"Jamie Clark is an experienced career professional who has been involved on a daily basis with many of the major wildlife issues facing the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service," Secretary Babbitt said. "She knows the Service well and will bring to the job energy, commitment, and an understanding of the Service and its major constituents."

Clark also has served as chief of the Endangered Species Division, Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Region 2, and a senior staff biologist.

Before that, she served as Fish & Wildlife Administrator for the Department of the Army and Natural/Cultural Resources Coordinator for the National Guard Bureau. She also worked as a research biologist for the Army Medical Research Institute and a wildlife biologist for the National Institute for Urban Wildlife.

Clark received a Bachelor of Sciences in Wildlife Biology from Towson State University and a Master of Sciences in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Maryland. Her husband, Jim Clark, also is a career Service employee, and now serves as chief of the Branch of Wildlife Training at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Hugh Vickery, Public Affairs, Washington

Cover Photo

Colleen Buchanan of Sevilleta NWR in New Mexico holds a Mexican gray wolf, one of 5 pups born in May at the refuge's captive wolf management facility. Refuge staff captured the pups, gave them a health exam and a series of four inoculations, and equipped them with transponder chips, allowing biologists to track the wolves' movements. The pups, who weighed about 12 pounds each, will receive more booster shots at 12, 16 and 20 weeks of age. Two litters of pups were born—3 males and 2 females. They are likely to be among the first Mexican wolves released into the wild early next year as part of the Service's Mexican wolf recovery program. Photo by Ryan Hagerty.

Excerpts from Jamie Clark's Confirmation Hearing Testimony

The following are some excerpts from Jamie Clark's testimony at her confirmation hearing before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on July 16:

"Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. It is a great honor to be nominated by President Clinton as Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Nation's premier Federal fish and wildlife conservation agency, and to have that nomination considered by this committee. It is also a privilege, as a career civil servant, to be considered for this position from within the ranks of the agency.

"I care deeply about the work we do at the Fish & Wildlife Service and I am committed to our mission to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats. I am proud of the job we do. Our 7,000 employees are dedicated, motivated, and professional. They represent the best tradition of public service. Together, we continue to work to protect that delicate balance of living in association with our natural environment.

"During my eight years with the Fish & Wildlife Service, I have been part of an agency undergoing significant change. Though the Service remains committed to its statutory obligations and mandates like the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act, I believe, as others do, that we need to continue to look for new and innovative ways to achieve species and habitat conservation. Most importantly, we have greatly expanded our work with partners outside the Service—whether they are State wildlife agencies, local governments, sportsmen's organizations, conservation groups, corporations, or individual private citizens.

"In the course of this transformation, the Service is learning to assume many different roles, depending on the situation. Our State, Federal, Tribal, and private partners have great capabilities to provide leadership and assistance in the management and recovery of natural resources. We recognize this and we are refining our ability to be a team player— knowing when to lead, when to follow, or when to assist to accomplish common goals. And I expect this process to continue.

"The Fish & Wildlife Service is widely recognized as the national and international leader in wildlife conservation, and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that hard-earned reputation is maintained and enhanced."

"The Fish & Wildlife Service is widely recognized as the national and international leader in wildlife conservation, and, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that hard-earned reputation is maintained and enhanced. Again, to do this, an ever-growing emphasis on partnerships and looking at the big picture is essential. With more than 1,100 species on the list of endangered and threatened species, I know too well the feeling of frustration and failure associated with each new addition to the list. There is no way the Service or any other public agency can single-handedly conserve our Nation's fish and wildlife resources. We must work hard to leverage our own resources and expertise with those of others to effect change on the ground.

"The Service also must continue our concerted efforts to reach out to the public and to important constituencies with a stake in our fish and wildlife resources. I have participated in numerous partnership efforts and firmly believe that involving stakeholders and other agency expertise early on reaps long-term benefits for fish and wildlife resources and the economy. As the Service gains experience in this way of doing business, I believe we will realize the expanded skills that we all must master to learn to listen more actively, to work as a team player, to be open-minded, and to be prepared to take whatever approach is most effective in accomplishing the task.

"I am convinced that as people better understand the connection between ecosystem health and quality of life, our success at managing for ecosystems and ensuring economic viability will continue to increase. The Service needs to communicate to others the fundamental message that the fate of wildlife and humans alike is linked to the well-being of the environment around us . . .

"Increasing the diversity of our workforce is an important element in improving our efforts to develop unique and innovative approaches and strategies for wildlife conservation. A skilled workforce, diverse in cultures, experiences, and ideas is equipped to build upon traditional and successful approaches by identifying new and fresh ideas for addressing conservation issues. The richness of this experience is an asset, and its absence is an enormous liability. I believe I can help the Service continue to work towards its goal of a diverse and skilled workforce.

"Americans are passionate about wildlife, and that passion fuels the Service. This is an exciting time to be at the helm of this agency....I look forward with great enthusiasm and excitement to the challenge of leading an agency dedicated to conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of the American people."

Proposal Would Divide Region 1; Establish New Regional Office in Sacramento

Then-Acting Director John Rogers announced a proposal in June to divide Region 1, creating the Service's first new region in more than 25 years. The new Region 8, which would encompass California and Nevada, would be headquartered in Sacramento.

The split is needed because of the explosive growth of fish and wildlife issues throughout Region 1. In particular, it will allow better focus on the growing number of California and Nevada issues in Region 8 and Columbia River and Northwest forest issues in Region 1.

"Managing the Service's California and Nevada activities out of Sacramento recognizes the importance of wildlife issues in these two states and would allow us to be even more responsive to local needs," Rogers said, noting that California's economy is surpassed by only six nations of the world.

"At the same time," he said. "Pacific Northwest forest management issues continue to make headlines and the ecological health of the Pacific islands are increasingly in jeopardy. The split will concentrate our efforts on these issues more effectively."



Before the Service can go ahead with the proposal, however, Congress must express support for the plan by approving a reprogramming request which was submitted on August 18, Rogers said.

Region 1 Regional Director Michael J. Spear would head the new region. Region 1 Deputy Regional Director Tom Dwyer would act as regional director in Portland until a new director could be named. The Portland office would continue to supervise the Service's programs in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Hawaii and the commonwealths and territories of the Pacific basin.

Although an undetermined number of Service employees from Portland will eventually transfer to the new regional headquarters in Sacramento, the overall number of Service employees within the region would remain approximately the same under this plan.

The creation of a new administrative region would be the first such split since 1971 when an independent Rocky Mountain region was created in Denver. The proposal comes in response to a request by Secretary Babbitt that the Service consider alternatives to the present regional system to better deal with the growth and complexity of natural resource issues in the West.

Pest control

The Service, working in partnership with Cornell University, this summer unleashed the latest weapon in the battle against purple loosestrife at Montezuma NWR in New York state—European beetles with an appetite for the nuisance plant. Cornell researcher Dr. Bernd Blossey conducted extensive tests on the beetles and discovered they ate only purple loosestrife, which is also native to Europe. In fact, they would starve themselves rather than eat anything else. "Montezuma has become the epicenter of loosestrife infestation in the Northeast," said Bob Lamoy, acting refuge manager. "It's taken over hundreds of acres of the refuge. We've tried mechanical means of controlling it, but those haven't worked very well." Photo by Bernd Blossey, Cornell University.

Pacific Regional Director Mike Spear Receives Merit Award



USFWS photo

President Clinton has recognized Pacific Regional Director Michael J. Spear with a "Presidential Rank Award" for meritorious accomplishments in the federal government's Senior Executive Service.

Spear received the award in June, chiefly for his management of California water allocation issues in 1996, Northwest salmon restoration activities and the President's Forest Plan in the Pacific Northwest. The award carries a citation from President Clinton and a monetary stipend.

The award program is designed to recognize outstanding accomplishments among the federal government's top cadre of professional managers, particularly those that advance the administration's goals and policies; exhibit innovation in management; improve quality of work, government efficiency, or customer service; or achieve significant cost reductions.

Spear was cited in the nomination for achieving a 9 percent reduction in Region 1's \$107 million budget and a 10 percent reduction in funding for the Portland regional office, eliminating over 60 positions in order to meet targets set by the administration's National Performance Review, while consolidating the region's budget and finance operations. He was also singled out for his accomplishments in maintaining a diverse work force and for maintaining the lowest ratio of equal employment opportunity complaints of any region in the Fish and Wildlife Service.

David Klinger, Public Affairs, Portland, Oregon

On the Horizon

Key upcoming issues affecting the Service and its mission

■ The House passed the Interior Department FY 1998 appropriations bill in July with \$591 million earmarked for Resource Management, more than a 12 percent increase over the \$526 million FY 1997 level. Much of the additional funding is for Refuges Operation and Maintenance. The House agreed to \$220 million for Refuges Operation and Maintenance compared with \$178 million last year. As Fish & Wildlife News went to press, the Senate had not completed work on its Interior appropriations bill.

■ As the U.S. Senate adjourned for its August recess, it appeared poised to pass H.R. 1420, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act that had earlier passed in the House by a 407-1 margin. Senate consideration and a Presidential signature are likely by late September or early October. Just in time for Refuge Week!

■ Negotiations with Senate Committee staff and members intensified during July but did not result in introduction of a bipartisan ESA reauthorization bill, as was hoped. Efforts will continue, however, when Congress reconvenes in September.

■ September will also find Congress considering extension of the Federal Highways or "ISTEA" legislation. Possible components of this debate might include reauthorization of the Wallop-Breaux/Sport Fish Restoration Program and use of highway trust funds for refuge road maintenance.

■ Secretary Babbitt toured Alaska in July. One of the issues he looked into was possible oil development in the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve in Northeast Alaska. The Department currently is researching the impact drilling would have on wildlife. The reserve, which is managed by the Minerals Management Service, could hold up to 1 billion barrels of oil.

Babbitt, Commerce Secretary Daley Sign Historic Order on Native Americans



Let's shake on it
Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Ronnie Lupe, chairman of the White Mountain Apache Tribe in Arizona, shake hands as Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley looks on. Photo by Tami Heilemann

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Commerce Secretary William Daley signed a joint secretarial order June 5 designed to clarify the responsibilities of both departments when actions taken under the Endangered Species Act involve Native American land, trust resources or rights.

Babbitt and Daley added their signatures to the secretarial order in ceremonies held in the Indian Treaty Room in the Executive Office Building before an audience of more than 40 Native American and government agency representatives.

Both men lauded the directive, noting among other things that it will give tribes a "seat at the table" in the planning and consultation process and "will enhance Native American involvement in endangered species recovery."

The joint order was developed with tribal and federal representatives over six months. Representatives of various tribal entities selected by the Native American community joined those of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and other federal agencies in negotiations to develop the order.

The secretarial order does not change the legal mandates of the Endangered Species Act, but it does formalize both agencies' responsibilities to Native American people, an effort, Babbitt noted, that began under the late Service Director, Mollie Beattie.

"The cooperative agreement concerning Endangered Species Act activities on tribal land that Mollie worked out with Ronnie Lupe, chairman of the White Mountain Apache Tribe in Arizona, served as a

template and a catalyst for developing this order," Babbitt said.

The order calls for both departments to:

- Work to restore ecosystems and enhance tribal management plans that affect listed species.
- Work to create an environment of trust and respect for the missions of both departments and tribes.
- Consult with and use the expertise of affected Native American tribal governments, including the use of traditional knowledge, when determining which species should be listed, conducting surveys and implementing conservation measures.
- Provide notifications to, use the expertise of and solicit information from affected tribal governments when considering impacts to tribal trust resources and tribal lands.
- Encourage and facilitate tribal participation in ESA activities that may affect tribal interests.
- Provide deference to tribal conservation plans for Indian lands that address conservation needs of listed species.

Alaska Natives were not included in the order because of concerns about potential impact to their subsistence exemption under the Endangered Species Act. The order does, however, commit both departments to address that issue and report their findings within 12 months.

*Ken Burton, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

CITES Delegates Tackle Elephants, Other Issues at Zimbabwe Meeting



The 136 party nations to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

made several noteworthy decisions at their recent meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Contentious negotiations surrounding three southern African countries' proposals to downlist their elephant populations from Appendix I to Appendix II to allow for limited trade in ivory threatened to focus attention on a single species; however, at the urging of CITES Secretary General Izgrev Topkov, the delegates resolved many other issues of particular importance to the United States.

Elephants from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe were downlisted from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II, annotated to allow for trade in sport-hunted trophies, leather goods and, under "appropriate and acceptable" circumstances, live elephants.

Some limited international trade in raw ivory may be resumed in 1999. At that time an experimental quota of raw ivory from the three countries may be traded only with Japan, subject to the importers meeting certain conditions, even if those sales to Japan are approved.

All imports of ivory into the United States are prohibited under the Endangered Species Act and the African Elephant Conservation Act except:

- bona fide antiques more than 100 years old, which can be imported for any purpose with a valid permit;
- personal and household effects of African elephant ivory registered with U.S. Customs upon exportation and now being re-imported; and

■ African elephant ivory items acquired for non-commercial use prior to February 4, 1977 (first listing under CITES), when accompanied by a valid special pre-convention permit.

CITES parties unanimously accepted a discussion paper submitted by the U.S., New Zealand and Argentina concerning the grave threat alien species pose to native wildlife. Introduced species are second only to habitat loss in their deleterious impact on the world's biodiversity and the delegates agreed to take measures to stem this problem.

Delegates accepted the U.S. proposal to list goldenseal, a woodland herb which provides a well-known medicinal product that boosts the immune system, on Appendix II. With escalating domestic and international trade of the increasingly popular plant, wild species in this country and parts of Canada are considered critically rare. This listing

ensures careful monitoring of wild goldenseal to ensure sustainable populations.

All species of wild sturgeon will be listed on Appendix II in 1998. The U.S. imports more caviar than any other country. Sturgeon populations in the Caspian Sea are in decline due to international demand for caviar and to the enormous illegal trade.

The U.S. and Bolivia asked the other nations to list bigleaf mahogany, a highly-traded tropical timber, on Appendix II. Although this proposal was rejected, Brazil, a major mahogany range state, announced it would list its wild stands on Appendix III and called for a working group to monitor the health and sustainable management of wild mahogany.

Patricia Fisher, Public Affairs, Washington, DC



Downlisted

African elephants in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe were downlisted to allow trade in sport-hunted trophies, leather goods and, under certain circumstances, live elephants. Photo by John and Karen Hollingsworth.



Limited trade resumed

After much debate, a proposal to downlist the African elephant and allow limited trade in elephant products such as ivory passed at the Conference of Parties to CITES last June. Photo by Patricia Fisher.

Babbitt, Daley Unveil Two New Policies to Support Endangered Species Conservation

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Commerce Secretary William Daley in June unveiled two conservation incentive policies designed to help endangered species, noting that protections for America's imperiled plants and animals are more effective today than at any time in the history of the Endangered Species Act.

Babbitt said the Clinton Administration has taken advantage of the Act's built-in flexibility to allow private landowners to conserve species while preserving certainty about the economic potential of their property.

The two policies, published June 12 in the Federal Register, include:

Safe Harbor Agreements

The Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service may provide property owners with assurances for enhancing the recovery of a listed species by their

voluntary participation in a Safe Harbor agreement. The Services must find that species included in the agreement are expected to receive a net conservation benefit from voluntary conservation activities. Any increase in an animal's population above a current habitat baseline condition, resulting from a property owner's voluntary good stewardship, would not increase the property owner's regulatory responsibility or affect future land use decisions.

Candidate Conservation Agreements

Similar in principle to the Safe Harbor policy, these agreements pertain exclusively to species that are facing threats but are not yet listed. The goal is to remove threats to eliminate the need for listing. If a species is nonetheless listed in the future, the Services would authorize the property owner to return the property to a condition mutually agreed to in the agreement, and would not require the participating property owner to do more to conserve the species.

"These new policies demonstrate significant progress in wildlife conservation as well as fostering greater appreciation for the flexibility of the Endangered Species Act," said Secretary Daley. He added that the policies have fostered dozens of successful partnerships in the private and public sectors showing that species can be protected while allowing sustainable development.

Babbitt said the law has been made more responsive to landowners, and said that administrative reforms of the law have "vastly increased" the number of species and amount of acreage being protected or managed for conservation.

*Ken Burton, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Goodbye to a Friend

Charles Kuralt, the beloved CBS broadcaster who took America "On the Road" to many of our national wildlife refuges, died this summer at the age of 62.

In a letter to his widow, Acting Director John Rogers wrote: "Charles Kuralt was a wonderful man and reporter who occupied a special place of respect for those of us in the Service who worked with him on so many stories while he was at CBS. We shall never forget his interest in helping his audiences discover the wonders and beauty of America's wildlife heritage whether "On the Road" or relaxing with his "Sunday Morning" viewers.



CBS News photo

"We also shall never forget his willingness to serve as spokesperson for the National Wildlife Refuge System. From whooping cranes to California condors, his love for wildlife and wild places radiated through his reports with a contagious spirit that both informed and buoyed all who saw them."

Kuralt had a special affection for the refuge system. He often ran segments about the system on Sunday Morning's annual "Gifts We Give Ourselves" Christmas show and donated his services to narrate last year's National Wildlife Refuge System broadcast public service announcement.

The Service's Future is in Our Hands

The conversation goes:

Them: Who do you work for?

Me: The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Them: Is that part of the DNR?

... and the discussions seem to go on and on this way...

What's the difference between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the State DNR? Why do we need a state AND a federal agency for fish and wildlife management? What are you doing to improve fishing success in Lake Wobegon/the River Styx? How can you possibly think that you can tell private landowners what to do on their own land?

While it may be frustrating at times, these types of conversations about the Service give each and every one of us an opportunity to educate the public about their federal tax dollars at work by a relatively small, highly efficient, yet largely unknown, federal bureau: the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Why does this type of conversation bother me? I work for the Service. I am very proud of the great accomplishments of this organization. These are OUR accomplishments. WE have worked shoulder to shoulder and have major, positive results to show for our efforts. I hear about those results, our accomplishments, every day. But, do others?

We work hard to make this country a better place for our trust resources. We manage the world's most outstanding collection of lands and waters dedicated to fish and wildlife resources. We assist private landowners to improve their lands for fish and wildlife; and we cooperate with the various DNRs and other partners, and have much to show for these efforts. The fact that we do good things should be enough to guarantee our future. But, is it?

We are a separate organization with a separate and important mission and we are funded by federal tax dollars. In this day of dwindling budgets and smaller staff, we need



Bill Hartwig. USFWS photo

all of the name recognition we can get. Be known or be gone! I am speaking of our very survival. How can we possibly survive if the public does not know who we are or what we do, or how it relates to them?

This task of public recognition is difficult at best for most organizations and it seems to be more so for the Service. Why? Our organization has a small but highly motivated staff, little funding, and a large list of responsibilities for which many of us take a unique and very personal interest in carrying out. We have much work ahead of us. We simply do not feel that we have the time to let the public know what great things we are doing for the fish and wildlife resources in our trust, or even how our work is connected to the greater public good.

Our goal should not be to become the biggest federal bureau dedicated to providing fish and wildlife for the enjoyment of current and future generations. Instead, our goal should be to continue to strengthen our ability to fulfill our mandated roles and responsibilities, providing quality fish and wildlife enjoyment for future generations.

So, what's the answer? Hire a public relations consultant? Ask our already overburdened public affairs specialists to solve this dilemma? Hardly. While I certainly

believe that communications professionals can help the Service tremendously, we all must learn to shoulder more of this important responsibility.

I believe that we, the employees of the Service, can continue to do great things for the natural resources, and, with a little thought, can let the public know who we are. We are, each and everyone of us, ambassadors for the Service. We have the tools to make this happen; but they need to be refined. We have already begun the process.

We now have a common Service look in our publications. More than 200 newly designed brochures are already out there in the public. The director has given directions for all new vehicles to be painted white with the Service shield proudly displayed on the sides. Standard entrance signs in accordance with the Service manual should be located at every field station over the coming months. The new, improved Service uniform coming to your neighborhood within the next six months should be worn by all staff that come in contact with the public. Our Internet Web site is getting better organized for the public. The Service's first-ever National Outreach Strategy will soon be released. The National Conservation Training Center is designing and offering expanded course selections on outreach, media relations, Congressional relations and community relations. And, I am sure that other suggestions that lead to better Service recognition would be more than welcome as well.

I challenge all employees to take part in our newly improved U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Use the tools we have at hand, and are developing, to present a unified Service image. Become pro-active outreach ambassadors on behalf of the Service. In the long run, this will benefit the public, and the resources toward which we have devoted our lives.

Bill Hartwig, Region 3 Regional Director, Minneapolis

Service Plans Grizzly Bear Recovery Effort in West



There's Still Time

A citizen management committee of interested community members will oversee the reintroduction into Montana and Idaho of the grizzly bear, whose numbers have dropped to near 1,000 from a high of 50,000. Photo by Bob Stevens.

Guided by a groundbreaking management committee of interested community members, the Service plans to reintroduce grizzly bears into the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem in central Idaho and western Montana.

This plan, aimed at boosting grizzly bear populations in a locale that includes the largest contiguous wilderness area in the lower 48 states not only allows for the reintroduction of threatened grizzlies but also accommodates the interests of people who live and work in the proposed reintroduction area.

After reviewing four alternatives proposed in a draft environmental impact statement and listening to public comments, the Service proposed in June to introduce 3 to 5 grizzlies each year to the Bitterroot area as a nonessential experimental population. Under this designation, a grizzly bear can be killed or removed if it poses a threat to livestock.

Prior to European settlement, some 50,000 grizzly bears lived in the contiguous United States. Now 800 to 1,000 grizzly bears remain in five scattered populations in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Washington.

The 15-member Citizen Management Committee, to be appointed by the Interior Secretary in consultation with the governors of Idaho and Montana and the Nez Perce Tribe, would manage the reintroduced population until recovery objectives are met and the species is delisted.

The committee would represent a cross-section of the community, including people experienced with handling natural resources issues, and members would serve six-year terms.

Even with a recent increase in habitat, grizzly recovery will be a slow process, say biologists. Using a minimum of 3 to 5 animals each year for 5 years, the recovery of the grizzly bear, which reproduces only once every 3 years, may take a century.

Grizzly bears historically were common in the Selway-Bitterroot region but excessive hunting and loss of some key foods such as anadromous fish and pine nuts led to the demise of the bear in the area. Surveys show that no grizzly bears have existed in the proposed reintroduction area since the 1940s.

In 1975, the Service listed the grizzly bear as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. A recovery plan for grizzly bears in the U.S. was published in 1982, and an interagency team began work on a reintroduction plan.

Prior to European settlement, some 50,000 grizzly bears lived in the contiguous United States. Now 800 to 1,000 grizzly bears remain in five scattered populations in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Washington. Only two areas in the country—the Yellowstone Ecosystem and the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem—have populations of several hundred grizzlies.

“Of all the remaining unoccupied grizzly bear habitats in the Lower 48, the Bitterroot Mountains have the greatest potential for grizzly bear recovery, primarily because of the large wilderness area,” said Region 6 Regional Director Ralph Morgenweck.

Diane Katzenberger, External Affairs, Denver, Colorado

Olympic Champion Kim Rhode Touts Hunter Safety in Public Service Announcement

“Hunting safety isn’t inherited . . . you have to teach it,” Olympic Gold Medalist Kim Rhode says in a new television public service announcement produced by the Service that will air across the country this fall.

The PSA is part of an ongoing campaign by the Service and state wildlife agencies to highlight the importance of hunter education programs in promoting safe and ethical hunting.

Rhode, who won the International Double Trap competition at the 1996 Games in Atlanta, appears with her mother in 30-second, 20-second and 15-second spots. She credits her parents with teaching her hunting safety when they took her hunting as a little girl.

“They not only helped me become a good shot, they taught me the most important lesson of all—how to hunt safely,” Rhode says in the spot. “Not everyone will grow up to be an Olympic champion, but everyone can learn to be a safe and ethical hunter. It’s up to you.”

At the end of the spot, viewers are given the telephone number for the hunter education program in their state.

The PSA is the fourth in a series of spots promoting safe and ethical hunting produced by the Service’s Public Affairs office in conjunction with the Audiovisual Division at the National Conservation and Training Center. Production and distribution have been paid for with hunter education funds under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program.

The International and U.S. Olympic committees and NBC Sports also provided valuable assistance by donating Olympic footage for the safety messages.

Past spots have encouraged parents and older hunters not only to teach children the basics of hunting safety but also to be considerate of landowners and obey other ethical guidelines.



Lights, camera, action!

The shooting of the 1997 Hunter Safety Public Service Announcements in Leesburg, Virginia. Right, Kim Rhode displays her gold medal from the 1996 Olympics. Photos by Steve Hillebrand.

The campaign has been enormously successful. A public service announcement is considered a success if 50 percent of the stations air it. The three hunting safety spots that have been distributed in past years have generated usage rates as high as 80 percent.

“We are delighted to have someone of the stature of Kim Rhode participate in this campaign,” said then Acting Service Director John Rogers. “The entire campaign has been a great success because safety is a message you can’t repeat too often. The television stations that air these spots know they are engaged in a meaningful public service.”

Hugh Vickery, Public Affairs, Washington



A Great Time to Be a Duck And a Duck Hunter

Most species of North American ducks are continuing to flourish because of a long spell of favorable weather conditions in their prairie nesting areas, according to the results of the Service's annual breeding duck survey conducted this spring.

The number of breeding ducks rose 13 percent to 42.6 million in the survey area, the highest level since the survey began in 1955.

Breeding populations of mallards climbed 25 percent to 9.9 million, and two species that have been in decline in recent years, American wigeon and northern pintail, rebounded in 1997. Wigeon was up 37 percent to 3.1 million while pintail rose 30 percent to 3.6 million.

"We've seen a complete turnabout from the long drought of the 1980s," said then Acting Director John Rogers. "Three years of favorable weather conditions have combined with the millions of acres of wetlands restored in the past decade to boost duck populations."

Overall breeding duck populations have climbed 70 percent since hitting a low point of 25.1 million in 1990 when the drought dried up much of the nesting habitat. Most species are currently above the numerical goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, an international partnership effort that has protected, restored, or enhanced more than 2.5 million acres of wetland habitat since 1986.

But Rogers warned duck lovers not to get too ecstatic over the news. "We clearly are

experiencing unusually good conditions, and obviously that is not going to last forever," he said. "We need to press on in our conservation efforts in preparation for another dry cycle."

In addition, some species are still struggling. Despite the strong showing this year, pintail breeding populations are still 19 percent below the long-term average. Scaup also have not rebounded along with other species.

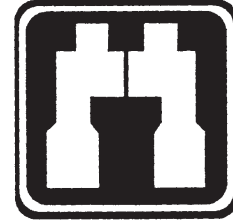
Hunters are benefitting from the abundance of ducks. In 1990, hunters harvested 6.2 million ducks, or an average of 5.5 per hunter. Last year, hunters more than doubled that harvest to 13.9 million ducks, or 10 per hunter.

The Service administers or participates in a number of programs to conserve and restore waterfowl habitat, including the 93 million acre National Wildlife Refuge System, the Partners for Wildlife Program and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan,

Provisions of the Farm Bill such as the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetland Reserve Program have provided significant acreage of wildlife habitat in the United States in recent years. The Swampbuster provision of the Farm Bill and the wetland protection provisions of the Clean Water Act also have helped conserve waterfowl habitat. And sportsmen and conservation organizations such as Ducks Unlimited have conserved and restored millions of acres of prime habitat.

*Hugh Vickery, Public Affairs,
Washington*

Look Out for Watchable Wildlife Conference



Freshwater mussels need love, too! Increasing public awareness and appreciation for plants and animals that perhaps don't fit the traditional definition of

"watchable" will be the focus of the 1997 Watchable Wildlife Conference to be held November 11-14 in Roanoke, Virginia.

The Watchable Wildlife program is a strategy to help maintain diverse, viable populations of fish and wildlife and their habitats by building an effective, well-informed public constituency for conservation. The Service has been actively involved with Watchable Wildlife through its refuges, hatcheries and other field stations since the federal-state-private conservation organization partnership began 7 years ago.

Watchable Wildlife Conferences are held annually to allow educators and representatives of state and federal natural resource agencies, conservation organizations, and outdoor industries opportunities to share knowledge and techniques in education and promotion of nature-based recreation.

Those attending the Roanoke conference will explore new ways to serve non-traditional as well as traditional viewing audiences, learn how to complement traditional watchable wildlife sites and programs with elements that reflect ecosystems, balance economics and ecology (nature-based tourism), and participate in a Share Fare where organizations show-and-tell their Watchable Wildlife projects.

For more information, contact the Service's Watchable Wildlife Coordinator in the Division of Refuges at 703/358 2029.

1997 Breeding Duck Results

Species	1996	1997	% Change
Mallard	7.9 million	9.9 million	+25
Gadwall	3 million	3.9 million	+31
Wigeon	2.3 million	3.1 million	+37
Green-winged teal	2.5 million	2.5 million	—
Blue-winged teal	6.4 million	6.1 million	-4
Northern shoveler	3.4 million	4.1 million	+19
Northern pintail	2.7 million	3.6 million	+30
Redhead	834,000	918,000	+10
Canvasback	848,000	689,000	-19
Scaup	4.2 million	4.1 million	-2

Volunteers Invaluable to Refuge System, Streeter Tells Congressional Panel

“Volunteers provide essential services that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service often cannot provide,” Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife Robert Streeter recently told a House subcommittee considering legislation to boost refuge volunteerism.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Jim Saxton of New Jersey, would allow one refuge in each region to use up to \$150,000 in appropriated funds plus receipts from entrance fees, user fees and donations to pay for building materials, training, and other costs in support of a pilot project to promote volunteerism.

In his June testimony, Streeter applauded the effort to enhance volunteer programs but said the Service would like to see the bill amended to promote not only volunteerism but also cooperative ventures with local citizen groups to support refuges and their mission.

Streeter told the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans that the number of volunteers increased from 4,251 in 1982 to 25,840 in 1996. Volunteer hours also have increased from 128,440 in 1982 to more than 1 million last year. He cited a number of examples of the value of these volunteers which include:

- At Edwin B. Forsythe NWR in New Jersey, volunteers assist by performing the weekly waterbird surveys. They also monitor the endangered piping plover’s breeding activity and construct and maintain nest



predator exclosures around piping plover nests. In addition, the interpretation work by volunteers to the public has substantially reduced people-caused disturbance to the nesting birds.

- At Ash Meadows NWR, Nevada, two volunteers removed 240 inactive utility poles during April and May. They donated 504 hours and saved the Service \$100,000.

- At Bitter Lake NWR, New Mexico, volunteers completed a 500-hour study to determine the nesting and fledgling success of endangered interior least terns, and also completed a 1,000-hour study to determine habitat use and populations of wintering sandhill cranes.

- At Okefenokee NWR in Georgia, volunteers perform operational maintenance tasks such as lawn and sign maintenance, plumbing, redecking boardwalks, and painting, as well as serving as the core work force that trims and maintains the 121-mile boat trail and three-mile hiking trail. Wildlife conservation activities involving volunteers include building artificial nest cavities for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and conducting wildlife surveys.

- At Conte NWR in New England, volunteers make a substantial contribution to neotropical bird conservation. A two-year study is being completed by 48 volunteers throughout the Connecticut River Watershed. These expert birders have spent more than 1,000 hours in the field documenting the species and stopover sites used during spring migration.

Making a comeback

Service biologists are hopeful that one of America’s most endangered bird populations, the Great Lakes piping plover, is inching back from the brink of extinction. Surveys found 23 nesting pairs along the Lake Michigan shoreline in 1996, nearly double the 12 nesting pairs surveyed in 1990. Photo by Kevin Stubbs.



Josh Nove. USFWS photo

Service Volunteer Drowns

Josh Nove, a 24-year-old Service volunteer, drowned in early July while banding tern and gull chicks on a mud flat in the Volcano Creek delta on the Alaska Peninsula NWR.

Nove was a native of Ipswich, Massachusetts, and graduated magna cum laude from Amherst College in 1995 with a degree in biology. According to witnesses, he was working in shallow water at Mother Goose Lake when he suddenly dropped into deeper water and was unable to stay afloat.

Service employees immediately attempted to rescue him with a boat and on foot. Alaska State Troopers and a Fish and Wildlife Protection dive team also participated, but the rescue effort was greatly hampered by glacial silt-laden waters with zero visibility.

“There are really no words to express our sadness at the loss of this promising young man,” Refuge Manager Ronald Hood said. “The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is built on a mission of caring and dedication, and in the short time that Josh was with us, he illustrated a fresh new interest in conservation for the future of younger generations.”

Michigan Leads Nation in Number of Hunters; Florida in Anglers

Michigan had the largest number of adult hunters in the country, Florida led the country in anglers, and California had the largest number of wildlife watchers, according to the preliminary state overview from the 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Meanwhile, the survey revealed that the West North Central region—which includes Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska and the Dakotas—was the wildlife-related recreation capital of the country, with the highest percentage of people 16 years and older who enjoyed hunting, fishing, and observing wildlife.

The survey, which has been conducted every five years since 1955, was done for the Service by the Census Bureau. As part of the survey, the Census Bureau initially screened 80,000 households. From this, the bureau chose 28,000 sportsmen and -women and 14,400 nonconsumptive participants 16 years and older for detailed surveys throughout the year.

The preliminary national results released earlier this summer showed that more than 39 million Americans 16 and older either hunted or fished in 1996 while 63 million enjoyed watching wildlife. In all, 40 percent of the adult population enjoyed some form of wildlife-related recreation.

In the state-by-state breakdown, Michigan had 934,000 hunters 16 years and older, edging out Texas and Pennsylvania, which had 913,000 and 879,000 respectively. Wisconsin was fourth with 665,000 hunters trailed by New York with 642,000.

Florida led the way with 2.8 million anglers 16 and older followed closely by California with 2.7 million. Texas had 2.6 million, Michigan 1.8 million and New York 1.7 million.

The survey revealed that 5.7 million Californians 16 and older enjoyed observing, photographing or feeding wildlife around their homes while 2.4 million took trips away from home to enjoy these activities. Texas, Pennsylvania, New York and Illinois also were home to millions of adults who enjoy watching wildlife.

A Little Rain Doesn't Dampen Spirits at D.C. Fishing Week Kickoff

Do fish really bite better on rainy days?

Four hundred elementary school students from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia found that koi and bluegill do, but catfish don't, as they gathered in a downpour on the Mall in Washington to kick off National Fishing Week, June 2-8.

The Service, several other federal agencies including the National Park Service, the D.C. Department of Fisheries, and the American Sportfishing Association hosted the event, with some help from 30 Eastern High School students who assisted the younger children with everything from baiting hooks to untangling lines and provided cheers and words of advice as the new anglers reeled in their catch.

After traveling along the "Pathway to Fishing," the youngsters took a group pledge to "Get Hooked on Fishing—Not on Drugs."

A little rain didn't dampen the spirits of the Fishing Week kickoff staff, either. They enthusiastically compared human and fish anatomy, explained where fish live and how to catch them, talked about fishing ethics and safety, showed casting techniques, and helped the kids develop knot-tying skills.

Special guests Gwenn Perkins, director of women's outdoor programs at Orvis, and Steve Pennaz, host of ESPN's North American Outdoors and editor of North American Fisherman magazine, demonstrated their world-class casting techniques and encouraged the youngsters to try their hands at casting. Fishbone Fred, a country crooner and an avid angler, entertained the soaking wet crowd at lunchtime.

Later the young anglers surrounded the lake and did their best to catch some of the 1,000 catfish delivered days earlier by the Orangeburg NFH, in Orangeburg, South Carolina. They were more successful at



It was THIS big!...

A rainsoaked but spirited participant in the National Fishing Week kickoff in Washington, DC, shows off her catch, one of thousands of fish stocked in a pond on the Mall just for the occasion. Photo by Lavonda Walton.

catching koi and bluegill, leaving most of the elusive catfish for another day. And another day of fishing it will be: each child went home with his or her own rod and reel.

An estimated 500,000 people nationwide participated in National Fishing Week activities. Most states provided free fishing days during the week, allowing the public to fish without a license. Fishing Week events all over the country encouraged Americans young and old to fish, learn about natural resources stewardship and appreciate the dedicated work of the nation's resource management professionals and volunteers.

Judith Maule, Little White Salmon NFH, Cook, Washington

Fish & Wildlife . . . In Brief

Service to Patrol Florida Manatee Protection Zones

In an effort to reduce the number of manatees killed or injured annually in boating accidents, the Service, in coordination with the Florida Marine Patrol, will begin monitoring manatee protection zones in Brevard County to enforce boating and recreational regulations designed to protect the large, endangered marine mammal. During the first 6 months of 1997, more than 110 Florida manatees died, 27 as a result of avoidable watercraft-related injuries, and many of those in Brevard County. The Service will aggressively patrol protected areas to catch violators of manatee zone regulations.

Service Agents Capture Enforcement Awards

Special Agents Richard Marks and Carl Mainen received Clark Bavin Awards from the Species Survival Network, a conservation consortium of NGOs, for outstanding work in the area of CITES enforcement. The awards were presented in June at the CITES Conference of the Parties in Harare, Zimbabwe. Marks was recognized for his work on "Operation Renegade," which resulted in convictions for 38 exotic bird smugglers, and for his years of service in the Special Operations branch of Law Enforcement. Mainen received recognition for his involvement in "Operation Wiseguy," an investigation involving the smuggling of rhino horn and leopard skins; and in "Operation Falcon," which involved smuggling in rare birds of prey; as well as for his involvement with international law enforcement organizations, including INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization. The award is named for Clark Bavin, a former chief of the Service's division of law enforcement.

Prosecution in Successful Undercover Operation Results in More Jail Time

A Florida bird importer arrested as part of the Service's highly successful "Operation Renegade" was sentenced to a year and a day in prison for illegally smuggling more than 4,000 "Congo" African grey parrots into the United States and filing false importation documents. Adolph "Buzz" Pare, 63, of Miami, will also pay \$300,000 in fines and restitution, the largest sum ever levied against a defendant in a federal wildlife smuggling case. Twenty-three other defendants in this case have received prison sentences totaling more than 47 years and fines totaling more than a half a million dollars. Three other commercial bird importers also were convicted. Richard Furzer pled guilty to additional offenses in Los Angeles and was sentenced to 18 months in jail and ordered to pay \$75,000 restitution. Another commercial bird importer, Louie Mantas, is a fugitive from justice who faces both smuggling charges and an additional charge for flight from prosecution. Mantas fled after posting bond.

Keweenaw Bay Indians, Service Renew Cooperation in Trout Production

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community celebrated two years of intense work with the transfer of 15,000 lake and brook trout produced in their isolation facility in what may set the scientific standard for the quality of fish produced for stocking nationwide. The 15,000 trout were transferred for delivery to Iron River NFH in Wisconsin. As part of the fish transfer, John Christian, assistant regional director for fisheries, signed a second cooperative agreement for the community to produce more disease-free trout for stocking in the Great Lakes. The trout will again be produced by this two-year formula using the community's brood stock isolation facility. "Our agreements with the Service have further enabled us to cooperate in native fisheries restoration in the Great Lakes," said Tribal Chairman Fred Dakota. "The community is pleased with the results of these agreements and looks forward to working with the Service on other natural resource projects."

IRM Makes Using GIS System Easier

The Service Geographic Information Systems Steering Committee, in conjunction with the Refuges and Realty programs, is working to define a standard operating procedure for entering Service property boundary information into a computerized database and sharing it with internal and external partners. Designed to be readily used by contractors as well as Service employees, the procedures will help users in their current data creation efforts without adding significant time or costs. In addition, it will reduce the workload on offices developing new boundary data by giving them a tested, workable process for creating and checking the data for errors. The SOP also specifies standard variables associated with refuge boundaries that will allow other kinds of data to be linked and reused. The project charter for the SOP is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/data/giscag.html>.

Service Proposes to Allow Take of Cormorants to Protect Fish Farms

In response to a growing depredation problem, the Service is proposing to allow catfish farmers and other aquaculturists in 33 states to take cormorants preying on their stocks. The proposal would save as much as \$20 million in fish each year in the aquaculture industry. The greatest impact would be in the Mississippi Delta region where catfish farmers lose an average of 3 percent to 7 percent of their inventory each year to the birds. Cormorants are long-necked, large-bodied, diving birds, and have webbed feet and hooked beaks adapted for chasing and capturing fish under water. Cormorant populations have been climbing steadily and are now believed to be at an all-time high of 1 million to 2 million birds. The Service may issue special depredation orders for specific species of migratory birds to address particular problems under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which generally prohibits take of migratory birds except for game birds during regulated hunting seasons.



Region 1 Team Opens the Lines of Communication with Congress

In an effort to communicate better with Congress, a team of Region 1 employees spent a week in Washington meeting with Congressionals representing the region and improving their own understanding of how Congress works. The team, which included Regional Director Mike Spear, geographic/programmable ARDs, and state supervisors, provided each member of Congress with a briefing book containing the names of Service contacts in Region 1 and descriptions of Service activities and current hot issues in the Northwest. Team members also answered questions and addressed specific issues that arose during the meetings. All involved from Region 1 pronounced the meetings a success. Region 3 and 5 have conducted similar successful meetings with their Congressional representatives in Washington.

Forensics Lab Measures Up

The Service's National Fish & Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon has been awarded accreditation by the American Society of Crime Lab Directors' Lab Accreditation Board, a distinction held by fewer than half of all crime labs in the country. To attain ASCLD accreditation, an internationally-recognized standard for evaluating crime labs, facilities voluntarily meet standards for management, operation, personnel, procedures, and instruments; physical plant and security; and safety. One hundred and fifty-five of the approximately 360 crime labs in the U.S. have earned ASCLD/LAB certification, which is valid for 5 years, according to Forensics Lab Director Ken Goddard. During that time the lab director must certify yearly that the lab still meets accreditation requirements. ASCLD is a nonprofit professional society devoted to improving crime laboratory operations through sound management practices.

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of columns brought to you by the National Wildlife Refuge System Outreach Team reporting on key refuge issues, interesting projects and outreach efforts taking place on refuges. Outreach Team members are Mike Boylan and Debbie McCrensky, Division of Refuges, Washington; Janet Tennyson, Public Affairs, Washington; Linda Watters, Region 1; Diana Trujillo, Region 2; Don Hultman, Region 3; Frank Podriznik, Region 4; Sarah Bevilacqua, Region 5; Sheri Fetherman and Roger Hollovoet, Region 6; George Constantino and Jim Kurth, Region 7.

■ A first-ever national refuge managers conference providing a forum to discuss issues, problems, and opportunities facing the National Wildlife Refuge System is tentatively being planned for three days in the fall of 1998. The tentative focus of discussion will be issues affecting the continued growth and management of the refuge system. Between now and conference time, work groups will develop recommendations and implementation strategies based on the challenges outlined in the brochure, "The National Wildlife Refuge System: Promises for a New Century," including such topics as maintaining refuge system health, strengthening system identity, and building partnerships.

■ Ray Rauch, manager of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR in Colorado, was honored in June with a "Legends" award from the American Recreation Coalition. Among Rauch's accomplishments cited by the ARC are comprehensive restoration efforts at Rocky Mountain Arsenal; initiation of a number of partnerships in the Denver metropolitan area; development of successful environmental education programs that reach more than 40,000 schoolchildren each year; and promotion of outreach efforts such as International Migratory Bird Day, Bald Eagle Day, Prairie Day, National Wildlife Refuge Week, and special fishing programs for the disabled. "Ray's outstanding leadership at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR is converting a degraded Superfund site into a premier urban wildlife refuge," said Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife Bob Streeter. "I'm proud to see this recognition for his gift in developing successful public use programs in a way that promotes the entire refuge system."

■ Preschool students in Northridge, California, recently held a tricycle-a-thon to raise \$2,500 for the California Condor Recovery Fund. Wildlife Biologist Martin Ruane of Hopper Mountain NWR, where the condor recovery program is headquartered, gave a special presentation on the condor to six classes at Pinecrest Schools' preschool. The recovery fund, administered by San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society, helps the Service carry out its recovery program for the endangered bird, which now numbers about 25 in the wild in California and Arizona and about 105 in captivity.

■ More than 60 sites are participating in the Service's Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, designed to test entrance fees as a source of revenue for visitor services and facilities. Annual collections from participating sites are estimated at \$3.3 million with \$1.5 million to \$2 million available for projects after covering the costs of collections. The Service recently entered into an agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey to evaluate visitor response to the program. The Service will be evaluating cost effectiveness and project leader response.

■ The National Conservation Training Center, the Division of Refuges, and Prince William Network are organizing a live satellite broadcast to educate students nationwide about refuges' role in endangered species recovery. The 90-minute "long-distance learning satellite field trip" will be broadcast from Mason Neck NWR in Virginia. The first refuge established for the threatened bald eagle, Mason Neck will host elementary school children from a nearby school to participate in the broadcast.

■ Rick Coleman, a 17-year veteran of the refuge system and former supervisor of refuges in Idaho, Oregon and Washington, took his new post as chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System in August. Coleman said his top priorities are working with the CARE group on funding issues; expanding the "Friends" Initiative, which involves establishing community-based citizens coalitions to help refuges; expanding public awareness efforts; and improving communications to better support field employees. Coleman has managed refuges in California and in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, and has worked on several national refuge task forces.

Service Reaches for Results

When Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act, most folks took one look at the new law and added GPRA to the mix of Washington's infamous alphabet soup of acronyms. But Congress didn't give the law its name on a whim. It expects results.

In short, the law requires federal agencies to clearly and specifically state what they are accomplishing with the taxpayer's money. This is easier said than done, especially for a scientific, resource management agency like the Service. How do you, for example, establish a quantifiable measurement for something unquantifiable, such as the recovery of an ecosystem? The Service has no choice but to find a way because starting in 2000 we will have to give Congress annual performance reports based on the requirements of the law.

Many of your colleagues have been hard at work on this task. After an extensive series of meetings with Service headquarters and regional employees and representatives of constituent groups, they developed a draft strategic plan for the Service that clearly outlines our mission, lays out the work we do to achieve that mission, and establishes means whereby we can measure the results and compare them to line items in our budget.

The draft plan focuses on working in partnership with groups and individuals outside the Service in four basic areas:

- Conserving, protecting and restoring federal trust species

- Conserving an ecologically diverse network of lands and waters
- Helping the public participate in and understand our conservation activities
- Providing the organizational capacity needed to achieve our mission

After the Directorate approved the draft plan in March, senior-level staff began to flesh out the specific results we intend to produce over the next five years and matching them up with the budget lines so that they can be measured. In late June, budget and program staff from throughout the Service began to develop an operational plan for FY 1999 that includes these measurements.

We expect to meet our September 30 deadline and present OMB and Congress with a plan approved by the Department of the Interior.

Reaching that September milestone will be important, but that doesn't mean we are done with the process. All of us working on the Act—Congress, OMB, the Department and the Directorate—realize that this represents a new way of doing business. We may need to refine our goals as we go along. That's to be expected. But, whatever we do, Congress has reminded us we must always keep our eye on the results. As any competent biologist can tell you, that's a good thing.

John Rogers, Deputy Director

Honored to Be Your Director

This is my first "Director's Corner" in Fish and Wildlife News since I was sworn in as Director in early August. I know many of you heard my remarks when I met with Service employees shortly afterwards, but I want to repeat what I said then—I am deeply honored to have been chosen as director of what I consider to be the finest wildlife conservation agency in the world.

The Service has come through a difficult period in recent years. Budgets were sliced, many of the landmark laws that underpin our conservation work were under attack, and we lost our director, Mollie Beattie, to cancer. Nevertheless, I believe we have come out of this period stronger than ever. We are on the right track as we head towards the 21st century.

As I begin my tenure as director, I want to commend John Rogers on the outstanding job he did the past two years filling in as acting director. Being an acting director is one of the toughest jobs in Washington. I think it is a tribute to him that the Service operated so smoothly during this time.

I also want to commend each and every Service employee for upholding the high standards of the Service during this time. Perhaps as a career employee, I am biased, but I believe our people are second to none in professionalism and commitment. Before my confirmation hearing, I met with many senators. One point they kept raising over and over again was how impressed they were with the quality of Service employees. Whether or not they agree with every position we take, they respect our dedication to wildlife conservation.

I look forward to serving you as director.



Fish & Wildlife News

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Deadline for next issue:

September 20, 1997